



CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING AUTHORITY AND
SUCCESSOR AGENCY TO THE EL CAJON
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Council Chamber
200 Civic Center Way
El Cajon, CA 92020

Joint Special Meeting Agenda

DECEMBER 22, 2020 - 10:00 a.m.

Please note that, pursuant to the State of California Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, and in the interest of the public health and safety, members of the City Council and Staff may attend the meeting telephonically.

Further, Orders from the San Diego County Health Officer prevent persons other than City officials and essential employees to be physically present.

In accordance with the Executive Order, and in compliance with the County Health Officer's Orders, the public may view the meeting on the City's website. Please visit <https://www.cityofelcajon.us/videostreaming> for more details.

To submit comments on an item on this agenda, or a Public Comment, please visit the City's website at <https://www.cityofelcajon.us/videostreaming>. Comments will be accepted up to the conclusion or the vote of each item. Comments will be limited to 300 words and will be entered into the official Council Meeting Record. The City Council will endeavor to include all comments prior to taking action.

If you find that you are unable to submit a comment through the website, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (619) 441-1763, not later than 9:30 a.m. prior to the start of the City Council Meeting.

Should technical difficulties arise, they will be resolved as soon as possible.

Bill Wells, Mayor
Gary Kendrick, Mayor Pro Tempore
Steve Goble, Councilmember
Michelle Metschel, Councilmember
Phil Ortiz, Councilmember

Graham Mitchell, City Manager
Vince DiMaggio, Assistant City Manager
Morgan Foley, City Attorney
Angela Cortez, City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Bill Wells

ROLL CALL: City Clerk Angela Cortez

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

1. Emergency Allocation of Community Development Block Grant - CARES Act Funds

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council considers allocating CDBG-CV3 funds to implement a pilot program to provide air filtration devices to income-eligible residents to slow the spread of COVID-19 infection in the City of El Cajon.

ADJOURNMENT: The Adjourned Regular Joint Special Meeting of the El Cajon City Council/ El Cajon Housing Authority/Successor Agency to the El Cajon Redevelopment Agency held this 22nd day of December 2020, is adjourned to Tuesday, January 12, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.



City Council Agenda Report

Agenda Item 1.

DATE: 12/22/2020
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
FROM: Graham Mitchell, City Manager
SUBJECT: Emergency Allocation of Community Development Block Grant - CARES Act Funds

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council considers allocating CDBG-CV3 funds to implement a pilot program to provide air filtration devices to income-eligible residents to slow the spread of COVID-19 infection in the City of El Cajon.

BACKGROUND:

The City has received one round of Community Development Block Grant funds through the CARES Act ("CDBG-CV"). These funds may only be used to support programs that directly support income eligible individuals within the City. The City has allocated the first round of funds (\$802,656), with approximately \$200,000 remaining. Programs supported by the first round of funding include rental assistance, utility assistance, motel voucher, and emergency homeless shelter programs. These programs are administered through third parties, including CSA San Diego, East County Transitional Living Center, Home Start, and Interfaith Shelter Network.

Earlier this year, the City Council received notification that the City would be receiving additional funds (referred to as CDBG-CV3 funds). On October 13, 2020, City Council gave preliminary direction to allocate a portion of the CV3 funds to continue the motel voucher and rental/mortgage assistance programs once the first round of funds is spent.

The remaining unallocated CDBG-CV3 funds (\$809,000) would be considered by the City Council at a later date. To allocate these funds, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), requires a noticed public hearing, public review and comment period, and an amendment to the City's Action Plan.

This agenda item does not meet the HUD noticing requirements because there was not sufficient time for noticing. However, a noticed public hearing can be scheduled for January 12, 2021. In the meantime, staff seeks City Council direction on whether to begin implementing a pilot program aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19 infection. It should be noted, that if the City Council wishes to implement the program, it cannot start until after the public hearing in January.

Pilot Program to Consider

The City of El Cajon, in comparison with the other cities in San Diego County, has one of the highest number of COVID-19 cases per 100,000. As of December 14th, El Cajon has 5,108 cases per 100,000. The County average is 3,324 cases per 100,000. Of the incorporated cities, El Cajon's rate is the highest, followed closely by National City. Only the unincorporated areas of Spring Valley and Lakeside are higher than El Cajon's rate.

In observing COVID-19 infection patterns, it appears that high concentrations of infection are in areas of the County with higher rates of poverty and higher housing densities. Logically, this makes sense, since many working in lower paying jobs do not have the ability to telework. Hence, there is a higher rate of exposure. There is also evidence that it is common for multiple families to live in a single housing unit, especially in more impoverished census tracts. Staff believes that this leads to higher rates of COVID-19 exposure. In fact, the County reports that since June 5, 2020, 34 percent of those contracting COVID-19 have had close contact with someone in their household that also tested positive.

Because many of the City's residents that currently have COVID-19 have no realistic way to isolate themselves, the risk of exposure to other household members is high. The CDC recommends social distancing, facial coverings, and sanitation as key strategies to slow the spread of COVID-19. However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) suggests that home air filtration systems can help in the overall air quality of a home, including the removal of particles that may contain viruses.

The EPA's website entitled "Air Cleaners, HVAC Filters, and Coronavirus (COVID-19)," states:

Air cleaning and filtration can help reduce airborne contaminants, including particles containing viruses. Portable air cleaners (also known as air purifiers) may be particularly helpful when additional ventilation with outdoor air is not possible without compromising indoor comfort (temperature or humidity), or when outdoor air pollution is high.

The EPA website goes on to state:

When used properly, air cleaners and HVAC filters can help reduce airborne contaminants including viruses in a building or small space. By itself, air cleaning or filtration is not enough to protect people from exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. When used along with other best practices recommended by CDC and others, filtration can be part of a plan to reduce the potential for airborne transmission of COVID-19 indoors.

If the City Council wishes to implement a pilot Air Filtration System program for income-eligible residents, staff recommends allocating up to \$50,000. This would provide approximately 75 to 95 systems, plus \$7,500 in administrative costs. Staff also suggests that the City rely on one of its current service providers to administer the program (staff recommends Home Start).

Program and Policy Considerations

In thinking about the implementation of this program, staff has identified several program requirements, dictated by HUD guidelines or best practices. These program considerations include:

1. The project must only serve low-income households in El Cajon.
2. The organization or department conducting the public service project must be experienced with CDBG regulations and compliance requirements of the grant. A staffing plan for implementation and administration of program must be in place. Multiple languages with information is highly encouraged.
3. Intake forms and procedures for determining income status must be in place, and data must be collected on race/ethnicity, household size, etc.
4. The City should require some sort of release of liability and package of information about reducing the spread of infection.

Staff has also identified several issues in which it seeks City Council input. Feedback from the City Council will help staff develop the program and see its implementation. Based on direction from the City Council, staff believes it could establish a program to be implemented after a January 12, 2021 public hearing, assuming filtration systems can be procured by then.

1. Should the program focus on families that have a current COVID-19 case in the home or be used as a preventative program (i.e. distributed to households prior to a COVID-19 case)?
2. Should the City consider a “one-size-fits-all” filter (which will be easier from a purchasing perspective) or attempt to purchase several types of filters to meet different housing space needs?
3. Should the City purchase the filtration systems, so they are available, but with the recognition that the City may have systems it cannot use or return?
4. Should the City strive to collect data to measure the effectiveness of the program?
5. Should the program also be limited to those living in apartments or by a square footage (perhaps 1,000 square feet)?

Staff seeks to know whether it is the City Council’s direction to implement a pilot program as described in the staff report and provide feedback on the policy considerations identified above. If there is direction to implement a program, staff will schedule a public hearing on January 12, 2021, prior to expending funds.

Prepared By: Graham Mitchell, City Manager

Reviewed By: N/A

Approved By: Graham Mitchell, City Manager
