



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: DECEMBER 8, 2015
FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL
SUBJECT: RIVERSIDE ADOPT-A-DRAIN PROGRAM

ISSUE:

The issue for City Council consideration is the development and implementation of an Adopt-a-Drain Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Approve and authorize an Adopt-a-Drain Program (Program) allowing members of the community to adopt storm drains for the purposes of assisting in ongoing storm preparedness, public awareness, and pollution prevention efforts; and
2. Authorize Program expenditures not to exceed \$20,000 per year for the period of December 1, 2015 to June 30, 2019, for a total program cost of \$100,000.

BACKGROUND:

The Public Works Department inspects and maintains over 4,800 storm drains which collect and convey storm flows away from the City. Storm drain maintenance is integral to the effective operation of the system and necessary to prevent flooding and property damage. In addition to flood protection, routine maintenance is required under the City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System "storm water" Permit. Clean storm drains help prevent pollution of local waterways and the Santa Ana River.

In most cities, storm drain upkeep is left solely unto City staff. Some cities however provide an opportunity through which individuals, neighborhood groups, civic organizations, and businesses can volunteer and assist.

Through their Adopt-a-Drain Programs, the Cities of Oakland, California and Burlington, Vermont allow volunteers to adopt storm drains and provide basic maintenance services to support ongoing City efforts. Adopters agree to clean trash and debris from the drain opening and ten feet of curb and gutter on either side; providing critical help to those city's maintenance efforts.

Adopt-a-Drain Oakland was created by the City of Oakland in partnership with Open Oakland; a

group of volunteer computer programmers. They developed open source software through which volunteers can, via a map-based interface, view the real time availability of city storm drains and adopt them. Because the software is open source it can be adapted freely by other municipalities. Burlington, as an example, appropriated much of Oakland's materials for their program. Cities including San Francisco, South San Francisco, and Los Altos are now looking to implement Adopt-a-Drain programs as well.

In its November 9, 2015 El Niño/Southern Oscillation Status Report, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration affirmed El Niño conditions remain in place, and that "there is an approximately 95% chance that El Niño will continue through Northern Hemisphere winter 2015-16, gradually weakening through spring 2016." Forecasts suggest the 2015-16 El Niño event could be as strong and impactful as those in 1997-98 and 1982-83.

In support of ongoing storm preparedness, public engagement and awareness, and pollution prevention activities, the Public Works Department recommends creation of a Riverside Adopt-a-Drain Program (Program). Empowering citizens, businesses, and other interested parties to help would not only raise awareness, but allow City resources to be directed to other important tasks in the days before and during storm events.

Through the Program, volunteers would be eligible to receive supplies to maintain their adopted drain(s). Staff would procure and maintain small supply kits available for pickup at the Corporation Yard, consisting of safety vests, gloves, waste bags, rakes, brooms, shovels, and trash pickers. The estimated, per volunteer, one time equipment cost is approximately \$50-\$100 depending on amount of supplies needed. Adopters would agree to periodically check on their drains, keep the drain opening clear of leaves and other debris, inform Public Works on the amount of debris removed, and report any perceived deficiencies or illegal dumping to the 311 call center.

In support of this recommendation, Innovation and Technology department staff adapted Oakland's open source software to Riverside. The attached screenshot of the test application shows the interface through which Riverside volunteers would participate in the program.

The Public Works Department anticipates a Program start sometime in late autumn or early winter and in conjunction with other El Niño preparation efforts. The Adopt-a-Drain website would concurrently "go live" with marketing efforts following soon after. Staff is currently evaluating various marketing strategies including a press release, social media outreach, utility bill inserts, and a segment on Riverside Government Television.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no impact to the General Fund. Sufficient funds are available in the Public Works Department NPDES Storm Drain budget, Account No. 9725335 – 440301 to fund the program through June 30, 2016. Future years' funding would be included in Public Works Department NPDES Storm Drain Fund budget.

Prepared by: Kris Martinez, Public Works Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Brent A. Mason, Finance Director/Treasurer
Approved by: Al Zelinka, FAICP, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachment: Screenshot – Riverside Adopt-a-Drain Test Website