

REPORT FROM

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Date: March 3, 2014

CAO File No. 0150-10105-0000

Council File No. 12-0600-S28

Council District: --

To: The Public Safety Committee

From: Miguel A. Santana, City Administrative Officer



Reference: Deployment of Fire Resources Study as prepared by the PA Consulting Group

Subject: **THIRD PARTY DEPLOYMENT OF FIRE RESOURCES STUDY –
LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT**

SUMMARY

Based upon Council instruction, this Office along with the Los Angeles Fire Department and the Chair of the Public Safety Committee (C.F. 12-0600-S28), was directed to draft a Request for Proposals (RFP) to secure an outside consulting firm to conduct a third party review of the Fire Department's deployment of resources. The intent of this effort was to provide for an independent review and analysis of the current deployment of fire and emergency medical services resources to determine the most efficient and cost-effective model that could be implemented by the Los Angeles Fire Department and to provide recommendations on funding for Fiscal Year 2014-15. Accordingly, an RFP was drafted and issued to obtain an outside consulting firm to conduct the Study. As a result of this action, the PA Consulting Group was chosen in a competitive bid process and was subsequently awarded the contract. Attached herein for your further consideration, is the final Third Party Deployment of Fire Resources Study, as prepared by the PA Consulting Group.

Prior to the release of the Study, a concerted outreach effort was undertaken by this Office to provide for a thorough review and briefing of the final document by the major stakeholders involved with the Study. The major stakeholders included the Mayor's Office, Council Offices, the Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst, the President of the Board of Fire Commissioners, and the Fire Chief and Department command staff. The United Firefighters of Los Angeles City was invited to participate in the review and briefing process; however, the invitation was declined by the organization.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the Study focused on three key areas as outlined in the RFP:

- Deployment of Resources – a review of the organization and performance of the Fire Department's current resource deployment, including platoon duty and administrative (special duty) staffing levels; the Constant Staffing deployment model; the 10th Member Task Force configuration; and the use of sworn firefighters to fill non-emergency administrative positions and the feasibility of utilizing non-sworn personnel to staff these positions;

- Response Times of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – analysis of current Fire and EMS response times benchmarked against industry goals and comparable agencies; a review of best practices of Fire and EMS as provide by local, county and comparable public safety agencies, including dispatching models and protocols; and,
- Emergency Medical Services comparative analysis – a review and analysis of best practices and a comparative study of EMS as provided in comparable cities and counties, including cost-benefit analysis of current services versus other service delivery models, both public and private.

PA Consulting Group Summary of Recommendations

After an extensive research effort consisting of data and information collection, complex analysis, interviews with key LAFD and City stakeholders, surveys of comparable public safety agencies, and insight provided by Fire and EMS subject matter experts, PA's Study provides a blueprint for effectively addressing the key challenges currently facing the Los Angeles Fire Department within the context of the principle Study areas. Specifically, the Study formulates the consultant's findings and recommendations into three Priority Groups that will provide City leadership and the Fire Department with short and long-term elements of organizational and operational change that will enhance the LAFD's ability to deliver Fire and EMS services to the residents of Los Angeles.

The three Priority Groups consist of the following:

- **Priority Group One** – Align management structure to Department mission and vision and stabilize leadership. This Priority Group establishes a vision for the Department, including organizational and operational change. Among the key recommendations are:
 - The development of a Strategic Plan and a Standards of Cover;
 - Realign LAFD resources into four geographical bureaus;
 - Create a Deputy Chief position to oversee EMS operations;
 - Implement a five-year employment contract for the Fire Chief;
 - Civilianize 198 identified positions that do not require fire suppression expertise or experience, including civilian positions for Chief Information Officer, Employee Relations Director, Analytics Director and Media and Community Relations Directors;
 - Merge the LAFD and LAPD's CAD systems;
 - Institute a Task Force staffing level policy based upon criteria of need or risk as defined in the proposed Standards of Cover; and,
 - Transition to a 1+1 ambulance staffing model with a paramedic on every Engine.
- **Priority Group Two** – Invest strategically in new technology and explore new models that result in improved performance tied to data and outcomes. This Priority Group provides for the commitment to a risk-based approach to Fire and EMS service delivery, founded in the use of modern technology initiatives and sound, accurate and rigorous historical data analysis and integration. A recommended Risk Management Plan based upon several specific elements which could afford positive outcomes for the LAFD, including a more effective utilization of resources; improved public safety through risk reduction; and lower costs due to better utilization of both human resources and physical assets.

Examples of risk-based resource deployments may include:

- Closing of low call demand stations either by day or night;
- Varying crew levels based upon workload demands and peak time periods;
- Deploying additional ambulances in areas of high-risk; and,
- Procuring smaller apparatus staffed by a smaller number of crew members to address freeway incidents, skip fires, etc.

Also included in Priority Group Two of the Study, PA provides a discussion on options for EMS service delivery. Included in the options studied is the Treat/Non-Transport model in which the LAFD would provide medical treatment, however the patient transport function would be performed by a contracted ambulance firm. This is similar to the Los Angeles County model. Should this option be considered, PA recommends a well-defined pilot-test within a small area of the LAFD service territory to fully determine the feasibility, costs and benefits of this initiative.

- **Priority Group Three** – Develop a culture of accountability and expectation. This Priority Group focuses primarily on an analysis of cultural and organizational challenges currently facing the Department. PA has identified significant issues with the Department's ability to effectively manage performance. Specifically, PA has found a discipline process that is cumbersome, unwieldy and ineffective; a system that can represent a threat to both performance and safety. Accordingly, Priority Group Three includes a series of recommendations focused on the interrelated areas of discipline, promotion and training.

Also provided in this Priority Group is a discussion on the establishment and advantages of implementing a Community Safety Program and an end-to-end emergency and mobile health care solution. A Community Safety Program is a proactive working partnership with other public services and community groups in an effort to reduce community and individual risk, including home hazards, medication monitoring, smoke and carbon monoxide detector programs, and educational programs for schools and other local groups. The end-to-end emergency and mobile health care solution provides for the development of new non-urgent EMS services that can result in improved patient outcomes, better community health, and a reduction of unnecessary resource responses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We consider the Third Party Deployment of Fire Resources Study, as prepared by the PA Consulting Group, to be an in-depth and unbiased analysis and review of the organizational and operational issues currently facing the Los Angeles Fire Department. This thorough look into the Department will afford City leaders and the LAFD an opportunity to utilize an effective blueprint to improve key areas and better prepare the Department's sworn and civilian members in meeting current and future challenges. The release of this Study comes at a critical juncture for the LAFD. The Department has faced a myriad of recent challenges, both internal and external, while under the backdrop of severe economic and budgetary stress. While the desire to restore departmental resources remains a high priority for City leadership, careful consideration should be given to the findings of this Study in relation to the preparation of the 2014-15 Budget. Although the initiatives recommended by PA are estimated to yield an approximate annual net cost savings of \$8.0 million, it should be noted that these estimates assume all initiatives are enacted concurrently.

Given the scope and depth of the recommended initiatives, the actual cost savings would most likely be realized over time, since implementation may occur through a phased-in approach and would be subject to internal review and approval processes. As cost savings are realized through the implementation of specific initiatives that provide for efficiencies in service delivery (e.g., organizational changes and technological solutions, etc.), we would recommend these savings be reprogrammed back to the Fire Department to address critical budgetary needs.

In order to develop an effective project implementation action plan with specific timelines for each Priority Group, we recommend the formulation of a working group consisting of key stakeholders to work collaboratively in support of the Fire Chief to undertake this task. Key stakeholders should include, under the direction of the City Administrative Officer, representatives from the Fire Department; the Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst; the Personnel Department; and with professional services provided under contract.

Based upon the acceptance of the Third Party Deployment of Fire Resources Study and this corresponding report, and given the Study provides a detailed roadmap to guide the policy discussion and implementation of short and long-term initiatives, we recommend consideration of the following items in the context of the Study's roadmap and the development of the 2014-15 Proposed Budget:

1. Direct the City Administrative Officer, in collaboration with the Fire Department and others as appropriate, to serve as a Deployment of Fire Resources Working Group to assist the Fire Chief in overseeing the development of an action plan for the implementation of the short and long-term adopted recommendations set forth in the Deployment of Fire Resources Study and require the Working Group to convene and report on a regular basis to the Mayor and Council on the status of the adopted initiatives;
2. Authorize the Fire Department, with the assistance of the Chair of the Public Safety Committee and the City Administrative Officer, to prepare and release a Request for Proposals for consultant services to assist the Fire Department in the development and preparation of a Standards of Response Coverage document;
3. Request that the Mayor include in the 2014-15 Proposed Budget, recommended actions as provided by the Study, in order to commence implementation within Fiscal Year 2014-15;
4. Instruct the Los Angeles Police Department to provide assistance to the Fire Department in the development and implementation of the LAFD computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, including undertaking an analysis of the feasibility to combine the CAD systems of both departments; and,
5. Identify as appropriate, the specific staffing and personnel-related recommendations in the Study that, if approved, would require the initiation of negotiations with organized labor, and refer these matters to the Executive Employee Relations Committee.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of the recommendations in this report will have no direct impact to the General Fund at this time. The specific organizational recommendations provided by the PA Consulting Group are estimated to yield a net total cost savings of \$8.0 million annually, based upon \$12.3 million in cost savings and \$4.3 million in additional expenditures. A complete fiscal impact will be determined upon further consideration and approval of the specific initiatives outlined in the Third Party Deployment of Fire Resources Study, formulated within the context of the Proposed 2014-15 Budget and in subsequent out years.

MAS:MCD:04140074c

Attachment