



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: July 25, 2007 REPORT NO: 07-130
ATTENTION: Council President and City Council
Docket of July 31, 2007
SUBJECT: Lifeguard Division Business Process Reengineering Report
REFERENCE: Lifeguard Division Business Process Reengineering Final Report

REQUESTED ACTION: Accept the recommendations of the Lifeguard Division Business Process Reengineering (BPR) Study.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Accept the Report on Lifeguard BPR and authorize implementation of the organizational changes.

BACKGROUND:

The Mayor has commenced Business Process Reengineering (BPR) efforts to improve efficiencies, reduce the cost of City government and to maximize the services offered to our residents. BPR focuses on optimizing the efficiency and effectiveness of operational processes and functional work groups. On July 31, 2006, the City Council adopted Ordinance O-19523, establishing a policy for the City of San Diego to reorganize the Departments of the City in order to improve the level of services to the citizens of the City and reduce the cost of providing such services.

A careful study was conducted on current practices within the Lifeguard Division of the Fire-Rescue Department. Issues were identified, and benchmark studies of best practices were completed by surveying other lifeguard agencies. The following areas were studied during this BPR:

1. Lifeguard Staffing/Training
2. Administrative Assignments
3. Lifeguard Dispatch
4. Community Education, Outreach, and Recruitment

LIFEGUARD STAFFING/TRAINING

Lifeguard Staffing /Training– Background

Permanent Lifeguards and Supervisors. The full scope of duties of a lifeguard and the training and certification associated with maintaining individual competency for each of those duties are

extensive. The Lifeguard Division is currently operating with 75 permanent lifeguards and 19 supervisors. The duties and responsibilities of the permanent lifeguards include not only beach guarding, but also cliff rescue, swiftwater rescue, dive rescue, etc. Permanent lifeguards require training above and beyond basic lifeguarding training to support their performance of these additional duties.

Seasonal Lifeguards. During the spring/fall, and particularly in the summer, there is a dramatic increase in crowds at City beaches. Operations are most dramatically affected by the need to have more lifeguards available to observe the water and respond to basic water rescues. Approximately 175 seasonal lifeguards are employed to augment the 75 permanent lifeguards during these high impact seasons. These seasonal lifeguards are given a basic level of training.

Lifeguard Staffing/Training – Significant Issues

1. The most daunting challenge for the Lifeguard Division is the difficulty in providing all the necessary training to our workforce. Specifically, requirements for constant staffing force the Lifeguards to conduct most of their training on an overtime basis. This is often cost prohibitive and inefficient.
2. There has been a long evolution of schedules over the years as efforts have been made to address operational challenges. In particular, as daylight hours lengthen during the course of the year, 8 hour shifts are often insufficient for proper coverage. A mix of four day/ten hour shifts (4/10) and five day/eight hour shifts (5/8) schedules currently exist (in addition to 24 hour shifts).

Recommendations to Lifeguard Staffing/Training

All permanent lifeguard positions, other than lifeguards assigned to the 24-hour night crew schedules, would be converted to a year-round 4/10 work schedule. As a result of needing to have supervisors cover particular posts during working hours, it is necessary to increase the number of Lifeguard Sergeants in operations from 15 to 17. This will require that two budgeted/vacant Lifeguards III positions be reclassified to Lifeguard Sergeant.

During the winter all Lifeguards, other than those assigned to the night crew, would be scheduled to be on-duty on Wednesdays. With the Lifeguard Division split into two shifts, on Wednesdays, one shift would be assigned to training while the other would be assigned to operations. Thus, on Wednesdays the two shifts would rotate between operations and training allowing for ten hours of training on alternate Wednesdays. This would be a pilot program for one year.

Impact on Service Levels

Converting the permanent Lifeguard staff to a 4/10 shift will provide regularly scheduled training for most permanent Lifeguards, the vast majority on straight time. In addition, this schedule supports continuous guarding of beaches without incurring overtime costs when we are on 10-hour beach guarding schedules in the spring, summer, and fall.

LIFEGUARD ADMINISTRATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Lifeguard Administrative Assignments - Background

Currently, the lifeguard clerical staff processes permits related to moorings and beach bars. This practice began when the Lifeguard Division was part of the Park and Recreation Department. At that time, both Lifeguard and Park and Recreation staff were co-located at Lifeguard Headquarters. With the separation of the Lifeguard Division from the Park and Recreation Department, all permits, with the exception of beach bars and mooring permits, were transferred to the Balboa Park Permit Center.

Lifeguard Administrative Assignments - Issues

Currently, the lifeguard clerical staff spends approximately 180 hours annually over a two-month period processing permits related to moorings and beach bars. We anticipate that, as Park and Recreation currently manages other permitting, that this permitting function will fit with that Department's responsibilities in a more synergistic manner. However, as the permitting responsibility is currently a collateral administrative duty during only two months of the year, there is no staff available to transfer with the function.

Recommendation on Lifeguard Administrative Assignments

Transfer the permitting process for beach bars and moorings to the Park and Recreation Department Permit Center.

Impact on Service Levels

With the exception of permits for beach bars and moorings, all permits related to the shoreline beaches and Mission Bay currently are done through the Park and Recreation Permit Center. Transferring this duty to Park and Recreation would allow for a more consistent and efficient process for the public as all park and beach permitting would be under one department in one location.

LIFEGUARD DISPATCH

Lifeguard Dispatch – Background

Lifeguard dispatching was evaluated in conjunction with Fire dispatching in order to examine the effectiveness of the Lifeguard Communication Center (LCC) and also explore opportunities to combine functions and/or positions with Fire Communication Center (FCC). The LCC is located at Lifeguard Headquarters and is staffed 24/7 by uniformed lifeguard personnel.

Aquatic emergencies are very time critical and immediate rescue response is necessary. Geographic locations for these types of emergencies are sometimes difficult to identify. Lifeguard dispatchers routinely rely on their firsthand knowledge of coastal geography to help pinpoint the location. Communicating with the boating public on the marine radio is also one of the LCC's functions. Lifeguard dispatchers are also Peace Officers and are trained to handle confidential information.

Lifeguard Dispatch – Issues

The committee identified reasons and justifications to maintain the LCC at Lifeguard Headquarters 24-hours a day. Lifeguard dispatchers are responsible for a host of responsibilities beyond taking incoming calls and dispatching emergencies which require their presence at Lifeguard Headquarters.

Recommendations to Lifeguard Dispatch

- Maintain the current emergency dispatching model for Lifeguards.
- Conduct further studies to examine the needs for technological upgrades.
- Include a review of Lifeguard Dispatch as part of the planned City-wide Dispatch BPR

Impact on Service Levels

Based on the unique emergencies and other logistical issues associated with the LCC, it is in the best interest of the City to maintain the current dispatching model.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH, EDUCATION, AND RECRUITMENT

Lifeguard Community Outreach, Education and Recruitment – Background

A major component of recruiting lifeguards is identifying candidates that are able to swim at the required proficiency level to pass the entrance test and eventually the lifeguard academy. Unfortunately, many potential candidates have not had access to swimming in their youth. Over fifteen years ago, lifeguards began programs that would help attract youth to the aquatic environment with the hopes of recruiting them for seasonal lifeguard positions. The most successful program is the Junior Lifeguard Program, which attracts over 1,000 children each summer. The Junior Lifeguard Program is managed by a Lifeguard Sergeant as a collateral duty during the summer season. All funding for the Program is derived from the tuition charged from enrollment.

In addition to the Junior Lifeguard Program, the Lifeguard Division has a number of formal and informal mechanisms for engaging the community and recruiting potential lifeguards. These activities are led by a Community Outreach, Education, and Recruitment position. The current Community Outreach, Education, and Recruitment position has been staffed full time by a Lifeguard II since 2003.

Lifeguard Community Outreach, Education and Recruitment – Issues

One of the biggest challenges is the turnover of the current Outreach Coordinator and the Junior Lifeguard Manager. Both positions are non-operational and require skills sets distinct and separate from the public safety skills. Uniformed personnel are currently filling these positions on a rotating basis every two years.

Recommendations to Lifeguard Community Outreach, Education and Recruitment

In order to provide continuity to community outreach and recruiting activities, we recommend reclassifying the Community Outreach, Education, and Recruitment position into a civilian position and having this position assume duties of the Junior Lifeguard Program management. We expect that this position will require a salary equivalent to the current Lifeguard Sergeant salary. In order to cover the salary differential between the current Lifeguard II salary and the expected civilian salary, the revenue from the Junior Lifeguard Program can be applied to this new position. We anticipate that with these two funding sources combined (current Lifeguard II salary and Junior Lifeguard Program revenue), we will have funds remaining to provide approximately 1,000 hours of seasonal lifeguard support to supplement recruitment and outreach activities.

Impact on Service Levels

The newly-civilianized Community Outreach, Education, and Recruitment position will provide for continuity of service for these functions (as we will not have a transition of staff every two years as was the case with the Lifeguard II filling this position). In addition, this will allow us to bring on board someone who has the particular training, community building, and recruitment skills that are warranted by this position. This reclassification further will allow for some synergies of responsibilities as this position will manage the Junior Lifeguard Program. Finally, this will allow the Lifeguard Division to return an operational Sergeant to operational duties during the summer months.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The following table summarizes the estimated overtime costs that will be avoided by implementing the 4/10 work schedule for a full year. After our pilot year, we will have a sense of estimated savings. These savings will be reflected in the FY09 budget.

Cost Impacts Expected	Impact
Backfill for Training (shown as 70% of FY06 expense)	\$ (261,987)
Overtime for Training (shown as 45% of FY06 expense)	\$ (122,087)
Sub Total Cost Avoidance	\$ (384,074)
Reclassification of (2) budgeted LGIII to (2) LG Sgt	\$ 19,436
Reclassification of (1) budgeted LGII to (1) civilian coordinator	\$ 0
Sub Total Expense	\$ 19,436
Cost Avoidance	\$ (364,638)

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION: None

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS: None

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

The work related impacts of this BPR have been appropriately covered through the Meet and Confer process with MEA. City residents and constituents will experience an increase in service levels. The resulting cost avoidance will benefit the City.


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