

# KPMG Operational and Performance Review

## *Fire Department Recommendation Response*

### Recommendation 1.1

*Expand data-driven, demand-based staffing, leveraging geographic and temporal trends in calls for service.*

*Action One: Proactively schedule additional staff for high workload periods to increase capacity to respond to calls for service.*

**The Fire District generally agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District is investigating a deployment and staffing system. This would ensure that staffing decisions are data driven and captured electronically. Worth noting, the recommendation to move toward a 12-hour shift may be excellent in concept, however it is typically more costly and difficult to staff. The Fire District does currently “upstaff” with 12 and 24 hour shifts as events and conditions warrant. We have been discussing different deployment and staffing software systems within the organization for roughly a year. It will likely take 2 different programs to meet the recommendation by KPMG . Target date for purchase and implementation is July 2024**

*Action Two: Explore options to deploy fast-response vehicles to respond to medical calls.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District is currently exploring options to deploy EMS fast-response vehicles. We believe the use of 2-person squads and/or ambulances are appropriate for low-level medical emergencies and/or public assists. Targeted for FY 2022-23**

*Action Three: Review scheduling of activities such as training, inspections, and community engagement during low-demand times.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. In 2020 through 2022, our training schedule was impacted by COVID due to a lack of an online training classroom platform. With the roll-out of Microsoft 365 and the Microsoft Teams Application we now can offer trainings remotely that will prevent future disruptions of our training. (Currently Underway)**

**The Fire District historically has strived to schedule training, inspections and community engagement during low-demand times. For example, occupancy inspections primarily occur in January, February and March. All-risk training such as USAR and structure fire operations also occur during winter months. This has been a long-standing practice of the Fire District. Some exceptions include the mandatory wildland refresher training, which occurs just prior to the start of fire season, and defensible space inspections which occur during fire season after seasonal vegetation has cured.**

### Recommendation 1.2

*Revise emergency medical protocols to more efficiently and effectively triage and manage demand.*

*Action One: Revise dispatch protocols to expand use of an “ambulance alone” response to most efficiently respond to low-urgency medical calls*

The Fire District does not disagree with the recommendation; however, the LEMSA has oversight of the ambulance deployment policies. The Fire District does not have oversight or authority over the LEMSA. The Fire District sees opportunity to work with the LEMSA for single vehicle response when the Regional Fire Communications Center (RFCC) goes live.

*Action Two: Create a telehealth program to separate nonemergency calls from emergency calls.*

The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District plans on implementing a “nurse advice line” in partnership with local healthcare providers through the accredited EMD system in the new RFCC. This will occur with medical oversight from the LEMSA.

*Action Three: Partner with LEMSA to stage ambulances in the highest-demand emergency calling areas in the fire protection district.*

The Fire District agrees with the recommendation and will continue to partner with the LEMSA to ensure that the Fire District is meeting the needs of the communities in which it serves.

## Recommendation 1.3

*Better define CAD problem and incident types to accurately capture incident and response data.*

*Action One: Develop clear call-type categories to accurately capture incident and response data.*

The Fire District agrees and has every intention of expanding its use of EMD once the RFCC is fully operational. The RFCC will be a fully accredited dispatch center for fire, rescue and EMS. Dispatch is currently managed and performed by the County Sheriff.

*Action Two: Expand data tracking related to Mutual Aid.*

The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District tracks mutual aid out-of-county incident costs and revenues. While this data is already being captured, the Fire District continues to look for methods/programs to improve data reporting and the associated analytics to include the recording of the jurisdiction to which the Department and staff are providing aid to enable a more granular analysis of the Department’s mutual aid workload. Target Date July 2024

## Recommendation 2.1

*Enhance processes for tracking the cost of services delivered and revenue generated by Tax Rate Area (TRA) within the County, as well as cost recovery for Mutual Aid provided to jurisdictions outside of the County, to better track the costs and reimbursements of the Department’s services.*

*Action 1: Enhance processes for data tracking and analysis to calculate workload by incident.*

The Fire District agrees with the recommendation and efforts are currently underway to identify a standard system status management application to automate data collection. However, it is important to note that all costs associated with any incident are currently tracked for reporting purposes. Targeted roll-out January 2024

*Action 2: Develop consensus on methodology to calculate cost per station and workload hour.*

The Fire District agrees with the recommendation and efforts are currently underway to identify a standard system status management application to automate data collection that will allow

**granularity of workload hour calculation. The Fire District is able to track both station and unit/hour cost; however, we are rarely asked for this data. Target roll-out January 2024**

*Action 3: Enhance processes to compare revenue by TRA region to annual workload or cost recovery by incident to incident workload.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The District agrees that it should further enhance the tracking of revenue and expenses by TRA. The Fire District will work with the CEO Office to determine appropriate software to accomplish this. Target July 2024**

## Recommendation 2.2

*Develop more transparent and equitable cost-sharing processes for Air Support Unit between Sheriff and Fire to support fair allocation of costs and increased transparency.*

*Action 1: Develop separate ASU budgets to increase transparency and clearly define which costs will be shared between departments or funded independently.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District is working closely with the CEO and Sheriff's Office to better define the appropriate shared costs and those funded independently. We support separate ASU budgets.**

*Action 2: Separate maintenance costs by vehicle and department to most fairly allocate costs based on vehicle usage.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District will partner with the Sheriff's Office and the CEO's Office to collaboratively develop uniform fleet rates and a pilot/mechanic time coding structure to properly capture chargebacks when using the Sheriff's Office's fleet, as some apparatus are a shared resource. The Fire District, in partnership with the Sheriff's Office, will employ a monthly or quarterly charge-back mechanism to true up any usage costs between the departments.**

## Recommendation 2.3

*Better forecast and prioritize capital planning in conjunction with General Services, to undertake a strategic prioritization of projects.*

*Action One: Develop priority scores for station rebuilds to establish relative priority for upgrades and resulting funding commitments.*

**The Fire District agrees and is currently partnering with General Services to develop a comprehensive CIP for all Fire District facilities. This will be completed within calendar year 2022.**

*Action Two: Develop a schedule for the purchase of medical equipment and apparatuses for use in ALS services.*

**The Fire District agrees with this recommendation. The Fire District has historically maintained a 'big-ticket' tracking sheet to forecast the replacement needs for all major equipment and apparatus. The Fire District will ensure that this tracking sheet is shared with all staff so that they are aware of the replacement plan. The Fire District has a strong and viable replacement process in place, but maintenance processes can and should be strengthened. Target completion July 2023**

## Recommendation 2.4

*Create an inventory management strategy to accurately account for assets and help minimize risk*

*Action One: Clearly define roles and responsibilities to help ensure accountability.*

**The Fire District agrees with this recommendation and has ensured that the appropriate staff are aware of their role(s) in the inventory management process. In addition, the District will outline expectations related to inventory management within job descriptions and through written policy. Target completion April 2022**

*Action Two: Refine policies and procedures to include a physical inventory count.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District is in the process of identifying an industry-specific inventory management system. Targeted roll-out of January 2023**

**The logistics section has existing controls in place to monitor all key inventory at the stations and on apparatus via the Fulcrum application. Currently, there are regular checklists completed by station staff and frequent site visits performed by logistics to ensure that assets are accounted for. All equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) per Fire District policy are checked daily, weekly and monthly to include assets and all PPE. Per Fire District policy and procedures, division chiefs are required to inspect all equipment and PPE quarterly to ensure compliance. The logistics and finance sections work together to track all safety and asset allocations annually. When items are replaced, they are accounted for by station/location to Fire District fiscal staff.**

*Action Three: Automate the inventory management process to gain inventory viability.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation and is currently evaluating several inventory management software applications. It is the goal of the Fire District to have this deployed in fall 2022.**

## Recommendation 3.1

*Implement processes to enhance consistency, streamline workload, and measure performance of inspections program*

*Action One: Establish and operationalize a Fire Prevention inspection "checklist" in order to maintain consistency in how inspections are carried out.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. Per the recommendation, the Fire District will develop a comprehensive checklist, as a supplement to the Guidebook, providing quick guidance to personnel on spotting hazardous conditions, what areas to focus on, and what questions to ask an occupancy to ensure a safe, thorough, and accurate inspection. Target completion July 2023**

**The Fire District currently has an Inspection Guidebook with detailed information about Fire Code, inspection processes, permits, and fire protection services. The Guidebook is available at all station libraries and is also located in the Vector Solutions library. The Guidebook does need to be updated. This District will ensure that all staff know where to locate the resource documents.**

*Action Two: Establish an inspections database or case management system in order to increase collaboration and transparency between parties requiring inspections data.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District is analyzing the feasibility of switching to Accela to provide a more robust inspections database or case management system that includes all applicable properties within the County and information including business name, address, occupancy type, property use, and approved occupancy loads, past inspection details, and building plans where appropriate.**

**The Fire District currently utilizes Imagetrend for our RMS for occupancy inspections; however, the Fire District agrees that Accela would be a better option than Imagetrend. Target January 2024**

*Action Three: Implement more detailed performance measures for inspections to understand workload and backlog.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District agrees with most of the findings related to expanding performance measures related to the inspection program. Implementing Accela will help support the recommendations in Action Three. Target January 2024**

*Action Four: Implement a self-inspection program for low-risk businesses to alleviate inspections workload.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District has engaged in a self-inspection program called B-Safe. The program had marginal success and the general observation based on feedback from both prevention and operations staff was to return to an active inspection program. The target occupancies were low-risk, non-permit B and M which currently are inspected every other year. We will revisit B-Safe and implement for appropriate occupancies. Target July 2023**

## Recommendation 4.1

*Strengthen performance measurement processes to enable continuous improvement and regular evaluation of progress toward established targets.*

*Action One: Develop comprehensive KPIs and analytics at the personnel, station, battalion, and Department levels to increase management visibility into Department operations.*

**The Fire District partially agrees. Management visibility into department operations is currently performed by three 24-hour chief officers assigned groups of stations and personnel. However, the Fire District is in the process of reviewing standard system status management applications that would be integrated with the CAD system to enhance data-driven decision making for leadership and provide improved transparency into daily operations. Target July 2024**

*Action Two: Expand response time tracking to vehicle, station, battalion, and Department levels to enable continuous improvement related to this key metric.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District has the ability to track these metrics, would benefit from the implementation of a standard system status management application. A standard system status management application would be integrated with the CAD system to enhance data-driven decision making for leadership. Target July 2024**

*Action Three: Develop a data-driven feedback and problem-solving loops for management performance at the vehicle, station, battalion, and Department levels.*

The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District will develop KPI's at the individual level, analyze these on a regular basis. While the Fire District conducts regular personnel evaluations and meetings between Labor and Management, the District would benefit from creating a more formal structure to provide timely performance feedback at an individualize level. We are currently assessing a system used by another fire agency within the County. Target purchase and implementation July 2024

## Recommendation 5.1

*Better enable the training of new staff and establish pipelines for recruiting talent to enhance workforce development, succession planning, and Department resiliency.*

*Action One: Establish permanent positions and a clear annual work plan to increase hand crew resiliency and retention.*

The Fire District partially agrees with the recommendation. The Fire District currently plans and shares the annual fuels work plan by the hand crews with outside stakeholders. We will develop a methodology to share the workplan with the workforce. Our hand crews are currently a mix of full and part-time employees. They are seasonal crews. We have no immediate plans to add more permanent position.

*Action Two: Provide increased support for training and training compliance to confirm accountability of completion.*

The Fire District agrees with the recommendation but also believes it is currently being accomplished. This is a current business practice of the Fire District. Fire District required trainings for promotion are voluntary. Not all employees have the desire to promote to higher ranks which is why this is provided as a voluntary opportunity. The Fire District does provide required training in-house as feasible and/or appropriate. It is important to note that required training for promotion is voluntary by design and like any educational requirement (i.e. AA, BA, certifications, etc.), while there are Fire District educational incentives written into policy, the costs associated with obtaining these degrees or certifications is borne upon the employee who wishes to promote within an organization. They are not mandatory classes to hold the position of firefighter.

The Fire District has a very comprehensive training accountability program run by "Vector Solutions". This program tracks and maintains records for all Fire District employees regarding the status of all required training. The Training section oversees this program and consistently notifies employees if and when a particular training requirement is overdue and requires completion. There is one dedicated full time FTE that tracks and ensures compliance with all training requirements. In addition, it is the responsibility of chief officers and captains to monitor and ensure their staff are meeting their training obligations for the organization. To the knowledge of the Fire District, all expectations/deliverables are being met.

*Action Three: Improve the standard operating procedures (SOPs) by position to minimize single points of failure and document day-to-day tasks and procedures.*

The Fire District agrees with recommendation. The Fire District currently delivers a comprehensive, internal two-week Captains Academy for all captains on the list regarding how to be a supervisor, leader, listener, daily planner and operational tactician for any emergency response. The Academy

also covers personnel issues, fire inspections, human resources concerns, FBOR, public service, administration, budget and finance programs. The Fire District delivers a comprehensive annual Battalion Chiefs Workshop, open to fire agencies from across the entire Santa Barbara Operational Area, on how manage large wildland fires, organizational ICS management, resource deployment, communications, teamwork, transition of command, evacuations and logistical support. Fire District personnel attend the L-series NWCG Leadership classes to prepare captains and battalion chiefs for operational supervisory and management positions. With the addition of the third battalion, the span of control for battalion chiefs to mentor, coach, develop and succession plan Fire District captains has been enhanced tremendously.

**We will organize our current SOPs by position where it is appropriate and create job expectation SOPs. Target July 2023**

## Recommendation 6.1

*Digitalize paper processes to alleviate workload on engine companies, dispatch, and administration.*

*Action One: Increase efficiency and automate workflows, digitize old and new files, and educate constituents.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. This recommendation will be addressed within the technology plan. Target implementation July 2023**

## Recommendation 6.2

*Develop information technology plan and process to assess and establish current and future technology needs*

*Action One: Establish committee to develop IT plan and process in coordination with General Services ICT.*

**The Fire District agrees with the recommendation. The fire service is seeing a significant shift of technology integration within operations and an overall need for full digitization of manual processes. The Fire District is currently developing a plan to meet these future needs of operations. The integration of technology will help streamline everything from pre-planning, to emergency mitigation, to post-incident analysis. The Fire District will establish the committee in the spring of 2022.**