



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR

January 22, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From:  Christine Daniel, City Manager
Submitted by: Gil Dong, Interim Fire Chief
Subject: Staff Response to Council Recommendations for Disaster Preparedness Projects

SUMMARY

At its October 2, 2012 meeting, the City Council requested staff report back on recommendations from the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission and the City Council regarding Measure GG (Fire and Disaster Preparedness Tax) programs for FY 2014 and FY 2015.

In this document, staff reports back on the following recommendations:

- Additional Staff in Public Health Division
- Community Outreach Efforts
- Additional Staff in the Office of Emergency Services
- Automatic Gas Shutoff Valve Program
- Roll-Off Dumpster “Debris Box” Program
- Disaster Readiness Classes
- Reserved Fund Balance
- Disaster Cache Equipment

Increased fire department overtime expenditures and overtime projections may impact Measure GG’s ability to support all recommendations in FY14 and FY15

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Additional Staff: Public Health Division

The Disaster and Fire Safety Commission recommended that Measure GG be used to fund one full-time equivalent (FTE) position in the Public Health Division. DFSC recommended that this position be dedicated solely to disaster preparedness in vulnerable and underserved populations of the City, with emphasis on South and West Berkeley.

Staff consulted with the Human Resources and Health, Housing and Community Services Departments regarding the Commission's recommendation. Staff reports that a position could be established within the Public Health Division, focused primarily on working through community groups, who have established relationships and trust with vulnerable and underserved populations, to develop and deliver disaster readiness information and education tailored to these populations. This position could manage a new community engagement program (see "Community Outreach Efforts" below). Based on the scope of duties and necessary supervisory capacity for the position, staff reports that such a position should be classified as a Health Services Program Specialist, at a cost of \$141,189 per year, including benefits.

Community Outreach Efforts

Council recommended that staff report back on the feasibility and cost to further engage community members in disaster readiness education and activities.

After consultation with the Public Health Division, staff reports that such a program would be best managed by the Health Services Program Specialist position described above. It could potentially utilize a framework to provide participants with experiences and educational opportunities that promote both disaster readiness and community organizing skills. The Health Services Program Specialist could ensure that this program interfaces with community groups, who have established relationships and trust with vulnerable and underserved populations, to deliver disaster readiness information and education. Staff estimates that, in addition to the cost of the Health Services Program Specialist position, approximately \$64,000 will be necessary on a recurring basis to implement this program.

If this program is established, staff recommends that it be done so as a two-year pilot. Staff will establish metrics to measure the program's success at improving community readiness. Program continuance would be based on measured success.

Additional Staff: Office of Emergency Services

The Disaster and Fire Safety Commission recommended that Measure GG be used to fund one full-time equivalent (FTE) position in the Office of Emergency Services. DFSC recommended that this position report to the CERT Program Manager and focus on preparedness for vulnerable and underserved populations.

Staff consulted with the Human Resources Department regarding the Commission's request. Staff reports that a position could be established within the Office of Emergency Services to manage existing and develop additional community readiness programs. These programs could include the existing Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, as well as the Roll-Off Dumpster and Automatic Gas Shutoff Valve programs described below. These programs are not exclusively focused on vulnerable populations, but all programs managed by this position could benefit these groups. Based on the scope of duties for the position, staff reports that such a position

should be classified as an Emergency Services Coordinator, at an estimated cost of \$155,216 per year, including benefits.

Automatic Gas Shutoff Valve Program

Council recommended that staff report back on the feasibility of establishing a program to provide free automatic gas shutoff valves, including subsidized permit fee waivers for low-income homeowners. Council recommended that \$25,000 be allocated for this program. To be a permissible expenditure under Measure GG, free automatic gas shutoff valves and subsidized fee waivers would have to be conditioned on participants attending disaster readiness training in order to be eligible.

Staff consulted with the Planning Department's Permit Services Center Manager and Building Official regarding the Commission's request. An automatic gas shutoff valve program would address fires, caused by natural gas leak, due to earthquake damage. Because most homes have several potential exits for escape from a fire, the primary benefit of such a program would be property protection, rather than life safety. Earthquake actuated valves automatically shut off gas when they sense shaking in a building that is above the building's design level. Valves can actuate even if damage and hazards do not exist, and aftershocks can cause the device to actuate after service has been restored.

According to the California Seismic Safety Commission, valves cost between \$100 and \$300. The proposed Emergency Services Coordinator position could lead associated trainings. The disaster readiness class allocation described above could cover training materials and other costs. Staff estimates that a \$25,000 program investment could provide 61 valves to community members (conservative estimate) or 181 (maximally).

Valves must be installed by a licensed professional, and require a City plumbing permit. Installation fees alone can cost \$300 - \$600, depending on required modifications to plumbing and to attach the valve to the building. City permit fees range from \$50 per residence for group installations (two or more neighboring residences coordinate permits and inspections), to \$127 per residence for individual installation. Even if Council authorizes waiver of permit fees for low-income residents (estimated at 20 percent of participants for the program investment estimates above), those homeowners will still be responsible for installation fees.

If this program is established, staff recommends that it be done so as a one-year pilot. Staff will establish metrics to measure the program's success at improving community readiness. Program continuance would be based on measured success.

Roll-Off Dumpster "Debris Box" Program

Council recommended that staff report back on the feasibility of Fire Department reinstatement of the "Debris Box" program, originally run by the Police Department, assuming a \$25,000 allocation. To be a permissible expenditure under Measure GG,

this program would incentivize training by limiting free debris box to neighborhoods that come together to receive training from a City representative.

Staff consulted with the Police Department regarding how the Debris Box program was operated, and with the Permit Service Center regarding costs associated with roll-off dumpsters. Staff reports that, if managed by the proposed Emergency Services Coordinator, the Fire Department could establish a similar program to the Police Department model, but with an emphasis on disaster readiness. With a \$25,000 investment, staff estimates that the program could provide up to 38 roll-off dumpsters to neighborhoods each year. Costs for each dumpster are \$644, calculated as follows:

- 12 Yard Roll-Off dumpster: \$473
- Permit: \$153
- Flasher (required if the dumpster is on the street): \$18

If this program is established within the Fire Department, staff would use criteria similar to those used for disaster caches to identify neighborhoods that have earned the debris box reward, namely, attendance at trainings and other documented steps toward community readiness. The Roll-Off Dumpster program could provide an interim incentive for neighborhoods that are on the path to cache eligibility, but that are not yet fully qualified.

If this program is established, staff recommends that it be done so as a one-year pilot. Staff will establish metrics to measure the program's success at improving community readiness. Program continuance would be based on measured success.

Disaster Readiness Classes

The Disaster and Fire Safety Commission recommended that a specific amount of funding be set aside from Measure GG to cover the costs of additional emergency preparedness classes, both those already in existence and those associated with new programs.

Staff reports that expenditures supporting future disaster readiness classes would include classroom rentals, instructor costs, class materials, and advertisement. Existing materials will need to be updated and reproduced as they are distributed. New programs will require the Fire Department to produce additional educational materials. Staff estimates that an allocation of \$70,000 per year could cover disaster readiness class expenditures associated both with the Community Emergency Response Team program as well as additional community readiness programs.

Maintain and Build a Reserve Fund Balance

Council recommended that a reserve fund balance of \$300,000 be established over a period of 24 months, to be used for unplanned expenditures or events associated with Measure GG programs.

Staff reports that a \$150,000 reserve in both FY 2014 and FY 2015 would create the recommended fund balance. This \$150,000 per year figure has been included in the Fiscal Impacts of Possible Future Action section below.

Disaster Cache Equipment

Staff recommends that a \$15,000 per year increase in funding for disaster equipment caches and distribution plan be included in these recommendations' referral to the FY 2014 and FY 2015 budget process. This \$15,000 increase would bring program expenditures to \$50,000 per year, and would provide an additional four (4) caches for distribution each fiscal year.

This \$15,000 increase in funding allocations would be recurring in future fiscal years.

BACKGROUND

The DFSC may make recommendations to the City Manager and Council regarding how Measure GG proceeds should be spent. The Fire Department provides budget presentations to the DFSC on a semi-annual basis in September and February to keep the Commission informed of the Measure GG expenditures. On September 11, 2012 and October 2, 2012, the DFSC made a recommendation to Council for funding additional disaster preparedness programs. Council made additional recommendations on October 2, 2012, and instructed staff to report back in January 2013.

In November 2008, Measure GG was passed to enhance emergency response and preparedness by eliminating rotating fire station closures; provide advanced life support on every fire company and a training officer for emergency medical services; hire staff to provide CERT training and other preparedness efforts; fund neighborhood emergency equipment caches; acquiring and maintaining equipment to enhance emergency preparedness, including equipment necessary to allow compatible radio communications throughout the City and with outside public safety agencies, and reserving tax proceeds as necessary to fund such acquisition.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Refer recommendations from Council and the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission to the FY 2014 and FY 2015 Budget Process.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Estimated costs to implement all programs described could total \$645,405 per year for FY14 and FY15:

Estimated Cost to Implement Programs Described Above

Program	FY14	FY15
Health Services Program Specialist	\$141,189	\$141,189
Emergency Services Coordinator	\$155,216	\$155,216
Disaster Readiness Classes	\$70,000	\$70,000
Automatic Gas Shutoff Valve Program	\$25,000	\$25,000*
Roll-Off Dumpster Program	\$25,000	\$25,000*
Community Outreach Efforts	\$64,000	\$64,000
Establish Fund Balance	\$150,000	\$150,000
Disaster Cache Allocation Increase	\$15,000	\$15,000
Totals	\$645,405	\$645,405*

*Programs would be piloted in FY14 and would be continued in FY15 if measured to be effective.

Since the introduction of Measure GG, staff has seen a steady increase in fire department overtime levels. Overtime expenditures were relatively high in 2011, and increased 51% in the first half of FY12 when compared to the first half of FY11. Overtime expenditure increases can be attributed to vacancies and extended leaves, including sick leave, military leave, worker’s compensation, parental leave and medical leave.

Any change in funding for Fire Department overtime expenditures could have an impact on overall Measure GG expenditures. Staff will report back in February on the status of overtime expenditures for the current fiscal year, FY 2013, in order to provide more current projections for the budgeted overtime expenditures for FY 2014 and 2015.

CONTACT PERSON

Aaron Lee, Assistant Fire Chief, Fire Department 981-5502