

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District

Service Reduction and Fire Station Closure Plan

Since the recession began in 2008, property tax revenue for the Fire District has declined by approximately \$32 million. During this period, the Fire District has taken a number of actions to reduce costs in order to maintain essential service delivery.

During the past five years, the District has utilized reserve funds to keep all of our fire stations staffed and protect the community. In an effort to obtain needed revenue, the District placed a parcel tax measure on the ballot in November. Measure Q received support from the majority of the voters. Unfortunately, it did not receive the votes necessary for passage at the “super majority” threshold. The reserve funds have been expended and the District can no longer afford to maintain current service levels.

The service delivery model is based on community threat, industry standards, (e.g. response time, staffing levels, operational capabilities), the risk level the community is willing to accept, and services the community expects/demands. Currently, the District does not meet industry standards or best practices for staffing levels, response times, assembly of an effective firefighting force, or number of specialty units, e.g. truck companies. Reducing resources and closing fire stations will only exacerbate this already challenging situation.

The contingency plan outlined at the October 23, 2012, Board of Directors’ meeting indicated that the District would close four fire stations in January. This would save approximately \$3M for the current fiscal year. Closing fire stations reduces expenditures, but it also reduces public protection in the respective areas and across the entire response system. Stations will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Community threat/risk
- Call volume
- Ability of adjoining fire stations to “absorb” the call volume and work load
- Proximity of adjoining automatic and mutual aid fire stations
- Transportation corridors
- Impact on response times

The District will work collaboratively with our automatic/mutual aid and private sector partners (e.g., AMR), in an effort to minimize the adverse effects of service reductions. It is important to note that we can utilize other agencies to supplement our response efforts but not to supplant our responsibilities.

In an effort to provide a balance between controlling costs and providing some level of public safety, the following options are provided:

Planned Actions:

- Close four (4) fire stations in early January as previously indicated
- Savings – Approximately \$3M
- Impact – Reduced service delivery and public safety
- Efforts to minimize the impact –
 - Leverage automatic/mutual aid, and private sector partners
 - Potentially up-staff one or two units to expedite interior fire attack operations
 - Utilize existing reserve force to provide some coverage for closed stations when available
 - Work to develop and implement an EMS only (paramedic and EMT or 2- EMTs) unit in some or all of the affected stations during peak call volume time periods of 8 A.M. to 8 P.M.
 - Develop and implement an EMS only reserve or volunteer program to cover the affected stations during the non-peak periods
 - Limit the response to some non-life threatening emergencies and public service calls
 - Enhanced use of dynamic resource deployment, e.g. posting
 - Utilize software to evaluate optimal fire station locations and response configurations
 - Continue to monitor and evaluate service delivery impacts

Fire Stations Identified for Closure:

- Fire Station #4 – 700 Hawthorne Drive, Walnut Creek
- Fire Station #11 – 6500 Center Avenue, Clayton
- Fire Station #12 – 1240 Shell Avenue, Martinez
- Fire Station #16 – 4007 Los Arabis Avenue, Lafayette