



**Fire Services Study Findings and Recommendations
Mercer Island, Washington**

July 14, 2020 - Agenda Bill 5726



Study Objectives

- ◆ The City commissioned a staffing study to conduct an organizational and operational assessment of the Fire Department, including:
 - Gathering Input from internal and external stakeholders
 - Reviewing existing conditions of the Mercer Island Fire Department
 - Development of analysis of future service demand
 - Development of future service delivery models
 - Presentation of the findings to the City Council



Methodological Overview

- ◆ Extensive input from elected and appointed officials in the City through face to face interviews.
- ◆ Extensive input from Fire Department personnel through face to face interviews.
- ◆ Comprehensive data collection regarding organizational structure, resource allocation, workload demands, staffing levels, utilization and deployment.
- ◆ Evaluation of the current service delivery model by the Fire Department and impacts of any planned growth on future needs.
- ◆ Assessment of fire service delivery and resource options as well as support functions.
- ◆ Collaboration with staff to review findings, assumptions and analysis.



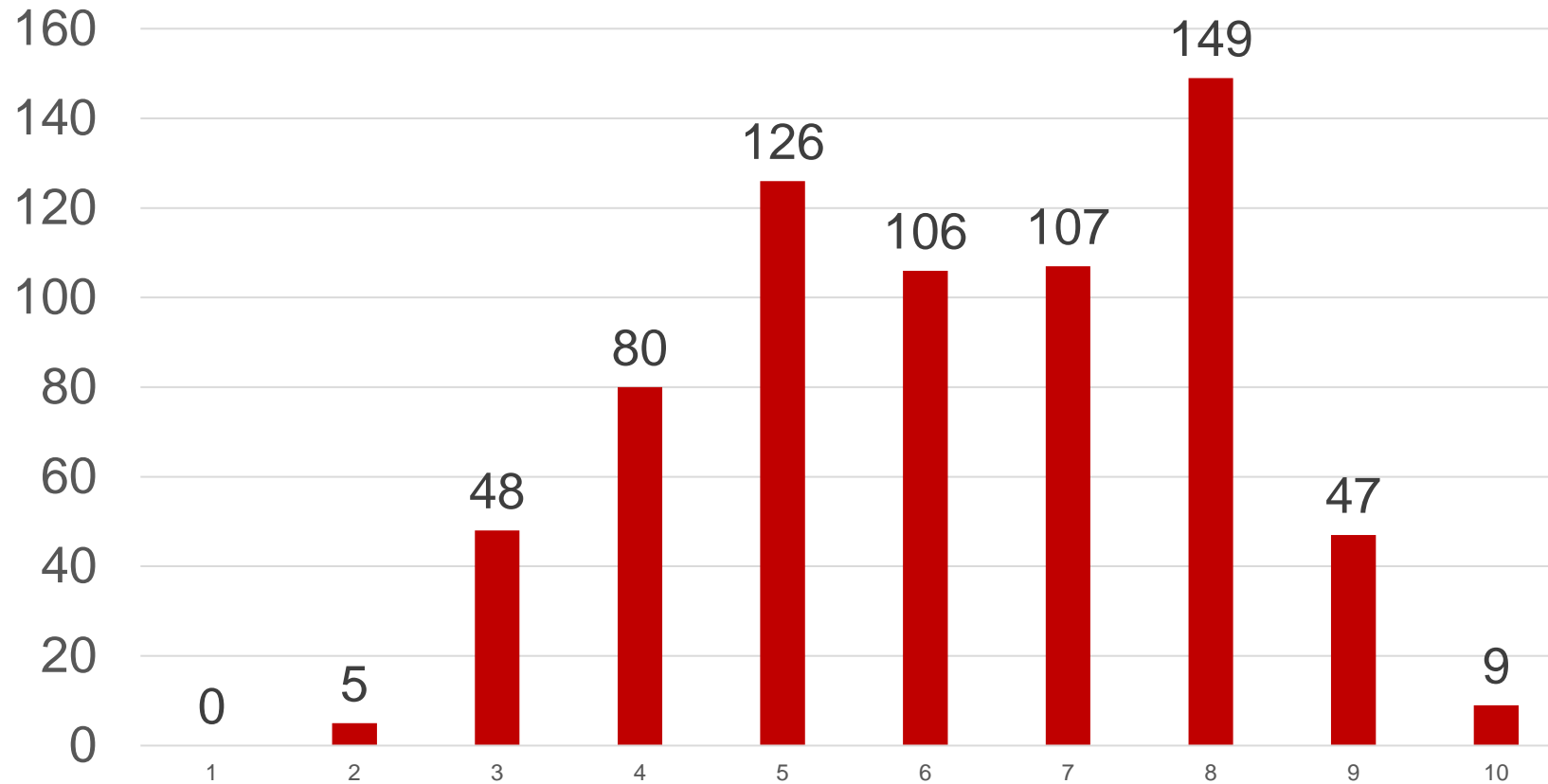
Strengths of the Fire Department

- ◆ The Fire Department has a Class 4 rating from the WSRB.
- ◆ The Fire Department has set and is meeting industry acceptable performance standards for turnout and travel times.
- ◆ There is an effective overlap of an 8-minute travel time coverage area.
- ◆ NORCOM is processing calls and dispatching the Fire Department under 1:00 90% of the time.
- ◆ Fire stations are located in the areas of peak call demand.
- ◆ Unit hour utilization rates are generally below 10% which helps response times and provides capacity for future growth.
- ◆ The Department has well-developed training and fire prevention programs.



WSRB Ratings for WA State FD's

Washington Protection Classes



Response Time Performance

Mercer Island Fire Department								
All Emergency Calls – 90th Percentile Times		2015 - 2019	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Benchmark
Call Processing	Pick-up to Dispatch	0:50	0:46	0:50	0:52	0:52	0:52	1:00



Response Time Performance

Mercer Island Fire Department

All Emergency Calls – 90th Percentile Times			2015 - 2019	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Performance Objective
Turnout Time	1st Unit	Medical Calls (Day)	1:27	1:35	1:29	1:27	1:25	1:24	1:30
		Medical Calls (Night)	2:11	2:19	2:10	2:06	2:07	2:07	2:00
		Fire Calls (Day)	2:01	2:07	1:55	1:59	2:03	2:02	2:00
		Fire Calls (Night)	2:26	2:24	2:28	2:26	2:22	2:28	2:30



Response Time Performance

Mercer Island Fire Department

All Emergency Calls – 90th Percentile Times			2015 - 2019	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Performance Objectives
Travel Time	1st Unit Distribution	Medical Calls	5:47	5:36	5:47	5:45	5:54	5:49	8:00
		Fire Calls	6:34	5:57	6:18	6:47	7:04	6:31	8:00



Improvement Opportunities

- ◆ Training can be improved through the use of an online program and video conferencing.
- ◆ Analysis indicates the need for additional personnel in areas with high-rise and mid-rise developments.
- ◆ Moving the D-Shift firefighter to a 24-hour shift and hiring two additional firefighters will reduce annual overtime costs.
- ◆ Replacing one engine with a quint will improve response times and availability of an aerial apparatus and further improve the City's WSRB rating.



Study Recommendations

- ◆ Continue monitoring response time metrics against established community standards.
- ◆ Continue the use of shift personnel to manage and deliver training programs.
- ◆ Invest in an online training program for the delivery of training programs.
- ◆ Utilize video conferencing between the stations to allow units to remain in their district during meetings and training sessions.
- ◆ Replace an existing engine with a quint style apparatus during the normal apparatus replacement schedule.
- ◆ Assign the D-shift firefighter and hire two additional firefighters to staff 24-hour shifts saving approximately \$162,000 in OT.



Study Recommendations (cont.)

- ◆ Continue to maintain the 7-person minimum daily shift staffing and scheduling one firefighter for a Kelly Day and one firefighter for vacation leave each shift.
- ◆ If the option of contracting for services is desired, negotiate a contract with the City of Bellevue due to potential cost savings and improved regional approaches to providing services.



Questions / Comments

