

# Staff Report

## Measure A Citizens' Oversight Committee



Item Title	Agenda Date:
Funding for Consultant(s) to Conduct Fire Department Planning	April 13, 2023

Department: Fire

### Recommended Action

Citizens' Oversight Committee to support using Fire Department fund balance for Planning Consultants.

### Discussion

#### **BACKGROUND**

Planning is the single most important function a fire department must do. This may seem counterintuitive when responding to 911 calls for service is what most people think of regarding anything fire service. We must be prepared before the call if we intend to be effective at stabilizing or solving an emergency. Firefighting, emergency medical response, and rescues come in all shapes and sizes and require a similar but different approach every time they occur. Proper planning is what allows first responders to be successful when the alarm is sounded.

From a public safety perspective, we have much to consider regarding the future. This is not intended to imply we can predict all of the future; however, some signs and symptoms can provide a fairly clear path forward and still allow for adjustments along the way. If we do not dedicate time and effort to analyzing the information we do have, like increasing call volumes, current life safety trends (lithium battery fires), and grandfathered equipment and facility safety standards, we will not be effective in meeting current service demands. It is equally as important to look at common predictors, such as a rapidly growing population, rising development density, increasing state and National Fire Protection Association employee safety standards, and a decreased firefighter application pool due to dynamic workforce evolution to keep ahead of the curve to meet future service demands.

Specifically, in Chula Vista, demands for the Fire Department's existing services are increasing. Call volume has increased by 36% over the past three years. From 2010 to 2020, the average increase was approximately 5% per year, with no single year during this time spiking above 9%. Another perspective of this evolution of services provided is demonstrated by fire station one's, Engine 51 (E51), which has been ranked in the country's top 10 busiest engine companies for the past three years, holding the number 7

position for the past two. In 2021, E51 outpaced the large metropolitan engine companies of LA City's Engine 9 from Skid Row, Chicago's Engine 122, and Washington DC's Engine 10. This is a distinct indicator of what the City of Chula Vista demands from its Fire Department.

The Fire Department has two planning documents that are between 11 and 19 years old, which are the Strategic Business Plan and the Fire Facility & Equipment Master Plan. Since the creation of the Strategic Business Plan (published in 2004) and the Fire Facility & Equipment Master Plan (drafted in 2011 and published in 2014), the City and the Fire Department have changed significantly. During this time, the Chula Vista Fire Department has grown from 7 stations with just under 100 sworn firefighters serving a population of 217,000 to 10 stations and more than 160 sworn firefighters serving a population of approximately 280,000 with a future anticipated population of over 300,000. Additionally, the Fire Department provided basic life support medical care responding to 12,400 calls per year, piling in comparison to the advanced life support first responders and transport system answering more than 31,000 calls today. Industry best practices call for a Master Plan to cover 10-15 years into the future and be supplemented by a Strategic Plan spanning 3-5 years. With significant growth on the horizon, the Community, the City, and the Fire Department must have a clear path moving forward.

## **DISCUSSION**

Based on the need to properly plan for service delivery demand, the recommendation is to use the existing Measure A Fire Department fund balance to contract consultants to produce the following:

- Revise/Update the Fire Department Master Plan
- Revise/Update the Strategic Plan
- Complete a Community Risk Assessment
- Complete a Standards of Cover
- Complete a Bottom-Up-Review of:
  - Fire Department Training
  - Fire Department Staffing
  - Ambulance Transport System
- Complete a Leadership Succession Plan

Below are detailed descriptions of each work product described above. All elements of this recommendation are important; however, certain priorities will dictate the order of completion.

### **Master Plan**

The purpose of a Fire Department Master Plan is to provide a long-range and comprehensive review of current and future fire, rescue, and emergency medical services necessary to protect the City of Chula Vista. This type of plan is at a very high level and focuses on 10-plus-year timeframes to maintain effectiveness. It also must include input from both internal and external stakeholders to ensure it is built with an all-inclusive approach.

The last time a plan of this nature was conducted was in 2011 but it was not published until 2014. As a rapidly growing City, many changes have occurred in the assumptions used in the creation of the plan and forecasted outcomes are very different. In addition, the Fire Service has seen many changes in the past 10 years, and community expectations have evolved regarding what and how services are provided. For this recommendation, a Master Plan is a one-time cost expense.

To be an effective master plan for the Chula Vista Fire Department it must address:

- Defining service levels and expectations; and,
- Assessing the performance of where the department is now; and,

- Conducted a community risk assessment for current conditions and future growth; and,
- Evaluate current and future facilities against identified community risks and service level expectations; and,
- Evaluate current and future fleet against identified community risks and service level expectations; and,
- Provides initiatives that are carried out by a Strategic Plan; and,
- Contains annexes that can be updated more frequently:
  - Strategic Plan (3-5 years)
  - Community Risk Assessment
  - Standards of Cover
  - Bottom-Up Reviews
    - Training
    - Staffing
    - Ambulance Transport
    - Municipal Services Review (SANDAG)

### **Community Risk Assessment (CRA)**

The purpose of the Community Risk Assessment is to thoroughly study the risks present within the City of Chula Vista and identify ways to mitigate them, thus making the city safer. Development of the CRA identifies emerging trends, specific risks, and underserved populations. Understanding these elements allows the fire department to build appropriate strategies, initiatives, goals, objectives, and tasks to reduce fires, injury, and illness. For this recommendation, a Community Risk Assessment is a one-time cost expense.

### **Strategic Plan (Annex to Master Plan)**

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to build off of the direction identified by the Master Plan, focusing on the highest priorities within a three-to-five-year timeframe. Additionally, the Strategic Plan provides the opportunity for the organization to reevaluate its mission, vision, and values as the community, service delivery, and personnel evolve. An organization must transparently know where it is going with a clear understanding of the environment it operates in along with a chosen path to be successful at its mission. For this recommendation, a Strategic Plan is a one-time cost expense.

### **Standards of Cover (SOC)**

The purpose of the Standards of Cover is to use the common threads of the Master Plan, Strategic Plan, and Community Risk Assessment to drive resource deployment. It is a technical, data-driven, and highly detailed analysis of the fire department resources to provide efficient and effective service delivery. For this recommendation, a Standards of Cover is a one-time cost expense.

### **Bottom-Up Reviews (BURs)**

The purpose of a Bottom-Up Review is to provide a focused and specific assessment of a program within the fire department. A BUR should be commissioned to validate the efficiency and effectiveness of significant programs and must be compared against defined goals and expected outcomes. The BUR process can confirm the need for the program to be reviewed or its revision. Once completed, it should become a template for future reviews by standardizing program metrics and desired outcomes. For this recommendation, a BUR is a one-time cost expense.

### **Leadership Succession Plan**

The purpose of a Leadership Succession Plan is to provide training and experience to develop our personnel in ways that are outside our typical means within the Fire Department or the City. As the Chula Vista Fire

Department continues to grow our ability to develop our leaders will become more difficult due to increased staffing levels, decreased average years of experience amongst staff, increased span of control and a growing number of leadership positions. This type of planning will provide preselected training programs which will qualify for department sponsorship. Desired outcomes would include an understanding from existing Fire Department members of what path they can didactically pursue to prepare themselves for executive leadership within the organization. Programs would include, but not be limited to the US Fire Administration Executive Fire Officer Program, California State Fire Marshal Executive Fire Officer Program, Harvard Executive Leadership Certification Program, and Mission Critical Team Institute Leadership Program. This funding will also cover the cost of associated backfill overtime.

In summary, properly conducting and documenting a planning process will provide a clear understanding of how, we as an organization, currently provide service to the community. With this completed, we can then begin to identify future demands and develop pathways to meet the needs of the City.

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### Current-Year Fiscal Impact

The estimated cost to complete the one-time body of work is expected to be \$650,000. This would be inclusive of research, analysis, community outreach, and publishing of all work products.

The recommended ongoing cost for Leadership Succession Planning is \$100,000.

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### Ongoing Fiscal Impact

The recommended cost for ongoing Leadership Succession Planning is \$100,000, will be paid for from fund balance and can be discontinued at any time.

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### Attachments

n/a

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### Staff Contact

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