

# ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Date: February 12, 2018

Agenda Item No.: 12

Council Action Date: March 19, 2018

**To: Honorable Mayor and City Council**

**From: Dan Paranick, Interim City Manager  
David Endaya, Fire Chief**

**Subject: SERVICE LEVEL IMPACTS TO THE CITY OF VENTURA  
RESULTING FROM THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF VENTURA  
COUNTY FIRE STATION 26**

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the City Council review the anticipated service level impact to the City of Ventura resulting from the proposed closure of Ventura County Fire Protection District Station 26 and provide direction to staff based on the alternatives presented.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION**

None.

**DISCUSSION**

In addition to individual services provided by the various fire agencies within Ventura County, including the Ventura County Fire Protection District (VCFPD) and the City of Ventura Fire Department (Ventura Fire), the system operates under a regional model of service delivery. This regional model is primarily premised on two foundational arrangements, various mutual aid agreements, and what is referred to as the regional “closest resource” policy.

Under the mutual aid agreements, fire agencies within the County address regional fire emergency support amongst each other for fire fighting resources, including crews, equipment, and other personnel and services. Other specialized programs with the mutual aid structure include hazardous materials response, urban search and rescue operations, water rescue response, air vehicle response, support company response, and aircraft crash response. The mutual aid agreements are premised on shared resources when one or more agencies may need support beyond its own capabilities or where regional approaches to the given service prove to be more efficient.

Under the “closest resource” arrangement with the County, the closest available unit responds to any given emergency to include fire calls for service, medical calls for service, or other emergency related calls for service. This arrangement is intended to ensure the quickest possible emergency response for residents or those in need regardless of jurisdictional boundary.

While the services provided through the various mutual aid agreements and the “closest resource” arrangement within the County are somewhat separate and distinct agreements, they can, in fact, overlap from time to time depending on the nature and type of the emergency call.

Recently, as a part of its process to annex the City of Santa Paula into the VCFPD for the purposes of providing fire and rescue services, VCFPD has proposed closing Fire Station 26 which is located at 12931 West Telegraph Road, approximately 1.9 miles east of the City’s eastern city limit. Fire Station 26 is currently staffed and equipped with a Basic Life Support, three-person engine company. The Ventura County Board of Supervisors approved the application to annex the City of Santa Paula on July 25, 2017 and the LAFCO Board of Directors approved the annexation on January 17, 2018.

## **IMPACTS**

Because of the nature of the regionalized service agreements and related operational policies, the proposed closure of Station 26 is anticipated to have a service level impact to the City of Ventura. It is anticipated that Ventura Fire will assume additional “closest resource” responsibilities in those instances when a Ventura Fire engine is the closest engine to one-half of the area covering Station 26’s current area of responsibility and that Ventura will receive less support from Station 26 in those areas within the City where Station 26 may currently provide the closest engine.

The following provides historical call volumes for the past four years in those instances where the City provided service to the area outside of the City, to include the number of times Ventura Fire responded to a call, the number of times Ventura Fire was the First Apparatus (FA) to arrive on that call, and the number of times that Ventura Fire was the only FA to service the call.

2014: 8 City FA responded to 5 incidents total, ME6 was one of them 3 times

2015: 6 City FA responded to 6 incidents total, ME6 was one of them 6 times

2016: 12 City FA responded to 10 incidents total, ME6 was one of them 10 times

2017: 19 City FA responded to 9 incidents total, ME6 was one of them 7 times

The following provides historical call volumes for the past four years where VCFPD provided service to areas within the City, to include the number of times VCFPD responded to a call, the number of times VCFPD was the FA to arrive on that call, and the number of times that VCFPD was the only FA to service the call.

2014: 59 times total, first FA in = 45 times, only FA in = 26 times

2015: 32 times total, first FA in = 25 times, only FA in = 11 times

2016: 91 times total, first FA in = 74 times, only FA in = 39 times

2017: 61 times total, first FA in = 48 times, only FA in = 24 times

Based on an average of the historical data, it is anticipated that Ventura Fire will have to respond to an additional 45 more calls per year, outside of the City, as a result of Station 26 closing. Based on Ventura Fire's current total call volume of 16,100 annual calls in 2017, this represents an average increase of .12 more calls per day, or an average of one additional call for service every 8.1 days.

In addition to the calls that are anticipated as the result of the closure of Station 26, the closure will also impact service on the east side of Ventura as the result of residential growth in the area. The east side is expected to add 1,150 housing units in the future, of which approximately 685 are under construction. Based on a calls-per-household analysis, it is anticipated that this growth will generate an additional 470 service calls per year in the area. It is likely that Station 26 would have provided some service level support to those areas within the City. However, with the closure of Station 26, the City will not have the closer resources to rely upon for call support with the anticipated call growth.

While the closure of Station 26 is anticipated to have some immediate and longer-term service level impacts, as discussed, it is important to consider the nature of the current regional response system when analyzing the potential impacts that various resource decisions have within the context of the larger operational system. Regionally, through the County's centralized dispatch system, the "closest resource" policy ensures that fire agencies and ambulance companies, provide for the quickest possible service regardless of jurisdiction. In addition, as it is currently structured, the system allows for an automatic shifting of resources based on the number of units available amongst the various participating agencies. Under current agreements, when one agency's resources are depleted responding to an incident, apparatus from other agencies will cover the local jurisdiction.

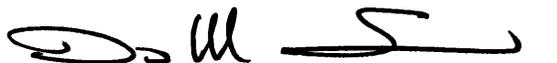
Coupled with mutual aid services, the closest resource policy and the shifting of resources substantially benefit the City within the context of the larger regional approach to service delivery. However, when viewed as a separate action and in this instance, the proposed closure of Station 26 is anticipated to have a service level impact on the City.

As it relates to the possible closure of Station 26, and in its discussion of the matter, the LAFCO Board of Directors noted and inquired as to the feasibility of the City of Ventura considering annexation into the VCFPD. Noting the regional nature of the service, and the fact that there are now only two cities within the County that are serviced by their own fire departments, the LAFCO Board encouraged the City to explore the possibility. In addition, as it relates to LAFCO's decision of January 17, 2018, a protest hearing has been scheduled for April 18, 2018, for those who wish to protest the annexation of the City of Santa Paula into the VCFPD. The protest hearing is limited to those that own property in, or are residents of the City of Santa Paula. However, City Council could direct staff to send a letter to LAFCO objecting the decision to proceed with the annexation.

**ALTERNATIVES**

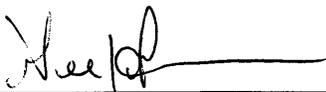
Based on the information provided, and in consideration of its direction to staff, the following are provided alternatives for City Council to consider:

- 1) Receive the report and take no further action;
- 2) Direct staff to formally work with VCFPD staff to explore methods for mitigating the service level impact caused by the proposed closure of Station 26;
- 3) Direct staff to send a letter objecting LAFCO's decision premised on the service level impact that the decision could have on the City of Ventura and its residents;
- 4) Direct staff to discuss and seek a formal proposal for the City of Ventura to annex into the Ventura County Fire Protection District for the purpose of providing fire and rescue services.



David Endaya  
Fire Chief

Reviewed as to fiscal impacts



Gilbert Garcia  
Finance and Technology Director

FORWARDED TO THE CITY COUNCIL



Dan Paranic  
Interim City Manager