



STAFF REPORT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

May 17, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Emily Sinkhorn, Director of Environmental Services

PREPARER: Brigitte Price, Administrative Specialist

DATE: May 09, 2023

TITLE: **Adopt Resolution No. 223-54 Approving an Application for Grant Funds from the California Coastal Commission’s LCP Local Assistance Grant Program for Conducting a Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment and Capital Improvement Project Adaptation Plan for Coastal Resiliency, and Authorize the City Manager to Execute All Applicable Documents.**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Council adopt Resolution No. 223-54 approving an application for grant funds from the California Coastal Commission’s Local Coastal Program (LCP) Local Assistance Grant Program for conducting a sea level rise vulnerability assessment and capital improvement project adaptation plan for coastal resiliency and authorize the City Manager to execute all applicable documents.

INTRODUCTION:

The Environmental Services Department requested grant funds to help fund coastal resiliency planning along Arcata’s shoreline, including a vulnerability assessment, hazard scenario planning, and development of an adaptation plan for capital improvement projects. The City Council originally approved submission of this LCP Rolling Grant on June 22, 2022. Following consultation with Coastal Commission staff, City staff refined the grant application and were encouraged to submit for a larger grant request.

BACKGROUND:

The California Coastal Commission’s LCP Local Assistance Grant Program offers rolling grant funding to support local government coastal resiliency efforts. Approximately \$31 million is available. The grant program is intended to provide assistance to local governments responsible for developing and amending LCPs. Funds may be used for projects that are designed to assist local governments in assessing impacts and planning for coastal resiliency, including adapting to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise, and which contain an LCP planning component. The Environmental Services Department submitted a grant application and was approved for funding on May 2, 2023.

DISCUSSION:

The Environmental Services Department originally planned to request the maximum grant award amount of \$100,000 and submitted Resolution No. 212-74 to the Council on June 22, 2022, which the Council passed and adopted at that meeting. Since that time, City staff received an update from the Coastal Commission that the maximum grant request was increased to \$500,000. City staff took this opportunity to revise the application and submit for a grant request of \$178,000. The City received notification from the Coastal Commission on May 2, 2023 that our application was approved for funding and a new resolution was requested, approving acceptance of the \$178,000 in grant funds from the Coastal Commission. The project will help the City to better understand vulnerabilities to sea level rise and flooding along Arcata's shoreline and develop adaptation strategies that reduce or accommodate the flooding and erosion associated with sea level rise. The planned study will involve more detailed hydraulic modeling than has previously been conducted for the Arcata shoreline, considering sea level rise, as well as the compounding effects of potential wave action, rainfall, and stormwater flows. The study area will be between McDaniel Slough to Washington Gulch (Brainard Slough). The project will include the following tasks: 1) Develop hydraulic model of the study area, 2) Conduct coastal exposures and vulnerability assessment considering potential flooding from tidal still water, wave action and rainfall, 3) Develop an adaptation plan for capital improvement projects, and 4) update the City's LCP. The adaptation strategies will consider both the location of assets as well as the condition, age, and proximity to other natural and built landscapes at risk to determine if there are opportunities for multi-benefit strategies that address both climate adaptation as well as long term capital planning.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

This action is consistent with the City's Sea Level Rise Chapter of the draft Local Coastal Element and is listed as a Council Priority Project for 2022/2023 under 8.f. Climate Change and Climate Adaptation – Continue sea level rise adaptation planning and implementation strategies including research, analysis, and project implementation and strategic property acquisition to support long term climate change adaptation.

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REVIEW:

The Wetlands and Creeks Committee and Planning Commission have expressed support for sea level rise adaptation planning.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA):

This grant proposal is for a planning-level study only and exempt from CEQA, as it does not meet the definition of a project.

BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:

The grant has been approved for \$178,000. These funds (both revenue and expenses) will be added to the 2023/2024 budget once a grant agreement is executed.

ATTACHMENTS:

A. Resolution No. 223-54 LCP Grant--Sea Level Rise (PDF)