



HILLCREST HEIGHTS
GEOLOGIC HAZARD ABATEMENT DISTRICT

Program Budget
FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022

APRIL 2021



HILLCREST HEIGHTS
GEOLOGIC HAZARD ABATEMENT DISTRICT

May 7, 2021

Hillcrest Heights GHAD Board of Directors
c/o Supervisor John M. Gioia
11780 San Pablo Avenue, Suite D
El Cerrito, California 94530

**SUBJECT: Program Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022
Hillcrest Heights Geologic Hazard Abatement District**

Dear Board Members:

Attached please find the proposed program budget for the Hillcrest Heights Geologic Hazard Abatement District (Hillcrest Heights GHAD, GHAD or District) for fiscal year 2021/2022. The proposed fiscal year budget totals \$205,000, which falls within projected revenues and anticipates a \$52,449 contribution to the reserve fund. At the time of this publication, it is expected that the fund balance on June 30, 2021, will be approximately \$1,709,173. A fund balance of \$1,761,622 is projected for June 30, 2022.

There are four major budget categories, their respective budget expenses break down as follows:

Major Projects	15 percent
Preventive Maintenance and Operations	27 percent
Special Projects	24 percent
Administration, Legal, Accounting	34 percent

BACKGROUND:

On July 23, 1996, the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 96/239 approving the formation of the Hillcrest Heights Geologic Hazard Abatement District (Hillcrest Heights GHAD), located in the hills of El Sobrante, within the jurisdiction of Contra Costa County. The Hillcrest Heights GHAD was formed pursuant to State Public Resources Code § 26500 et seq. The Board of Supervisors at that time appointed itself as the Board of Directors of the Hillcrest Heights GHAD.

Resolution 97/178 adopted on April 1, 1997, by the Board of Supervisors, acting as the Hillcrest Heights Board, confirmed the assessments for the district and ordered the collection of the amounts called for in the Assessment Report. The initial fiscal year for the Hillcrest Heights GHAD was established as 1997-1998.

A 15-lot subdivision also completed in El Sobrante known as Spanish Trails was annexed in 2008 to the Hillcrest Heights GHAD and on February 25, 2009, the Notice of Assessment was recorded. Assessments were levied on the 15-lots beginning fiscal year 2009/2010. Maintenance transfer to the Hillcrest Heights GHAD for the activities pursuant to the approved Plan of Control occurred on February 5, 2010.

A 32-lot subdivision also located in El Sobrante known as Edgemont (Colina Canyon) was also annexed to the Hillcrest Heights GHAD on May 11, 2010, with the Final Map and Notice of Assessment recorded on July 29, 2010. Construction commenced on several model homes and activities halted and the subdivision remains in this condition at this time, although the district is receiving revenue from lot assessments. Maintenance transfer to the Hillcrest Heights GHAD has not been completed and therefore the District is not currently providing services.

As a percentage of the budget, the Major Projects Program will utilize a portion this year within the customary norms. To address localized groundwater conditions within the Spanish Trails subdivision, an array of horizontal drains have been installed. Fiscal year 2021-2022 will focus primarily on continuation of additional Major Projects consisting of two primary studies designed to further assess instrumentation effectiveness in providing markers that may indicate the potential for land movement, and studies focused on localized and regional slope stability analyses and groundwater conditions.

The Preventive Maintenance Program will focus on efforts to complete asset site restorations. The program will pursue analysis and upgrades to all instrument and asset sites and the associated data collection to ensure all predictive features of these instrumentation sites are fully realized. Specifically, we will target the following program elements - Concrete Interceptor Ditch Systems (Repair and Replace Program); the Horizontal Drains (Site Maintenance Program); the Piezometers (Site Maintenance Program); and the Soil Debris Bench/Impact Walls (Maintenance Program). The Operations Program will continue its existing monitoring profile through this period, and we are currently beginning a study of accumulated empirical data from its many monitoring assets in an effort to further expose any notable trending that might occur over significant periods of time, thereby reducing risk exposure. Currently, The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts El Niño neutral conditions in the Southern Oscillation; however, early probability forecasts have often changed throughout the summer months.

The Special Projects Program will be directed, in part, to analyzing the Plan of Control and other essential documents that establish and direct the Hillcrest Heights GHAD. Preliminary review will be initiated to assess the need to conduct a formal Reserve Study that would serve to test, identify weaknesses, and expose any necessary adjustments to the criteria or methodologies utilized in the program and anticipate revenue and reserve demands. Additional studies have begun to assess the feasibility of integrating a Geographic Information System (GIS) into the Hillcrest Heights program.

This budget anticipates continued strengthening and building efficiencies within the Administration Program. General legal counsel will continue to be provided by the Hillcrest Heights GHAD Board appointed attorney, Patricia Curtin of Wendel, Rosen, LLP.

As managers, we continually monitor and project significant short-term and long-term financial impacts on GHAD reserves and compare such impacts with our ongoing 40-year reserve study.

Our ability to maintain reserves will provide assurance of our capability to continue services in the future. We will continue to monitor the process and advise you of changed conditions throughout the remainder of this pandemic.

A summary of the expenses is shown on Table 1, pages 4 and 5, followed by brief descriptions of each of the budget items on pages 6 through 12.

Respectfully yours,

Hillcrest Heights Geologic Hazard Abatement District

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael D. Sands". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" written in a large, sweeping script, followed by "D." and "Sands" in a similar style.

Michael D. Sands
Sands Construction Company, Inc.
General Manager

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Hillcrest Heights Geologic Hazard Abatement District Program Budget Fiscal Year 2021/2022

The following proposed line-item program budget (Table 1) summarizes the anticipated expenditures for fiscal year 2021/2022 for the Hillcrest Heights Geologic Hazard Abatement District (Hillcrest Heights GHAD, GHAD, or District). Through an ongoing assessment, the manager evaluates and addresses geologic risk through the implementation of an annual program budget consisting of four major categories. Preceding Table 1, and directly below, is a general overview description of the four major program elements within the budget.

Major Projects Program

The annual Major Projects Program includes, landslide repair projects, drainage improvement projects, and capital improvement projects necessary to either control, mitigate, or prevent landslide activity. Other large program responses necessary to implement the Plan of Control, including specific purpose studies and investigations, may also be included in the Major Projects Program.

Generally, for consideration of inclusion into the Major Projects Program, a project or study would represent a level of complexity requiring plans, specifications, and comprehensive engineering analysis including modeling and research, or a project with a protracted scope such as those requiring multiple regulatory agency approvals. Most Major Projects have a projected cost that exceeds \$25,000.

Historically, the Major Projects Program has been comprised of significant landslide repair projects and other responsive large projects; at other times, it has included programmatic studies and investigations useful in generating proactive responses. This diversity of projects demonstrates the importance of a flexible Major Projects Program structure that adapts between responsive and proactive needs and capabilities to manage the dynamic nature of larger scale geologic events.

Preventive Maintenance and Operations Program

The annual Preventive Maintenance and Operations Program includes all minor repairs, cleanup, maintenance, monitoring and replacement of drainage structures and other assets that degrade over a serviceable life. The goal of preventive maintenance is to keep assets in operational condition and identify potential slope stability risks before they manifest, allowing measures to be taken to either prevent, or mitigate the impact of these hazards as defined in the Hillcrest Heights GHAD Plan of Control.

Typical Hillcrest Heights GHAD assets include concrete lined ditches, subdrainage systems, groundwater measuring instrumentation, slope inclinometers and moisture gauges, and slope debris catchment features.

The Preventive Maintenance Program also includes preparations for emergency response, winterization measures including erosion protection and slope stabilization supplies, and instrument maintenance.

The Operations Program is primarily populated with scheduled instrument monitoring events. Data from these instruments are evaluated to establish risk and trends to avert landslide activity. In addition to the instrumentation monitoring program, the Operations Program contains the Incident Response and Community Relations Program, which incorporates comprehensive first response capabilities, and fosters community incident interaction.

Special Projects

The Hillcrest Heights GHAD pursues ongoing and new activities identified as “Special Projects”. Special Projects include activities requested by the Board such as the Communications Program, and projects and studies designed to improve the District’s operational effectiveness and ensure financial solvency. Special Projects also include utilizing new technologies to increase the efficiencies of the day-to-day operations.

Administration

Administrative expenses are required to operate the Hillcrest Heights GHAD and implement projects. Administrative expenses include personnel and consultants to manage the operations including: the General Manager, Administrative Manager, Construction Services Manager, certain clerical and accounting staff, consultants, and legal support.

With respect to the General Management of the Hillcrest Heights GHAD - The Hillcrest Heights GHAD Board of Directors through Resolution 2020/01, among other business, established a Consulting Services Agreement with Sands Construction Company, Inc. to act as General Manager. The payment limit established for a term through June 30, 2021, was \$52,000; the proposed payment limit through June 30, 2022, is \$54,000. The scope of services for the General Manager includes, managing the day-to-day operations through implementation of the necessary financial recordkeeping and reporting; updating and maintaining governing documents, such as the Plan of Control; and managing and updating administrative tools such as the Reserve Study, Communications Plan, Work Program and Monthly Incident Log. The General Manager Consulting Services Agreement provides for certain administrative positions including, but not limited to, a General Manager, an Administrative Manager, a Construction Services Manager and a Network Administrator as well as overhead costs, such as office space rent, office supplies and postage.

With respect to the Operations of the Hillcrest Heights GHAD, the scope of services for Operations includes, implementing the Major Projects and Preventive Maintenance Programs through forecasting work schedules and priorities, preparing Requests for Proposals, and managing maintenance and repair operations within the Major Projects and Preventive Maintenance Programs. These services include project management and construction management; and preparing for and responding to emergency incidents.

The General Manager will retain the necessary professionals, including without limitation: engineers, accounting professionals, and vendors to facilitate the operations of the Hillcrest Heights GHAD. The General Manager Consulting Services Agreement and associated budget allows for the conditional use of subcontractors such as administrative sub-consultants and engineering or construction sub-consultants within the payment limits of the Consulting Services Agreement.

A summary of the proposed Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Budget is presented in Table 1 on the following pages.

Table 1 – Summary of Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Budget

Budget Item	Budget Amount	% of Total Budget
Major Repairs		
Study – Instrument Restoration/Replacement	10,000	
Study – Slope Stability Analyses	15,000	
Unanticipated Sites	5,000	
Total Major Projects	\$30,000	15%
Preventive Maintenance/Operations		
Preventive Maintenance		
Drainage		
Storm Drain Facilities		
B-58 Concrete Lined Ditches		
Maintenance/Clean/Map	4,700	
Repair and Replace	4,000	
Retention Basins	2,000	
Subdrain Systems	4,000	
Horizontal Drains	3,000	
Subdrain Outlets	5,000	
Piezometers	2,000	
Settlement Monitors	500	
Minor Repairs	3,000	
Winterization	2,000	
Emergency Response	3,000	
Debris Benches/Impact Walls	2,000	
Subtotal	\$35,200	
Operations		
Piezometer Monitoring	5,000	
Horizontal Drain Monitoring	5,000	
Subdrain Monitoring	3,500	
Settlement Monitoring	1,000	
Incident Response/Community Relations	6,000	
Subtotal	\$20,500	
Total Preventive Maintenance/Operations	\$55,700	27%

Budget Item	Budget Amount	% of Total Budget
Special Projects		
Plan of Control	25,000	
Reserve Study Update	1,000	
Special Studies/ Transfers	15,000	
Information Technology	3,000	
Accounting Systems Upgrade	1,000	
Tax Assessment Calculation	1,500	
Communications Program	1,000	
CA Association of GHADs – Membership/Insurance	1,400	
Total Special Projects	\$48,900	24%

Administration		
Legal fees		
General Counsel	3,000	
Special Counsel		
Litigation/Legal Concerns		
Staffing/Administrative Support	37,000	
Accounting/Bookkeeping	25,000	
Training/Education	0	
Office – Rent/Supplies/Equipment/Lease	5,400	
Total Administration	\$70,400	34%

TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET FY2021/2022	\$205,000	100%
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Available Funds	
Estimated Beginning Fund Balance – July 1, 2021*	1,709,173
Estimated Property Owner Assessments	
Hillcrest Heights - \$ 1,690.03 annually per unit x 65 units**	109,852
Spanish Trails - \$ 2,731.71 annually per unit x 15 units**	40,976
Colina Canyon - \$ 1,541.92 annually per unit x 32 units**	49,341
Estimated Interest on Investments	57,280
Other Income	0
Total Available Funds	1,966,622
Uses of Funds	
Major Projects	30,000
Preventive Maintenance	55,700
Special Projects	48,900
Administrative	70,400
Total Use of Funds	\$205,000
Estimated Reserve Available/Ending Fund Balance June 30, 2022	\$1,761,622

* Projected Fund Balance date of publication, includes estimated true-up revenue payment (June 2021) \$9,629.88

** Estimated – Resource CPI, San Francisco Metropolitan Area – April 2020

DESCRIPTION OF BUDGET ITEMS

Major Projects

Study – Instrument Restoration and Replacement

Typically, instrument replacement and maintenance falls within the Preventive Maintenance program; however, this proposed study evaluates the current program protocol and further identifies potential sites for remedial installations or provisions. Preliminary studies have identified several sites for restoration work or new replacement installations.

Estimated Cost \$10,000

Study – Slope Stability Analyses

Slope weathering and changes in groundwater levels over time can contribute to slope for additional study. instability. It is important for Hillcrest Heights GHAD management to make dynamic assessments to ensure design thresholds are met in slope stability. This study will address several potential sites and analyze conditions. Previous studies have identified potential sites

Estimated Cost \$15,000

Unanticipated Sites

During heavy rain years, unexpected repairs are necessary to avert or control landslides that may threaten property within the District. It is vital for the manager to retain the availability of funds within the Major Repair Program to address such an event.

It is also common to experience a change in the planned construction schedule to include additional sites. Known sites can rise in priority throughout the year and additional sites may emerge.

Estimated Cost \$5,000

Preventive Maintenance and Operations

Preventive Maintenance

Preventive maintenance generally consists of those measures taken to prevent an incident or landslide event including, asset maintenance, drainage structures, instrument sites and winterization measures. Operations include ongoing monitoring programs and responses to community requests. Details of the proposed budget for each of these categories are listed below.

B-58 Drain Systems

Maintenance – Allows for one major annual cleaning and mapping. In addition, District staff periodically walks the B-58 systems to get a first-hand account of the current conditions and project serviceable life. This information, along with other empirical data, is typically utilized in Reserve Study updates. With the extreme weather conditions last year and the related soil and vegetation load impacting the network of B-58 systems, we have anticipated and allowed for a greater effort to maintain proper drainage for these facilities over the fiscal year.

Estimated Cost \$4,700

Repair and Replacement – A detailed assessment will be performed to establish the existing condition of the B-58 Concrete ditches throughout the district. This assessment will serve to establish a baseline for needed repairs and/or assessments as to the remaining serviceable life of these assets to be utilized in reserve study criteria.

Estimated Cost \$4,000

Retention Basins

There is one retention basin within the district boundaries. This retention basin requires annual improvements and de-silting efforts. With the extreme weather conditions and the related soil and vegetation load impact, improvements were made to this facility during FY17/18 and FY18/19. We anticipate and allow for a typical effort to maintain proper drainage for these facilities over this fiscal year.

Estimated Cost \$2,000

Subdrain Systems

Subdrain systems must be monitored, and maintenance provided to ensure the systems have not been damaged or impeded. This budget will allow for an inspection and minor maintenance of these sites.

Estimated Cost \$4,000

Horizontal Drains

The District must provide ongoing maintenance to ensure horizontal drains remain functional. This budget will allow for the maintenance of new installations from FY16/17.

Estimated Cost \$3,000

Sub-drain Outlets

The Hillcrest Heights GHAD is currently conducting efforts to identify, locate and make determinations about the effectiveness of the network of subdrains throughout the District. It is

anticipated that on-site restoration work may be necessary at some sites. This additional work has been incorporated into this budget item.

Estimated Cost \$5,000

Piezometers

The District reads and maintains piezometers which measure ground water elevations. A budget has been established to provide for work to begin to restore the sites and install identification markers.

Estimated Cost \$2,000

Settlement Monitors

Over time, several settlement monitors have been placed throughout the development. These monitors were, in large part, installed as part of one specific study or another and therefore are not continually monitored. Currently ongoing monitoring programs exist in several areas of the District.

Estimated Cost \$500

Minor Repairs

A budget is established annually for minor projects establishing a provision for unanticipated minor projects within the Preventive Maintenance Program.

Estimated Cost \$3,000

Winterization

The District provides an annual budget for procuring and storing an inventory of winterization materials and to provide for the costs of site installation.

Estimated Cost \$2,000

Emergency Response

During the winter rainy season, the Hillcrest Heights GHAD prepares for and may respond to a range of urgent, active or threatening landslides as well as drainage issues where property damage is threatened. These incidents typically involve mud or debris flows, plugged storm drains at the base of slopes or flooded properties due to the overflow of runoff from plugged or damaged facilities. In severe cases these responses can require the initiation of temporary slope stabilization measures in preparation for a major repair.

Estimated Cost \$3,000

Debris Benches/Impact Walls

Earthen debris benches and debris impact walls exist throughout the district. It is essential that these facilities are inspected to ensure capacities and drainage have not been compromised. Annual inspections are made, and periodic debris removal plans are initiated. This year's budget allows for geotechnical evaluations and the periodic removal of accumulated debris from several of the benches identified during the study and routine monitoring events.

Estimated Cost \$2,000

Operations

An inventory of on-site instrumentation including piezometers, inclinometers, horizontal drains, sub-drains, and settlement monuments are monitored periodically throughout the year as a preventative measure.

Monitoring sites can be established for a variety of uses. Often completed repair sites require monitoring to confirm that the slope has been stabilized. Other sites have been utilized to indicate signs of unstable conditions developing and have been instrumental in determining slope conditions prior to the activation of a landslide.

Through the use of collected data such as groundwater depth, magnitude of slope movement, depth of movement and ground surface movement, the District has been able to arrest slope movement in advance of an incipient failure.

Throughout the year, the District receives incident response or assistance calls from property owners regarding slope stability or drainage issues. Community relations, including incident responses through the annual Operations Program has been institutionalized as a role of Hillcrest Heights GHAD management. All incidents are recorded and move through the district response mechanisms as is appropriate and consistent with the Hillcrest Heights GHAD Plan of Control.

The Hillcrest Heights GHAD Manager receives updates in long range weather and oceanic temperature changes through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other scientific and atmospheric agencies that track data and produce probabilistic assessments on the likelihood of a recurrence of El Niño conditions.

Estimated Cost \$20,500

Special Projects

During fiscal year 2021/2022 the District will continue several special projects. Brief descriptions of the special projects are presented in Table 1 and further described below:

Plan of Control

It is anticipated that an evaluation and assessment of the current Plans of Control for the Hillcrest Heights GHAD, including Spanish Trails, will be pursued, to confirm operational compliance. Once an initial evaluation is completed, consideration will be given to amend the current plan to incorporate historical practices of the GHAD and acknowledge technological and other procedural advancements.

Estimated Cost \$25,000

Reserve Study Assessment

A reserve study functions as a pro-forma analysis of the financial needs of the Hillcrest Heights GHAD. The study serves as a tool to calculate the annual contribution required by the district to build and maintain sufficient funds for emergencies and capital replacement programs based on past weather patterns, landslide repair costs, and general attrition. As a result of severe winters, draws will likely be necessary in the future on the reserve fund. Work is planned to evaluate and complete an analysis of the fund health and methodologies. This analysis will be used in establishing a pro-forma plan and provide instruction to Hillcrest Heights GHAD management as to the necessary reserve demands over time.

Estimated Cost \$1,000

Special Studies

The Hillcrest Heights GHAD intends to continue targeted studies in the areas of fiscal policy and geologic risk. The Hillcrest Heights GHAD, now in its 25th year, has the unique opportunity to address many of the issues surrounding long-term viability and sustainability, within changing environment and financial conditions. Using empirical data, we can assess potentially increasing financial loads and geologic risks that may accompany the maturation process of this district. We are confident that these studies have produced and will continue to produce beneficial results.

Estimated Cost \$15,000

Information Systems and Technology

The Hillcrest Heights GHAD will consider integrating a GIS system to include all the GHAD's data collection and monitoring operations. The record and tool that this system offers facilitates the General Manager's ability to locate past repairs and assist in a variety of risk assessments within the District.

Estimated Cost \$3,000

Accounting System Upgrade

Periodic upgrades are necessary to enhance accounting system capabilities. The Hillcrest Heights GHAD utilizes expense accounting software to assist in reporting and the day-to-day operation of the District. Continued accounting systems enhancements will be implemented allowing more data entry streamlining, enhanced reporting, and quality control assurance procedures, augmenting the current systems.

Estimated Cost \$1,000

Tax Assessment Calculation

Each year an assessment calculation is conducted to identify and determine all qualified parcels within the district to receive assessments for Hillcrest Height GHAD services. Typically, the GHAD Manager will contract these assessments to a firm that specializes in these services. Historically, the Hillcrest Heights GHAD has provided this information through its contracted consultant to the County Assessor's Office as required.

Estimated Cost \$1,500

Communications Plan

The Hillcrest Heights GHAD maintains a communications plan designed to keep constituents up to date on Hillcrest Heights GHAD operations and developments. The plan addresses several venues and mediums used to disseminate information within this district and to other concerned parties, and to establish clear and accessible channels for community interaction. The Hillcrest Heights GHAD intends to implement a web page for public information, and a multi-page informational brochure to be available to interested Homeowner Associations (HOA) and stakeholders that describes the Hillcrest Heights GHAD and its responsibilities and limitations. Additionally, the General Manager is available to write periodic articles for the HOA newsletter.

Estimated Cost \$1,000

Outreach/Legislative Review

California Association of GHADs (CAGHADs) Membership/Insurance

The proliferation of new GHADs within California has resulted in new legislation and adopted procedures. The Hillcrest Heights GHAD Manager, in association with others, shares information and knowledge through a consortium of GHAD managers known as the California Association of GHADs (CAGHADs). The CAGHAD has obtained General Liability policies for its member GHADs. Although more GHAD onboarding has reduced relative premiums, policy premium costs for the Hillcrest Heights GHAD are approximately \$710.¹. Additionally, the Hillcrest Heights GHAD manager participates in the CAGHADs as the organization pursues other financial instruments that may provide the Hillcrest Heights GHAD additional

¹ A more comprehensive policy was presented in 2021 with a premium increase

options for extraordinary financial demand and planning. In 2016 the CAGHAD Board adopted a new fee schedule reducing the annual GHAD fees for membership by 50%.

Estimated Cost \$1,400

Administration

The administration of the Hillcrest Heights GHAD includes all costs associated with legal support, office expenses, staffing, and accounting. Brief descriptions are presented below.

Legal

General Counsel – Hillcrest Heights GHAD management must interact regularly with Hillcrest Heights GHAD Counsel. The day-to-day operations of the Hillcrest Heights GHAD present myriad opportunities and issues to work directly with GHAD counsel, in the areas of contracts, agreements, issues or new business to present to the Board, legislation, property owner issues, etc.

Estimated Cost \$3,000

Special Counsel – Typically Special Counsel consists of legal representation in the event of legal issues that might arise. Currently there are no legal issues involving litigation.

Estimated Cost \$0

Staffing/Administrative Support

The Hillcrest Heights GHAD staff includes the General Manager, an Operations Manager, an Administration Manager and frequently other support staff and consulting professionals. The General Manager administers all Hillcrest Heights GHAD day-to-day operations, including financial budgeting and communications regarding its activities. The Operations Manager, among other tasks, administers the Major Projects and Preventive Maintenance Programs and associated work schedules, consulting and construction contracts, and documents. The administrative staff is responsible for accounting/bookkeeping, contract administration, clerical, and construction management support. Additional management staff costs are also applied to specific projects as appropriate. Authorized business expenses such as rent, office supplies and leases are included in Staffing.

Estimated Cost \$67,400