



Dear Mayor and Council Members:

On behalf of City Manager Ed Shikada, please find below the staff responses to questions made by Councilmember Tanaka and Councilmember Cormack regarding the [Monday, October 18 Council Meeting](#) consent agenda items:

Item 6, Review and Approve a Fire Department Ambulance Subscription Program: 1) Adopt Ordinance to Establish Program and Fees, and 2) Approval of a Budget Amendment in the General Fund

Item 7, Approval of Facility Interior Finishes Replacement Purchase as Approved in the CIF with Pivot Interiors in the Amount of \$349,545 Project PF-02022

Item 10, Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 Reappropriation Requests to be Carried Forward into Fiscal Year 2022 and Budget Amendments in Various Funds

Item 11, Approval of Contract Number C21181420 with West Coast Arborists, Inc. for a Total Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$3,765,380 Over a Three-Year Term for Tree Pruning and Removal Services

Staff responses are below:

Item 6, Review and Approve a Fire Department Ambulance Subscription Program: 1) Adopt Ordinance to Establish Program and Fees, and 2) Approval of a Budget Amendment in the General Fund

- 1. What metrics will the fire department use to measure success for this program (e.g., customer satisfaction scores, ratio of revenue received to revenue lost, renewal rates) and when will its success be evaluated?**

Answer: The purpose of the program is to provide peace of mind to participants knowing that there will be no out-of-pocket costs if they are transported to the hospital in the event of a medical emergency. The Fire Department will track the number of registrations, the number of participants transported each year, and how much has been waived in co-pays. The Department currently contracts with a vendor that collects feedback surveys from all our transport patients. We expect subscription participants to express their experiences with the program in these surveys.

This program will help generate revenue that supports the ambulance and emergency medical services provided to the community. To measure the program's financial sustainability, the Department will track revenue received, administrative costs, enrollment numbers, and the total loss from waivers granted to assess the net profit of the program each year.

High-level emergency medical services will be provided to all those experiencing emergencies, whether subscribers or not.

Item 7, Approval of Facility Interior Finishes Replacement Purchase as Approved in the CIF with Pivot Interiors in the Amount of \$349,545 Project PF-02022

1. **Will the new water heater (page 45) be electric?**

Answer: Staff has confirmed the current water heater at Elwell is electric. Since there is not much use of hot water at Elwell, the new electric water heater will be downsized to 50 gallons to reduce cost and electricity.

Item 10, Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 Reappropriation Requests to be Carried Forward into Fiscal Year 2022 and Budget Amendments in Various Funds

1. **Did staff identify any process improvements for the capital projects where more funding was spent than was recommended for reappropriation (page 151)?**

Answer: Overall, the total budget for these capital projects, over the life of the projects, have remained within the amounts presented to Council. Estimated reappropriations for capital projects are reviewed three times annually, with the third and final adjustment based on what actually occurred by June 30 of any given year. Staff in May of every year do their best in estimating which contracts will be completed by June 30 while in active procurements however, responses to procurement solicitations, timing for contract negotiation, and aging contracts for Council review do not always go as planned therefore causing these true-up reallocations. When the funding is not aligned with the appropriate fiscal year, sometimes a delay in award of contract may occur, therefore staff typically favor proactively reappropriating funding to not create administrative barriers to meeting project timelines. These reappropriations do not represent projects being over budget.

2. **As we transition out of the Covid crisis, does staff have a plan in place to encourage eligible employees to use the Management Training Program benefits for their professional development?**

Answer: Human Resources does have a citywide training plan that provides an array of training and encourages professional development. Training and professional development has continued throughout the pandemic. As we emerge from the pandemic, there will be increased focus on promoting the training program benefits. However, with reduced resources, staff is finding it increasingly difficult to find the time to dedicate and engage in these available programs as they focus on maintaining the day-to-day operations and priority projects.

Item 11, Approval of Contract Number C21181420 with West Coast Arborists, Inc. for a Total Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$3,765,380 Over a Three-Year Term for Tree Pruning and Removal Services

1. **What are possible disruptions to public life, especially to road traffic, that could arise from the undertaking of tree maintenance services by West Coast Arborists, Inc.? How does the City plan to deal with such disruptions?**

Answer: Tree trimming for regular maintenance of public trees has been ongoing for many years with minimal impact to public life. The process does not require road closures or traffic control unless work on an arterial road requires use of a traffic lane for safe operations. Crews are able to trim multiple trees each day so the work moves steadily through a neighborhood, rarely impacting the same block more than one day at a time. Special circumstances such as

trimming University Ave or downtown trees is often scheduled for weekends or off-hours and is publicized in advance through regular city channels.

2. **Which task that West Coast Arborists, Inc. would be carrying out as part of tree pruning and removal services has the most significant resource cost? Which has the smallest price tag attached to it?**

Answer: The highest cost item per unit in the contract is tree removal for trees 31" or larger at \$2,900 each. This item only accounts for 3.3% of the total contract amount. The lowest cost item per unit in the contract is program pruning (routine) for trees 4" to 10" DBH at \$100 each. This item accounts for 7.3% of the total contract. The work item with the largest portion of contract dollars is program pruning (routine) for trees 11" to 20" DBH at 18.2% of total contract dollars.

3. **What characteristics of West Coast Arborists, Inc., aside from their being the lowest responsible bidder, was the reason for their initial selection? To what extent did their prior work for the City play a role in their selection?**

Answer: The California Public Contract Code requires that the contract be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. The bid review process first identifies the lowest bid and includes a review of the bid documents, including bid tabulations, insurance requirements, and Department of Industrial Relations registration, to verify that the bid is responsive. If the low bid is determined to be responsive, staff verifies the status of the contractor's license and previous work history to determine that the contractor is also a responsible bidder.

4. **In what ways are the details of the tree removal and pruning project being communicated to the public? Are there active outreach efforts underway? If not, why is this the case?**

Answer: The details regarding ongoing work by the tree trimming contractor are regularly shared on Nextdoor and Facebook when a new pruning area is started. Included in the postings are the neighborhoods included and approximate timeline for the area pruning to be completed.

Thank you,
Joanna



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Joanna Tran

Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Office of the City Manager

(650) 329-2105 | joanna.tran@cityofpaloalto.org

www.cityofpaloalto.org

