

MOTION

Over a decade ago the City suffered a recessionary impact on government revenues which forced departments to reduce resources and cease hiring. Due to severe citywide financial constraints during the last recession, in Fiscal Year 2011-12 the Los Angeles Fire Department was forced to remove 11 engine companies and seven light-force truck companies, through the implementation of a deployment plan and other staffing adjustments. As a result, these changes impacted call loads and response times.

As economic conditions improved over the years, and with the availability of other funding sources such as the Staffing for Adequate Fire Emergency Response (SAFER) grants, eight engine companies and one light-force truck company have been restored. In 2016 and 2017, the Fire Department was awarded back to back SAFER grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which allowed for the restoration of engine companies and staffing levels at four Fire Stations (FS) across the City - FS 1 in Lincoln Heights, FS 20 in Echo Park/Silver Lake, FS 73 in Reseda and FS 75 in Mission Hills - and the restoration of a light-force deployment at Fire Station 38 in Wilmington. These locations were selected to be restored based on call load in order to improve response times, and enhance public safety and services in those areas.

The foothill communities in the Seventh Council District are especially prone to fires and deserve full restoration of fire resources and personnel as well as the addition of fire facilities to adequately safeguard the area. The communities of Sylmar, Lake View Terrace, Shadow Hills, Sunland, and Tujunga are overlaid in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and High Wind Velocity Zones and have endured large scale fires in recent history including the Sayre Fire in 2008, the La Tuna and Creek Fires in 2017, and the Saddleridge Fire in 2019. Fortunately the City's top caliber firefighting force successfully responded to these fires, saving both life and property.

Fire Station 74 in Tujunga was one of the eleven engine companies that was taken out of service to address the City's financial crisis and has yet to be restored. In Sylmar, Fire Station 91 has the largest service area in the City at eight square miles. In 2017, because of the large coverage area, other units were required to respond to FS 91's service area over 4500 times compared to responses by units into other service areas averaging under 2300 times. Due to the large service area, the response time for FS 91 has typically been longer than the National Fire Protection Association's six-minute guideline for response time to a fire emergency. In response to the needs, ambulance resources have been expanded to improve fire response efficiencies, such as Fast Response Vehicles and Advance Provider Response units, and alternative deployment models have been introduced to free fire personnel for fire response such as the new announced Therapeutic Van Pilot program with the County. Additionally, through the leadership of this office, the City was able to restore the helipad on Olive View Medical Center's property in Sylmar that was destroyed during the Sayre Fire in 2008 which proved conveniently useful during the Saddleridge Fire.

The 96,000 residents of Sylmar deserve an additional Fire Station in their community and the City needs to prioritize and explore all resources to fulfill this long obligated commitment. While the Sylmar community is long overdue for additional investments in fire response resources, other fire prone and disenfranchised communities across the City need to be prioritized as well.

The November 2020 California ballot included Proposition 19, which provides reassessment of property tax on properties transferred in ownership by inheritance should the property not be utilized as a primary residence. A majority of the state savings resulting from the increased property tax collections will go to historically underfunded rural and urban fire districts and CAL FIRE. Though the passage of Proposition 19 is not final, but expected, the City should begin to investigate the projected revenue and identify a process to secure resources for our City

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst be directed to report on Proposition 19's projections to generate increased revenues for City fire service, and on the steps necessary to ensure the City receives its share of any additional tax revenue resulting from the passage of this measure.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Fire Department, with assistance from the City Administrative Officer and the Chief Legislative Analyst, be directed to report on available funding sources to expand fire facilities and resources, including a plan to expand staffing and facilities in Sylmar and restore the engine company at Fire Station 74 in Tujunga, projected need of any additional drill tower classes, and prioritize the restoration and expansion of fire resources in similar fire prone and disenfranchised communities across the City.

PRESENTED BY: _____
MONICA RODRIGUEZ (verbal)
Councilwoman, 7thDistrict

SECONDED BY: _____
BOB BLUMENFIELD (verbal)
Councilmember, 3rd District