



Office of the City Manager

RECESS ITEM
CONSENT CALENDAR
January 27, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager
Submitted by: Terrance Davis, Director, Public Works Department
Subject: Contract: West Coast Drilling, Inc. for 2709 Hilgard Avenue Retaining Wall Stabilization

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution ratifying the action taken by the City Manager during recess to execute a contract with West Coast Drilling, Inc. for design-build services for urgent slope and retaining wall stabilization work at 2709 Hilgard Avenue, in the amount of \$585,000 which includes a contingency of \$88,631.

NEGATIVE EFFECT IF ACTION IS DELAYED UNTIL AFTER COUNCIL RECESS

Staff have determined that there is an imminent risk of damage to public and private property due to ongoing retaining wall failure and slope instability at 2709 Hilgard Avenue and that this risk warrants immediate action. Delaying contract award until after Council recess exacerbates this risk to health and property due to potential for increased instability during winter rains.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Funding for the Project is available in FY 2026 from the State Transportation Tax (Fund 127), Clean Storm Water Fund (616), and the Sanitary Sewer Operations Fund (611). No other funding is required, and no other projects will be delayed due to this expenditure.

Design-build estimate	\$496,369
Contingency	\$88,631
Project cost	\$585,000

FY 2026 Funding:

State Transportation Tax (127-54-623-675-0000-000-431-665110).....	\$435,000
Clean Storm Water (616-54-623-675-3016-000-473-665110).....	\$100,000
Sanitary Sewer Operation (611-54-623-676-0000-000-473-665110).....	\$50,000
Total Project funding	\$585,000

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The City Manager, under advice of the Public Works Department and City Attorney's Office staff, deemed the work to repair the retaining wall and stabilize the hillside in front of 2709 Hilgard an emergency and of urgent necessity for the preservation of life, health and property. Per City Charter § 67.4(a), this situation meets the conditions for waiving competitive solicitation requirements.

Public Works obtained an estimate from West Coast Drilling, Inc. for the design and construction of improvements to stabilize the slope and retaining wall for an amount of \$496,639. Staff recommend awarding a non-competitive design-build services contract to West Coast Drilling, Inc. based on its performance as a subcontractor on competitively bid projects and its experience with slope stabilization work, including performing emergency slope stabilization and retaining wall work for the City along Wildcat Canyon Road.

The scope of the authorized work is anticipated to include:

- Structural engineering;
- Drilled support piers and a structural grade beam to stabilize the hillside and existing retaining structure;
- Shotcrete facing to reinforce and stabilize the wall;
- Retaining wall drainage and surface drainage improvements; and
- Backfilling, compaction, and resurfacing of the area supported by the wall.

BACKGROUND

A retaining wall of unknown origin, located on unimproved right-of-way in front of 2709 Hilgard Avenue failed. Retaining wall fill material has migrated through cracks in the wall, forming a sinkhole that has made a section of Hilgard Road impassable to drivers and others and has caused slope instability that threatens the residence at 2709 Hilgard Road. With the onset of the wet season, increasing soil saturation and elevated groundwater levels may accelerate the migration of backfill through existing cracks, further undermining the roadway supported by the wall. Continued settlement presents a growing risk of structural damage, with a resulting risk of liability to the City. Instability of the wall also threatens the pedestrian pathway and adjacent downslope properties. These risks are exacerbated by the site's proximity to a trace of the Hayward Fault, adding a seismic vulnerability component to the existing slope instability.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements, this project has been determined to be categorically exempt because it pertains to emergency repairs.

The Living Wage Ordinance does not apply to this project since Public Works construction contracts are, pursuant to City policy, subject to State prevailing wage

laws. The Community Workforce Agreement (CWA) does not apply to this contract because the estimated project value does not exceed \$500,000.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

The slope stabilization that this project provides would reduce sediment entering the storm drain downstream. Though no creek is downstream of the site, this would provide a water quality benefit. Additionally, safe and usable pathways and roads encourage community members to more regularly walk and cycle, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from cars.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Awarding the design-build contract to West Cost Drilling, Inc. and expediting emergency repairs abate hazardous conditions to life, health, and property. Performing the work requires contracted services, as the City does not possess the in-house labor, equipment, or expertise necessary to complete the project.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

No alternative actions were considered for this project. Further deterioration of the retaining wall and expansion of the sinkhole above would place public and private infrastructure at risk.

CONTACT PERSON

Wahid Amiri, Deputy Director, Department of Public Works, (510) 981-6396
Ricardo Salcedo, Acting Supervising Civil Engineer, Public Works, (510) 981-6407

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT: WEST COAST DRILLING, INC. FOR 2709 HILGARD AVENUE
RETAINING WALL STABILIZATION

WHEREAS, a retaining wall of unknown origin, located on unimproved right-of-way in front of 2709 Hilgard Avenue has failed, forming a sinkhole that has made a section of Hilgard Road impassable to drivers and others and has caused slope instability that threatens the residence at 2709 Hilgard Road as well as the pedestrian pathway and residences below; and

WHEREAS, the City Manager deemed the work to repair the retaining wall and stabilize the hillside an emergency and of urgent necessity for the preservation of life, health and property and per City Charter § 67.4(a), this situation meets the conditions for waiving competitive solicitation requirements; and

WHEREAS, the City received an estimate from West Coast Drilling, Inc. for the design and construction of improvements to stabilize the slope and retaining wall for an amount not to exceed \$496,639; and

WHEREAS, staff recommend awarding a design-build services contract to West Coast Drilling, Inc. based on its performance as a subcontractor on competitively bid projects and its experience with slope stabilization work, including performing emergency slope stabilization and retaining wall work for the City along Wildcat Canyon Road.; and

WHEREAS, funding for the emergency project is available in FY 2026 from the State Transportation Tax (Fund 127), Clean Storm Water Fund (616), and the Sanitary Sewer Operations Fund (611). No other funding is required, and no other projects will be delayed due to this expenditure.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the Council ratifies the action taken by the City Manager to execute a contract with West Coast Drilling, Inc. for the design and construction of retaining wall stabilization improvements in an amount not to exceed \$585,000, which includes an \$88,361 contingency for unforeseen circumstances. A record signature copy of said agreement and any amendments will be on file in the Office of the City Clerk.