



REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

Approved by:

Department Director

Arnoldo Rodriguez, City Manager

Council Meeting of: February 6, 2019

Agenda Number: C-5

SUBJECT:

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A CHANGE OF THE NAME OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT REVIEW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE; and

REQUEST FOR DIRECTION ON THE ROLE FOR THIS COMMITTEE DURING THE 2019/2020 AND FUTURE CDBG FUNDING ALLOCATION CYCLES

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends City Council (Council) 1) rename the Review and Advisory Committee (RAC "Committee") to Block Grant Commission (BGC), 2) reject the RAC's proposal for the appointment of two City Council Members to serve once per year within the Commission, during the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocation process, and 3) provide guidance for the future role of the RAC.

SUMMARY: Since the implementation of the CDBG RAC in 2009, it has served in an advisory capacity making recommendations about the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) CDBG annual funding allocations. Given some concerns from city staff and residents about the use of the acronym RAC, a new name for the Committee is being proposed. In addition to the new name, current Committee Members are suggesting a new format and collaboration between the Committee and Council for upcoming funding cycles. Although the Committee members consider that the proposed format for collaboration with Council seems like it would be efficient and a more effective method for reviewing applications to make funding allocations, Staff does not recommend it. Staff also requests direction on the role of the RAC during this year's and future years' allocation processes.

DISCUSSION: Staff has been receiving feedback about the acronym that is used for the CDBG RAC over some time. A strong aversion to using the acronym RAC was expressed by some residents and City staff. This concern was presented to members of the RAC, and a decision was made to address the concern. During the April 5, 2018, August 16, 2018, October 29, 2018 RAC quarterly meetings, suggestions for a new name were discussed amongst the members. Consensus was achieved by the Committee during its January 14, 2019 quarterly meeting to propose the new name of, Block Grant Task Force (BGTF). Staff discussed the new acronym internally during a department head meeting, including with the Police Chief. It was determined during staff discussions that Task Force has a connotation to military or police operations and maneuvers; therefore, may not be suitable for a block grant committee. Instead it was

suggested that an alternative could be, Block Grant Commission or Committee, thereby using the acronym BGC. Staff recommends that Council address the public's and staff's concerns regarding the use of the acronym RAC and therefore adopt the staff recommended name of Block Grant Commission. In addition, staff is requesting direction from the Mayor and Council Members about the role of the RAC.

History of CDBG RAC

During the March 4, 2009 City Council meeting, a public hearing was held to approve, by a resolution, the implementation of an advisory committee to evaluate and make recommendations on the merits of the applications received for CDBG funding consideration under public services, administration, or capital projects/public improvements categories submitted by local non-profits agencies and City departments. To streamline the allocation process, and to provide specific funding recommendations, staff recommended the formation of a CDBG Review and Advisory Committee. Council concurred with this proposal and directed staff to develop a list of eligible nominees. Following the meeting, Department Heads approached their respective Vision Madera 2025 Action Plan Implementation Committees and selected volunteer nominees for the CDBG review and advisory committee. This resulted in the formation of the RAC as a five-member committee composed of one member of the City Council and one member from each of the four Vision Madera 2025 Action Plan Implementation Committees (A Well-Planned City, Good Jobs and Economic Opportunities, A Strong Community and Great Schools and A Safe, Healthy Environment).

The responsibilities established for the RAC, since its inception, has been to make recommendations for the use of CDBG funds and to ensure that the recommendations be consistent with the goals established by the City of Madera's Consolidated Plan and the Vision Madera 2025 Action Plan. This established a guide to determine funding eligible activities and for documenting compliance with important Federal requirements. In addition, this process aligns with the HUD's Guide to National Objectives and Eligible Activities, the City's CDBG Citizen Participation Plan and all other available sources (networking with staff from nearby cities also allocating CDBG funds). Valuable assistance is also incorporated by keeping abreast of changes with the assistance of the San Francisco HUD field office. The RAC ensures that funding decisions promote the aspirations of the Vision 2025 Action Plan and are consistent with HUD mandates. Staff assures the meetings and notices are conducted in accordance with the Brown Act.

During the December 17, 2014 City Council meeting, staff informed the Council that the pool of volunteers from the Vision Madera 2025 Action Plan Implementation Committees who were willing to serve on the RAC was not enough to fill the expected vacancies. This was based upon the receipt of notices from three of the four Vision Committee members that they no longer were able to serve on the RAC. Staff informed the Council that no other volunteers from these committees had offered to serve as replacements. Staff recommended amending the appointment criteria to provide for representatives nominated by the Mayor and each Council Member. This seven-member body would preserve the role of the RAC, while ensuring a wider selection of potential candidates. Such a change would also align the RAC with other community advisory bodies and the composition of the City Council.

CDBG RAC Proposal

Given a recent evaluation and reflection of the role of the RAC during the most recent CDBG allocation processes, the RAC membership consider that a change to the process may be necessary at this time. The goal in proposing their recommendation to Council is to reduce duplication of roles when vetting the applicants and ensure that Council has more insight and information about the applicants when approving

the allocations. The RAC membership feel that in recent allocation years, the time that they invested into evaluating and ranking applicants to make funding allocation recommendations for Council was not the best use of their time, since Council later desired to vet applicants as a governing body and make independent determinations for the allocations, not necessarily in line with the RAC's recommendations. Therefore, during the April 5, 2018, August 16, 2018, October 29, 2018 and January 14, 2019 quarterly meetings, RAC members held discussions to reach consensus about what the membership wished to recommend to Council. They derived at the following recommendation for the Committee's new role and structure for future annual allocations:

The RAC proposes that an Ad Hoc Committee be formed consisting of 2 City Council Members and the 7-member RAC, to serve at the beginning of the 2019/2020 allocation of CDBG funding process. The two Council Members would serve once a year during the allocation process. Staff expends a lot of effort to compile and distribute the application binders in a timely manner, coordinate with RAC members for an agreed upon meeting date and time, and the RAC undertakes a lot of work and effort to review the applications, interview applicants and provide funding recommendations outside of their normal business working hours. The RAC considers that with the two Council Members present and involved with the allocation process, the RAC and Council recommendations would be more likely upheld when the full Council reviews and approves final allocations for the 2019/2020 CDBG Action Plan. The City Attorney has advised against the addition of Council Members to the advisory committee because it places the Council Members in the advisory position which they have already delegated and then puts them in the capacity of being a decision maker utilizing those same recommendations to make a final allocation of grant funds. This creates potential incompatibility, especially in the instance in which the two bodies might be at odds in the decision-making process. Given the potential for this conflict, Staff recommends that Council reject RAC's proposal for the Ad Hoc Committee.

Ongoing Benefits for an Established Advisory Group

Early into the 2019/2020 Program Year, staff and the RAC plan to begin working with a consultant to carry out input sessions with the public, local State and County Departments, non-profits and Department Heads to compile a draft and, ultimately, a new Five-Year 2020/2024 CDBG Consolidated Plan. Council representation on the RAC during the new Five-Year 2020/2024 CDBG Consolidated Plan development would provide Council representatives with insight into the process and collaboration to eventually compile the new Plan. The proposal for the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee with 2 Council Representatives appointed for the term of the Council Members provides for consistency and overall continuity with the programs and projects funded in accordance with the goals and strategies identified in the new CDBG 2020/2024 Consolidated Plan and related Annual Action Plans.

There is a very important need to provide data and outcomes to HUD on an annual basis that supports programs and projects funded with CDBG consistent with the goals and strategies identified in its Consolidated Plans and reported to HUD through its Integrated Disbursement and Information System and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report available for a 15-day public review period after first submitted to the City Council and then submitted to HUD electronically after approval by the City Council following the 15-day public review period. Creating an opportunity for stronger collaboration by RAC, Staff and Council through the CDBG funding allocation process strengthens the City's ability to address community needs identified in the Consolidated Plans and ongoing Annual Action Plans.

What is Council's Direction?

Staff requests direction on what Council desires regarding the role of the CDBG Review Advisory Committee starting with the 2019/20 allocation cycle.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The RAC operates as a volunteer advisory committee and its members do not receive compensation for their services. As a result, the RAC composition and new name do not impact the General Fund.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE VISION MADERA 2025 PLAN: The CDBG program has the potential to advance an extensive number of the Vision Plan's objectives and the Committee performs a valuable role in the community input process.

ALTERNATIVES: Alternatives available for the Mayor and City Council to consider are as follows:

1. Reject the new name.
2. Use the word "Commission" or "Committee" instead of Task Force.
3. Discuss and propose a new name.
4. Refer the item back to staff to return with a resolution for the proposed new name.
5. Leave the name as is.
6. Discuss the appointment of two Council Members and provide the agreed upon direction to staff to return with a resolution at the next City Council meeting.
7. Reject the proposed two Council Member recommendation.
8. Disband the RAC.
9. Return to Mayor and Council presentations by applicants for the allocation of CDBG funds.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 19-____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL, OF THE CITY OF MADERA, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A CHANGE OF THE NAME OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT REVIEW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WHEREAS: During the March 4, 2009 City Council meeting, a public hearing was held to approve by a resolution the implementation of an advisory committee to make allocation recommendations regarding applications submitted for public services carried out by local non-profits and City-sponsored capital projects/public improvements funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds; and

WHEREAS: To streamline the allocation process, and to provide specific funding recommendations, staff recommended the formation of the CDBG Review and Advisory Committee (RAC); and

WHEREAS: Staff has been receiving feedback about the acronym that is used for the CDBG RAC over some time, and a strong aversion to using the acronym RAC was expressed by some residents and City staff; and

WHEREAS: During the April 5, 2018, August 16, 2018, October 29, 2018 RAC quarterly meetings, suggestions for the new name were discussed; and

WHEREAS: The new name, Block Grant Task Force (BGTF) was agreed upon during the January 14, 2019 CDBG RAC Quarterly meeting.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Madera, California, hereby finds, orders, and resolves as follows:

1. The above recitals are true and correct.
2. The name for the CDBG Review and Advisory Committee is hereby changed to Block Grant Commission.
3. The City Clerk and the Grants Administrator are authorized to effectuate the change.
4. This resolution is effective immediately upon adoption.