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MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR &
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Brooke A. Levin
Director, OPW

SUBJECT: Gopher Control in Parks & Athletic
Fields

DATE: March 24, 2015

City Administrator

Date

Approval /s/ Donna Hom

3/24/15

INFORMATION

The purpose of this informational memo is to provide at the request of Council President Lynette Gibson McElhaney and the Oakland Parks and Recreation Coalition an update on the City's efforts to control gophers in parks and athletic fields. In the last few years, the gopher population has significantly increased, especially in a few West Oakland parks. Pocket gophers damage lawns and make fields unsafe due to the nature of the holes and tunnels that are made. As herbivores, pocket gophers will flock to areas that can provide the adequate tunneling room and food. Ideal locations for the gophers are areas that provide a number of underground roots (lawn areas). Turf areas provide moist soil conditions, which is an ideal habitat where gophers can remain year-round.

In 2013, Oakland Public Works (OPW) used outside services in an attempt to eradicate the pest population at DeFremery Park, South Prescott, and a few smaller parks. This contract ended in 2013. With the gopher population under control, staff determined that a minimal maintenance program would be sufficient. This minimal maintenance by staff was successful through the early part of 2014, but was not adequate to keep up with the increase of the gopher population. In the fall of 2014, OPW worked with City Purchasing to seek a longer term service contract with a vendor who could control the gopher problem.

As such, a contract purchase order was signed on March 9, 2015 with Smith's Gopher Trapping Service through a cooperative purchase agreement. The cooperative purchasing agreement allows the City to contract with a vendor who has an existing contract with another governmental agency that went through a competitive bid process. Smith's Gopher Trapping Service currently provides gopher control services to the following cities and/or school districts; Alum Rock Unified School District, Castro Valley Unified School District, San Mateo, San Leandro, San Bruno, Albany, as well as the University of California at Berkeley. This contract will ensure the City's Integrated Pest Management Policy (IPMP) is followed. The IPMP states that "when gopher or ground squirrel control is necessary, trapping is the preferred alternative." The contractor hired will not use pesticides, but will use the trapping method. This method is more

