

Exhibit A



HILLCREST HEIGHTS
GEOLOGIC HAZARD ABATEMENT DISTRICT

Program Budget
FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

APRIL 2024



HILLCREST HEIGHTS
GEOLOGIC HAZARD ABATEMENT DISTRICT

May 3, 2024

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 2024-2025
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 2024-2025. The proposed fiscal year budget totals \$296,750, which falls within projected revenues, and anticipates a \$75,242 contribution to the reserve fund. At the time of this publication, it is expected that the fund balance on June 30, 2024, will be approximately \$2,172,483. A fund balance of \$2,247,725 is projected for June 30, 2025.

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

Major Projects	21 percent
Preventive Maintenance and Operations	33 percent
Special Projects	20 percent
Administration, Legal, Accounting	26 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 remained in this condition for a time, although the district has been receiving revenue from property assessments. Maintenance transfer to the Hillcrest Heights GHAD has not been completed and therefore the District cannot currently provide services.

The Major Projects program will move into a phase of dedicating more of our focus to address preemptive measures and studies and asset maintenance within both our Major Projects program and our Preventive Maintenance program.

As a percentage of the budget, the Major Projects Program will utilize a portion this year within the customary norms. Fiscal year 2024-2025 will focus primarily on continuation of additional Major Projects consisting of two primary studies designed to further assess instrumentation and drainage systems efficacy and serviceable life, and studies focused on localized and regional slope stability analyses and groundwater conditions. A storm drain system inspection in Hillcrest Heights Development was completed and reviewed. Plans for targeted repairs are anticipated in FY24/25.

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 infrastructure 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. GHAD conducts ongoing studies of accumulated empirical data from its many monitoring assets 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 La Niña 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 continue 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 over time. 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 be provided by the Hillcrest Heights GHAD Board appointed attorney, Patricia Curtin of Fennemore, Wendel, LLP.

As managers, we continually monitor and anticipate 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 and manage reserves funds will provide assurance of our capability to continue uninterrupted services in the future.

A summary of the expenses is shown on Table 1, pages 4 through 6, followed by brief descriptions of each of the budget items on pages 7 through 14.

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" being the most prominent part.

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

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Hillcrest Heights Geologic Hazard Abatement District

Program Budget

Fiscal Year 2024/2025

The following proposed line-item program budget (Table 1) summarizes the anticipated expenditures for fiscal year 2024-2025 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 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 2024-2025 Budget is presented in Table 1 on the following pages.

Table 1 – Summary of Proposal Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget

Budget Item	Budget Amount	% of Total Budget
Major Projects		
Study/Project: Storm Drain System Project Design	\$ 30,000	
Study: Groundwater Study/Slope Stability Study	\$ 20,000	
Unanticipated Sites	\$ 10,000	
Landscape Replacement (associated GHAD repairs)	\$ 1,000	
Total Major Projects	\$ 61,000	21%

Preventive Maintenance/Operations		
Preventive Maintenance		
Drainage		
Storm Drain Facilities		
B-58 Concrete Lined Ditches		
Maintenance/Cleaning/Mapping	\$ 6,500	
Repair and replace	\$ -	
Storm Drain Maintenance/Repairs	\$ 45,000	
Subdrain Systems		
Horizontal Drains	\$ 4,000	
Subdrain Outlets/Pumps	\$ 2,000	
Piezometers	\$ 2,000	
Settlement Monitors	\$ -	
Retention Basins	\$ 3,500	
Minor Repairs	\$ 4,500	
Winterization	\$ 3,000	
Emergency Response	\$ 3,000	
Debris Benches	\$ 4,500	
Subtotal	\$ 78,000	
Operations		
Piezometer Monitoring	\$ 5,500	
Horizontal Drain Monitoring	\$ 5,500	
Subdrain Monitoring	\$ 4,000	
Settlement Monitoring	\$ 1,000	
Incident Response/Community Relations	\$ 5,000	
Subtotal	\$ 21,000	
Total Preventive Maintenance/Operations	\$ 99,000	33%

Special Projects		
Plan of Control	\$ 15,000	
Reserve Study	\$ 5,000	
Special Studies/Annexation Transfers	\$ 10,000	
Information Technology/Content Management	\$ 20,000	
Geographic Information Systems	\$ -	
Accounting Systems Upgrade	\$ 2,000	
Procedures Manual	\$ -	
Communications Program/Website	\$ 7,000	
CA Association of GHADs - Membership/Insurance	\$ 1,550	
Total Special Projects	\$ 60,550	20%

Administration		
Legal Fees		
General Counsel	\$ 5,000	
Special Counsel	\$ -	
Litigation/Legal Concerns	\$ -	
Assessment Roll Update	\$ 2,500	
Administrative Support		
Staffing/Administrative Support	\$ 47,000	
Accounting/Financial Services	\$ 18,000	
Training/Education	\$ -	
Office - Rent/Supplies/Equipment/Lease	\$ 3,700	
Total Administration	\$ 76,200	26%

TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET FY2024/2025	\$ 296,750	100%
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Available Funds		
Estimated Beginning Fund Balance - July 1, 2024*		\$ 2,172,483
Estimated Property Owner Assessments		\$ 226,992
Hillcrest Heights	\$ 1,930.35**	
Colina Canyon	\$ 1,709.88**	
Spanish Trails	\$ 3,120.17**	
Estimated Interest on Investments/Change in Value		\$ 145,000
Other Income		\$ -
Total Available Funds		\$ 2,544,475
Use of Funds		
Major Projects		\$ 61,000
Preventive Maintenance		\$ 99,000
Special Projects		\$ 60,550
Administrative		\$ 76,200
Total Use of Funds		\$ 296,750
Estimated Reserve Available/Ending Fund Balance June 30, 2025		\$ 2,247,725

* Including estimated true-up revenue payment (June 2024) of \$10,916.80 – Projected Fund Balance date of publication

**Estimates based on USBLS April 2024 CPI San Francisco, Oakland, Hayward Area

DESCRIPTION OF BUDGET ITEMS

Major Projects

Study/Project – Storm Drain system Project Design

A study was initiated in 2021 to inspect and development-wide storm drain systems in Hillcrest Heights. Once in situ video inspections were completed all storm drain systems were reviewed and any deficiencies identified and prioritized for possible repair interventions. In FY24/25 we will continue our ongoing efforts to design both in situ, and conventional excavating and repairing or replacing methods of repairs. Followed by targeted field operations to correct system deficiencies on a priority basis.

Estimated Cost \$30,000

Study – Groundwater Study/Slope Stability Analyses

Slope weathering and changes in groundwater levels and regimes over time can impact slope stability. It is important for Hillcrest Heights GHAD management to make dynamic assessments to ensure design thresholds are met in slope stability. This study addresses several potential sites and analyzes conditions. Recent storm events will be evaluated through onsite instrumentation data and any evidence of latent slope stability impacts identified and addressed.

Estimated Cost \$20,000

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 Budget \$10,000

Landscape Replacement

Typically, remedial landscaping is either included in the scope of work for major projects or eliminated completely from the repair scheme depending on impact from remedial efforts to restore slope stability. However, on occasion, and in compliance with the Plan of Control, the associated License Agreement executed in preparation of the work will address a reimbursement or allowance to the property owner for remedial landscaping installation.

Estimated Budget \$1,000

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.

Storm Drain Facilities

Planned continued work on community storm drain condition and maintenance assessments. GHAD is working with consultants to establish conditions of existing storm drainage systems throughout the district. Assessments will be made on baseline conditions of drainage systems and projected longevity. Conclusions of this effort will inform the GHAD on current performance and future maintenance or replacement intervals for these infrastructure assets. As described in Major Projects above, development-wide storm drainage systems are currently being evaluated and deficiencies addressed on a priority bases.

Estimated Budget \$45,000

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 extreme weather conditions in years past 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.

Estimated Cost \$6,500

Repair and Replacement – An ongoing detailed assessment is performed to establish the existing condition of the B-58 Concrete ditches throughout the district. This assessment and associated data are periodically aggregated with past collected data to serve to establish a typical timeline for needed repairs. These assessments as to the remaining serviceable life of these assets are also utilized in reserve study criteria to anticipate repair and replacement costs. Currently there are no replacement projects active.

Estimated Cost \$0

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 are likely to occur this year to this facility. We anticipate and allow for typical efforts to maintain proper drainage for these facilities over this fiscal year.

Estimated Cost \$3,500

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 through the Horizontal Drains and Sub-drain Outlets programs below.

Horizontal Drains

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

Estimated Cost \$4,000

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 \$2,000

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 areas of the District and are periodically read and evaluated.

Estimated Cost \$0

Minor Repairs

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

Estimated Cost \$4,500

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 \$3,000

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 \$4,500

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 significant 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 \$21,000

Special Projects

During fiscal year 2024-2025 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 \$15,000

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 \$5,000

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 27th 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 \$10,000

Information Systems and Technology

In early 2024 GHAD issued Requests for Proposals (RFP) in a planned effort of upgrading its managed Information Technology (IT) systems to modernize data collection systems, storage, processing and expansion capabilities. In April Rooted Software, a Walnut Creek based firm, was selected and engaged to perform a scope of work to accomplish this project. Completion of the work is scheduled for late FY23/24 or during the first quarter of FY24/45. New safeguards are being implemented for data protection and increased data storage capacities, as well as file convention modernization and integration ability with a new planned Geographic Information System (GIS) upgrade.

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 \$20,000

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. No upgrades planned for FY2023-2024.

Estimated Cost \$2,000

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 \$2,500

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 continues to evaluate the community benefit to implement an interactive web page for public information, reporting and inquiries, 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 newsletters.

Estimated Cost \$7,000

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, make up the CAGHAD Board of Directors and 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. Additional GHAD onboarding and participation 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 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 \$1,550

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 \$5,000

¹ A more comprehensive policy was presented in 2022 with a premium increase

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 \$68,700