



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

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TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: FEBRUARY 24, 2026

FROM: PUBLIC UTILITIES WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM (HMGP) APPLICATION FOR FIVE BACKUP GENERATORS AND AUTOMATIC TRANSFER SWITCHES AT CRITICAL WATER INFRASTRUCTURE SITES FOR A GRANT REQUEST AMOUNT OF \$2,829,300 WITH A 25% COST-SHARE MATCH OF \$943,100 (BUDGETED FUNDS)

ISSUE:

Authorization to submit a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) application to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) in the amount of \$2,829,300, with a 25% cost-share match of \$943,100, to support the design and construction of five backup generators and automatic transfer switches at four critical well sites and one critical booster station.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to submit the HMGP application to FEMA for an amount up to \$2,829,300, including a 25% cost share local match funding of \$943,100 and to accept any funding awarded under HMGP. Funding will support design and construction of five backup generators and automatic transfer switches at the five critical water infrastructure sites;
2. Upon receipt of the funding award, and with at least five affirmative votes, authorize the Chief Financial Officer, or designee, to record an increase in revenues and a corresponding supplemental appropriation in the amount of the actual award into appropriate accounts to be established by the Finance Department, including but not limited to the Water Fund Federal Capital Grants revenue account; and
3. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute all documents and instruments necessary in connection with the HMGP application, and to take all actions necessary or advisable to participate in, implement, and administer the HMGP Program, including making minor and non-substantive changes, corrections, and amendments, as needed.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

On January 12, 2026, the Board of Public Utilities, with six members present, voted to recommend that City Council authorize submittal of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application and associated recommendations. The vote was five ayes, with one board member abstaining and two board members absent.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

In early January 2025, the President declared a major disaster for the State of California under Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), FEMA-4856-DR-CA, in response to wildfires. This declaration makes federal programs such as the HMGP available statewide to support hazard-mitigation projects.

Due to the major disaster declaration, eligible jurisdictions in California, such as the City of Riverside, can apply for HMGP funds to implement mitigation measures that reduce the risk of natural hazards to lives, infrastructure, and property. This project is a strong candidate for funding because it will provide backup power to critical water infrastructure, including wells and a booster pump station, supporting service during emergencies such as earthquakes or other hazards that could cause power loss. The statewide availability of HMGP under this declaration allows this project to be considered for federal cost-share funding, helping the City proactively protect essential water services.

BACKGROUND:

Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) groundwater is sourced from the Bunker Hill, Rialto Colton, Riverside North and Riverside South groundwater basins. RPU's source of supply has been 100% groundwater since 2009 but it maintains emergency interconnects to imported water that can be utilized in the event of an emergency. Water Systems in Southern California face many challenges that could constitute an emergency, such as earthquakes, high winds, wildfires, and power outages.

Wells within the Riverside South basin are located within city limits and improve the resiliency of RPU's water supply by serving as a local source of potable and non-potable water to meet the City's needs. Four wells were selected based on their location as well as the water quality regulations, since they will feed the first PFAS Water Treatment Plant. While these wells are served by RPU/Electric, they are still subject to local outages due to wind, fire, earthquakes, etc. and need backup power to continue operation during potential power outages. Currently, the City has a few portable trailer-mounted generators to power its critical facilities during emergencies. These temporary generators require time and personnel to deploy, set up, refuel, secure and may not provide sufficient or timely backup power to provide enough potable water for firefighting or drinking water needs during a large-scale regional emergency.

In addition to its groundwater wells, the City also faces fire risks near several booster pump stations. The Gratton Pump Station is a vital piece of infrastructure that supplies water to a high-risk, fire-prone area. RPU supports firefighting operations by maintaining water system pressures necessary for effective fire suppression and emergency response. However, the Gratton station is vulnerable to power loss from equipment damage or a widespread grid outage. If that occurs,

the station would be unable to operate, limiting water for both residents and firefighters.

As part of RPU's effort to harden the water system against earthquakes, wildfires, and power outages, permanent emergency generators are being strategically added at critical facilities, including the City's first PFAS treatment plant and key distribution locations.

The proposed project will install five permanent backup generators with automatic transfer switches at four critical local wells and one booster station: Twin Springs Well, Moore Griffith Well, Brunton 1R Well, Garner B Well and Gratton Pump Station. These generators, ranging from 200 kW to 350 kW, will help keep local water sources running during emergencies. All equipment will be elevated above the 500-year floodplain and built to current safety standards. These upgrades will make the City of Riverside's water system more resilient, protecting public health during disasters and in the recovery period following these events.

DISCUSSION:

RPU requests City Council authorization to apply for and accept a federal Hazard Mitigation Grant. The grant would fund permanent backup generators and transfer switches at four key local wells and one booster station, with the grant covering 75% of the project cost and the City providing the required 25% local match. If awarded, funding is anticipated to be available in Fiscal year 2028. This funding approach reduces the financial impact to ratepayers while improving the City's water system resiliency.

Permanent generators at local wells are essential because a power outage, major earthquake or other disaster could disrupt the City's water supply. With permanent backup power at key sites, these local wells can continue providing safe drinking water even when other sources are cut off. Permanent systems also are faster to activate and more dependable than portable generators during an emergency.

Pursuing this grant reflects the City's commitment to preparedness, fiscal responsibility, and public safety and health. The project will strengthen Riverside's water system, support water service during emergencies, and help RPU maintain reliable, and cost-effective water delivery for all residents.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total fiscal impact of this action is an increase in revenues and expenditures of \$2,829,300 plus an additional \$943,100 in City matching funds. Sufficient funds are available to cover required matching contributions or non-reimbursable construction costs in Water Fund, Public Utilities Facility Rehabilitation Account 6230100 - 470803 and will be transferred to HMGP Grant – Generator Project account 6810243-440301. Funding information will be presented to the Board for approval prior to the start of construction and appropriately budgeted from the Water Utility Fund.

Upon City Council approval and execution of the funding agreement, a corresponding increase in revenue and expenditures will be recorded in the Water Fund, under accounts set up for the HMGP Generator Project. Specific revenue and expenditure accounts have been established by the Finance Department for the grant portion as shown below.

Fund	Program	Account	Amount
	<i>Revenue - Federal Capital Revenue Grant</i>		
	HMGP Grant – Generator Project - Grant	6810243-331300	\$2,829,300
	<i>Expenditures</i>		
Water Fund	HMGP Grant – Generator Project – Grant	6810243-440120	\$2,829,300
	HMGP Grant – Generator Project – RPU	6810243-440301	\$943,100
	Total Expenditures		\$3,772,400

Prepared by: Robin Glenney, Utilities Assistant General Manager/Water
 Approved by: David A. Garcia, Utilities General Manager
 Certified as to availability of funds: Julie Nemes, Interim Finance Director
 Approved by: Gilbert Hernandez, Interim Assistant City Manager
 Approved as to form: Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Attachment: Presentation