



URGENT ITEM AGENDA MATERIAL

Government Code Section 54954.2(b)
Rules of Procedure Chapter III.C.5

THIS ITEM IS NOT YET AGENDIZED AND MAY OR MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR THE AGENDA AS A LATE ITEM, SUBJECT TO THE CITY COUNCIL'S DISCRETION ACCORDING TO BROWN ACT RULES

Meeting Date: September 28, 2021

Item Description: Re-Establishing a COVID-19 Business Damage Mitigation Fund

This item is submitted pursuant to the provision checked below:

- Emergency Situation (54954.2(b)(1) - majority vote required)**
Determination by a majority vote of the legislative body that an emergency situation exists, as defined in Section 54956.5.
- Immediate Action Required (54954.2(b)(2) - two-thirds vote required)**
There is a need to take immediate action and the need for action came to the attention of the local agency subsequent to the agenda for this meeting being posted.

Once the item is added to the agenda (Consent or Action) it must be passed by the standard required vote threshold (majority, two-thirds, or 7/9).

Facts supporting the addition of the item to the agenda under Section 54954.2(b) and Chapter III.C.5 of the Rules of Procedure:

In June 2020, the City Council allocated \$25,000 for a COVID-19 Business Damage Mitigation Fund providing funds for repairs to local businesses occurring as a result of vandalism and other problematic behavior during this COVID-19 State of Emergency. The State of Emergency is still in effect, and the fund is currently depleted, however there are a number of businesses which have incurred damage recently which have requested funds. An additional \$50,000 is needed immediately to ensure this program can continue in order to support local businesses that have been impacted.

To: Members of the City Council
From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín (Author)
Subject: Re-Establishing a COVID-19 Business Damage Mitigation Fund

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to re-establish the COVID-19 Business Damage Mitigation Fund in an amount up to \$50,000 to provide one-time grants to small businesses who experience property damage due to vandalism and other problematic behavior during this COVID-19 local State of Emergency. Authorize the City Manager to appropriate funding for the Mitigation Fund from Berkeley Relief Fund donations received through the East Bay Community Foundation.

BACKGROUND

Last year, in response to the Shelter in Place order and damage incurred from businesses during the pandemic, the City of Berkeley launched the Business Damage Mitigation Fund to provide reimbursement to eligible businesses for repairs to their businesses who experienced property damage due to vandalism or other problematic behavior. This Mitigation Fund provided support to small businesses already struggling due to business closures and reduction in revenues. Presently the Fund is exhausted however there is still a significant need for assistance to support small businesses who experience damage.

During this COVID-19 emergency, City staff have received numerous complaints from local businesses regarding problematic and violent behavior, including assault of employees and property damage. As a result of increased criminal activity, the Berkeley Police Department have deployed overtime shifts in Telegraph and the Downtown to increase police patrols to respond more quickly to calls for service and to increase police presence to deter crime. While the deployment of the Downtown Task Force has provided additional presence and support for businesses, crime is still occurring. Businesses have specifically requested that the City establish a Damage Mitigation Fund to provide one-time funding for repairs to local businesses occurring as a result of vandalism and other problematic behavior during this COVID-19 State of Emergency.

This item reauthorizes the COVID-19 Business Damage Mitigation Fund to provide emergency funds to small businesses for out-of-pocket expenses due to damage incurred during the pandemic. Funds are available from donations through the Berkeley Relief Fund, and this item also authorizes the City Manager to capitalize the Mitigation Fund using Berkeley Relief Fund donations received through our fiscal agent, the East Bay Community Foundation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Up to \$50,000.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental impacts from the recommendation

CONTACT PERSON

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