



Legislation Text

File #: 23-446, **Version:** 1

Report Prepared by: Derek Parker, Fire Chief, Fire Department

SUBJECT: Authorization to Accept and Appropriate \$3,000,000 from Senator Anna M. Caballero for the Merced Regional Fire Training Center, Phase 1

REPORT IN BRIEF

Considers accepting and appropriating funding in the amount of \$3,000,000 from Senator Anna M. Caballero, who secured funding from the state's budget to help support the Merced Regional Fire Training Center, Phase 1.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion:

- A. Accepting and increasing the revenue in Fund 5004-Public Safety CIP, project CP230076 in the amount of \$3,000,000; and,
- B. Appropriating the same to Fund 5004-Public Safety CIP, Project CP230076; and,
- C. Authorizing the City Manager or Deputy City Manager to execute the necessary documentation.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1. Approve, as recommended by staff; or,
- 2. Approve, subject to other than recommended by staff; or,
- 3. Deny; or,
- 4. Refer to staff for reconsideration of specific items; or,
- 5. Continue to a future meeting.

AUTHORITY

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 200

Sect. 1105. - Budget - Appropriations

Title 3 - Revenue and Finance, Chapter 3.16 - Funds, Article III. Other Funds

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Public Safety as provided for in the FY 22/23 budget priorities.

DISCUSSION

Background

In 2011, the Merced Fire Department (MFD) created a five-year Strategic Plan, with one of its goals

to provide challenging training and education that is current and effective, enabling the MFD to accomplish its Mission to prevent, prepare for, and mitigate emergencies to protect the citizens of the City through exceptional service and visionary leadership. The action plan identified tasks to accomplish the goals. Four of the tasks were:

1. Develop a regionalized training program
2. Develop a proactive, collaborative relationship with the fire program at Merced Community College
3. Create a formal system for developing course curriculum consistent with Local, State, and Federal Mandates
4. Create a formal system for developing course curriculum

Since that time, MFD was unable to obtain any measurable trajectory on these tasks. However, under the leadership of Fire Chief Derek Parker working in tandem with leaders from Merced College and Merced Union High School District, a successful partnership has been created thereby making a clear fire career technical pathway for students to obtain a local, low-cost career path to becoming a Paramedic, Emergency Medical Technician, Wildland Firefighter, or a Firefighter. The program is also being designed to enable Career and Technical Education (CTE) students to complete the training during high school. Upon graduation or 18 years of age, they will be employable in a high paying and rewarding career.

MFD has been exceeding record-setting call volumes year after year and there is no projected slowdown. MFD has outgrown the current facility at 99 E. 16th St. (Fire Station 51). As the fire department continues to grow with the additions of stations, apparatus, and members, the existing space needed to adequately train the membership will not suffice. Additionally, MFD has developed valuable partnerships with Merced College, Merced Union High School District (MUHSD), and Merced City School District (MCSD) where MFD members train future leaders while diversifying the workforce. MFD understands that they will not be able to recruit quality recruits without investing in the local workforce.

Partnership

Since the school partnerships were formed, the largest obstacle to overcome was the funding component to plan and build the infrastructure for the Hawk Regional Training Center located at the Merced Airport Industrial Park.

Senator Anna Caballero, representing Senate District 14, tirelessly advocated for funding through the state budget process to advocate for having \$3 million being awarded to the City of Merced for capital costs for the development of the Regional Training Center's Phase 1. We want to emphasize that with Senator Caballero's securing the \$3 million in funding, the community will now be able to create educational and career pathway opportunities for our youth and to further training and certifications programs for our existing first responders so that they may be ready to serve.

Merced College is the academic home of many of the courses which the MFD needs to successfully train new members. In partnering with Merced College and bringing their courses to a common facility both agencies are increasing efficiency with the delivery of education.

MUHSD and MCSD are excellent partners and where the sustainability of the MFD begins. By

leveraging potential new employees as they enter their adult journey MFD is where success will live. MFD is determined to provide opportunities to young leaders and provide skills which will lead to a rewarding profession.

While the success of many programs center around fire and emergency services it is important to note that the Hawk Regional Training Center is not just for the fire department. All City of Merced departments will be able to conduct training when space is available at the Hawk Regional Training Center. MFD and the City of Merced Public Works Department regularly conduct joint training events and the new Hawk Regional Training Center will be the home to said training.

The MFD, as the primary City of Merced department participating in this future regional training center, will be utilizing this funding to reduce out of town training, increase the delivery of more technical training which will assist Merced residents, and foster fantastic community-driven relationships. For example, MFD recently sent all line members to San Bernardino, on grant supported training, for Airport Rescue Firefighting (ARFF). The training was grant funded however thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours would have been saved for just this one training event if the Hawk Regional Training Center was completed.

Hawk Regional Training Center Project Description

The project is slated for construction at the Merced Airport Industrial Park on Hawk Drive near Thornton Road, which is close to the Merced Yosemite Regional Airport. The property City-owned property at the Merced Airport Industrial Park is overseen by the Economic Development Department.

Initial actions for funding will be to establish connections with utilities, build a multi-story training tower with recycled shipping containers, build an ARFF training prop, establish classroom facilities for all partners to use, restrooms to include decontamination areas for both personnel and equipment, and have an area where Merced CERT members can store needed community response equipment.

The initial phase includes completing the utility infrastructure, constructing classrooms, restrooms, parking, and building a training tower within two years. Without Senator Caballero's success in lobbying for improving public safety training services to protect our community's health and wellness; enhancing our city's public safety, and creating future economic success for our youths, the future of Merced could not be so prosperous.

After completion, the fire regional training facility will house classrooms, offices, a training tower, emergency vehicle operations course, other facilities for urban search and rescue, aircraft rescue training, trench rescue, and other types of emergency response education.

In closing, the successful effort provided by Senator Anna M. Caballero helps set the stage for Phase 1 of the Hawk Training Facility. The fire department, City of Merced, and the community cannot thank Senator Caballero enough for her commitment to the citizenry of Merced.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

Staff is requesting that Council accept and appropriate in Fund 5004-Public Safety CIP in the amount

of \$3,000,000. Appropriation breakdown is as follows:

- (CIP Buildings) \$1,000,000
- (CIP Improvements) \$1,000,000
- (CIP Infrastructure) \$900,000
- (CIP Machinery & Equip) \$100,000

ATTACHMENTS

1. Merced Regional Safety Center Conceptual Layout