



CITY OF POMONA

COUNCIL REPORT

September 15, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Anita D. Scott, City Manager

Submitted By: Mark J. Gluba, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: REPORT BACK ON FIRE SERVICES DELIVERY OPTIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council take the following actions:

- 1) Receive and consider the presentation outlining three pathways for ensuring the continued provision of fire and EMS services for the City; and
- 2) Authorize the formation of a Pomona City Council Ad Hoc Committee to further evaluate a regional collaboration for fire and EMS service with the City of La Verne which will report updates to their respective City Councils; and
- 3) Direct Staff to initiate Phase 2, including a detailed financial analysis and modeling, evaluation of governance structures, coordination with LAFCO, resource deployment, assessment of resource deployment, and exploration of EMS system opportunities; and
- 4) Direct Staff and the Ad Hoc Committee to report back to the City Council no later than December 2025, with the results of Phase 2 and recommended next steps for the provision of fire and EMS services.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Publishing of the City Council Agenda was delayed to allow staff to incorporate the outcomes of the recent meeting with the Los Angeles County Fire District and ensure that this report reflects the most up-to-date fire services cost estimates and information.

The City of Pomona (City) and the Los Angeles County Fire Protection District (LACoFD) are two years into a five-year extension of their ongoing fire services contract that began in 1994 (the 1994 Agreement) and find themselves in a mutually unaffordable contract situation.

LACoFD has determined that it must change the contract and increase the contract cost in order to secure additional cost recovery for Fire Services. As discussed by the Council at its meeting on July 7, 2025, the additional contract cost proposed by LACoFD would create an unmanageable

fiscal obligation and place severe strain on the City's budget, particularly in light of current budget constraints, and could force potentially devastating cuts to other essential City services.

In light of the one-year notice of termination of the 1994 Agreements issued on April 16, 2025, by the LACoFD which provides for the effective provision of fire services to the City effective on April 15, 2026, the City retained Emergency Services Advisors, Inc. (ESA) to conduct a preliminary analysis of fire and EMS service delivery models. The City recognizes and values the services provided by LACoFD over the past 30 years. However, given LACoFD's termination of the fire services contract, the City faces an urgent need to identify future pathways for fire and EMS services. ESA proposed a three-phase approach to address this need.

Phase 1 work has included:

- Review of Fire services history and organizational foundational documents
- Identifying studies and analytics needed for project success
- Early identification of project outcome options for fire/EMS service delivery
- Comprehensive financial analysis of project outcome pathways
- Facility condition assessment of fire stations

A regional collaboration with La Verne has emerged as a strong, promising option, offering substantial long-term savings, economies of scale, and expanded paramedic services through paramedic-staffed engines. This model appears both fiscally and operationally sustainable and is worth pursuing through more detailed analysis in Phase 2.

Further information on proposed Phase 2 and Phase 3 work is outlined in the discussion.

SB1439/GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLICABILITY:

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FISCAL IMPACT:

Preliminary financial analysis utilized the projected costs of continuing in a contract with LACoFD as a baseline for comparing it to Pomona rebuilding its own fire department and a regionalized solution with the City of La Verne.

The analysis indicates savings in both options compared to a continuation of the contract with LACoFD.

Savings utilizing a model where Pomona has its own fire department could total more than \$8 million over a 10-year period of time. The savings are attributed to reduced overhead compared to the County system, and more direct control over staffing and benefit structures.

A regional model with La Verne could yield even greater savings totaling more than \$35 million over 10 years. In addition to the benefits listed in the Pomona model, additional savings are attributed to the economies of scale between the two cities, elimination of duplicative administrative positions, shared use of apparatus and reserve equipment, joint training and prevention programs, and the ability to spread fixed costs across a larger service population while still maintaining local control.

As discussed at the July 7, 2025, City Council meeting, the County's April 2024 proposal would increase fire and EMS costs by \$14.7M between FY 2025-26 and FY 2028-29 over existing Contract terms. This initial proposal included a LACoFD cost share of 1/3 in year 1, 2/3 in year 2, and the complete elimination of the cost share formula beginning in year 3. After the July City Council meeting, LACoFD sent correspondence providing slightly revised and updated numbers (**Attachment No. 1**) that included the FY 2025-26 adopted budget contract amount. Based on this update, the 4-year cost impact totals \$13.6M over existing contract terms. The main difference between the two proposals was that the FY 2025-26 budget contract only totaled \$37.7M in the new proposal when compared to the \$40.4M proposed originally. The incremental proposal to eliminate the cost share over three years included the same terms, but the start date would begin in FY 2026-27 instead of the proposed start of FY 2025-26.

As the City evaluates its options, staff discussed the cost associated with remaining in a contract with LACoFD for FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28. LACoFD proposed that without a full commitment to continued fire services the only option was a one-year contract at additional cost recovery with two six-month extensions. Partial cost sharing would not be available in those first two years, requiring the City to pay the total contract amount. Under this structure, the overall impact for FY 2025-26 through FY 2027-28 would be \$9.8M. Subsequently, LACoFD offered additional options in a scenario when staff met with LACoFD representatives on Wednesday, September 10, 2025 of a one-year contract at 50% cost recovery (FY 2026-27) with two six-month extensions at no cost recovery (FY 2027-28) that would be applied in the instance of Pomona's removal from the LACoFD representing an estimated \$3M savings over a three year period when compared to the previous offer thus netting \$6.8M in savings.

To conduct this analysis, consulting services have been provided by Emergency Services Advisors (ESA) and outside legal counsel services provided by Burke, Williams & Sorensen, totaling \$95k to date. A remaining budget of \$94k is available within the FY 2025-26 General Fund Budget. Additional appropriations may be necessary to complete the study, legal support, and analysis.

Additional financial and structural analysis is needed to provide a complete financial and operational picture of the savings and services afforded through the possible alternative fire service delivery models and to facilitate an informed comparison between the option of continuing service with LACoFD at significantly higher costs versus the alternative models.

PREVIOUS RELATED ACTION:

On January 20, 1994, the City Council approved an agreement with LACoFD. On April 5, 2004, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2004-90, approving an amendment to the agreement for Fire Services, adjusting certain service levels and changing the date for effective five (5) years renewal periods to May 1, 2004, and every five years after. On October 19, 2019, the City Council Adopted Resolution 2019-163 opting into a Fire District proposed revenue measure in an effort to

provide stabilized funding for Fire Services. This measure was not successfully passed. The City Council adopted the FY 2025-26 Operating Budget, Housing Authority Budget, and the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program on June 2, 2025. The FY 2025-26 General Fund budgeted appropriations totaled \$168.7M with estimated revenues budgeted at \$163.1M, resulting in a projected deficit (use of reserves) of \$5.5M. In addition, of the \$168.7M appropriated, \$6M in General Fund Department reductions are included, which is partially made up of 32 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) positions being “Frozen” for the entire fiscal year. On July 7, 2025, the City Council directed staff to continue analysis of Fire Services operational alternatives, in light of the Notice of Termination letter served to the City by LACoFD.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Potential environmental impacts on the community from the LACoFD’s noticed cancellation and potential service model changes will be evaluated, but are unknown at this time.

DISCUSSION

In 1994, the City of Pomona and LACoFD entered into a fee-for-service contract for Fire Services within the City. At the time of execution, the contract afforded the City an estimated savings of \$1.3M for Fire Services and touted a cost avoidance and benefit to LACoFD estimated at \$2.2M annually, due to the addition of two truck companies to service the region. The 1994 contract amount was \$12M with an assigned LACoFD cost share of \$2.2M for the addition of the two trucks. When comparing the 1994 contract amount of rate to the current FY 2025-26 amount of \$37.8M with the LACoFD cost share amount being \$5.7M, this equals an increase of \$25M, with the cost share increasing \$3.5M. It more than doubled, which would place the assumed benefit to LACoFD around \$5M in current dollars.

This District benefit was contractually acknowledged by the district through a cost-sharing agreement in which the District agreed to pay half the resource costs of each of truck company 187 and 181 (now 187 and 185). Truck companies are staffed with four (4) post positions, versus three for engine companies and represent additional personnel and resource costs.

The recent correspondence from Chief Marrone seeking additional cost recovery, does not acknowledge the contractually recognized cost avoidance for the District or the benefits of these resources. The nearest LACoFD operated truck company (Quint) in the region, outside of Pomona is located Glendora, with the majority of District stations operating with combinations of three (3) person engines and paramedic squads. During negotiations with the District, Chief Marrone declined suggestions to relocate truck companies to nearby District areas, which could have partially mitigated the impacts of the District’s proposal on Pomona.

On August 27, 2025, LACoFD Chief Marrone sent the City Manager a letter (**Attachment 2**) outlining a two-year extension and transition period for the City to continue its fire services analysis and indicated that the County Board of Supervisors is also considering initiating proceedings through the Los Angeles County Local Agency Formation Commission to detach and remove the City from LACoFD’s boundaries/service area and from LACoFD’s Sphere of Influence. Staff has continued efforts to negotiate an interim extension with LACoFD in order to provide sufficient time for analysis, comparison and potential transfer of fire service delivery

models. However, terms of Chief Marrone's proposed two-year extension call for implementation of full cost recovery beginning July 2026. This proposal represents worse financial terms than initially presented by the LACoFD for phased implementation and would expedite and exacerbate financial challenges presented by the District's cost recovery demands.

As mentioned herein, staff met with LACoFD representatives on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, to further discuss the terms of an interim extension. This meeting resulted in more favorable conditions for the City to consider. Specifically, the District proposed a potential transition phased cost recovery schedule, with FY 2026–27 at 50% cost recovery and FY 2027–28 at full cost recovery. The amounts referenced in the fiscal impact section of this report are estimated by staff based on discussions at the September 10, 2025 meeting and represent minor anticipated contract cost increases. These estimates are a well intended effort to reflect those discussions and have not been fully substantiated by the District in writing with a formal estimated fee calculation. Should the City determine to transition away from LACoFD during this timeframe, this phased schedule provides a more reasonable payment structure that might allow for an orderly and financially manageable transition. Additionally, LACoFD indicated a willingness to support a potential revenue-generating ballot measure for fire services should the City pursue one and affirmed their commitment to ensuring that newly approved Measure E funds generated in Pomona would remain dedicated to improvements within the City.

Taking all of these developments into consideration, staff believes it remains important to fully explore all service delivery options before making a final decision. While LACoFD has requested that the City provide its final determination by November 17, 2025, staff has indicated that an extension until the last Council meeting in December would provide a more reasonable and practical deadline for the City to complete its analysis and deliberations.

In accordance with City Council direction from the July 7, 2025, Meeting, staff has continued analyzing three pathways with a particular focus on the financial implications of each pathway. The three viable options for Fire and EMS service delivery include:

- Continuation of the contract between the City and LACoFD at full cost recovery.
- Creation of a stand-alone City of Pomona Fire Department.
- Regional collaboration with neighboring fire agency(s).

To date, significant Phase 1 project analysis has been conducted, indicating that while continuing with LACoFD avoids start-up costs, the status quo limits local control and exposes the City to ongoing cost escalations that are not sustainable. Utilizing the projected costs of continuing with LACoFD as a baseline, a stand-alone City department provides long-term flexibility and limited savings but requires significant up-front investment. A regional collaboration requires a similar initial investment but has the potential to provide significant long-term operating cost savings and expand Advanced Life Support paramedic service delivery with paramedic-staffed fire engines. In summary, pursuit of establishing a collaborated district model with the City of La Verne, appears to present the most fiscally and operationally sustainable option for Fire and EMS Services.

Staff recommends moving forward into Phase 2: Detailed Analysis of a regional collaboration with the City of La Verne, supported by the formation of a joint Ad Hoc Fire Services Committee. The

option for a standalone fire department and continuation of the contract with LACoFD remain as alternative solutions should further in-depth analysis prove them necessary.

Staff recommends moving forward into Phase 2: a detailed analysis of a regional collaboration with the City of La Verne, supported by the formation of a joint Ad Hoc Fire Services Committee. Phase 2 will include in-depth financial modeling, governance structure evaluation, deployment and staffing studies, facility condition assessments, and the development of potential leadership and funding frameworks. This phase will also involve coordinated work between ESA, City staff, and stakeholders to refine the operational and fiscal details of a possible joint district. Importantly, no application will be filed by LAFCO without one or both cities first adopting Resolutions of Application to formally initiate proceedings. The options of establishing a standalone fire department or continuing with LACoFD remain available as alternatives should further analysis demonstrate their necessity. Should the Councils agree upon completion of Phase 2, that establishment of a regional model would be in the best interests of both communities, Phase 3 would be implementation/district establishment, including a formal LAFCO process, establishment of governmental structure, apparatus/equipment acquisition, recruitment/selection and the orderly transition of Fire Services to the newly established model.

Simultaneously, ESA will work with City staff and stakeholders to conduct essential operational studies, including a deployment analysis, facility condition review, and financial modeling. These efforts will support the development of foundational systems necessary for the new district's success, including staffing models, leadership structures, and funding frameworks.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES & GOALS:

This item supports the 2021-2022 City Council Priority 1: Fiscal and Operational Responsibility (Take actions to ensure the fiscal sustainability of the City and make operational decisions that align with the City's core values and priorities) – Goal B: Improve efficiency and effectiveness of City services to businesses and residents."

Prepared by:

Mark J. Gluba
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ATTACHMENTS:

Attachments:

1. August 1, 2025, Letter from Chief Marrone
2. August 27, 2025 Letter from Chief Marrone