



**DATE:** October 1, 2019

**CATEGORY:** Consent

**DEPT.:** City Manager's Office

**TITLE:** **Grant Agreement for Santa Clara County Funding for City Participation in Cool Block Program**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Authorize the City Manager or his designee to enter into an agreement with the County of Santa Clara to receive funding in the amount of \$125,000 over three years to support sustainability and other engagement efforts through the City's participation in the Cool Block Program.

### **BACKGROUND**

Mountain View has a long-standing commitment to environmental sustainability, including comprehensive planning and a wide range of sustainability programs. Staff engages in a variety of public outreach efforts to raise awareness about climate change and other environmental challenges and to encourage participation in City initiatives that seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve other sustainability goals.

Cool Block, a nonprofit initiative of the Empowerment Institute, has been implemented in a few cities across California, including the City of Palo Alto. The Cool Block program helps create and support neighborhood block-based teams of residents who take actions to reduce their carbon footprint, increase their emergency preparedness, and strengthen their connection to neighbors.

City staff has identified the Cool Block program as one of several promising methods to effectively engage the community, and the Environmental Sustainability Task Force 2 report included a recommendation that Mountain View participate in Cool Block. The County of Santa Clara has committed funding to support implementation of the Cool Block Program in Mountain View through a three-year grant totaling \$125,000. The City is required to provide matching funds in this same amount to support a Mountain View Cool Block program over the next three years.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Cool Block program recruits block leaders and provides training, coaching, and other resources that help these block leaders reach out to their neighbors and create block-based teams. The teams meet over a four- to six-month period to engage in neighbor-led discussions, using facilitation scripts and information provided by Cool Block and the City to learn about different sustainability, emergency preparedness, and community building actions that residents can take. Action at both the household and team level is encouraged and enabled through peer support and easy access to information about City and regional programs. In addition, Cool Block provides a web-based platform and smart device app to help residents plan and track the results of their actions.

The Cool Block model begins with a pilot to recruit 25 blocks, initially with the goal of expanding over time to engage 25 percent of residential blocks. The objectives for each block are to: reduce carbon emissions 25 percent per participating household; achieve basic emergency preparedness in each participating household (working in coordination with the City's Office of Emergency Services); and implement at least three block-based initiatives to promote neighborhood wellbeing.

Cool Block provides an opportunity for the City to leverage existing outreach efforts and support the success of a wide range of City programs that seek to change community behavior in areas such as zero waste, water conservation, carbon-free energy upgrades, vehicle electrification, emergency preparedness, etc. Accordingly, staff has included Cool Block in the proposed Sustainability Action Plan-4 (SAP-4), along with the City's matching funding, as one of the outreach initiatives the City will undertake over the next three years.

Total County and City funding for Cool Block would be \$50,000 in the current fiscal year and \$100,000 per year for the next two fiscal years. These moneys would be used to fund part-time staff support, materials, neighborhood meetings, and other program expenses. With the support of the Council Sustainability Committee, which reviewed the Plan on September 16, 2019, SAP-4 is scheduled for Council consideration on October 22, 2019.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Santa Clara County has approved \$125,000 in total funding for Cool Block in Mountain View, to be disbursed to the City in the amount of \$25,000 in Fiscal Year 2019-20, \$50,000 in Fiscal Year 2020-21, and \$50,000 in Fiscal Year 2021-22. The County requires

matching funds from the City and these amounts are allocated in the proposed SAP-4. Council has committed \$7.5 million in funding for this and other SAP-4 actions at a Study Session on April 30, 2019 and adopted this amount as CIP 20-99 as part of the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Capital Improvement Program budget.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. Do not approve the grant agreement.
2. Provide other direction.

**PUBLIC NOTICING**

Santa Clara County, Cool Block, members of Environmental Sustainability Task Force 2, agenda posting.

Prepared by:

Audrey Seymour Ramberg  
Assistant City Manager/  
Chief Operating Officer

ASR/5/CAM  
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