

PUBLIC SAFETY NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT **(San Diego Fire-Rescue)**

INTRODUCTION

Over the last several years, San Diego Fire-Rescue has shared in the funding challenges faced by the City with budget reductions and inadequate funding increases in a number of areas.

Last year's department reorganization significantly enhanced the efficiency of the department by realigning position classifications and assignments to match current operational and support needs. However, many other operational and support staffing requirements remain unmet. In addition, there are a number of other personnel funding needs in the areas of recruitment, hiring and promotion, health management, overtime, labor agreement obligations, and training.

In the area of communications, while with the assistance of grant funding, the department has made some significant advances in acquiring portable and mobile radios with current technology, there is insufficient funding to finish the job. And, in the related area of information technology, there is not enough funding to adequately support the 911 emergency dispatch (CAD) system or the related Mobile Data Terminal replacement program which is part of the Public Safety Communications Project.

Budget reductions in the areas of supplies and services have been particularly difficult to absorb and, in fact, in order to sustain basic operations, the department expects to exceed its appropriation in this area by over \$1.0 million in the current fiscal year. In the area of general equipment purchases, under funding over a number of years has created a backlog of needs, particularly in the areas of medical, fire fighting, safety, rescue, and training equipment. In addition, an inconsistent fleet replacement program has created a need to replace a number of older apparatus particularly those with open cab design. A similar need exists in the Lifeguard Service where there is an immediate need to replace a number of rescue vessels, personal water craft, all terrain vehicles, and motors.

One of the most glaring deficiencies is in the area of facilities maintenance. The historical insufficiency of funding in this area has created a backlog of over \$11 million in deferred maintenance projects for fire and lifeguard facilities. And this assumes that the Fire and Lifeguard Facility Improvements Project is fully accomplished. In addition, if the City is to improve its ratio of firefighters to population, a number of additional facilities will be needed.

Finally, the events of September 11, 2001 and the recent serious wildfires in the region have highlighted the need to be prepared for all types of major emergencies. To meet the challenges in this enhanced "all risk" environment, the department needs additional, specialized resources to better meet the potential emergency needs of residents.

Following, is a more detailed needs assessment of the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department including tables showing specific requirements.

PERSONNEL

For Fire-Rescue to be successful it is critical to have an appropriate level of uniformed and support staff to manage emergency response programs, provide the public safety services to the communities it serves and to support the Department Operation Center and City Emergency Operation Center during large scale incidents. Last year the City Council approved Fire-Rescue's reorganization proposal, and much of it was incorporated into the FY 2004 budget. However, due to City fiscal constraints, two of the proposed support positions could not be included in the budget and, in addition, a number of support positions that were included cannot be filled due to City hiring restrictions. Due to these support staffing shortages, the Department is not able to appropriately manage all of its programs or meet the requests of citizens and public officials in a timely manner.

Staffing (\$8,638,880 needed for FY 2005, Pages 1 to 4 of Fire-Rescue spreadsheet.)

Uniformed: Fire

- Annualized funding is required in FY 2005 for the engine crew at Santaluz Station 46 which opened in January 2004; due to the mid-year opening, only five months of funding was included in the FY 2004 budget. This station was planned to house two crews (engine and truck) to accommodate North County growth. Staffing for the truck is identified in FY 2006.
- Three Battalion Chief positions were approved on a supplemental basis in FY 2004 and need to be added to the base budget to provide ongoing staffing of the Seventh Battalion. A shortage of chief officers, even with the seventh battalion, makes it challenging to deploy strike teams with the appropriate incident command staff and still be able to fill key positions in both the Department Operations Center and Emergency Operations Center. At this time the Department is also requesting addition of an Eighth Battalion. Long range goals include a Ninth Battalion in FY 2007 to provide the appropriate span of control of chief officers to line fire fighter personnel.
- The Community Emergency Response Team Program (CERT) requires one Captain and one Fire Fighter for implementation. This program is critical to train and develop communities to be more self reliant in the event of major disasters when local emergency services are overwhelmed.
- Preliminary estimates of additional resources needed to meet the City's current six minute emergency response time goal include eleven engine

companies and three truck companies. Requirements to meet the National Fire Protection Association's five minute response time standard will be addressed in the accreditation study that will be completed in February 2005. To provide full time staffing each company requires 12.97 positions. This provides four crew members on each of three shifts plus a "staffing factor" to cover vacations and sick leave.

The two new engine companies proposed for FY 2005 can be housed in existing stations in the City's central core. For the new units proposed for FY 2006 and beyond, the City would need additional facilities.

In addition to these new units, for FY 2006 the Department proposes restaffing two truck companies whose "dedicated" crews were deleted in prior years. These trucks have remained in service although they must be "cross staffed" by the engine crew. This can lead to delays in emergency responses when the crew is out of the station and not on the appropriate apparatus.

Finally, the Department proposes adding a dedicated crew for the truck at Station 43 in Otay Mesa. This station opened over ten years ago and was originally planned to have both an engine and a truck. However, due to City funding constraints staffing for the truck was never added to the budget and it must also be "cross staffed" by the engine crew.

- The Fire and Lifeguard Facilities Improvement Project includes two additional stations to be built in the next five years; the Personnel Staffing summary includes positions for these stations. They include Station 2 in Mission Valley and Station 54 in Paradise Hills.
- The Capital Improvement Program includes a rebuild and relocation of Station 6 in the western Otay Mesa area. This station would include an additional truck company and be sized to house a medic and Battalion Chief. The Personnel Staffing summary includes the positions for the truck crew.
- Facilities Benefits Assessment (FBA) funding includes two additional stations to be built in future years; the Personnel Staffing summary includes positions for these stations. They include Station 47 in Pacific Highlands and Station 48 in Black Mountain Ranch. Station 47 and 48 both need to be moved up in the construction timeline based on the development and growth already occurring in this area. Funding availability has Station 47 targeted for completion in 2008 and Station 48 in 2010, even though homes have already been built in these areas.
- Key deficiencies in administrative uniform positions exist in the areas of training, safety and operational support. Positions to address these needs

have been identified in the FY 2005 budget as follows: Operations Project Officers, Training Battalion Chief, Safety Officer, In-Service Training Captains, a Captain for Special Operations, and staffing for Light and Air apparatus. Currently there are limited positions to provide training and mentoring of uniformed personnel to step into key roles during a moderate to major incident. Untrained staff makes it challenging to rapidly activate the Department Operations Center and scale up to meet the needs of the community during significant incidents.

Lifeguards (Page 3 of 14)

- Additional Lifeguard IIs and a Sergeant are required to cover the 4/10 schedules implemented as a result of the meet and confer process with the Municipal Employees Association (MEA). Long term goals include additional staffing to improve current beach and bay coverage. Also, one Marine Safety Captain is proposed in the future to establish the same level of oversight that is currently on the fire side with the Battalion Chief position.

Non-uniformed (Page 4 of 14)

- Nine personnel are required to reinstate the Brush Management Program at levels established following the 1985 Normal Heights fire. Over the years, this program has been reduced to two personnel and is unable to meet the demands of the public for guidance and enforcement of brush management issues.
- Four additional Clerical Assistants are required to meet the administrative demands of the Department.
 - Two Clerical Assistants were eliminated as part of the budget reductions during the FY 2004 budget process, although the positions were approved under the reorganization process. Lifeguard Services and the Fire Prevention Bureau are unable to meet the demands of the public for record and permit requests at these reduced staffing levels. Park and Recreation also eliminated their public counter clerical position from Lifeguard Headquarters, effectively reducing clerical staff from four personnel to one at this location.
 - One Clerical Assistant is required to assist with handling the backlog of data entry information required to meet State and Federal reporting requirements for fire incident information. The Department has now fallen several years behind in reporting incident data due to understaffing and vacant positions. Non-compliance with reporting requirements impacts the Department's eligibility for federal and state grant funding, as well as reimbursement.

- One Clerical Assistant position, previously deleted in the reorganization, needs to be reinstated as the receptionist position in the Fire Prevention Bureau. The lack of a receptionist has impacted the overall productivity of the Bureau in meeting the demands of its customers.
- An Equal Employment Opportunity/Background Checks Officer is required to handle fact-findings, equal employment opportunity complaints and background checks for the department. This would be a civilian position which would perform timely and comprehensive investigations thereby reducing the City's exposure to potential litigation. Timely follow up and consistent investigations are critical to addressing the issues arising within the Department.
- A Telestaff technical support staff position (Information Systems Analyst II) is required to manage the automated staffing system. This position will insure accurate data to allow for timely hiring and promotions thereby minimizing overtime fluctuations. In the past 14 years only one data system coordinator has been added to the Fire-Rescue Department, even though the technological demands on the small core staff have increased exponentially.
- A technical writer is needed to prepare fire apparatus specifications and modify them as national standards change. The Department is requesting a reinstatement of this position to expedite processing of apparatus specifications once funding has been identified.
- To successfully implement the conversion from Mobile Data Terminals to Mobile Data Computers staff will be required to develop functionality, train the end users, and deploy equipment department wide. Two Information Systems Analyst IIs have been identified as the appropriate level to support implementation of this program.
- The potential for corporate sponsorship is significant for San Diego Fire-Rescue. However, the Department does not have dedicated staff to pursue potential offers and synergistic opportunities. A dedicated position would provide a single point of contact that understands the needs of the department and can coordinate with the potential sponsor. Currently, the Department significantly impacts the workload of the citywide development office with the number of donations and requests for Fire-Rescue.
- Depending on the outcome of the apparatus leasing proposal, additional staff may be required in FY 2006 and 2007 to establish a second shift at the Repair Facility. Space is a limiting factor, and a second shift may be the only way to address the Department's future needs.

Recruitment (\$96,000 needed for FY 2005, Page 5 of 14)

Support for a comprehensive Community Outreach Program is essential to educate all communities on the career opportunities available within the Fire-Rescue Department, including Lifeguards. This funding augments and supports two full time positions approved in the Department reorganization to focus on establishing an effective outreach program. Funding covers printed materials and overtime for community education, school visitations, career fairs and other community presentations that cannot be handled by on-duty staff and crews.

Hiring & Promotions (\$150,000 needed in FY 2005, Page 5 of 14)

Two fire academies are included in the Department's current budget, however there are no identified funds dedicated to conduct promotional exams. Two promotional exams will be required in FY 2005, a Battalion Chief exam and an Engineer exam. The recent Captain exam cost \$75,000.

Health Management (\$340,000 needed for FY 2005, Page 5 of 14)

Health management programs are required under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement with Local 145. These programs reduce workers' comp and lost time costs to the Department by establishing proactive health screening, fitness, and employee stress reduction programs. There is no funding in the budget to support these requirements even though they are required by the MOU. In addition, the Department has been awarded a Wellness Grant under the Federal Fire Act grant program. Funding the MOU items and providing \$225,000 in matching funds will fully meet the match required to receive all the available grant funds.

Overtime (\$738,000 needed for FY 2005, Page 5 of 14)

The Department's annual overtime costs require an additional \$500,000 be added to the base budget. Backfilling vacant crew positions with overtime is more cost efficient than hiring additional staff that at times would cause the department to run long in positions, essentially having more staff on duty for a particular day than positions available to fill. The Department continues to work towards balancing the hiring and promotional processes to optimize staffing levels and minimize overtime required.

In addition, there are \$239,000 in contractual requirements from the Hazardous Materials Incident Response Team (HIRT) program and other critical management support and training needs. These programs require overtime whether funded or not. Programs include: Self-contained Breathing Apparatus technician certification training, new fire apparatus outfitting, and Battalion Chief coordination meetings.

MOU (\$2,421,000 needed for FY 2005, Page 6 of 14)

MOU requirements with Firefighters Local 145 require an additional \$2,421,000 in funding, most of which is in Special Pay. Although not budgeted, these expenditures must be made which significantly impacts the ability of the Department to maintain current service levels without additional mid-year budget infusions.

Training (\$3,360,000 needed for FY 2005, Page 6 and 7 of 14)

Due to high rates of attrition caused by increasing retirements over the next several years, Fire-Rescue's work force will experience a significant loss of experienced personnel. This loss is exacerbated by years of reduced professional training due to severe budget reductions. The loss of experience and lack of ongoing training directly impact the Department's ability to develop an effective succession plan at all levels of the organization. This funding is required to establish additional training positions, programs, and a succession planning program to insure the Department has qualified and competent personnel at all levels of the organization.

COMMUNICATIONS (\$697,000 needed in FY 2005, Page 8 of 14)

Mobile Equipment

Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs)

The number one priority for Fire-Rescue in FY 2005 is replacement of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs). This issue was initially raised in 1999 and the system is now close to failure. Funding is required to migrate the Department's fleet over to Mobile Data Computers (MDCs). Without this funding, Fire-Rescue will not be able to continue to track the location of emergency response apparatus and identify the closest available resources to fires, rescues and emergency medical emergencies. The Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) requires the MDC platform to transmit the signal that allows tracking of resources by the 911 dispatch center. The funding for this project is included in the Public Safety Communications Project.

Portable Radios

Portable radios, for both the 800 MHz and VHF systems, must be compatible throughout the fleet and capable of the same functionality. The Department has leveraged grant opportunities, private donations and a phased approach to begin conversion of our fire, medical and lifeguard fleets to newer, more reliable radio technology. However, the entire fleet has not been converted creating a critical compatibility issue during large scale incidents. To complete the transition for both VHF and 800 MHz portable radios \$647,000 is needed, of which \$200,000 is for upgrade and conversion of Lifeguards radios.

The XTS 5000 model of the 800 MHz portable radios are digital and hold 500 radio channels, as opposed to the Sabre Si/Astro model that are analog, hold only 200 channels and are no longer supported with parts or maintenance. The primary difficulty today, in

using a mix of Astros, Sabre Si and XTS 5000 models, is that each 800 MHz model requires a different type of charger be mounted in the apparatus. During a significant incident with virtually all apparatus deployed it is difficult to insure compatible radio equipment for each apparatus.

Due to the State of California's mutual and automatic aid systems, the Department needs to maintain compatible VHF portable radio capability. The new VHF radios have 240 channels and are fully programmable. The older VHF King radios are 17 years old, only hold 16 channels, are not programmable, and no longer have parts or maintenance support. The current situation, where only part of the fleet has been converted, causes communications incompatibility on moderate to large scale incidents. Donations from the philanthropic organization Las Patronas helped to address the Department's VHF portable radio issue, but \$42,000 is still required to complete the conversion.

Fixed Equipment

Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS)

The UPS is the back up power system for Fire-Rescue's Computer Aided Dispatch System, and it has reached its 15-year life expectancy. When power failures occur at the Dispatch Center, the UPS system keeps the 911 fire and medical dispatch system functioning until the emergency generator engages. Two to three times a year, power failures occur at the Dispatch Center on Kearny Villa Road. Without this system upgrade the Department cannot insure a continuously operational 911 system.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (\$392,000 needed in FY 2005, Page 9 of 14)

Fire-Rescue's information technology such as computers, automated staffing systems and records management systems require adequate funding to insure proper maintenance and replacement of critical systems. These funds are primarily required to operate and maintain the Department's 911 CAD system. IT&C and the Auditor also recommend one quarter to one third of the Department's personal computer inventory be replaced annually. Ongoing support for Telestaff is required to accommodate the upgrades within the software system. If funding support is not available, reinstatement of the manual method needs to be a consideration.

SUPPLIES AND SERVICES (\$1,136,000 needed in FY 2005, Page 10 of 14)

For the past three years, supplies and services funding has been subjected to severe budget reductions. In FY 2005, additional funding is essential to meet the minimum needs of the Department in apparatus and equipment repair, operations and support supplies, facilities maintenance and MOU obligations. In FY 2004, the Department could be over budget by up to \$1.1 million in supplies and services just keeping basic operations functioning.

EQUIPMENT (\$660,000 needed in FY 2005, Page 11 of 14)

The past three fiscal years have not provided sufficient funding to purchase necessary emergency response equipment to meet the Department's need for medical, fire and rescue responses. In FY 2005, it will be necessary to purchase all identified items to insure the safety of emergency response personnel and the citizens they serve. Lack of medical, fire and safety equipment, as well as depth in shelf stock, makes it difficult to handle a moderate to major incident. Donations have been utilized to address some of these equipment needs, but much more is needed.

FLEET (\$16,553,000 needed in FY 2005, Page 12 of 14)

Fire-Rescue and Lifeguard Services have never had a consistent fleet replacement budget. This has eroded the Department's ability to provide and maintain a reliable fire and marine fleet. Any further fleet degradation will jeopardize the Department's ability to serve the public and insure personnel safety during emergency responses. Three additional fleet needs have been identified: the need for dedicated air support, the need to replace any open cab apparatus for safety reasons, and the need for multi-casualty response equipment.

Apparatus (\$11,900,000)

Fourteen replacement fire engines, five aerial ladder trucks and two brush apparatus are needed to address the safety issue associated with open cab apparatus and the potential to be overrun during a wildfire. In addition, two additional engines are needed to improve response coverage in the City's central core area. These additional units can be housed in existing facilities. Additional engines and restaffing of truck crews has been phased in over the next four years to begin to address the understaffing issues within the Department.

Vessels (\$465,000)

The Lifeguard's need for additional equipment has been phased over several years to reach a reasonable replacement schedule. Critical equipment needed to get to an acceptable level of service in FY 2005 includes two rescue boats, three inboard motors, four outboard motors, seven personal water craft (PWC), six all-terrain vehicles, two surf boat trailers, and eight PWC trailers. The Lifeguard Service has never been funded appropriately to address fleet replacement needs. The current fleet has to be replaced over multiple years beginning in FY 2005.

Air Support (\$3,443,000)

This is a regional issue that is being addressed through the City Manager's office to gain support from the County of San Diego and all 18 cities. Currently, there is

no dedicated air support in this region to respond to the year round rescue, motorist aid, and brush fire needs of the City and the County.

Support Vehicles (\$745,000)

There is the need for the appropriate type of command vehicles with four wheel drive capability to meet the safety, command and logistics requirements of moderate to large scale incidents. Administrative staff with the appropriate vehicle can be rapidly deployed as additional strike team leaders during large scale incidents.

Another historical support fleet issue is the need to replace 1989 Ford Escort sedans; this need has been deferred for years due to budget constraints. These compact vehicles are primarily utilized by fire inspectors who use them on a daily basis. In addition, during large scale incidents they function as scouts, damage assessment teams or communication liaisons during large scale incidents. These vehicles do not have power steering, power brakes and are well past their useful life span.

Mass Casualty Incident trailers and tow vehicles acquisitions have been spread over five years with the purchase of one per year. These vehicles are essential for large scale incidents with multiple patients.

FACILITIES (\$11,405,000 needed in FY 2005, Page 13 of 14)

Under the Fire and Lifeguard Facilities Bond, two projects have been awarded to contractors and two more will soon be coming before Council for approval to award contracts. Cash flow needs are currently being updated in light of the escalating construction costs experienced during the bid process. Staff will be returning to full Council in March 2004 with a detailed report, including the financial impacts associated with completion of all projects.

Deferred Maintenance

Ongoing deferred maintenance continues to be a problem for Fire-Rescue facilities due to budget reductions over the past three years. Addressing deferred maintenance issues will assist in extending the life of existing facilities and major facility components versus requiring demolition, rebuild or equipment replacement. Deferred maintenance to date, outside of the Fire and Lifeguard Facilities Bond, is estimated at \$11 million. This includes \$1.4 million to repair the Lifeguard's boat dock that is in a critical state.

The Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) clean room has been deferred the past three years and has created a significant health and safety issue for repairing this equipment. Outsourcing this contract will cost \$80,000 to \$100,000 per year. The current practice of repairing SCBA's on the apparatus floor does not meet acceptable standards for a clean work space. The SCBAs are at risk for contamination by exhaust

particulates from the apparatus and a clean room needs to be built or the work outsourced.

New Facilities

In FY 2005 no new facilities are scheduled for completion.

In FY 2006, Station 2 (Mission Valley) and Station 54 (Paradise Hills) are scheduled for completion under the Fire and Lifeguard Facilities Bond. Staffing is included in the Personnel Staffing summary. In addition, approximately \$133,000 would be needed to fund station operating and maintenance costs for Station 54, a single house, and \$181,000 for Station 2, a triple house.

In FY 2008, Station 47 in Pacific Highlands is projected for completion utilizing Facilities Benefit Assessment (FBA) funding. Staffing is included in the Personnel Staffing summary. In addition, approximately \$145,000 would be needed to fund station operating costs for a double house. Fire-Rescue recommends the construction timeline for this station be moved up as early as possible due to the substantial growth in this area and the department's inability to provide timely and effective service.

Based on anticipated FBA funding availability, Station 48 in Black Mountain Ranch is currently scheduled for completion in FY 2010. However, for this report, due to ongoing rapid growth in the area, completion and staffing have been moved up to FY 2009 in the Personnel Staffing summary for tracking purposes. Fire-Rescue recommends this station also be moved up in the construction timeline as early as possible due to the substantial growth in this area and the department's inability to provide timely and effective service. Again, an additional \$133,000 would be needed for station operating costs

Following the accreditation process a determination will be made on the priority and location of additional stations to begin to address the impacts of growth and in fill development on the Department's ability to provide services.

Over the next five years a strategy is needed to address replacement of the Lifeguard Headquarters built in 1956 and the Repair Facility built in 1966. Both facilities are deteriorating rapidly with no definitive replacement plan. The expansion of the Repair Facility on the existing site would require relocation of Fire Station 28 to Montgomery Field. The current Repair Facility site is only 3.4 acres and seven to eight acres is required to adequately provide the space necessary to maintain and park department apparatus.

OPERATIONS

Service Augmentation

All service augmentation has been included in the personnel section and new facilities portion of this report. Additional emergency response apparatus and personnel associated with service augmentation have been included in the fleet and personnel sections of this report.

New Services

The only new service is the creation of the Community Emergency Response Team program, included in the Personnel section of this report under staffing.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/HOMELAND SECURITY (\$642,000 needed in FY 2005, Page 14 of 14)

The Fire-Rescue Department Operation Center is currently not equipped or designed to handle moderate to significant activations without delays and requires upgrading. Also all Department truck companies and Rescue 4 are recommended to be advanced life support (ALS) capable. This would improve the Department's ability to provide ALS first responder service during periods of high incident volume where the engine companies are committed. Also Incident Command trailers have been identified as a future requirement to enhance the Department's capability to respond to significant large scale incidents.

CONCLUSION

For FY 2005, \$47,228,880 is required to address the most immediate needs of the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.