



DATE: August 5, 2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council through City Manager

FROM: Tom Jordan, Emergency Manager
Patrick Carter, Assistant to the City Manager

SUBJECT: Resolution Accepting Project Needs and Information Inputs Report for the Feasibility Study to Establish a Resiliency Hub at the Community Center for Emergency Use

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the attached Resolution Accepting Project Needs and Information Inputs Report for the Feasibility Study to Establish a Resiliency Hub at the Community Center for Emergency Use.

BACKGROUND

The need for a resiliency hub was one of many projects identified in the City's 2019 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Grant funding was allocated from the Federal government as a result of the 2017 Tubbs Fire and distributed through the California Department of Housing and Community Development in the form of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The City applied for and was awarded four grants under this program, including projects involving Sea Level Rise, Seismic Retrofits of City Facilities, Emergency Generator Replacements, and examining the Community Center for use as a Resiliency Hub. The City was awarded a \$31,400 grant, effective September 29, 2022, to conduct a feasibility study for establishing a resilience hub at the City Community Center for emergency use to function as a cooling center, or "resiliency hub" or "safe place" during severe weather events involving heat waves, poor air quality, and wildfires.

The milestones of this project include surveying professionals and community partners to determine the needs of a resiliency hub and the applicability of the Community Center to function as a resiliency hub, develop a Project Needs and Information Inputs (PNII) report, develop a Conceptual Recommendations List, develop conceptual plans and specifications for a resiliency hub, and conduct public outreach.

The feasibility study began with the development of an online survey whose respondents were a diverse set of experienced leaders including City staff, associated local Community Based Organizations, and the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management. This survey work was supplemented with interviews of staff who are knowledgeable of facility operations and program implementation. These interviews, and clarification interviews with survey respondents, were conducted at feasibility study site locations.

The Project Needs and Information Inputs (PNII) Report included a Conceptual Recommendations List with three Recommended Actions for consideration:

- Establish opportunities for enhanced real-time information sharing focused on seniors and low-income individuals
- Design and build a purpose specific Resilience Hub Facility for Emergency Use (as opposed to repurposing overprogrammed, existing facilities)
- Establish Memorandums of Understanding specific to community emergency resilience activities between the City and existing and potential City affiliated resilience service providers

The PNII Report will be followed by a Project Closeout Report no later than December 2024.

DISCUSSION

The Community Development Block Grant work to which this staff report relates is an opportunity for contemplation on key choices, such as existing and potential locations for a City resiliency hub facility in whole or part defined by the grant. The bottom line was that the Community Center did not meet all of the functional needs of a resiliency hub, and that other sites were recommended for consideration, including a new resiliency hub at the Petaluma Fairgrounds.

The PNII Report provides considerations for each of the Recommended Actions. For instance, when considering the City Community Center and other City facilities as a resilience hub Facility, report participants qualified why these facilities were inadequate and recommended a purpose specific Resilience Hub Facility at the Petaluma Fairgrounds property.

Conceptualization for a Resilience Hub Facility continues as an element of other city planning efforts, including the upcoming revision to the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Staff recommends approval of the attached Resolution accepting project needs and information inputs report for the feasibility study to establish a resiliency hub at the community center for emergency use, which finds that the community center does not meet all of the conditions to adequately fulfill this role.

Regarding next steps, while the Community Center was determined to not be adequate for a resiliency hub which meets all of the necessary objectives, feedback from this process and the broader upcoming community engagement efforts, including with vulnerable populations and community groups experienced in this field such as Community Organizations Active in

Disasters (COAD), will assist in the identification of a more suitable site and assist in the conceptual design and specification for such a site.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This agenda item appeared on the City’s tentative agenda document on July 15, 2024, which was a publicly-noticed meeting.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

This item is aligned with the Council goal of a Safe Community that Thrives – support facilities and design programs that create

CLIMATE ACTION/SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Extreme weather events have been and will continue to increase in frequency as a result of climate pollution. City facilities are frequently used as temporary evacuation and information points. Planning for future events will allow staff to better serve our community members, as well as members of the greater bay area affected by emergency events.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Adopting of a resolution accepting project needs and information inputs report for the feasibility study to establish a resiliency hub at the community center for emergency use is considered a discretionary action that could therefore be a “project” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Nonetheless, adoption of this ordinance is exempt under the “common sense” exception in CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), which establishes the general rule for projects concerning which can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment as it can be seen with certainty that this Resolution will not have a significant negative effect on the environment as it is just a feasibility study and does not commit the City to an action. Moreover, acceptance of this report is exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies) which exempts projects that “involving only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the agency has not approved, adopted, or funded.” The resiliency hub feasibility project satisfies this requirement.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

This project is entirely funded by a CDBG Mitigation - Planning and Public Services grant of \$31,400. Only staff costs of less than \$5,000 have been incurred to-date, allowing adequate funding for future tasks, including community engagement.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution

2. Community Development Block Grant 17-MITPPS-21017 Project Needs and Information Inputs (PNII) Report