

# Review and Assessment of the Operational Components of the Los Angeles County Fire District Proposal

## City of Hermosa Beach Fire Department

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CITYGATE ASSOCIATES, LLC  
FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Business of Better Government



# Fire Service Delivery Policy Choices

- There are no mandatory federal or state regulations directing the level of fire service response times or outcomes. Thus, communities have the level of service they desire and can afford.
- The body of regulations on the fire service states that *if fire services are provided at all, they must be done so with the safety of the firefighters and citizens in mind.*
- An adequate headquarters team is needed.
- Deployment is about the **speed** and **weight** of the response:
  - **Speed** = single, neighborhood-based units controlling moderate emergencies quickly.
  - **Weight** = multiple units amassing quickly enough to stop serious fires.

# Overall Opinion

- All the needed costs have been identified correctly.
- The cost figures, at this point, are still estimates, but are close enough to hold final discussions and make policy choice work worthwhile.
- We **recommend** that, for a single-station fire department, the much higher level of fire services and personnel redundancy offered by the Fire District contract proposal make a district contract very advantageous to the City.

# Minimum Fire Services

- In addition to fire station staffing, the headquarters team must ensure safety, regulatory compliance, and accountability.
- The minimum headquarters team is:
  - One Fire Chief
  - Three Battalion Chiefs on a 24/7/365-basis
  - One Fire Marshal or Fire Prevention Officer for Fire Code enforcement
  - One Office Support professional (clerical) with support from City Hall in case of absences.

# Current Fire Services

- 1 Fire Chief
- 3 Fire Captains, one per shift to supervise
- 5 Fire Engineers for the fire and ambulance units
  - Four of these personnel are paramedics, and the fifth is an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- 7 Firefighter/Paramedics
- 0 Firefighter/EMTs
- 1 Administrative Assistant
- 1 Fire Inspector
- 1 Emergency Manager

# Planned Fire Services

- Three Battalion Chiefs on a 24/7/365-basis
- Three Firefighter/Paramedics, one per shift, increasing each shift's personnel to six



# Finding #1

- Citygate cannot support, in any manner, the current staffing level of the Hermosa Beach Fire Department.
- Personnel will wear out, and the size of the headquarters team is insufficient to provide the necessary oversight for firefighting and paramedic services.

# Fire District Proposal

- The District's proposal also includes fire prevention services and all needed emergency incident command, headquarters support, and oversight services.
- Multiple units for serious emergencies (e.g., a First Alarm building fire) would bring the closest units from existing Hermosa Beach mutual aid partners, as well as District units that are approximately five miles away.
- For catastrophic emergencies, the District would send all the needed regular and specialty resources, such as engines, aerial ladders, helicopters, and technical rescue and hazardous materials response teams.
- The District's dispatch center would handle the Hermosa Beach units as it does all its regional units.
- The District's Lifeguard headquarters is in Hermosa Beach and that staff can assist as first responders.



## Finding #2

- Citygate finds the District's services proposal completely meets the operational needs, present and future, for Hermosa Beach's risks and expected emergencies.
- There is no way a one-station fire agency can ever cost effectively afford the headquarters team bench depth, specialties, and extra technical response capacity as found in the District's proposal.

## Finding #3

- Citygate finds that the District's proposal adequately and fairly addresses the usual and customary fire service conversion costs, both personnel and operating assets.
- Citygate did not find any issues to be added.



## Finding #4

- Citygate reviewed the District formula and detailed Uniform Personnel Cost supporting materials and concurs in the adequacy and appropriateness of using this information to develop the District's personnel costs in the Hermosa Beach proposal.

## Finding #5

- The District overhead expense format, and the way the District calculates and distributes the costs among fire stations, fairly distributes the benefits of supervision, supplies, equipment, etc., that each station and station labor need to operate.

## Finding #12

- Significant capital cost savings occur for the City if it chooses to contract with the District and have the District rehabilitate the current fire station at an estimated cost of \$2,091,000 as compared to an estimated cost of \$14,684,523 if the City retains its own fire station and constructs the needed headquarters offices and fire station.

## Finding #13

- Even with three added chief officers and three added firefighter/paramedics, an independent, one-station fire department will always be fragile and subject to personnel vacancies and a limited fiscal ability to provide all typical fire service programs within regulatory compliance.
- For nearly the same cost, the City, in a contract with the District, purchases comprehensive, sustainable fire services.

# Questions?

