



AGENDA REPORT

Economic Development

DATE:	July 1, 2025
TO:	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Nannette Beacham, Economic Development Director Samantha Carr, Environmental Manager Valerie Li, CivicSpark AmeriCorps Fellow
Subject:	Contract with GRID Alternatives for Low-Income Solar Installation Services
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	The proposed \$700,000 expenditure is funded by the Environmental and Community Investment Agreement (ECIA) grant and will not impact the City's General Fund (Account String: 11771018 400549 2A1EC).
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	April 21, 2015 May 21, 2019 June 21, 2022
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	The Economic Development Department is requesting City Council approval to award a contract with the non-profit, GRID Alternatives, to continue to provide over 20 low-income households with solar systems and associated roof and electrical upgrades over a 3-year term with an option to extend for 1-year. This would be funded by the Environmental and Community Investment Agreement (ECIA) funding.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	APPROVE a sole-source contract with GRID Alternatives to continue to provide solar system installations to over 20 low-income households in Richmond in an amount not to exceed \$700,000, with a three-year term beginning July 15, 2025, with an option to extend for one year - Economic Development (Valerie Li 510-621-1554/Samantha Carr 510 620-5407/Nannette Beacham 510-621-1306).

DISCUSSION:

Background

[GRID Alternatives](#) is a nonprofit licensed solar contractor leading teams of volunteers and job trainees to install solar electric systems exclusively for low-income families. Since GRID's first solar installation in the City of Richmond in 2007, GRID has completed over 590 solar installations on low-income homes in Richmond. As of June 2025, a total of 2,059 kilowatts direct current (DC) of clean power has been installed in the City of Richmond. Over the projected lifespans of these systems, Richmond families will save approximately \$14 million, while eliminating over 34,298 tons of greenhouse gas emissions or the equivalent of taking over 4,000 cars off the road for one year.

These installations have provided paid work opportunities for Richmond residents, as well as hands-on training for hundreds of volunteers and job seekers as a pathway to employment in the growing solar industry, such as their Solar Corps Program. Additionally, since 2017-2025 these solar projects have generated an estimated \$114,000 in permit fees for the City of Richmond.

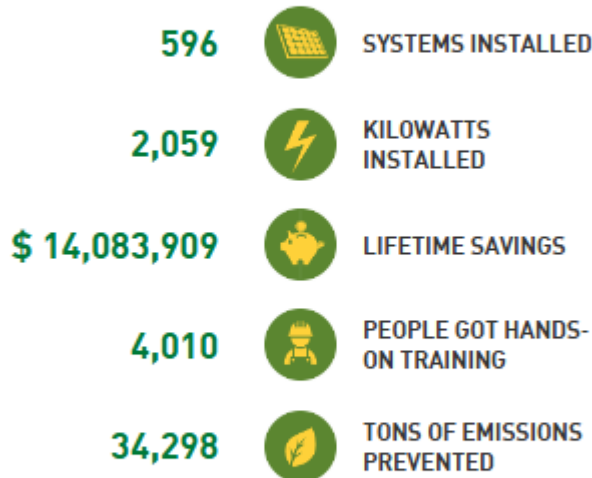
Across the City, over \$12.2 million has been contributed through GRID to make solar deployment a reality for low-income families to date. This includes \$8.5 million from State rebate programs, GRID's public and private philanthropy, and nearly \$3.7 million contributed from the City of Richmond through the 2009-2012 R3 Program and 2015-2019; 2019-2025 ECIA contract.

The City of Richmond's investment in creating a no-cost solar installation significantly increases participation opportunities for low-income households, as demonstrated by the City's ECIA contributions in 2025. The information below is accessible on the City's Open Data Dashboard, Transparent Richmond:

www.transparentrichmond.org/stories/s/Renewable-Energy-and-Energy-Efficiency/xik8-8ght

Solar in Our Community

The City of Richmond has partnered with GRID
Alternatives to install solar for Richmond families since
2007



Learn more at gridalternatives.org



Contract Deliverables

During the three-year cycle, leveraging the ECIA funding, GRID will complete no-cost solar for over 20 low-income families, serving 10 households each calendar year. In addition to solar installations, GRID will provide related services to enable and maximize the benefit of the solar installations, including needed roof repairs and replacements, electrical upgrades for new service panels as well as electric vehicle readiness (Attachment 1). On average, each solar system installed saves the family \$13,437 in energy cost savings and offsets 30+ tons of harmful GHG emissions.

GRID's model also provides hands-on training opportunities for green job trainees and increases community engagement volunteerism in the City of Richmond. Over the next three years, the solar installations made possible by the partnership can have the following impacts:

- *Total number of families served: 25*
- *Total cost savings for Richmond residents over the systems' lifetimes: \$335,925*

- *Total Greenhouse Gas emission eliminated over the systems' lifetimes: 750+ tons*
- *Total number of main service panels brought up to code for Richmond Residents: 15*
- *Total number of roofs repaired or replaced for Richmond Residents over 3 years: 21*
- *Total number of EV-ready homes: 10*
- *Total expected permit fees generated for the City of Richmond: \$114,000*
- *Total Richmond ECIA Contribution: \$700,000*

State Funding Leveraged: DAC-SASH and Cap-and-Trade

GRID provides funding support both through fundraising efforts as a registered 501(c)(3) and through leveraging State and local rebates as well as other funding streams intended to encourage the deployment of renewable energy in low-income communities. These sources include: the State of California's Disadvantaged Community SASH (DAC-SASH) program, the State's Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) grant, the City's utility providers MCE and PG&E, a solar financing partnership that allows GRID projects to leverage the Federal Solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC), and designated dollars for case management and resource provision in electric vehicle deployment.

In 2019, GRID was awarded the administrator role for the DAC-SASH statewide program that will replace both SASH and Cap and Trade rebates and provide designated funding through 2030. GRID is uniquely able to leverage additional funding sources for solar clients and streamline the client experience, bringing an estimated \$1,995,049 in matching dollars to projects in the City of Richmond through these programs.

SYNERGISTIC POLICIES:

The following synergistic implementing actions and policies are included in the City's General Plan:

Policy EC3.1 Renewable Energy directs the City to "promote the generation, transmission and use of a range of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind power and waste energy to meet current and future demand and encourage new development and redevelopment projects to generate a portion of their energy needs through renewable sources."

Goal HW10 Promote Green and Sustainable of the Health and Wellness Element directs the City to "promote green and sustainable development and practices to support a healthy local economy, protect the environment and improve quality of life for all residents."

Policy EC5.1 Green Businesses and Jobs of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation of the Climate Change Element directs the City to “promote a green economy that can provide new jobs in the emerging green industry. A cluster of green businesses can provide goods and services to support the growing need for clean and sustainable technologies, fuels, vehicles, and equipment, while providing jobs and training to Richmond residents. The green economy can support Richmond’s economic development and environmental protection goals.”

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

Attachment 1 – Standard Contract with GRID Alternatives

Attachment 2 – Sole Source - GRID Alternatives 2025