



## Legislation Text

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*Report Prepared by: Janet German, Secretary III, Fire Dept.*

**SUBJECT:** Accept the Standards of Coverage Assessment Report, Volumes 1 (Technical Report) and 2 (Map Atlas) for the Fire Department

### REPORT IN BRIEF

On April 17, 2017 the City Council approved the funding and contract with CityGate Associates, LLC to complete a Fire Department Standards of Coverage Assessment. The Standards of Coverage Assessment has been completed and is presented in two volumes.

### RECOMMENDATION

**City Council** - Adopt a motion accepting the comprehensive Standards of Cover (SOC) report, Volumes 1 (Technical Report) and 2 (Map Atlas) pending future policy direction.

### 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 further evaluation.

### AUTHORITY

Pursuant to a City Council directive in the 2016-17 adopted budget.

### CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Public Safety, as provided for in the 2017-18 Adopted Budget.

### DISCUSSION

Pursuant to the City Council directive in the 2016-17 adopted Budget, the Merced Fire Department's (MFD) consultant, Citygate, has completed the Standards of Coverage (SOC) Assessment. Delays in the implementation of the SOC were due to lack of funding and unanticipated changes in the Fire Department's Executive Management.

The goal of the SOC is to provide a foundation for future fire service planning, by identifying current service levels to desired service levels and then assessing the City's ability to provide them. Put simply, this performance analysis forms the basis from which to make recommendations for future changes, if any, to fire station locations, staffing and equipment.

There are no mandatory federal or state regulations directing the level of fire service staffing, response times, or outcomes. Therefore, local policy decision and the City of Merced and its budget are the determining factors of the level of fire protection services provided to its citizens. Because the city provides fire protection, it is required to abide by local, state, and federal regulations relating to firefighter and citizen safety.

The SOC is presented in two separately bound volumes as outlined:

- Volume 1 - Technical Report (132 pages)
- Volume 2 - Map Atlas (23 pages)

The two volumes contain 14 findings and 11 specific action recommendations.

The MFD agrees with many of the findings and supports a number of the recommendations to improve service delivery. In addition, the report validates that some progress can be achieved within the current budget through steps referenced in Section 5 - Next Steps of the SOC (Volume 1) as follows:

Near Term

- ❖ Review and absorb the content, findings, and recommendations of this report.
- ❖ Share key elements of this report with other project stakeholders.
- ❖ Adopt revised response performance goals as recommended in Section 2.8.2.
- ❖ Initiate collaboration with the Police Department and City Manager's Office to address the call processing performance issue.

Long Term

- ❖ Develop and implement a strategic plan to minimally prioritize and address the recommendations contained in this report.
- ❖ Collaborate with the City Manager's Office to initiate location planning and site acquisition for future fire stations within the City's current/projected sphere of influence considering the deployment recommendations.
- ❖ Monitor response performance and adjust deployment policies as appropriate.

The MFD also recognizes that many of the recommendations will require a substantial increase in both its current and ongoing capital and operational budgets.

Conclusion

The MFD strongly believes that implementation of the recommendations described above will positively impact performance and service delivery. While many of Citygate's deployment and organization staffing recommendations will require additional personnel and technology resources, which will require ongoing funding to both capital and its operational budget, some progress can be

achieved within the current budget through work already underway, some of which are funded, in order to provide minor improvements to response times. The MFD recognizes that funding continues to be limited and there are a number of competing priorities citywide, the MFD will continue to work with the City Manager's Office to enable performance improving initiatives, as well as work towards a multi-year plan to fill the gaps as identified in the report as funding permits.

The MFD will be preparing to update its Strategic Plan utilizing the Standards of Cover Report for the foundation of the Strategic Plan.

With that in mind, the MFD avails itself to discuss organizational review findings, recommendations, and steps going forward.

## **IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES**

None.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. SOC Technical Report (Volume 1)
2. SOC Technical Report (Volume 2)