



TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Steven D. Powers, City Administrator

CC: John Seto, Safety Services Area Administrator

DATE: March 25, 2013

SUBJECT: Fire Restructure Proposal - Summary

During a Council Work Session on March 12, 2012, Fire Chief Hubbard presented a fire restructure plan. This plan called for the Ann Arbor Fire Department to deploy out of three fire stations, 1, 2 and 5. Since the presentation to Council, numerous means of communications to the public were initiated to obtain feedback. The following are examples and the amount of participation received:

- 6 public meetings at different locations of the city where a total of approximately 45 residents attended. Several of the meetings were also attended by Councilmembers and Fire Department Personnel.
- A2 Open City Hall contained this topic for three weeks and 37 people visited the site and it received 4 responses.
- Approximately 25 comments from e-mail correspondence to the city were received.

The majority of the comments received were not in support of the fire restructure proposal. However, the number of citizens that commented was a very small proportion of the overall population.

The following concerns were prevalent in the comments:

- *Deploying out of three stations is perceived as a reduction in staffing.*
There appears to be an assumption that fewer fire stations open equates to a reduction in firefighters on duty. . The focus of the proposed restructure is to meet fire industry standards and to improve safety to fire personnel by getting 4 firefighters to the scene within 4 minutes. The focus has not been staffing, and overtime, and reductions.
- *Medical response time by the fire department will increase with the 3 station model.*
HVA is the primary medical responder for the city.
- *Although there may be improved response times to fire scenes for some areas of the city, other areas will have an increase in response times.*

Additional information is in the attached summary. The actual comments are available if desired.

Fire Restructure Proposal Public Engagement

During the month of September 2012, six community meetings were held in five wards and were attended by the Fire Chief, Police Chief and City Administrator who presented the fire restructure proposal and solicited feedback from attendees. Of the six meetings, approximately 45 citizens attended plus several firefighters and Council members. In addition, during the month of October, a question was posed for three weeks on A2 Open City Hall, a new online public forum, asking for feedback from residents about the proposal. While 37 people visited the site, only four residents submitted comments (see report enclosed).

The community meetings and opportunities to learn about the proposal and provide feedback were promoted in various ways, including media; online vehicles such as the city website, e-notifications and social media; Community Television Network; and via the city's monthly newsletter and calendar.

From March through October, questions and comments have been tracked by city staff, and three common themes have emerged as most frequently asked questions: Response times; HVA responsibility; and Desire to increase fire coverage. Answers to the three most commonly asked questions are noted below in No. 1 – 3. In addition, answers to other questions asked are enclosed.

Top Three Frequently Asked Questions

1. How would an AAFD restructure impact response times?

Restructuring the Ann Arbor Fire Department allows the department to better satisfy the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health

Association (OSHA) firefighting guidelines and meet recommended response times. This plan would enable four firefighters to be staffed at each of the three stations vs. the current model that only allows for three firefighters to be staffed at each station. In addition, this proposal allows the Fire Department to better cover heavily populated areas with high run volumes, thus enhancing the safety of citizens and our firefighters. It also meets best practices for fire deployment, which was a recommendation of the International County Management Association Fire Study. For more detailed response information throughout the city, refer to enclosed 4-minute and 8-minute response time maps.

2. Who would answer emergency medical response calls?

Huron Valley Ambulance will continue to be dispatched and be responsible for providing emergency medical call service in Ann Arbor. HVA has been apprised of this proposal, and has assured the city it will make any adjustments that are necessary as a result of AAFD restructuring.

In addition, the AAFD has purchased a light rescue truck that will enable the department to utilize Tower 1 when Ladder 5 is down for repairs. Because the light rescue truck only requires two firefighters to staff it, then it would allow the department to cover the downtown area for medical calls when the Ladder 5 truck is out of service. In addition, light rescue trucks are designed to withstand heavy call volumes and would be utilized for approximately 70-percent of the department's medical responses so wear and tear on the department's larger trucks would be substantially reduced.

3. What would it take to staff four firefighters at five Fire Stations?

The Fire Department currently has 86 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees. In order to staff five fire stations, with four firefighters, the hiring of 12 firefighters would be necessary. The cost to hire 12 FTEs starting in fiscal year 2014 would be \$1,058,399. The cost for the first year would be \$936,963, plus a \$121, 536 one-time cost for equipment for these 12 positions, year 2 would be \$991,518, year 3 would be \$1,010,107, year 4 would be \$1,029,184, and year 5 would \$1,048,751 for these 12 positions. This amount would be in addition to the Fire Department's current personnel budget for its 86 FTEs.

Other Frequently Asked Questions

4. What does the AAFD restructure proposal involve?

The AAFD restructure proposal involves one Fire Department operating out of three Fire Stations. One station will be located on the north side of the city (Station 5), one on the south side of the city (Station 2) and one in downtown Ann Arbor (Station 1). The plan requires Fire Station 2 to be re-opened for fire service usage. This plan would enable four firefighters to be staffed at each of the three stations vs. the current model that only allows for three firefighters to be staffed at each station.

5. Why is the Ann Arbor Fire Chief proposing a department restructure?

The City of Ann Arbor aims to provide services that meet community needs while

balancing costs and available resources. While economic challenges impacting the City's budget and our financial future are improving, fiscal constraints remain a reality. How the City operated 10 years ago is an inadequate response to the community's needs today. Reviewing operations and proposing administrative changes to best serve the community is required of all city departments.

6. Are there firefighting guidelines that support this restructure proposal?

Yes. NFPA 1710: The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 rule sets guidelines for minimum standards for initial responses. The NFPA response standard is four people shall arrive within four minutes 90 percent of the time, and 13 people shall arrive within eight minutes, 90 percent of the time. The NFPA standard is based on a 2,000 square foot, single family, two-story home with no basement or exposures. The Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA) has a two-in/two-out law, which requires at least four personnel on scene before anyone can enter a burning building. The current AAFD response model includes three people staffed at each station and, therefore, two trucks have to be on-scene before fire personnel can enter a burning building.

The proposed restructuring plan is better suited to meet NFPA and OSHA compliance than the existing AAFD structure, as four fire personnel would depart from the same station and arrive on scene at once.

7. Would a restructure of fire stations impact homeowners' insurance rates?

The City of Ann Arbor does not control how individual insurance rates are set or the varying factors associated with determining an individual homeowner's insurance risk, i.e., age, type and quality of home, location to hydrants, your claims and credit history, deductible amount, riders, etc. While individuals do have some degree of control over what level of risk they pose to insurance companies who set homeowners insurance rates, individuals don't always have control over their level of risk. An increase in natural disasters like tornadoes and significant storms can raise the average cost increase of homeowners insurance. The continual increase in the price of building materials and labor all have to be absorbed by the insurance company and are ultimately reflected in individual homeowners insurance premiums as well.

Individuals need to contact their insurance company directly in order to better understand what factors the company uses to assess risk and set homeowner rates. For example, State Farm does not measure the distance of your home to a fire station but instead looks at the number of homeowners in the area who have submitted claims for fire losses to assess homeowner insurance risk. Some companies look at whether or not the area you live is susceptible to natural disasters or has experienced a natural disaster recently, such as a tornado, flood or wildfire.

8. How can I learn more about this proposal?

There are a variety of options available to citizens to learn about the Fire Restructure Proposal including:

- View the complete Fire Restructure Proposal with response-time maps at www.a2gov.org/government/financeadminservices/budgetguide/Pages/BudgetPublicProcess.aspx
- Watch Chief Hubbard's March 12 Work Session presentation of this proposal to City Council via CTN's video on Demand at <http://a2govtv.pegcentral.com> (use the pull-down menu at the top left of the screen to select "City Council," then scroll through the pages to find the March 12 meeting link).
- Watch an interview of Chief Hubbard on CTN's "Conversations" program via Video on Demand at <http://a2civity.pegcentral.com/> (use the pull-down menu at the top left of the screen to select "Conversations," then scroll through the pages to find the Chief Hubbard interview link).

9. If the AAFD is restructured, when and how will changes be evaluated?

If the AAFD is restructured, then changes will be evaluated semi-annually, beginning in the summer of 2013. The evaluation will be conducted by the Fire Chief and presented to the Safety Services Administrator and City Administrator and will include the analysis of fire loss data, fire fatalities and response time statistics to measure program effectiveness.