



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: November 28, 2007 REPORT NO: 07-195
ATTENTION: Council President and City Council
Docket of December 4, 2007
SUBJECT: SAFER Grant
REFERENCE:

REQUESTED ACTION:

Approve the recommendations

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Authorize the Mayor or designee to approve the application to the Department of Homeland Security- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) U.S. Fire Administration for a grant in the amount of \$2,530,200 from the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program.
2. Authorize the Mayor or designee to take all necessary actions to secure grant funding for the staffing of two emergency response units.
3. Authorize the Auditor and Comptroller to accept, appropriate and expend grant funds to staff the two emergency response units.

SUMMARY:

SAFER grants are designed to help local jurisdictions increase the number of frontline firefighters. The goal is to increase staffing and deployment capabilities, thus assuring adequate protection from fire and other "all-hazard" risks in local communities. San Diego expects to open a new fire station (#47) in the Pacific Highlands Ranch area in FY08. The SAFER grant, a five year program, would offset the cost of firefighters required to staff an engine and truck company in this new station.

As part of the National Fire Service Accreditation process, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) conducted a Risk Assessment/Standards of Response Coverage study. This study included a critical analysis of historical data, existing and proposed deployment strategies, distribution and concentration of resources based on time parameters, community risks and expectations and reliability of emergency response units. SDFD evaluated the demographics of the area protected or population at risk, area protected by initial attack companies and full effective fire force, population and building density per square mile and ratio of firefighters per capita by engine district. The assessment showed that staffing shortages negatively affected response times and decreased the degree to which an engine and/or truck company is available to

respond, i.e., the reliability of response. Based upon these factors, the Pacific Highlands Ranch area was found to be one of the greatest areas of risk.

Population growth in outlying areas without a corresponding increase in stations and firefighters has resulted in an increase in the area protected per engine district, run volume, building density and a reduction in firefighter per capita ratios. Furthermore, the shortage of truck companies affects the Department's ability to assemble a full effective fire force. For example, the two trucks that currently respond to Pacific Highlands Ranch cover 22 and 59 square miles respectively, which significantly drives-up response times. These factors have not only resulted in delayed response times but have adversely impacted response unit availability and increased fire losses.

The risk assessment study indicated a direct correlation between an increase in concentration and distribution of firefighters and decreasing response times and unavailability rates. Adding two fully staffed units to the Pacific Highlands Ranch station will enable the SDFD to improve response times in this hard-to-serve area and surrounding areas. It is expected that response times will improve, at a minimum, by 18.5% in the Pacific Highlands Ranch area. Emergency units responsible for responding into this area will experience a reduction in call volume, square miles protected and population to firefighter ratio, also resulting in a corresponding decrease in response times and unavailability rates.

The Pacific Highlands Ranch fire station was designed to house one engine company and one truck company to address the response issues noted above. The developer has purchased and delivered both emergency response apparatus. Staffing of both units would require 24 fire personnel (6 Captains, 6 Engineers, 6 Firefighters and 6 Firefighter/Paramedics). However, current funding will only provide for staffing of the engine company. Staffing of the truck company is not slated to occur until FY2012.

To expedite the staffing of the truck company, the SAFER Grant would be used to fund part of the cost of the 12 firefighter positions needed to staff both units. The awardee is required to match an increasing proportion of the salary over a four-year period and in the fifth year of the grant the awardee must absorb the entire cost of any positions awarded. San Diego's cost share would be 10% in year one, 20% in year two, 50% in year three, 70% in year four and 100% in year five, as illustrated in the table below. Table 1 displays the costs of firefighters only, the second Table reflects firefighters and captains and engineers.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

COST OF FIREFIGHTERS FOR ONE ENGINE AND ONE TRUCK COMPANY (excluding Captains and Engineers)

	Grant Year 1*	Grant Year 2	Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5
City	\$2,238,000	\$2,339,280	\$2,642,880	\$2,844,840	\$3,148,800
Grant	\$ 910,800	\$ 809,520	\$ 505,920	\$ 303,960	\$ 0
TOTAL	\$3,148,800	\$3,148,800	\$3,148,800	\$3,148,800	\$3,148,800

*Grant Year estimated as April 1 – March 31

SDFD plans to open Fire Station 47 in November 2007. The estimated cost for 24 uniformed staff (6 Firefighter IIs, 6 Firefighter/Paramedics, 6 Engineers, and 6 Captains cover three shifts) at Station #47 for FY 2008 is \$1,443,200. The annual cost for FY's 2009 – 2013 is \$3,936,000. Per the table above, SAFER funding would offset the cost of the twelve Firefighters over the grant period, estimated at \$2,530,200, beginning with \$910,800 in the first grant year (estimated as April 2008 – Mar 2009). The City's General Fund would be responsible for providing the balance of the cost during the first four grant years assuming full cost in the fifth grant year. The General Fund would also be responsible for the total cost of the Captain and Engineer positions. Since the station is expected to open in November, the SDFD FY08 budget includes \$1,300,000 towards its staffing.

The table below illustrates the actual costs per fiscal year as opposed to by grant year as shown in the previous table

COST OF FIREFIGHTERS FOR ONE ENGINE AND ONE TRUCK COMPANY (including Captains and Engineers)

	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
City	\$1,215,500	\$3,050,520	\$3,202,380	\$3,480,570	\$3,708,030	\$3,936,000
Grant	\$ 227,700	\$ 885, 480	\$ 733,620	\$ 455,439	\$ 227,970	\$0
STATION TOTAL	\$1,443,200	\$3,936,000	\$3,936,000	\$3,936,000	\$3,936,000	\$3,936,000

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION:

None


COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

If awarded the SAFER Grant and once the emergency response units are placed into service, San Diego Fire-Rescue will conduct an outreach effort to include the media and key stakeholders.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

The key stakeholders include the City of San Diego and the citizens and visitors of San Diego.


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Fire-Rescue Department


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