


Public Safety & Court Committee

DEPARTMENT: Burleson Fire/EMS
FROM: Casey Davis, Fire Chief
MEETING: April 8, 2026

SUBJECT:

Receive a report, hold a discussion, and provide recommendations to the city council on Fire/EMS capital improvement ambulance procurement plan. *(Staff Contact: Casey Davis, Fire Chief)*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AND GOAL(S):

Strategic Priority	Strategic Goal
 <p>Beautiful, Safe, & Vibrant Community</p>	<p>3.3 Enhance emergency response services 3.4 Ensure public safety equipment and personnel needs are being met</p>

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an overview of the planned replacement of four frontline ambulances currently in service and to request Council feedback on the proposed approach within the FY2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). These ambulances were placed into service in October 2023 and operate within a high-utilization system consisting of three 24-hour ambulances and one peak-time ambulance, supported by reserve units. All units are staffed by firefighter/paramedics and function as dual-role Fire/EMS units, supporting both emergency medical response and fireground operations.

Due to the nature of fire-based EMS delivery, these ambulances experience above-average wear compared to traditional ambulance services. In addition to continuous EMS deployment, crews carry firefighting equipment such as bunker gear, SCBA, forcible entry tools, and fire extinguishers, allowing them to contribute to fireground operations and assist with assembly to fires. The department actively rotates units to balance mileage across the fleet; however, utilization remains high. Current mileage on these units ranges from approximately 52,000 to 65,000 miles, and based on current trends, they are

projected to reach between 115,000 and 145,000 miles by the time of replacement in late 2028 to early 2029, aligning with an expected five-year frontline service life.

The department is beginning to observe early indicators of lifecycle-related wear on the existing Demers ambulances. Specifically, air ride suspension issues have already required replacement on one unit, and similar failures are anticipated as the fleet continues to age. Additional challenges include increasing mechanical issues, longer maintenance times, and delays in parts availability due to international sourcing. As these issues arise, reserve ambulances are utilized to maintain frontline coverage, which reduces system redundancy and increases operational risk.

Delaying the planned replacement of these units would increase the likelihood of mechanical failures impacting service delivery, reduce the availability of frontline ambulances, and place additional strain on the system. Given that all ambulance personnel are also certified firefighters who support fireground operations, reduced ambulance availability also impacts the department's ability to effectively assemble personnel for fire incidents. A proactive replacement strategy helps ensure continued service reliability, maintains response performance, and reduces the risk of unplanned or emergency capital expenditures.

The FY2028 CIP includes funding in the amount of \$2,652,000 for the replacement of these four ambulances, and equipment. Current lead time and build time for a new ambulance is approximately 30-months, requiring advance procurement planning to ensure delivery aligns with the anticipated end of service life. As part of this replacement plan, the department is recommending a transition to Horton ambulances to support long-term fleet standardization and operational effectiveness.

Horton ambulances provide several advantages for a fire-based EMS system, including a larger patient care module to accommodate firefighting equipment, enhanced safety features such as rollover-tested designs and integrated occupant protection systems, and improved durability for high-demand operations. Additionally, Horton ambulances are manufactured in the United States, which improves parts availability and reduces maintenance delays compared to current units that rely on international supply chains. The department also anticipates the ability to remount future Horton units, extending their lifecycle and providing long-term cost savings.

This planned replacement aligns with the City's commitment to maintaining reliable emergency services, supporting employee safety, and managing resources responsibly through a proactive capital replacement strategy. Staff is requesting Council feedback on proceeding with the planned CIP purchase, maintaining the established replacement schedule, and continuing the transition toward a standardized ambulance fleet.

Staff recommends moving forward with the procurement of 4 Horton ambulances within the CIP.

PRIOR ACTION/INPUT (Council, Boards, Citizens):

List date and description of any prior action related to the subject

REFERENCE:

Insert CSO# if applicable
Insert resolution or ordinance change

FISCAL IMPACT:

Proposed Expenditure/Revenue:
Account Number(s):
Fund:
Account Description:
Procurement Method:

STAFF CONTACT:

Casey Davis
Fire Chief
cdavis@burlesontx.com
817-426-9173