



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 16-5086

Agenda Item Number: 18.

Agenda Date: 11/3/2016

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Fire

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Charles N. Hood

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-Wide

SUBJECT:

Agreement to Perform Services on Public Lands with Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS)

SUMMARY:

Ordinance authorizing agreements with the Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) to provide state resources to mitigate wildfire threats to the City. TFS will also provide free wildfire training for SAFD firefighters.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Wildfire threats are increasing in urban areas, often repeatedly, putting more homes, lives, infrastructure, and other resources at risk. More than 15,000 wildfires burned in the continental United States from 2000 to 2014. During these years, 127 urban areas (cities with more than 75,000 residents) were threatened by major wildfires (fires greater than 5 square miles in area) that burned within 10 miles of the city limits. San Antonio is particularly vulnerable to wildfire because of its extensive undeveloped land within city boundaries and frequent drought conditions.

TFS approved the City's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) on July 27, 2016. In this plan, there are more than 600 City parks and neighborhoods identified within City limits that are at some level of threat from a wildfire. Upon approval of this ordinance, TFS will coordinate with San Antonio Office of Emergency Management (SAOEM) to develop fuel reduction projects to mitigate the wildfire risk to our community.

Wildfires increasingly are expensive and dangerous, burning homes, and consuming agency budgets. Attempts to mitigate wildfire risk, such as voluntary landowner education and fuels reduction, while important, alone are

insufficient for the magnitude of the growing wildfire danger, which is exacerbated by a warming climate and continued home building. This Agreement will help offset the City's cost in preparing for and responding to a wildfire. In addition, area firefighters will have the opportunity to train with TFS while working on a fuel reduction project.

ISSUE:

The City does not have an agreement with TFS for wildfire support and therefore has limited or no access to state grant funding or resources to assist with wildfire prevention and training.

ALTERNATIVES:

The alternative is to increase the number of City firefighters who are trained to fight wildfires.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate fiscal impact to the General Fund; however, mitigation of wildfire threats in our City could reduce the financial impact from future wildfire incidents.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance and authorizes the San Antonio Fire Chief to enter into agreements with the Texas A&M Forest Service to perform wildfire mitigation, training, and related activities on public lands in San Antonio.