



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: NOVEMBER 1, 2016**
FROM: FIRE DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**
POLICE DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF THE IMPACTS BUDGET CONSTRAINTS HAVE ON EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIMES

ISSUE:

Receive information regarding the impact of budget constraints on emergency response times.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council receive and file information regarding the impact of budget constraints on emergency response times.

DISCUSSION:

Receive information regarding the impact of budget constraints on emergency response times.

Fire Department Response Times

The Fire Department has recently experienced an increase in call volume outside of station primary response areas. While this increase can be attributed partially to the summer season, when children are out of school and historically there is a rise in service calls, another factor is that Squad 5 was placed temporarily out of service as a budget balancing measure. Since Squad 5 was removed from service, surrounding fire stations including Arlington Station No. 2, Magnolia Center Station No. 3, Arlanza Station No. 7 and Arlington Heights Station No. 10, are responding longer distances to render aid. Professional public safety literature validates that longer travel to fire and EMS emergencies is unproductive and has a direct correlation on both firefighter safety and patient medical treatment.

The Fire Department operates under three broad expectations when it comes to incident management of any emergency the fire department is dispatched to:

1. Stop the escalation of the emergency when found.
2. Respond with enough resources to:
 - a. execute the "Critical Tasks" connected with each type of emergency, and
 - b. provide for the safety of fire personnel based on the risk of the event.

3. For EMS calls:
 - a. arrive before brain death occurs in a full arrest, and
 - b. extricate and transport trauma patients to a designated trauma center within 60 minutes of the accident occurring.

Fire Emergency Calls in Secondary Response Areas

Statistics from the previous three months indicate that fire resources are now traveling to secondary jurisdictions on a consistent basis. The average response time for fire apparatus traveling to secondary response areas is 10 minutes and 30 seconds for 90% of incidents.



Recommended Fire Response Times

The American Heart Association's position is that brain death and permanent death start to occur in 4-6 minutes after a patient experiences cardiac arrest. Cardiac Arrest can be reversed if aggressively treated with Advanced Life Support (ALS). Studies also show that a victim's chance of survival is reduced 7-10% with every minute that passes without ALS intervention. Few attempts of resuscitation succeed after 10 minutes.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, ALS is recommended to arrive on scene for EMS calls within eight minutes. For fire extinguishment, all responding fire apparatus and personnel (15 people minimum) are also expected to arrive on scene of an incident within eight minutes.

Fire Department response times would improve with increased staffing levels in the south end of the City, which would reduce the frequency of having fire units traveling greater distances to calls.

Police Department Response Times

There is no accepted national standard for measuring police response time. Time can greatly vary from city to city, based on how the agency defines emergencies. The Department provides responses for emergency and non-emergency calls from the public. Each call for service is evaluated and the appropriate response is prioritized and initiated. The standard response time to calls for service in most police departments has historically been to dispatch a sworn police officer – who in turn would respond to a location as quickly as possible.

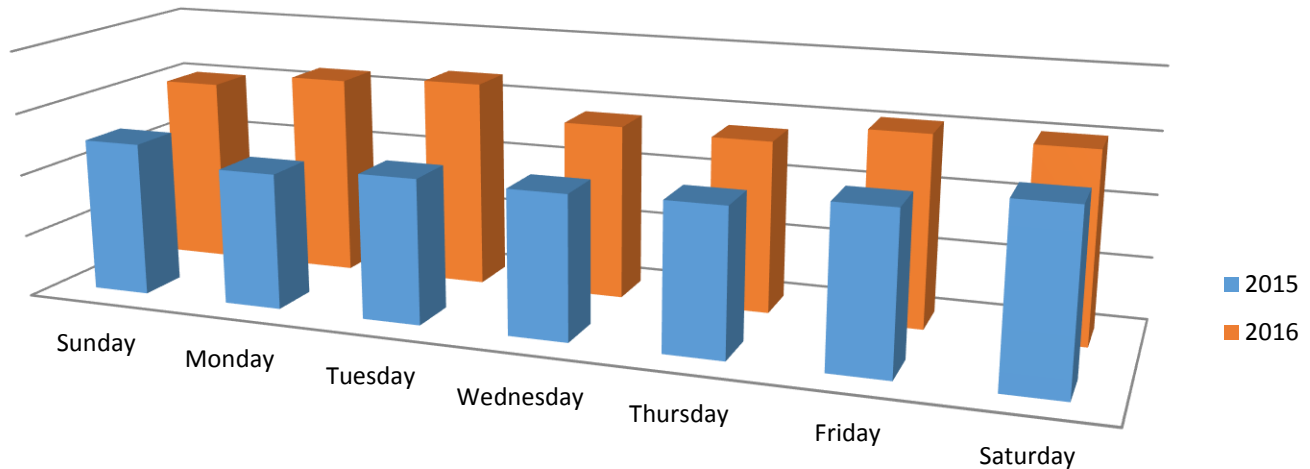
However, research and experience have shown that not every citizen who calls the police requires, or even necessarily expects a rapid response. Recently the Department has been dealing with resource shortages and is looking for ways to streamline existing resources to improve efficiency and effectiveness by implementing alternative response strategies. The Department recently upgraded to a new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Prior to this implementation, the Department (utilizing the old CAD system) was not able to neither determine reliable response times nor calls for service holding to be dispatched to officers in the field.

To enhance services while considering geography, topography, traffic patterns, and other features during a response to an emergency situation and to fully utilize this new technology, the Department has restricted its means in the collection of response time data. The Department expects to be able to utilize accurate response time statistics in assisting with deployment and enhancing community livability. As of August 23, 2016, the Police Department incident priorities codes are defined as follows:

Priority	Description	Response
0 - Emergency	Considered the highest priority. These incidents have caused or are likely to cause serious injury to peace officers or firefighters. This includes incidents involving the potential for mass casualty.	Shall be broadcast immediately to all units.
Priority 1	Also of the highest priority are incidents that have caused or are likely to cause serious injury to citizens; involving actual, threatened or imminent domestic violence	Shall be broadcast to the closest available units immediately.
Priority 2	Incidents or circumstances that may lead to serious injury to citizens; involving damage or loss of personal property.	Shall be assigned to the first available area unit. When no area units available, the incident may be held for the next available area unit.
Priority 3	Past occurrences of felonies or misdemeanors when rapid police intervention will not lessen the gravity of circumstances or damage.	Incidents may be assigned to the first available area unit.
Priority 4	Past occurrences of crimes and suspicious circumstances.	Incidents may be assigned to the first available area unit.

During the recent budgetary staffing reduction, the Department has seen an increased call volume as compared to the same time last year. The following chart illustrates this increase by day of the week:

July - September



	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total	Increase
2015	4,953	4,378	4,644	4,596	4,677	5,060	5,578	33,886	
2016	6,025	6,468	6,669	5,623	5,520	6,127	6,037	42,469	8,583

Response times for the Police Department would improve with increased staffing levels as requested through the most recent budget process, with the addition of two officers to fill vacated grant positions, as well as the addition of six officers for each of the next five years. Adding officers will not only reduce overtime costs in the future, but would also help to increase the quality of service provided to the city and improve the quality of life for all Department personnel.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with the receipt of this information.

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Approved by: Alexander T. Nguyen, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachment: Presentation