



AGENCY: City Council
MEETING DATE: May 13, 2024
DEPARTMENT: Community Development
PRESENTED BY: L. Peterson
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AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TITLE:

RECEIVE REPORT AND CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARING FOR DISCLOSURE OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CLOSEOUT OF ACTIVITIES FUNDED BY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) 20-CDBG-12043

ISSUE:

The expenditure period for the City's 2020 Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) award 20-CDBG-12043 ended on April 19, 2024. Funds in the amount of \$437,146.07 have been expended, funds in the amount of \$10,602.93 will be disencumbered, and the activity is complete. Per CDBG requirements, a public hearing must be conducted before the governing body to notify the public of accomplishments funded by the grant. The 2020-CDBG grant was awarded to fund a Code Enforcement program activity and General Administration. Following is a description of accomplishments resulting from the funded activities.

ANALYSIS:

In 2020, the City applied for funding for a Public Services activity from the Competitive 2020 CDBG program for a Code Enforcement Program and General Administration and was awarded \$447,749.00, including \$216,749.00 in grant funds and \$231,000.00 in Program Income in 2021. Under the 2020 CDBG funding year, a Code Enforcement program is an eligible CDBG activity and meets CDBG's low-moderate income area (LMA) National Objective.

This Code Enforcement program funded staff time for code enforcement and related activities, training, supplies, and equipment for the Code Enforcement Officers and general administration of the CDBG program. The intent of the grant was to fund the strategic development and implementation of a Code Enforcement program to benefit the predominantly low-moderate income community with an emphasis on proactive inspections regarding rental housing. Prior to the grant award, Code Enforcement was handled within the Community Development Department, without any dedicated staff person. The grant funds allowed the City to transition an Assistant Planner to a Code Enforcement Officer. In 2022, the Code Enforcement program was moved from Community Development to the Police Department, and in 2023, an additional Code Enforcement Officer was hired. At this time, the grant scope of work was revised to include targeting blight and deterioration that can be detected and accessed without entering residences, hotels and motels that serve long-term tenants (over 30 days), and commercial structures that are located in primarily residential areas or that include residential units.

The program was active for a three-year period from April 20, 2021 through April 19, 2024. Throughout the grant period, funds in the amount of \$335,684.28 were expended on staff

AGENDA ITEM NO.

time in support of program activities; \$72,169.79 were expended on training, supplies, and equipment; and \$29,292.00 were expended on general administration of the CDBG program. Funds in the amount of \$10,602.93 were unspent and will be disencumbered.

Throughout the term of the grant, Code Enforcement has made a significant impact on the quality of life and beauty of the Fort Bragg Community. Code Enforcement activity in the City increased by 207% compared to the three years prior to the grant. The closure rate for cases increased from 29.6% to 54.6%; with the addition of the second Code Enforcement Officer in 2023, all outstanding cases from 2021 and 2022 were also closed. Along with improving code enforcement activity, Code Enforcement also ensured that Code Enforcement protocols and policies were in line with state and federal requirements by updating templates, code enforcement municipal code, judicial process and administrative regulations. Code Enforcement also dedicated themselves to continuous professional development. Both Officers obtained the Certified Code Enforcement Officer certification through the California Association of Code Enforcement Officers. One Officer also achieved the necessary certifications in building, plumbing, and electrical to become a Certified Building Inspector, and became a Certified Storm water Inspector.

To spotlight recent achievements from the last year, Code Enforcement has tackled longstanding issues in both residential and commercial zones. In our commercial downtown district, Code Enforcement prompted a property owner with a large, broken shop window to get the glass replaced and remove the plywood covering, thus improving the beauty of a street that attracts many tourists. In a residential neighborhood, a particular property had continuous complaints over several years of criminal/drug activity, visual blight, and unsafe conditions. There was 30 cubic yards of trash in the yard and dilapidated sheds where criminals were illegally modifying the structures in a way that could have been dangerous for the entire neighborhood. Code Enforcement worked with the property owner to gradually clean up the trash, and remove the ability for criminal activity to take place. Finally, Code Enforcement assisted a mother and her ten-month-old baby who were unable to convince the apartment property management to deal with a seriously dangerous mold issue in their unit. Code Enforcement motivated the property management to move the mother and child to another unit as they remediated the mold issue.

City staff requested an extension of the grant in 2023, when expense projections indicated less than full grant expenditure and the 2023 CDBG Notice of Funding (NOFA) was delayed, but the request was denied by HCD. At the present time, Code Enforcement is not allowed as a standalone activity under the CDBG program, meaning that the City cannot submit a Public Services application for a Code Enforcement program under the upcoming 2024 CDBG NOFA or as a Program Income-only application. In order to apply for Code Enforcement funds under the upcoming CDBG NOFA, the City may apply for a Housing Program application including Housing Rehabilitation and Code Enforcement. The intent of this requirement is to ensure that there is funding available to bring low-moderate income housing up to code when code compliance issues are found. Concurrent rehabilitation funding and Code Enforcement funding could support the proactive, residential-focused code enforcement vision from the original application.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

No specific action is required of Council. The purpose of this item is to provide a report and

conduct a required Public Hearing to disclose accomplishments and closeout of activities funded by CDBG #20-CDBG-12043.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

None.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The 2020 grant project was implemented with CDBG grant funds. The 2020 grant provided General Administration funding that was adequate to cover administrative costs; any on-going administrative tasks after grant close out may be covered by the City's CDBG grant administration funds from any active CDBG award. CDBG funding is intended to assist the low- and moderate-income population; as over 50% of the population within City limits are considered low- and moderate- income as per CDBG income limits, this meets the low-moderate area National Objective.

CONSISTENCY:

The State CDBG mission is to improve the lives of low- and moderate-income residents through the creation and expansion of community and economic development opportunities, which supports livable communities for all residents. This mission is consistent with Fort Bragg City Council Priority Areas, established in City Council's April 2019 Goal Setting process.

IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:

The expenditure deadline for the 2020 grant was April 19, 2024. Final Funds Requests for the grant have been submitted to HCD. Grant closeout reports, due to CDBG within 30 days of contract expiration, will be submitted to HCD after the closeout public hearing is held. The City's Agreement with CDBG expired on April 19, 2024. It is unclear when CDBG will authorize closeout of the City's contract with the state because final closeout is subject to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) monitoring and review of State CDBG funding allocations.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Public Hearing Notice – English
2. Public Hearing Notice – Spanish

NOTIFICATION:

1. CDBG "Notify Me" Subscribers