



Staff Report

February 16, 2021 Council Workshop

Request for Proposal for Facilitated Review of FD Merger

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BACKGROUND: Since 2014, CWFD has been in a functional consolidation that brought together CFD and WFD in to one organization. The financial cost-sharing agreement that comprises the merger ILA has led to difficulties in the ability of both cities to fund the growing needs of the fire department. Updating/changing the cost-share formula was identified in the organizational scan conducted by the Novak Group.

SUMMARY: The cost sharing formula that forms the basis of the CWFD merger has created friction in the partnership, and has at times, threatened the continuance of it. Both cities have expressed frustration at their inability to fund the necessary growth of the fire department. Councils in both cities have expressed interest in having a facilitated review of the merger completed in 2021. A draft RFP for this facilitated review is ready, and will be discussed with Council at workshop.

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS:

What are the desired results and outcomes for this agenda item?

Council discussion of the proposed RFP and consensus to move forward with posting it as soon as possible.

What's the data? What does the data tell us?

The data shows that both cities are having difficulty funding the department with the current cost-share agreement.

How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?

There has been no community outreach on this topic at this time, but Council and the public will be involved and afforded the opportunity for discussion on any proposed changes to the merger ILA.

Who will benefit from, or be burdened by this agenda item?

The fire department will benefit from a stabilized funding mechanism. The cities, and ultimately taxpayers, may be burdened if the facilitated review shows that one city, or both, should pay more for the partnership.

What are the strategies to mitigate any unintended consequences?

There will be discussion with council and the public to ensure that any potential increase in the cost-share formula, or in the partnership, are supported by the facts and the data.

Does this agenda item have a differential impact on underserved populations, people living with disabilities, and/or communities of color? Please provide available data to illustrate this impact.

Changing the cost-share formula or the partnership structure itself, such that it becomes desirable to both communities, would benefit underserved populations. If the CWFD merger were to end, response times would increase. This would negatively impact underserved populations and people living with disabilities, as they tend to be more frequent users of the EMS system.

Will this agenda item improve ADA accessibilities for people with disabilities?

Changing the merger structure or cost-share formula will not directly impact ADA accessibility.

What potential hurdles exist in implementing this proposal (include both operational and political)?

Continuing the present service merger with perhaps a different structure or governance would not cause operational impacts. There are political hurdles, in ensuring that elected officials and members of the public in both cities support any potential changes to the partnership.

How will you ensure accountabilities, communicate, and evaluate results?

The vendor chosen to conduct the facilitated review of the merger will be monitored closely for results. City administration member, elected officials, and fire department officials, will be closely involved in this process.

How does this item support a comprehensive plan goal, policy or other adopted resolution?

Changing or modifying the cost-share formula of our service merger was recommended in the organizational scan conducted by the Novak Group.

BUDGET IMPACT: Hiring a consultant to conduct the facilitated review will have a budgetary impact that can be accommodated by CWFD reserves. Changes in the cost-share formula could have future budgetary impacts in both cities.

RECOMMENDATION: Council consensus to move forward with posting the RFP for a facilitated review of the fire department merger.