

Date: August 25, 2026

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Kevin Riper, Director of Financial Management



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Response to Questions from the Budget Oversight Committee meetings and the City Council Budget Hearings on August 11, 2026, and August 18, 2026**

During the Budget Hearing held at the City Council Meeting on August 11, 2026, the Human Resources, Fire, and Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Communications Departments provided presentations on the Proposed FY 2027 Budget. The following week, during the Budget Oversight Committee (BOC) meeting on August 18, 2026, Public Works provided presentations on Traffic Safety Improvements and the Department's Traffic and Transportation Programs more broadly. Later, during the Budget Hearing held at the City Council Meeting on that same day, the Police, Health and Human Services, and Community Development Departments provided presentations on the Proposed FY 2027 Budget. This memorandum provides responses to questions and/or comments raised by City Council and the BOC during those meetings.

At the scheduled City Council Budget Hearing on August 11, 2026, the following questions were raised:

- 1. By removing Engine 14 from the Fire Department, how does that increase response times?**

The closure of a Long Beach Fire Department (LBFD) fire engine has the most direct impact on the immediate area it serves, as emergency coverage must be provided by surrounding fire units. The Fire Department Operations Bureau uses the data point of On-Scene Time to measure fire apparatus travel time to emergency incidents. LBFD evaluates response performance in two primary categories: (i) structure fire response and (ii) emergency medical services (EMS) response.

Structure Fire Response

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) prepares national fire, electrical, and life-safety codes industry standards and is used by LBFD to determine performance metrics and standards.

NFPA 1710 response-time standards are critical for structure fires because effective fire operations require the rapid assembly of a significant number of fire personnel to perform multiple coordinated tasks, including fire attack, search and rescue, ventilation, water supply, and command. Unlike many other emergencies, the arrival of a single fire engine, truck or ambulance does not provide enough personnel to

safely perform all necessary operations. Timely assembly to fully mitigate the structure fire threat is essential and supports compliance with the fire industry best practice of the two-in/two-out requirement. Two-in and two-out is a fire safety practice, which requires two fire sworn personnel to remain outside a structure fire while the other two fire sworn personnel enter a building to mitigate the fire threat and perform victim rescues.

NFPA 1710 establishes that the first engine should arrive within 4 minutes of travel time and the full effective response force within 8 minutes of travel time, at least 90 percent of the time. LBFD currently meets the 4-minute first-unit travel-time standard at 38.57 percent of the time. NFPA 1710 is considered a very, very difficult standard for any large City Fire Department to meet. Centralized reporting data for cities do not exist for this standard, and it does not appear from a web search that any major City Fire Department meets the NFPA 1710 standard.

EMS Response

NFPA 1710 EMS response-time standards emphasize deploying appropriately trained EMS personnel to the patient quickly so that assessment, stabilization, and medical treatment can begin as soon as possible. Unlike a structure fire response, where operational effectiveness depends heavily on rapidly assembling multiple fire apparatus and a substantial number of fire sworn personnel, the initial EMS objective can often be accomplished by a smaller number of qualified personnel who can immediately begin patient care. EMS response performance therefore places greater emphasis on the timely arrival of the first appropriate medical resource, while structure-fire performance requires both rapid initial arrival and the timely assembly of a larger effective response team for coordinated fireground operations.

NFPA 1710 standards establish that an ALS-equipped fire truck or fire engine should arrive within 4 minutes of travel time and an ALS ambulance within 8 minutes of travel time, at least 90 percent of the time. LBFD currently meets the 4-minute travel-time standard 40.77 percent of the time.

Proposed FY 27 Fire Engine 14 Closure

Structure Fires Response Time Impacts

When assessing the Station 14 area only, the closure of Engine 14 increases the average travel time for the first-arriving fire engine from 4:26 minutes to 5:33 minutes, representing a material increase in response time. This figure does not fully capture the additional delay associated with assembling the entire first-alarm structure-fire response, as fire engines from farther away will be required to complete the response assignment. In its current operation, Fire Engine 14 meets the 4-minute first-unit travel-time standard 42.52 percent of the time. With the closure of Fire Engine 14, this metric is forecasted to be met 15.11 percent of the time.

Although EMS calls account for roughly 85 percent of the calls in Fire Station 14's district, structure fires represent potential for significant loss of life, property damage, and a considerably greater associated financial impact.

When assessing the Citywide impact of closing Fire Engine 14, LBFD's current model results in an average response time of 4:46 minutes, meeting NFPA 1710 compliance standards 38.57 percent of the time. Fire Engine 14's closure is forecasted to increase the Citywide fire-unit travel time to 4:49 minutes with a 37.38 percent 4-minute compliance rate.

EMS Response Time Impacts

The closure of Engine 14 is projected to increase the first-apparatus arrival time from 4:52 minutes to 5:46 minutes, an increase in response time of 54 seconds. The difference compared with structure-fire response times is due to the availability of Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) Paramedic Rescue Ambulances, which may qualify as the first-arriving apparatus on EMS incidents, whereas structure-fire response calculations rely on the arrival of fire engines.

Although the majority of calls in Fire Station 14's district - roughly 2,000 per year - are EMS incidents, the Paramedic Rescue Ambulance that will relocate from Fire Station 4 to Fire Station 14 already responds to approximately 12-13 calls per 24-hour shift, resulting in 6-7 transports to local emergency departments. During these patient transports, the unit is unavailable for additional emergency responses. Hospital turnaround time is generally about one hour before the Paramedic Rescue Ambulance becomes available again, during which time coverage must be provided by units from other areas.

Impact on Surrounding Stations

The closure of Engine 14 will have the greatest impact on the immediately surrounding stations: Stations 4, 8, and 22. Engines assigned to these districts will continue responding to calls within their own station districts while also providing additional coverage for calls in Fire Station 14's district. This secondary impact is difficult to fully capture through response-time modeling because each time a surrounding unit is committed to an emergency in Station 14's district, it becomes unavailable in its own area and may require a unit from farther away to provide coverage, increasing travel times elsewhere. In this scenario, units from Stations 17, 10, 2, and 5 will also contribute to emergency response coverage. As a result, the impact of closing Engine 14 extends beyond Station 14's district and is progressively absorbed throughout the citywide response system.

It is important to recognize that this represents a reduction in emergency service capacity. With seven engines already responding to more than 15 emergency incidents per 24-hour shift, Fire Department Operations Bureau is evaluating options to remove lower-priority calls for service from the dispatch protocol to reduce

systemwide workload and preserve response-time performance. This will result in a system-wide service reduction.

2. How will employee wellness be addressed in the Fire and Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Communications Departments?

The Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Communications Department (DPEC) will continue to promote employee wellness by providing mental health support via The Counseling Team International and our internal peer support program; workplace amenities to make long shifts more comfortable for staff, like full kitchens, gym and locker rooms, quiet rooms and outdoor spaces; and celebrating the incredible work our staff do not only during annual Public Safety Dispatcher Week and graduation ceremonies, but also throughout the year with our "Excellence in Service" recognition program. Additionally, DPEC will continue to partner with its staff to identify new ways to improve wellness; for example, the department is currently researching healthy vending machine options that will allow staff to purchase salads, sandwiches and other nutritious meals at all times.

The LBFD supports several one-time and ongoing programs to prioritize and emphasize employee wellness. A summary of these programs as well as future opportunities to enhance these efforts is provided below.

One-Time Support from the Community

In FY 25, LBFD received a generous community donation of \$30,000 to fund wellness efforts in the department. This August, funds will be used to support muscular therapeutic clinics. The fire service is susceptible to occupational injuries, respiratory illness, musculoskeletal pain, and mental health strain. The clinics will provide therapy and treatment such as chiropractic, cupping, stretching, and acupuncture services.

Initiatives with Structural Support

The LBFD in partnership with the Human Resources Department, has an ongoing annual contract with The Counseling Team International that provides all LBFD employees with access to clinicians to support mental health needs. This program provides all fire sworn and professional staff access to mental health clinicians with a specialty in public safety support.

Additionally, LBFD provides ongoing operation and support to the LBFD's Critical Stress Debriefing (CISD) and Peer Support program. LBFD's CISD and Peer Support programs are composed of LBFD employee volunteers who receive specialty training in CISD and peer support resources. When LBFD employees encounter traumatic incidents or are facing a mental health incident, CISD and Peer Support are available for access to provide resources and guidance.

Finally, LBFD operates its Annual Wellness Program in partnership with Sana Ana College to promote overall fitness and wellness for fire sworn staff. LBFD fire sworn staff are invited to participate in wellness-related lectures, participate in blood draws and assessment, a fitness assessment test, and completion of workout logs.

Future Opportunities and Initiatives

Certain cancers are recognized as a presumptive occupational injury for firefighters under California Labor Code §3212.1. At the federal level, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program has released grant funding for cancer preventative measures and general health and wellbeing support. LBFD is pending final determination of its grant application and award status.

At the scheduled Budget Oversight Committee meeting on August 18, 2026, the following questions were raised:

1. Is the “Vibe City” a citywide branding or tourism branding, and what fund did the branding come from?

In the FY 25 Adopted Budget, as a part of the Mayor’s Recommendations, \$500,000 was appropriated from the Special Advertising and Promotions Fund Group (SAP) on a one-time basis to expand the City’s marketing, tourism, and advertising efforts to raise the City’s national and international profile and attract new business investment and jobs to locate to Long Beach.

On June 9, 2026, an item was brought before the City Council to amend an existing agreement with Meet Long Beach to extend the agreement term and expand its scope of services. The scope of services expansion was so that Meet Long Beach, to the extent possible, could support planning and activities and special projects related to City tourism branding, marketing, major events, and economic development initiatives that elevate Long Beach as a destination for music, entertainment, sports, and tourism, and that promote and support small businesses. The eventual creation of the tourism brand “Vibe City” was one result of these efforts. In Meet Long Beach’s presentation that night, the Meet Long Beach team reviewed the Vibe City brand. This brand is intended to support the City’s outward-facing branding and tourism-marketing efforts to establish Long Beach on the national and international stage with iconic imagery, messaging and positioning.

The FY 27 Proposed Budget requests one-time funding to advance the citywide Long Beach “Vibe City” advertising and branding initiative, in partnership with Meet Long Beach in the amount of \$150,000 from SAP.

SAP is a Special Revenue Fund dedicated to the specific purposes of advertising, promotional, and public relations projects calling attention to the City, its natural advantages, resources, enterprises, attractions, climate, and facilities. Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) collected by Long Beach hotels and short-term rentals is the

largest source of revenue for the fund. The current tax rate is 13% of the nightly room rent, 6% of which is allocated to the General Fund Group, and six percent to the SAP Fund Group. The remaining one percent was added per the 2020 voter approved Measure B (TOT) and is intended for the City's arts organizations and the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center per City Council Resolution. Other sources of SAP revenue include studio filming permits, special events licenses, and other permits and fees.

2. How can the community micro-grant program work if the Council Districts administered the program?

In FY26, the Community Development Department administered just over \$130,000 in funds supporting Neighborhood Microgrants. The funds came from the General Fund as a combination of \$29,000 in unspent FY25 carryover plus \$103,000 in new FY26 funding. As of August 2026, all funds have been fully expended, supporting more than 20 community organizations who hosted 34 neighborhood serving campaigns and events:

Organization	Event
Alamitos Beach Neighborhood Association	Halloween Festival
AOC7	Women's Symposium
Association of Social Butterflies	Bird Watching and Planting Event
Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association	Butterfly Mural CERT Program Training
Bluff Park Neighborhood Association	Fall Harvest Block Party
CLIMB Central Long Beach	Art Wraps on 10th Street Cook and Connect Healthy Meals for Families Movie and Craft Event
College Square Neighborhood Association	School Backpacks Security Camera Program Security Lighting Program Turkey Giveaway
Deforest Chapter North Long Beach	Chili Cook Off Earth Day Event Lunch with a Cop Event
El Dorado Park Estates	Jazz in the Park Winter Wonderland Event
Friends of Miracle Park on 4th Street	Celebration of Butterflies and Pollinators
Greenbelt Heights Neighborhood Association	Annual Movie Night Event Chili Cook Off

Historic St. Anthony Neighborhood Association	Art Fest
Lindbergh Circle Neighborhood Association	Alley Cleanup
Los Cerritos Neighborhood Association	Rock the Block Event
Roosevelt/Linden Historic Association	Mama J Jacket Giveaway
Rose Park Neighborhood Association	Annual Summer Picnic
South of Conant Neighborhood Watch	Neighborhood Watch Yard Signs
West Long Beach Advocacy Group	P.E.A.C.E. in the Park Event
West Long Beach Advocate Group	Tax Preparation Assistance
Willmore City Community Association	Back To School Event Willmore Community Breakfast Willmore Pet Wellness Clinic Winter Wonderland Event
Wrigley Area Neighborhood Alliance, Inc.	Spirit of Christmas on Daisy Avenue

The administration of the microgrant program is very labor intensive and requires significant resources to run. A robust program requires oversight to ensure consistency and transparency, and the tasks to administer the program include marketing and solicitation of applications, design and management of a grant application process, reviewing and correcting documentation, requesting and processing reimbursements, and monitoring for compliance. With the proposed reductions in the FY27 budget, Community Development has less capacity to oversee this work. Based on FY26 actuals, it requires \$64k to support disbursement of \$100k. The former employee overseeing this program has retired, and that position is part of the Community Development Department's service reductions to address declining grant and general fund allocations. The other staff previously working on the microgrant program will be fully dedicated to Neighborhood Cleanups in FY27, which is funded by specialized funding that cannot be used for this program. The administrative effort to implement this program is approximately \$86,000 as shown in the table below:

	Number of Grants	Cost Per Grant	Total Cost
DIRECT ASSISTANCE			
Microgrants	33	\$ 3,000	\$ 99,000
SUBTOTAL DIRECT ASSISTANCE			\$ 99,000
	Hours	Cost Per Hour	Total Cost
SUPPORT COSTS			
Housing Operations Officer	33	\$ 121	\$ 3,977
Community Development Analyst	495	\$ 79	\$ 38,893
Overhead & Indirect Costs (15%)			\$ 21,281
SUBTOTAL SUPPORT COSTS			\$ 64,151
TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS			\$163,151

If the City Council's FY27 adopted budget proposal includes an allocation for the Neighborhood Microgrants, the Community Development Department will make every effort to support implementation and oversight, despite the challenges. The number of applications funded may be fewer or there could be impacts to the level of support provided to the neighborhood cleanup program, but we will endeavor to find a way to advance the programs that best meet the direction and priorities of the City Council.

The City Charter outlines the responsibilities of the City Council versus City staff. City Council are not able under the Charter to involve themselves in the operational aspects of city management. Thus, according to the City's Charter, the Council Districts cannot administer the City's micro-grants program.

At the scheduled City Council Budget Hearing on August 18, 2026, the following question was raised:

1. Are Prop H funds fully programmed in the Proposed FY 27 Budget?

Alongside general taxes on oil, the City receives oil production taxes from Measure US and Proposition H (the Police and Fire Public Safety Oil Production Act). Proposition H is a use-restricted tax that can only fund public safety services that would otherwise be funded with the General Fund.

The FY 26 Budget programs \$1 million (\$500,000 from General Fund and Measure US, and \$500,000 from Proposition H) from oil production tax proceeds which were reduced structurally from the General Fund forecast, as part of the Mayor and City Council's past policy direction to remove the City's reliance on oil revenues in the operating budget, but will be recognized in FY 27 due to financial conditions in the fund.

Response to Questions from the Budget Oversight Committee meetings and City Council
 Budget Hearings on August 11, 2026 and August 18, 2026
 August 25, 2026
 Page 9

In millions of \$	FY 24 Actual	FY 25 Actual	FY 26 Est. *	FY 27 Budget	FY 28 Proj.	FY 29 Proj.	FY 30 Proj.	FY 31 Proj.	FY 32 Proj.
General Fund	\$1.4	\$1.3	\$1.3	\$1.2	\$0.6	\$0.5	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0
Measure US	\$1.4	\$1.3	\$1.3	\$1.2	\$0.6	\$0.5	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0
Proposition H (Public Safety)	\$2.9	\$2.6	\$2.6	\$2.4	\$0.8	\$0.6	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0

**\$1 million programmed in the FY 26 budget for one-time purposes.*

If you have any questions, please contact Budget Manager Rebecca Bernstorff at (562) 570-6408.

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