



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, April 25, 2023

TO: City Council

FROM: INTERIM PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES DIRECTOR VIDES
SENIOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS ANALYST VU-DUC
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER MCCLOUD

THROUGH: CITY MANAGER MENDEZ

SUBJECT: ACCEPTING A \$15,717 GRANT FROM URBAN SUSTAINABILITY
DIRECTORS NETWORK (USDN) TO BUILD CAPACITY &
OPERATING MODEL FOR THE COMMUNITY CLIMATE
COMMITTEE AND APPROPRIATING SUCH FUNDS TO THE
SPECIAL GRANTS FUND

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution accepting the \$15,717 from USDN, authorizing the City Manager to execute all agreements and any amendments which may be necessary, and appropriating such funds to the Special Grants Fund [0260].

BACKGROUND:

The City was awarded \$15,717 in grant funding to invest in the City's Community Climate Advisory Committee ("Committee") to enhance equitable engagement on delivery of the Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP). The investment is scoped into a defined project to refresh the existing Committee's operations with a more formalized, transparent operating model aligned to center justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. This refresh project is titled "Equitable Involvement: Reimagining a Community Climate Advisory Committee" under the funding proposal. A grant has been awarded from the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN).

DISCUSSION:

The City established a Community Advisory Committee (Committee) in 2020 as part of the public engagement process to adopt the Watsonville 2030 Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP). This committee was formed out of community surveys which identified individual community members to serve, but did not include formal operating agreements or a formal operating model. Input from the committee was gathered at virtual meetings held by City staff and the CAAP was successfully adopted at the end of 2021.

As CAAP implementation got underway in 2022, the need for ongoing community input was identified and staff researched best practices to re-engage the Committee. This work revealed that two key elements were missing from the Committee's operations: 1) committee governance agreements and 2) the explicit integration of justice, equity, diversity & inclusion principles into the governance agreements and their design process.

These findings created a challenge beyond usual budgetary constraints. To meet these needs and operate within State law, the City sought external funding for the Committee's re-engagement from grant agencies.

The USDN's Emergent Learning program provides small, short-term grants for innovative projects that result in sustainable climate action. The \$15,717 award received by the City will go toward:

1. Costs associated with barriers to participation (such as childcare and catering) for committee members between April and December 2023
2. Consultant fees to:
 - a. Facilitate Committee workshops to center justice, equity, diversity & inclusion principles
 - b. Deliver a document outlining a co-designed governance model for Committee operations

Under the grant agreement, the work listed above must be completed by November 30, 2023. This seed funding will provide a springboard for future grants to provide on-going member compensation through the 2030 CAAP timeframe. These funds can be combined with other grants and do not require a match.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action is consistent with Strategic Plan Priority:

3 - Infrastructure and Environment

5 - Community Engagement and Well-being

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Accepting this grant will bring outside funding to offset the cost of the project. In-kind staff support to administer the grant aligns with existing CAAP work programming and is anticipated to decrease the cost of staff time to coordinate public engagement on individual CAAP projects. Proceeds from the \$15,717 USDN grant are to be appropriated to the Special Grants Fund [0260].

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

Council may choose not to accept the grant award. Without the grant award, the Committee can continue to operate with a small number of existing members, without formal agreements, or the integration of explicit equity principles. If the City does not meet these missing operating elements, however, project delivery under the CAAP will have low or inefficient community engagement and reputational risk is increased over time.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

1. Memo of Understanding from the Urban Sustainability Directors Network to fund \$15,717 towards the delivery of equity workshops, an operating model, and Committee member compensation.