



City of Arts & Innovation

Safety, Wellness and Youth Committee Memorandum

TO: SAFETY, WELLNESS, AND YOUTH COMMITTEE DATE: JUNE 17, 2026

FROM: FIRE DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: RIVERSIDE FIRE DEPARTMENT MASTER PLAN – PHASE 1
IMPLEMENTATION

ISSUE:

Receive and provide input on the Riverside Fire Department Master Plan – Phase 1 implementation, which addresses current response system deficits through the deployment of additional frontline units, targeted facility modifications, and the addition of personnel to improve response performance, reduce unit saturation, and increase system capacity.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Safety, Wellness, and Youth Committee:

1. Receive and provide input on the Fire Department's Master Plan Phase 1 implementation.

BACKGROUND:

The Riverside Fire Department completed a comprehensive Master Plan, Standards of Cover, and deployment analysis over a 15-month period in partnership with AP Triton. The study evaluated current and projected service demand, identified response performance gaps, and assessed system capacity limitations.

A presentation was provided to the City Council on January 13, 2026, at which time the Council requested that an implementation plan be brought forward to the Safety, Wellness, and Youth Committee.

The analysis confirmed that the existing deployment model is operating under overload conditions due to increasing call volume, resulting in unit saturation and extended response times in multiple areas of the City.

Phase 1 of the Master Plan was developed to immediately correct existing infrastructure, staffing, and apparatus shortfalls and to restore system performance to meet current service demands while preparing for future growth.

DISCUSSION:

Phase 1 of the Riverside Fire Department Master Plan is designed to immediately address the

City's current emergency response performance gap by increasing frontline system capacity, improving unit availability, and reducing call concurrency. The deployment analysis confirmed that the existing system is operating under sustained overload conditions, which results in unit saturation, increased reliance on distant resources, and extended response times in several areas of the city. The Phase 1 implementation plan focuses on correcting these deficiencies through the addition of strategically placed resources, targeted facility modifications, and the incremental expansion of the Department's workforce. Absent a new funding source, the implementation of the plan is predicated on the City's ability to reallocate limited funding resources by attempting to reprioritize city services.

Phase 1 Implementation (CY 2026–2027):

A key component of Phase 1, to be implemented during calendar years 2026 through 2027, should funding be available, includes fully staffing Engines 1, 2, 3, and 5 with four-person staffing, along with the deployment of three additional squad companies utilizing existing apparatus and equipment currently owned by the Department. This strategy allows the City to achieve immediate operational enhancements without the extended lead times typically associated with fleet procurement. This phase, with new personnel and capital debt service, is estimated at \$26.1 million.

Phase 1 also includes facility improvements to support expanded staffing. This includes the development of plans for modifications at Fire Stations 4 and 8 to construct additional dormitory space, along with the temporary relocation of equipment to accommodate construction activities. In addition, planning efforts will begin with three future fire station projects (Stations 10, 15, and 16). This will require coordination with the Real Property Services Division to identify and secure appropriate sites, as well as collaboration with the General Services Department on future fire station design and development.

Phase 1 Continued Implementation (CY 2027–2028):

During calendar years 2027 through 2028, Phase 1 would include the addition of Engine 15 and the establishment of a third Battalion Chief position, resulting in the addition of fifteen (15) personnel.

The current plan includes the construction of a temporary fire station in the Orangecrest area, with the specific site yet to be identified. This temporary station will immediately address current response deficiencies by adding personnel and equipment, while the planning, design, and construction phases of a permanent fire station are completed.

The addition of Engine 15 and a third Battalion Chief will enhance response reliability in the southeastern portion of the City, strengthen battalion-level supervision, and improve overall incident command effectiveness.

Phase 1 Continued Implementation (CY 2028–2029):

During calendar years 2028 through 2029, Phase 1 would include the addition of Engine 16, resulting in twelve (12) additional personnel.

The addition of Engine 16 is intended to improve response times, reduce call concurrency, decrease unit saturation, and enhance geographic coverage within the Downtown area.

The current plan contemplates the construction of a temporary fire station in the Downtown area,

with the specific site to be identified. This interim solution will allow the Department to increase service capacity while planning permanent stations, and the continuation of development efforts.

All recommendations are consistent with the Master Plan Study concurrency modeling resulting in an increase in overall system capacity and reduce system-wide call concurrency by approximately 10,000 incidents annually. The result is improved response reliability, geographic coverage and operational effectiveness citywide adding a total seven-unit frontline expansion capable of absorbing approximately 15,000 to 17,000 calls per year.

The implementation of Phase 1 requires the addition of 84 firefighters, bringing total sworn staffing to approximately 309 personnel and supporting a daily deployment model of 27 in-service units across 16 fire stations.

The phased deployment strategy allows the City to align service improvements with operational demand. Initial implementation will deliver immediate system capacity gains, followed by the placement of mobile and temporary fire station facilities to improve response times and coverage in high-demand areas, including Ward 4 and Ward 1. This approach provides near-term performance improvements while permanent station projects are planned, funded, and constructed.

Phase 1 represents the first step in a long-term strategy to sustain emergency response performance as the community continues to grow. By restoring system balance today, the City positions itself to maintain acceptable response times, improve service reliability, and meet future service demands in a fiscally and operationally responsible manner. The total capital investment identified for the full Master Plan buildout is \$293.4 million. The Department is working with the City Manager's Office on developing funding strategies that will support both the immediate implementation and long-term sustainability of these improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with this report.

Future fiscal impacts related to staffing, apparatus, and facility improvements will be presented to the City Council as part of the budget development process and future agenda items.

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Attachments:

1. Riverside City Master Plan (Final Report) – 22 December 2025
2. Presentation