



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager 

DATE: May 19, 2022

SUBJECT: ATX Public Safety Vacancy Staffing Plan (Resolution No. 20220217-036)

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update regarding the development of vacancy staffing plans for the Police, Fire, and EMS Departments as directed by Resolution No. [20220217-036](#). Final recommendations and the timeline necessary for Council actions to implement the staffing timeline will be provided as part of the FY 2023 Proposed Budget to be presented on July 15, 2022.

Presented below is a summary of the three departments' response to the elements outlined in the Resolution. Detailed information can be found in the attachments.

Current Staffing Levels

The following table summarizes the FY 2022 authorized sworn staffing and vacancy rates for the three Public Safety Departments.

Department	Authorized	Vacant	% Vacant
Police	1809	190	10.5%
Fire	1257	108	8.6%
EMS	664	149	22.4%

Challenges Leading to Vacancies

The factors driving attrition and therefore vacancies are specific to each department and are not summarized here. Regarding the ability to fill vacancies, the major factors are recruitment and training capacity. Training capacity is the limiting factor in comparison to recruitment due to the length of time required to train cadets, the sworn staffing required for training, and the challenge of scheduling of training classrooms and other resources at the Public Safety Training Center to accommodate multiple cadet classes. The current departmental vacancies pose an additional challenge to staffing the cadet classes, which requires sworn staff from operational units to augment the assigned training sworn staff.

Draft Departmental Staffing Plans

Presented below is a summary of how each department has projected future staffing needs. The timeline differs based on the unique factors associated with each department, which is detailed in the attachments. Note that an evaluation of fiscal impact has not been conducted given the ongoing contract negotiations. Recommendations regarding how best to address the projected staffing needs will be addressed in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget.

Department	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
Police	1809	1844	1889	1944	2009	2074
Fire	1257	1305	1321	1337		
EMS	665	689	713	737	761	

Training Resource Needs

As mentioned earlier, the existing facilities at Public Safety Training Center along with availability of operational sworn staff to augment assigned training staff are the major limiting factors to increasing the capacity to graduate cadets. Fire and EMS both expressed the need for additional training space and resources; however, the Police Department identified the greatest need in order to reduce the existing vacancies as well as make progress toward their projected goal staffing level. Based on their statistical analysis of historical graduation rates, an increase in recruiting and training capacity by 75% is required in FY 2024 to sufficiently reduce their vacancy rate to begin increasing sworn staff size based on the projected new positions. Improvements to the Training Center will be considered as part of Strategic Facilities Governance Team planning along with the City's overall facility needs.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Jason Alexander, Chief of Staff
Veronica Briseño, Assistant City Manager
Ed Van Eenoo, Chief Financial Officer
Kimberly Olivares, Deputy Chief Financial Officer
Kerri Lang, Assistant Director/Budget Officer, Financial Services Department
Darrell Alexander, Director, Building Services Department
Michael Gates, Interim Real Estate Services Officer, Financial Services Department


Attachments:

- (1) APD Staffing Vacancy Plan
- (2) AFD Staffing Vacancy Plan
- (3) EMS Staffing Vacancy Plan



MEMORANDUM

TO: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Joseph Chacon, Chief of Police 

DATE: April 15, 2022

SUBJECT: Austin Police Department Vacancy Staffing Plan 2022

This memorandum provides key information in support of the Austin Police Department's (APD) Vacancy Staffing Plan 2022. Included in this memorandum is background and contextual information demonstrating need; current staffing levels and challenges; proposed staffing recommendations for the next five years; and APD's vacancy mitigation plan.

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Executive Summary

The Austin Police Department (APD) is currently authorized 1,809 sworn positions. As of April 6, 2022, APD held 190 sworn vacancies reflecting a vacancy rate of 10.5% for sworn staff. As well, APD is currently authorized 484 civilian positions. As of April 6, 2022, APD held 93 civilian vacancies reflecting a vacancy rate of 19% for civilian staff. The high vacancy rates for both groups reflect a variety of issues including high attrition and challenges to successfully hiring and training new staff.

Pursuant to CIUR 2483, APD has developed a vacancy staffing plan for implementation in the period beginning with FY23 and ending with FY27. To develop a cohesive vacancy staffing plan, the Department considered data and trends in officer attrition as well as data on calls for service and population growth in the City. Importantly, high priority calls for service that represent substantial risk are projected to increase between FY22 and FY27. In addition to these projections, the Department considered the recommendations from staffing research conducted in 2016 and 2021 that suggested appropriate staffing levels at those points in time. The City population is projected to grow by 8.2% between 2021, when the last staffing study was completed, and 2027 by approximately 8.2%.

The analysis suggests that a sworn staffing authorization of 2,074 and a civilian authorization of 621 as the appropriate staffing levels to be achieved by FY27. As well, the plan suggests that the Department should work toward achieving a sworn vacancy rate of approximately 8% over the same timeline. To achieve these goals, recruiting and training capacity must be increased by approximately 75%.

The Department suggests a stepped plan for authorizing the additional sworn positions where 35 additional positions would be authorized in FY23, 45 additional positions would be authorized in FY24, 55 additional positions would be authorized in FY25, and 65 additional positions per year would be authorized in FY26 and FY27. The additional civilian positions should be authorized over the same timeline increasing staff size yearly to address increasing workloads.

Section 1: Context and Background

This report serves as the staffing plan for the Austin Police Department (APD) pursuant to CIUR 2483 which directs the City Manager’s Office to “develop the ATX Public Safety Vacancy Staffing Plan, a comprehensive staffing plan for the Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services, Austin Fire Department, and Austin Police Department.”

The report includes four sections. Section 1 provides context highlighting available information relevant to long-term staffing considerations including information about the City, requests for policing services, and available evidence on long-standing staffing limitations. Section 2 provides information on current authorized staffing and vacancies for both sworn and civilian personnel in APD. Section 3 provides specific recommendations relating to required staffing based on projected population and calls for service increases as well as to address current operational limitations within the Department. Section 4 provides strategies recommended by the Department to address the challenges of filling vacancies and achieving the required staffing levels.

While any adopted five-year staffing plan would necessarily be indexed to fiscal years (FY), the analysis herein is largely based on calendar years due to the organization of available data. The analysis considers calendar years 2023 to 2027 under the assumption that any changes would be initially adopted in FY23.

City of Austin Population

APD services the City of Austin with an estimated population of 1,041,722 residents in 2022. The Austin Metro area exhibited the fastest population growth among metropolitan areas in the U.S. between 2010 and 2020 (34%) with the City itself growing by 21% during the same period. Austin was the second fastest growing city in Texas between 2010 and 2020.

While updated forecasting is needed, the City of Austin’s Housing & Planning Department issued population forecasts for the City in 2020 based on data from 2019. These forecasts estimated a 2022 population of 1,041,722 residents. The forecasts predicted a 1.45% annualized growth rate for 2023, a 1.3% annualized growth rate for 2024, and a 1.25% annualized growth rate for 2025 to 2030. Table 1 presents the forecasts within the timeframe related to this staffing plan.

Table 1: City of Austin Population Forecasts 2023 to 2027

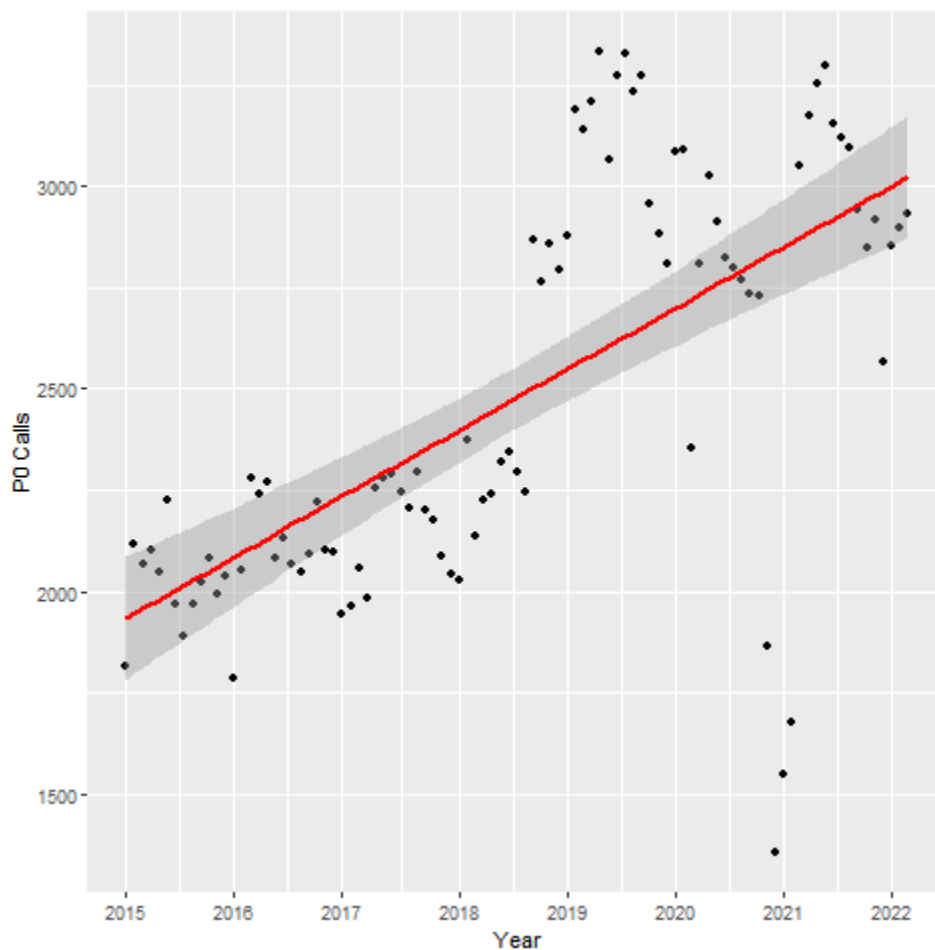
Year	Forecasted Population	Annualized Growth Rate
2023	1,056,827	1.45
2024	1,070,565	1.35
2025	1,083,948	1.25
2026	1,097,497	1.25
2027	1,111,215	1.25

Policing Service in the City of Austin

Alongside the rapid population growth, the City experienced an increase in demand for many public services including policing. Between 2015 and 2019¹ average weekly Emergency² calls (Priority Zero - P0) for service to the Austin Police Department (APD) increased by 54%. Urgent³ calls (Priority One - P1) for service necessitating immediate response increased by 18%. While 2020 saw reduced levels of calls for service overall due to COVID-19, 2021 saw a significant increase in Emergency calls returning to 2019 levels. As well, projections for 2022 indicate that Emergency calls for service will likely exceed the levels seen in 2019.

Forecasting models based on data between 2016 and April of 2022 suggest that levels of Emergency (P0) and Urgent (P1) calls for service will continue to increase through 2027.

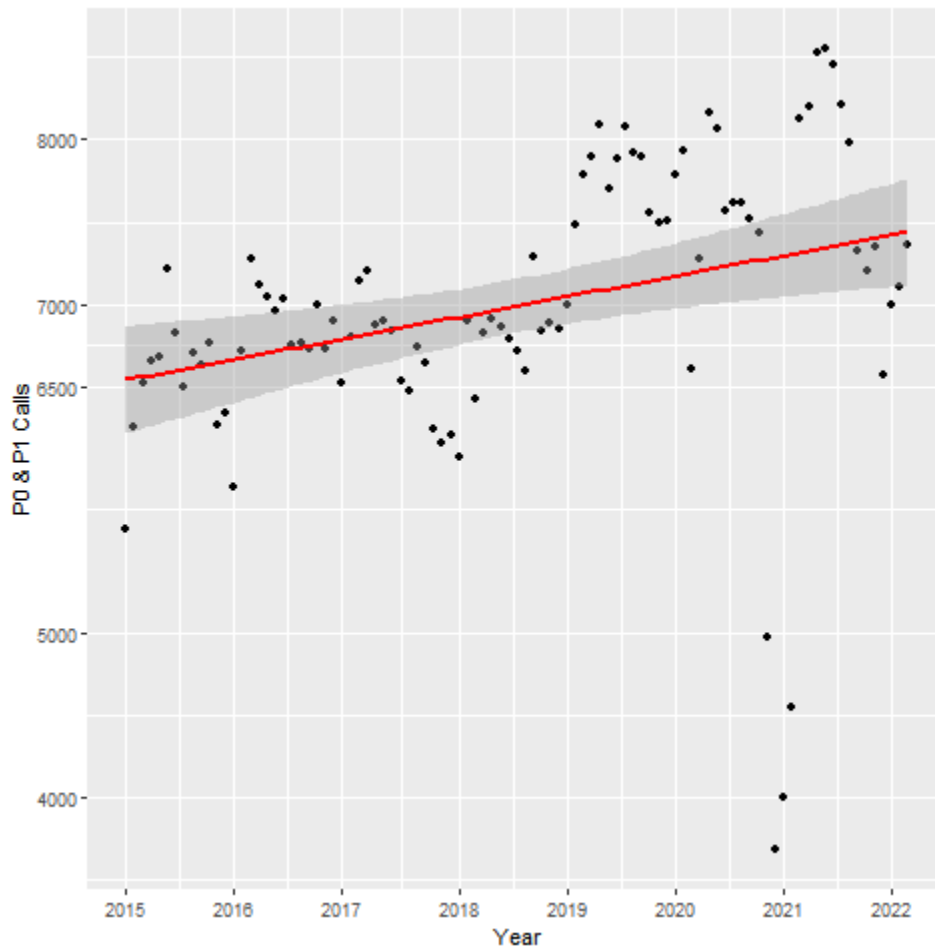
Figure 1: Emergency (P0) Calls for Service



¹ 2020 resulted in substantially different levels of crime and calls for service due to social changes resulting from COVID-19.

² Emergency calls for service are calls for assistance that represent an immediate risk to public safety and where the likelihood of apprehension of a suspect is very high.

³ Urgent calls for service are calls for assistance that represent a likely risk to public safety and where the likelihood of apprehension of a suspect is high.

Figure 2: Emergency (P0) and Urgent (P1) Calls for Service

Figures 1 and 2 show that Emergency (P0) and Urgent (P1) calls for service that represent the most pressing public safety concerns are likely to increase through 2027. This suggests that additional staffing will likely be required to meet demands for policing services over the next five years.

Section 2: Current Staffing and Challenges

Current Sworn Staffing Summary

APD is currently authorized 1,809 total sworn positions. As of April 6, 2022, the Department had 190 total sworn vacancies (10.5%). Table 2 presents authorized and vacant sworn positions within APD.

Table 2: APD Sworn Positions by Rank

Position/Rank	Authorized	Vacant	Percent Vacant
<i>Officer</i>	<i>1,128</i>	<i>153</i>	<i>13.6%</i>
Patrol Officer	773	69	8.9%
Patrol Support Officer	225	70	31.1%
Investigative Support Officer	38	5	13.2%
Specialized Unit Officer	92	9	9.8%
<i>Corporal</i>	<i>93</i>		
Patrol Corporal	75		
Patrol Support Corporal	12		
Specialized Unit Corporal	6		
<i>Detective</i>	<i>305</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>7.9%</i>
Patrol Support Detective	17	2	11.8%
Investigative Detective	278	20	7.2%
Specialized Unit Detective	10	2	20%
<i>Sergeant</i>	<i>189</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>6.9%</i>
Patrol Sergeant	76	8	10.5%
Patrol Support Sergeant	26	1	3.8%
Investigative Sergeant	45	3	6.7%
Specialized Unit Sergeant	42	1	2.4%
<i>Lieutenant</i>	<i>69</i>		
Patrol Lieutenant	30		
Patrol Support Lieutenant	7		
Investigative Lieutenant	11		
Specialized Unit Lieutenant	21		
<i>Commander</i>	<i>18</i>		
<i>Assistant Chief</i>	<i>5</i>		
<i>Chief of Staff</i>	<i>1</i>		
<i>Chief of Police</i>	<i>1</i>		
Total	1809	190	10.5%

Red denotes units with vacancy rates greater than the Department average.

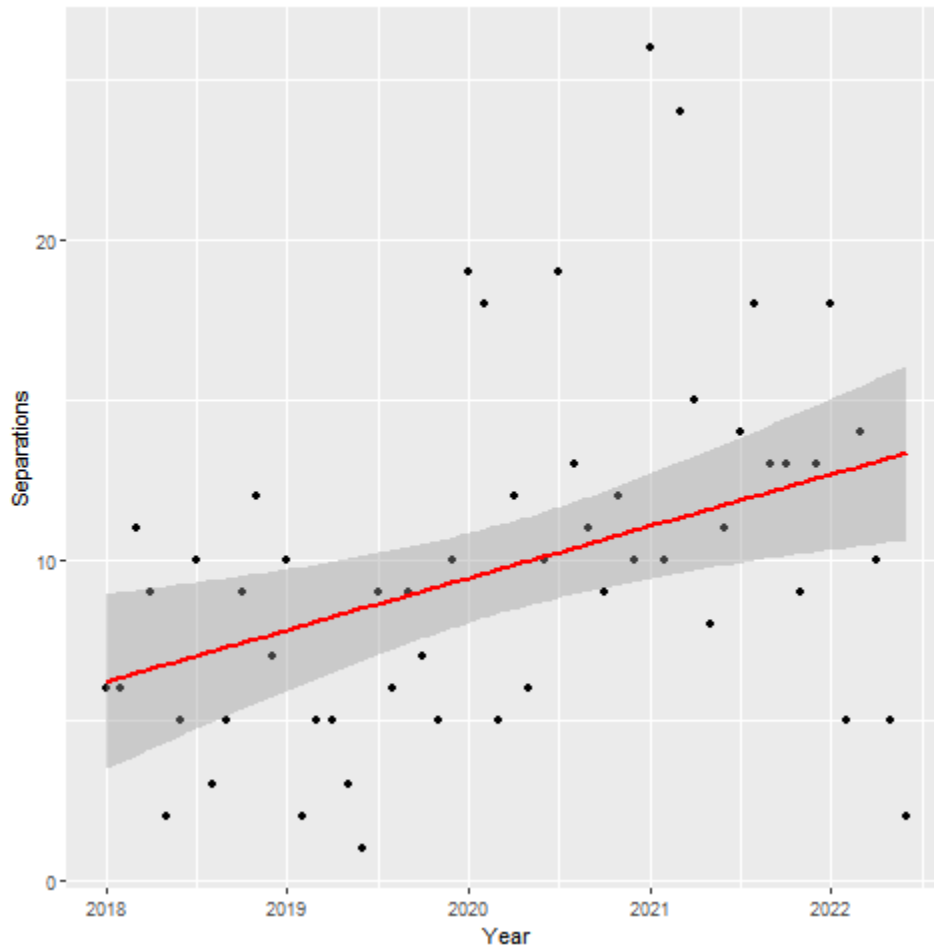
The table demonstrates that vacancies are primarily held at the officer level and particularly within patrol support operations⁴. Given the expected increases in Emergency (P0) and Urgent calls (P1) for service noted above, this represents the key area of focus for the Department related to vacancy reduction.

Attrition within APD increased precipitously between 2020 and 2021. While several factors have been speculated as explaining the increased attrition (e.g., COVID-19), there remains no substantial evidence

⁴ While vacancies are generally held at the officer level, this does not imply that attrition generally occurs at the officer level. Attrition at higher levels results in vacancies at the officer level as promotions occur within the department.

as to the actual impact of any specific factor. Figure 3 presents the monthly number of sworn separations over the past 5 years.

Figure 3: Monthly Sworn Separations



Over the past five years, the Department has experienced an average of 10 sworn separations per month. The rate of separation shows substantial volatility the 12-month moving average ranges from 6 to 15 while the 6 month and 90 day moving averages range from 6 to 16 and 3 to 20 respectively. This suggests that vacancy forecasting should be based on an average of 10 separations monthly (0.6% of authorized sworn staff), but risk mitigation should anticipate the potential of up to approximately 17 separations in some months (0.9% of authorized sworn staff). While it is possible that some months may experience even higher attrition, it is unlikely that any extended period would experience those monthly levels outside of a substantial issue impacting sworn personnel's desire to continue working in the Department.

Limitations to Addressing Sworn Vacancies

While current projections suggest that short-term monthly rates of attrition have reduced slightly, there is little to suggest that forecasting attrition provides an adequate basis for planning attrition mitigation. As well, given the historic volatility in attrition, vacancy mitigation in APD should be primarily oriented toward processes to increase the rate at which new officers are added to the Department.

The rate at which the Department can add new officers is dependent on recruiting and training capacity. Between 2016 and 2020, APD successfully recruited 596 cadets. Of those, 425 successfully completed training (71.3% completion rate). In addition, the 144th Pilot Academy, which ended in January of 2022, graduated 66 cadets from an initial group of 100 (66% completion rate). Finally, APD has recently started the 145th Academy with an initial group of 84 cadets, and the 146th Modified Academy is scheduled to run later this year with a projected 20 cadets.

Between 2016 and 2022, the average academy class has consisted of 74 cadets and the average modified academy class has consisted of 21 cadets. Table 3 presents information on previous training academy cohorts.

Table 3: Academy Cohorts 2016 to 2022

Year	Class	Date of Completion	Initial Cadets	Separations	Graduations	Completion Rate
2016	134	10/28/2016	59	13	46	78.0%
	135	10/28/2016	23	4	19	82.6%
2017	136	6/23/2017	95	25	70	73.7%
	137	12/22/2017	111	33	78	70.3%
	138	12/22/2017	19	4	15	78.9%
2018	139	8/29/2018	56	16	40	71.4%
2019	140	5/10/2019	92	44	48	52.2%
2020	141	1/31/2020	71	14	57	80.3%
	142	1/31/2020	12	2	10	83.3%
	143	10/23/2020	58	16	42	72.4%
2022	144	1/28/2022	100	34	66	66.0%

While changes to recruiting and training strategies may be impactful at increasing this capacity, initial planning should situate training capacity around these numbers. Current academy capacity allows the running of one regular academy class followed by overlapping regular and modified classes. Estimates of on-boarded officers should be based on the average class sizes indicated as well as the average historic completion rate of 71.3%. The vacancy mitigation planning herein uses these estimates within a training schedule consistent with current capacity given facilities and staffing limitations.

Current Civilian Staffing Summary

APD is authorized 484 total civilian positions. As of April 6, 2022, the Department had 93 total civilian vacancies (19.5%). Table 4 presents authorized and vacant civilian positions with APD.

Table 4: APD Civilian Positions by Division

Division/Position	Authorized	Vacant	Percent Vacant
<i>Executive & Multi-Divisional Management</i>	2	0	
<i>Academy Division</i>	6	1	17%
Managerial Staff	2	1	50%
Supervisory Staff	1	0	
Staff	3	0	
<i>Administrative Division</i>	64	6	9%
Managerial Staff	1	1	100%
Supervisory Staff	7	0	
Staff	56	5	9%
<i>Business Technology Division</i>	17	2	12%
Managerial Staff	1	0	
Supervisory Staff	3	0	
Staff	13	2	15%
<i>Central Records Division</i>	54	10	19%
Managerial Staff	1	0	
Supervisory Staff	8	1	13%
Staff	45	9	20%
<i>Communications Division</i>	226	60	27%
Managerial Staff	3	0	
Supervisory Staff	22	3	14%
Staff	201	57	28%
<i>Community Liaisons</i>	11	5	45%
Managerial Staff ⁵	1	1	100%
Staff	10	4	40%
<i>DEI Division</i>	2	1	50%
Managerial Staff	1	0	
Staff ⁵	1	1	100%
<i>Fleet/Property</i>	12	1	8%
Managerial Staff	1	0	
Supervisory Staff	1	0	
Staff	10	1	10%
<i>Research & Planning Division</i>	25	11	44%
Managerial Staff	1	0	
Supervisory Staff	4	2	50%
Staff	20	9	45%
<i>Victim Services Division</i>	48	2	4%
Managerial Staff	1	0	
Supervisory Staff	5	1	10%
Staff	42	1	2%
<i>Wellness Division</i>	5	2	40%
Managerial Staff	1	1	100%
Staff	4	1	25%
<i>Sworn Direct Reporting</i>	12	1	8%
Air Ops	1	0	
Animal	1	0	
Emergency Management	2	0	
Grants	2	1	50%
Mounted Patrol	1	0	
Police Technology	1	0	
Recruiting	4	0	
Total	484	93	19%

Red denotes units with vacancy rates greater than the Department average.

⁵ Table 4 presents the last available HR data dated April 6, 2022. Footnote indicates positions filled between April 6, 2022 and April 14, 2022.

As indicated by the table, civilian vacancies represent a substantial challenge for the Department. High vacancy rates in large divisions including the Central Records Division, the Communications Division, and the Research and Planning Division impact mandatory operational processes.

Limitations to Addressing Civilian Vacancies

Vacancies among civilian positions within APD have likewise increased since 2019. Review of exit interview data as well as direct discussions between management and staff have uncovered the following reasons. The list reflects issues raised by at least five individuals that have left the Department across at least three separate units. In many cases, these issues have been raised by far more departing individuals and across all civilian divisions.

- Inadequate compensation relative to cost of living
- Lack of advancement opportunity within APD; need to move to other City departments for career advancement
- High stakes, stressful environment
- Similar positions within other City departments have better benefits
- Excessive workloads resulting from understaffed units
- Lack of resources

Vacancies are also impacted by inability to effectively hire into civilian positions. This has been suggested to be related to:

- Inadequate compensation relative to similar work or job titles outside the Department or City
- Inability to reclassify titles to appropriate levels to support hiring
- Lack of flexibility and inefficiency in the hiring process
- Lack of qualified applicants

Section 3: Five Year Staffing Recommendations

Sworn Staffing Recommendations

A variety of evidence suggests that the 1,809 authorized sworn positions within APD are inadequate to address the public safety needs within the city. Based largely on the findings of a 2016 analysis conducted by the Matrix Consulting Group, which made recommendations to support continued development of community policing within Austin, the previous staffing plan recommended the addition of 150 positions beyond the 1,809 between 2016 and 2021. These positions were authorized and were scheduled to be funded over a five-year timeline. However, authorization for these positions was rescinded in 2020. As such, the 2016 staffing plan reflected an 8.3% sworn staffing increase within APD which was never realized. The estimated population in Austin in 2016 was 926,426 which is 12.4% lower than the current population and 19.9% lower than the projected population for Austin in 2027.

Further, machine learning analysis conducted by the Greater Austin Crime Commission (GACC) suggested that 108 additional authorized patrol positions were necessary to address inadequate call for service response times caused by levels of calls for service and limited staffing in 2021. This recommendation reflects 13.9% increase in patrol staffing compared to staffing for 2021. The population of Austin is projected to grow an additional 8.2% between 2021 and 2027.

Together, both projects demonstrate that the APD was understaffed in 2016 and remains understaffed in 2022. APD recommends authorizing the additional 108 patrol positions recommended with the goal of adding these positions to patrol within three years. As well, APD recommends authorizing an additional 8.2% to total sworn staffing by 2027. Together, both recommendations would render an authorized staff size of 2,074 total sworn personnel within APD by 2027.

Civilian Staffing Recommendations

APD prepared a five-year civilian staffing recommendation in 2019. The recommendation was based on assessment of operational need, and the additional positions were requested to address operational limitations within the department. The 2019 civilian staffing recommendation suggested that the Department required 122 additional civilian positions which were requested over a five-year period.

This request included civilian positions for the Communications Division, the Neighborhood Liaison Program, the Victim Services Division, the Research and Planning Division, the Human Resources Division, The Forensics and Evidence Division, the Administrative Division, and the Business Technology Division as well as a stable attendant and a staff psychologist. Human Resources has been decoupled from APD and decoupling of Forensics and Evidence is proceeding. Forty-four of the requested 122 positions were within these divisions. The remaining 78 positions requested in 2019 are within divisions that remain part of APD.

APD also completed a current review of individual units to assess current operational staffing needs. The process involved unit supervisors providing projected five-year staffing needs including requests for new personnel with business justifications. This information was reviewed by the division managers who approved or rejected the requests based on priority of the requests, adequacy of business justification, consistency with department strategic planning. The division managers conclusions were reviewed by upper management, and a second round of prioritization led to a final set of recommended positions. Table 5 shows the requests by unit relative to current authorized staffing and 2019 recommendations.

Table 5: Civilian Staffing Projections

Division	Current Staffing	Requested Positions	Percent Increase	Positions in 2019 Plan
Upper Management	2	0		0
Academy	6	4	67%	0
Administration	64	21	33%	14
Business Technology	17	15	88%	5
Central Records	54	16	30%	0
Communications	226	51	23%	22
DEI	2	0		0
Fleet/Property	12	0		
Research and Planning	25	18	60%	18
Victim Services	48	7	15%	7
Wellness	5	1	20%	1
Sworn Direct Reporting	12	4	33%	11
<i>Total</i>	<i>484</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>78</i>

While the 137 requested positions reflect a 28% increase in civilian staffing within APD by 2027, the process was limited to addressing immediate needs within the Department.

Section 4: Vacancy Mitigation Plan

Sworn Vacancy Mitigation

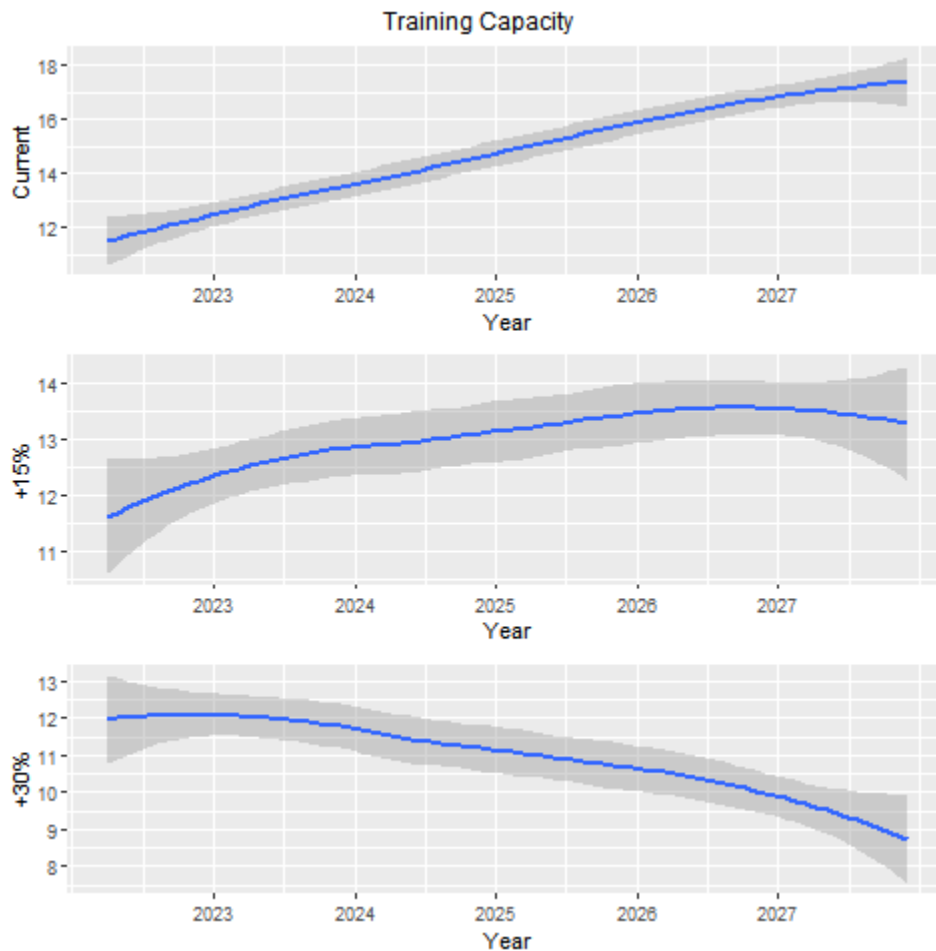
APD should work toward achieving an authorized sworn staff of at least 2,074 and should work to maintain an average vacancy rate below 8% by 2027. This would relate to approximately 1,908 working sworn personnel minimum and 166 vacant positions maximum.

Given projected reductions in attrition, the primary challenge facing APD related to sworn staffing is the limited number of new officers that can be trained at the academy on a yearly basis. Several factors contribute to the lack of capacity including:

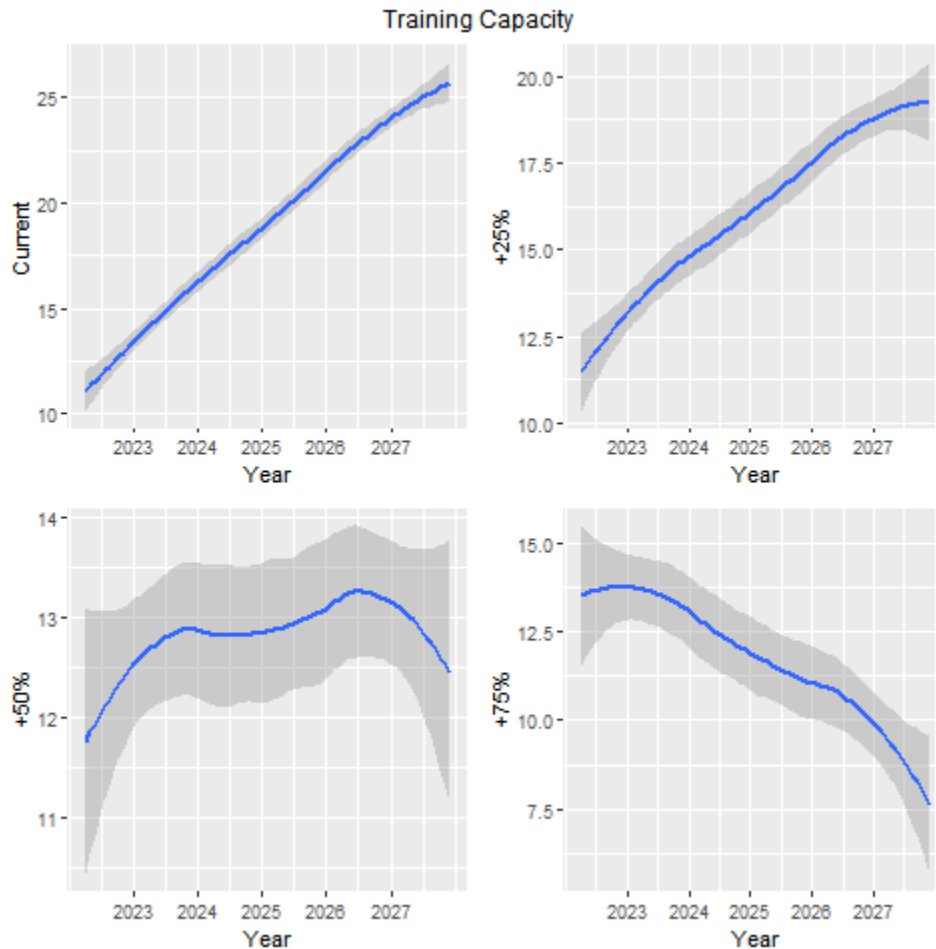
- (1) Inadequate training space
- (2) Insufficient training staff
- (3) Insufficient curriculum staff

As outlined in previous sections, APD's current recruiting and training capacity should be estimated as approximately 122 cadets per year with an average completion rate of 71.3%. This suggests an estimated onboarding of 87 new officers per year at current capacity.

Given current sworn vacancies and projected attrition, this capacity is inadequate to successfully overcome the vacancy issue by 2027. Figure 4 presents the projected five-year vacancy rates under the assumed rates of attrition and successful training of new cadets based on currently authorized staffing of 1,809.

Figure 4: Projected Vacancy Rates 2022 to 2027

The figure clarifies that increasing recruiting and training capacity by approximately 30% is required to meet vacancy reduction goals based on current authorization. However, given the evidence related to inadequate sworn staffing and the recommendation that the City authorize 2,074 positions by 2027, additional recruiting and training capacity will be required. Figure 5 presents projected vacancy rates at various levels of increased recruiting and training capacity. Additional authorized positions are incorporated based on a plan of authorizing 35 new positions in FY23, 45 new positions in FY24, 55 new positions in FY25 and authorizing 65 new positions per year in FY26 and FY27. This would achieve the recommended increases to patrol within three years while affording time to develop recruiting and training capacity and address vacancies over the five-year period.

Figure 5: Projected Vacancy Rates 2022 to 2027 (Enhanced Authorization)

The figure demonstrates that enhancing recruiting and training capacity by 50% would begin to lower the vacancy rate by 2026 although the actual size of sworn staff would likely increase by 2024. Enhancing recruiting and training capacity by 75% would begin to reduce the vacancy rate by 2024 while increasing sworn staff size based on the newly authorized positions.

Civilian Vacancy Mitigation

Civilian vacancy mitigation is likewise best addressed through increased hiring capacity as well as addressing issues related to attrition. Overcoming the obstacles to civilian hiring involves addressing the factors that limit the number of qualified applicants interested in positions within the Department. Primarily, this involves establishing a competitive compensation relative to similar work or job titles outside the Department or outside the City. Throughout 2021 and into 2022, the Department has experienced substantial civilian attrition. In almost all cases inadequate compensation was listed as the reason for separation. Moreover, attempts to hire replacement personnel have been largely ineffective as job postings have rendered few qualified applicants, and qualified applicants have regularly turned down job offers due to compensation, a situation being experienced nationwide in many organizations.

The compensation issue relates to two underlying issues. The first issue is inadequate compensation. APD currently has three market studies in process at HRD (Crime Intelligence Analysis, Victim Services,

and Communications job titles). APD job titles not only appear to be undercompensated but require more experience than similar positions in other organizations. This suggests that addressing both compensation levels and experience requirements may be necessary to enhance hiring.

The second issue is inappropriate job titles. The Department has initiated reclassification of multiple PCNs to add appropriate job titles. While the HR Department has addressed some of the requests, they have been challenged with addressing all similar requests from other departments as well as conducting market compensation studies to address retention issues City-wide. Another factor at play is internal equity comparisons between similar job duties across the City organization relative to a focus on market compensation.


The Department is currently exploring the following strategies with the HR Department to address this problem including:

- (1) Development of APD specific job titles.
- (2) Exploring a stipend program for citywide job titles used in the Department that have peculiar duties (i.e., APD stipend for on-call status employees).
- (3) Exploring a stipend program for positions that require specialized training and/or certifications.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Joel Baker, Fire Chief 

DATE: April 15, 2022

SUBJECT: Fire Department Vacancy Staffing Plan 2022

This memorandum provides information about the Austin Fire Department's (AFD) current staffing levels; recruitment and retention challenges that create vacancies; AFD's plan to fill vacancies; expansion of public safety facilities to address the need; and proposed Council recommendations.

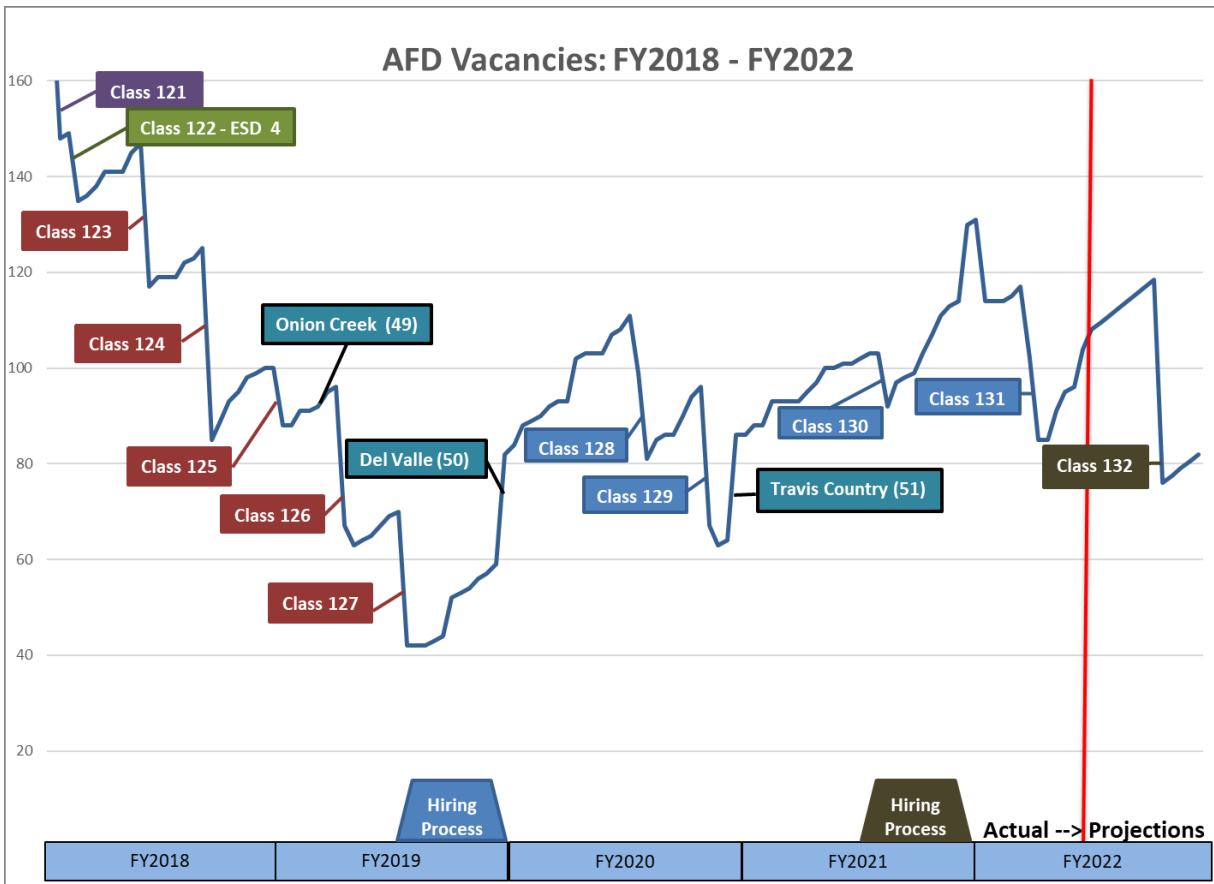
CURRENT STAFFING LEVELS

As a civil service department, AFD holds all sworn vacancies at the lowest rank, Firefighter. The table below shows AFD's vacancies as of April 11, 2022, and the authorized strength by classification.

Classification	Vacant	Authorized
ASSISTANT CHIEF	0	5
DIVISION CHIEF	0	8
BATTALION CHIEF	0	37
CAPTAIN	0	72
LEIUTENANT	0	216
FIRE SPECIALIST/DRIVER	0	225
FIREFIGHTER	108*	694
Total	108	1257
CIVILIAN, FULL-TIME	9	143
Department Total	117*	1400

*this includes 16 unfunded Firefighter FTEs intended for the Loop 360 station, and it does not include Temporary Civilian or Cadet FTEs.

AFD's historical trends with regard to sworn vacancies correspond directly with the addition of new FTEs, the opening of new fire stations, and the graduation of cadets from the Fire Academy. There is also a lag in filling vacancies after a hiring process is conducted. The current retirement/separation rate for sworn personnel is 1.5 per pay period. The following chart shows that sworn vacancies have been as high as 160 in FY2018, and as low as 42 in FY2019.



Civilian vacancies have one distinct pattern; AFD always has open Engineer and Plans Examiner positions. These job titles are used in the Fire Marshal's Office where they review and inspect plans for development and construction. It takes almost a year to fully train an Engineer or Plans Examiner in the specifics of fire safety.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CHALLENGES

AFD has two-year hiring cycles for new cadets. In 2021, there were 3,102 applicants and 1,516 took both the written and oral exams. The list of 1,516 was reduced to the top 460 candidates in order to minimize adverse impact on African American and Hispanic candidates. **Potential adverse impact in the hiring process is AFD's greatest recruiting challenge.**

The first 260 of the 460 candidates mentioned above were assessed in 2021 which resulted in the hiring of 97 cadets in two cadet classes. Disqualification during assessments is due to the inability to complete the Candidate Physical Aptitude Test (CPAT), medical and psychological evaluation, criminal background investigation, and drug testing. The final 200 candidates on the list were assessed in March 2022. Over the last year, these 200 candidates have dropped to 101 due to attrition and disqualifications. **The length of time it takes to go through all the steps in the cadet hiring process, as they are detailed in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, is a second recruiting challenge.** It would be preferable to conduct an annual hiring process, but it is logistically and financially impossible at this time. The next cadet hiring cycle will begin in April 2023.

While AFD does not have the same recruitment issues found in police and EMS departments, there is a new trend emerging in retention that we all may share. Over the last year, AFD has seen an unusual number of firefighters separating from the department with less than five years of service. Over the last year, AFD has seen eight firefighters leave the department with less than ten years of service, five of which had less than five years of service. In previous years, AFD saw one or two firefighter separations with less than ten years of service per year. Exit interviews with separating firefighters indicate that they are leaving the profession for other careers, or they are leaving Austin, as an experienced firefighter, to join another fire department closer to family and friends. This appears to be more of a national trend found in many employment sectors, rather than something specific to the fire service. ***If this trend continues, the AFD retirement/retention rate could easily increase to 2.0 per pay period in the future.***

AFD civilian hiring and retention challenges are one and the same – pay rates for Engineers and Plans Examiners in the Fire Marshal's Office. The skills for these positions are in high demand throughout central Texas. Prospective employees often have multiple job offers. Employees trained in fire safety are often lured away to work in the private sector or for a City of Austin enterprise department where the pay is higher.

PLAN TO FILL VACANCIES

The following chart (next page) shows vacancies over FY2023 and FY2024 and AFD's plan for the following cadet classes:

2021 Hiring Process was conducted May through September

- Class 133 started in January 2022 and will graduate in July 2022 with approximately 44 firefighters
- Class 134 started the end of March 2022 and will graduate in October 2022 with approx. 45 firefighters
- Class 135 will start in October 2022 and will graduate in May 2023 with approx. 45 firefighters
- Class 136 will start in January 2023 and will graduate in July 2023 with approx. 45 firefighters

2023 Hiring Process will be conducted May through September

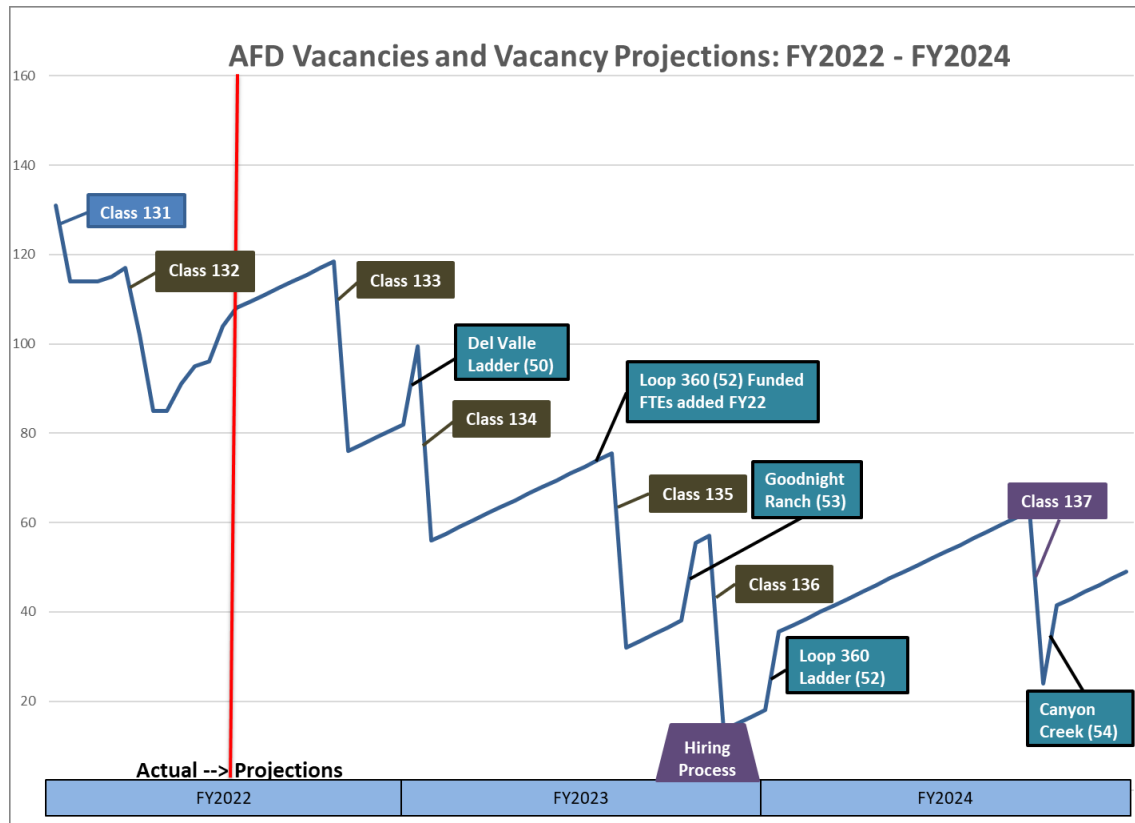
- Class 137 will start in January 2024 and will graduate in July 2024 with approx. 40 firefighters

The chart also shows the projection of sworn vacancies assuming the retirement/separation rate continues at 1.5 per pay period even though we see indications that it may increase. Projected vacancies are also based on continued implementation of Council Resolution 20180524-035 and the detailed memo to Mayor and Council dated March 30, 2018 (see attachments).

Council Resolution 20180524-035 directs the City Manager to “develop a six-year timeline to fund, construct, and staff five permanent fire stations in the areas of greatest need as identified in the updated 2017 Austin Fire Department/Austin Fire Association Fire Station Risk and Service Delivery Analysis Report.” The vacancy projections in the chart below are also based on the following assumptions about adding new positions:

- positions were added for Fire personnel at Loop 360 (station 52) in October 2021 during the budget process (vacancies show below), but the positions were not funded in FY2022;
- unmet needs request submitted to add Ladder positions in October 2022 for the Del Valle station (station 50);
- unmet needs request submitted to fund the Engine positions at Loop 360 (station 52) when it opens in March 2023;

- unmet needs request submitted to fund the Engine positions at Goodnight Ranch (station 53) in July 2023 – this is contingent on approval of construction funding in FY2022;
- plan to request Ladder positions at Loop 360 (station 52) in FY2024; and
- plan to see construction of a Fire/EMS station in the far west neighborhood of Canyon Creek (station 54) in 2024 – plan to request Engine positions at Canyon Creek beginning July 2024.



The chart shows how vacancies will remain below 80 in future fiscal years, if 1) AFD continues with bi-annual hiring cycles, 2) separation/retirement rates are maintained at 1.5 per pay period, and 3) the aforementioned plan for staffing new stations is implemented. **Future decisions about the construction and staffing of new stations, as well as the addition of Ladder crews, have a significant impact on AFD’s ability to predict vacancies and the timing/size of cadet classes.**

Staff will be prepared to present an RCA for construction of the Goodnight station to Council in August so that it may be considered along with the operational/staffing expense in the context of the FY23 Proposed Budget and the implications for an updated 5-year forecast.. The “2017 Austin Fire Department/Austin Fire Association Fire Station Risk and Service Delivery Analysis Report” and the memo to Mayor and Council in response to the Resolution identified the need for two Ladder trucks, one in Del Valle and one on Loop 360, in addition to the Engine staffing required to open the stations. Funding for the Ladder crew in Del Valle has not been approved during the budget process in prior years.

Ladder truck crews provide critical functions at fires in large buildings. At present, AFD has thirteen Ladder trucks to cover the entire City of Austin, even with increased density housed in mid-rises, high-rises and warehouses. The last time a Ladder was added to AFD's fleet was 1997. Further, Ladder crews include positions for personnel management. Adding Engine crews with no Ladder crews has created span of control issues for the supervision of firefighters.

Due to current construction conditions, the cost of building Fire/EMS stations has increased substantially since the Station Resolution was passed. Funding for the construction and staffing of the two remaining stations, and the staffing for two additional Ladder crews, is uncertain because of the 3.5% budget cap. If the staffing for any of the four crews is not approved, then firefighter vacancies will be lower than what is seen in the chart.

Finally, the plan for civilian hiring/retention of Engineers and Plans Examiners involves HRD evaluation for higher pay for those job titles, offering college internships and recruiting recent college graduates rather than waiting for applicants to find us in the City of Austin job postings.

EXPANSION OF PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES TO ADDRESS THE NEED

AFD, in partnership with the other public safety departments, sees a need to expand the capacity to train cadets at the Public Safety Training Center (PSTC) on Shaw Lane. AFD adjusts training schedules in response to scarcity in available space. Possible solutions include construction of the additional phases included in the original design of the facility, and/or finding another facility to accommodate continuing education training of incumbents thus freeing up more space for cadets at the PSTC.

PROPOSED COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

AFD would like to recommend for City Manager consideration the following current-year action future-year budget items:

FY2022:	Fund construction of Goodnight Ranch (Station 53)
FY2023:	Fund full-year staffing for 16 FTEs for a Ladder in Del Valle (Station 50) Fund partial-year staffing for 16 FTEs for an Engine at Loop 360 (Station 52) in March 2023 (6 mo.) Fund partial-year staffing for 16 FTEs for an Engine at Goodnight Ranch (Station 53) in July 2023 (3 mo.) Fund construction of Canyon Creek (Station 54)
FY2024:	Annualize funding for Loop 360 (3 mo.) and Goodnight Ranch (9 mo.) Fund the purchase of a Ladder apparatus for use at Loop 360 in FY2025 Fund partial-year staffing for 16 FTEs at Canyon Creek (3 mo.)
FY2025:	Fund full-year Ladder staffing of 16 FTEs for Loop 360 Annualize staffing for 16 FTEs at Canyon Creek (9 mo.)

RESOLUTION NO. 20180524-035

WHEREAS, the Austin Fire Department has an emergency response goal of responding within 8 minutes of call receipt, 90% of the time, and this goal is consistent with national standards set by the Commission of Fire Accreditation International and the National Fire Protection Association; and

WHEREAS, in some areas of the city the majority of emergency incident response times exceed the 8 minute goal; and

WHEREAS, according to the City of Austin Demographer, Austin's population grew by 40% from 2003 to 2018, and will likely further expand by roughly 25% between now and 2033; and

WHEREAS, as Austin's population continues to grow, the need for services will also increase; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Fire Department and The Austin Firefighters Association collaborated to update the 1994 Fire Station Justification Model, now called the Fire Station Risk and Service Delivery Analysis Model (Service Delivery Analysis), which provides data driven information to allow policymakers to proactively make informed decisions about the need for future fire station location and timing; and

WHEREAS, the 2016 Service Delivery Analysis determined there was an immediate need for fire stations in five areas with "significant development, increased population, and response times which are substantially below AFD's goal of 8 minutes" within call receipt; and

WHEREAS, when facing a similar situation in 1986, Council passed Resolution 19860522-019 to develop a plan to build six new fire stations to address high areas of need, and to respond to this need the City of Austin built all six stations in two years—Stations 28, 29 and 30 in 1987 and Stations 31, 32, 33 in 1988; and

WHEREAS, other communities throughout Texas, including San Antonio, Houston, and Denton, have responded to critical fire station needs through innovative means such as the use of temporary fire stations until permanent stations can be built; and

WHEREAS, in 1997 the City of Austin used a temporary fire station, Temporary Station 38, while Permanent Station 38 was built at 10111 Anderson Mill Road; and

WHEREAS, recently the detrimental lack of emergency response service has been compounded for Austin families who have also seen an increase in their homeowner's insurance rates due to a downgrade in their Public Protection Classification because they are more than five miles from a fire station; and

WHEREAS, the Insurance Service Office ("ISO") is a for-profit organization that provides statistical information on risk and, in particular, assesses a Public Protection Classification that many insurance companies use to calculate insurance rates; and

WHEREAS, according to the Texas Department of Insurance, the ISO classifies communities from a Class 1 (the best) to a Class 10 (the worst) based on how well they score on the ISO Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, which gives consideration to many things, including Fire Department resources and firefighter training—regardless, any building more than five road miles from a fire station is

automatically rated Class 10; and

WHEREAS, these 1-10 scores are used by the ISO to reflect a community's local fire protection for property insurance rating purposes and these Public Protection Classifications are shared with insurance companies; and

WHEREAS, insurance companies use Public Protection Classification (PPC) ratings to set insurance rates and, if a community's classification is downgraded, then premiums will increase; and

WHEREAS, according to the Austin Fire Department, after a 2017 review by the ISO, 183 issued addresses have been downgraded from a Class 1 rating to a Class 10 rating; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the downgrades in PPC ratings, homeowners have reported homeowner's insurance rate increases of as much as \$1,000 per year; and

WHEREAS, the only way to improve PPC ratings and reduce the impact on an affected homeowner's insurance rates is to provide a fire station within five miles of their issued address, but the City has only broken ground on one fire station since 2010; and

WHEREAS, the ISO recognizes a temporary fire station in meeting the five-mile requirement for PPC ratings, and the City of Austin has previously used a temporary fire station for up to two years to provide high-quality service in high needs areas; and

WHEREAS, on March 7, 2016, the Public Safety Commission voted 9-0 to recommend that Council direct the City Manager to develop a comprehensive plan to address immediate needs for fire stations, including recommendations for

funding options and timelines, and that an annual report be presented to Council during each budget year that includes an updated version of Austin Fire Department/Austin Fire Association Fire Station Risk and Service Delivery Analysis Report; and

WHEREAS, Council is committed to providing reliable and equitable public safety services for Austin residents, and Council sees value in immediately improving response times through building fire stations in areas of greatest need; and

WHEREAS, Austin's Strategic Direction for 2023 states that the city strives to create a complete community where every Austinite can experience, "[b]eing safe in our home, at work, and in our community." And "[b]elieving that city government works effectively and collaboratively for all of us—that it is equitable, ethical and innovative."; and

WHEREAS, the metrics for measuring success in achieving the goal for being safe in our home, at work and in our community, include the success of emergency response outcome, community compliance with laws and regulations, community prevention and preparedness, administration of justice, and quality of reliability of safety-related infrastructure and utility services; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is not meeting its goals for those residents who are living in the areas of greatest need; and

WHEREAS, in order to construct a fire station within the next six months, a request for proposals (RFP) must be put out immediately; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant lag between when an RFP is placed for bid, when the contract is awarded, and when contract construction is complete and,

as such, there would not be a need to fund staff for fire stations until City of Austin fiscal year (FY) 2018-2019; and

WHEREAS, the FY 2018-2019 Financial Forecast indicated that for FY 2016-2017 General Fund departments closed the year with \$6.1 million more than had been estimated and the Forecast projected that for FY 2017-2018 General Fund departments would end the year with a \$750,000 surplus; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The Council directs the City Manager to, by the end of 2018, construct, build or establish, either through temporary structure or other alternative arrangement, interim fire stations in at least the top two areas of greatest need as identified in an updated 2017 Austin Fire Department/Austin Fire Association Fire Station Risk and Service Delivery Analysis Report, that accounts for recent CAMPO funding allocated to Advances Signal Timing technology, as well as projected mobility improvements from the 2016 City of Austin Mobility Bond. This may include options such as working with the Texas Department of Transportation to use the toll booth station located on Toll Road 130.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council directs the City Manager to develop a six-year timeline to fund, construct, and staff five permanent fire stations in the areas of greatest need as identified in the updated 2017 Austin Fire Department/Austin Fire Association Fire Station Risk and Service Delivery Analysis Report. This plan should look at innovative solutions to streamline the entire process to significantly reduce the timeline and find other efficiencies. This plan should include creating a working group that includes all relevant City departments—from Procurement and Real

Estate, to Permitting and the Fire Department—to streamline the process and may include partnering with outside entities such as Emergency Service District 11 to build and/or co-locate a fire station in the Del Valle area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council directs the City Manager to bring forward by June 28, 2018 for Council consideration the finance action items necessary to construct, build, or establish interim fire stations. Alternatively, the City Manager may bring to Council for consideration an expedited process that outlines a 12-18 month and an 18-24 month timeline for design, permitting, construction, and completion (beginning construction in 12 months), and for fully staffing, permanent fire stations in the top two areas of greatest need, and any action items for Council consideration that are necessary to fund such permanent stations. Twelve months may be added to the timeline in the Travis Country area for the purchase of land.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

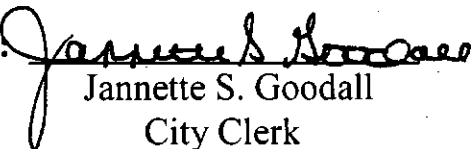
The Council directs the City Manager to include any funds necessary to staff the fire stations in the City Manager's recommended fiscal year 2018-2019 budget for Council consideration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council directs the City Manager to report back to Council monthly on the progress on efforts related to the interim and permanent fire stations, challenges that could cause delay, and identify any actions that Council may take to make the process more efficient.

ADOPTED: May 24, 2018

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Rhoda Mae Kerr, Fire Chief *Rhoda Mae Kerr*
Ed Van Eenoo, Deputy Chief Financial Officer *EV*

DATE: March 30, 2018

SUBJECT: Response to Resolution No. 20160324-009: Future Fire Stations

On March 24, 2016, the City Council directed the City Manager to develop a comprehensive plan for consideration during the budget process with proposed funding mechanisms and timelines for building fire stations in five areas of immediate need identified by the Austin Fire Association (Local 975) and the Austin Fire Department. The five areas include the Travis Country area, the Del Valle/Moore's Crossing area, the Loop 360/ Davenport area, the Goodnight Ranch area, and the Canyon Creek area. The intent of the following information is to update you on the plan to build five fire stations over the next ten years.

Attachment A is a map showing the recommended locations for future fire stations. The locations are based on a "Standard of Coverage" analysis that focuses on response times. The areas in purple have responses that exceed the department/national goal of arriving in eight (8) minutes or less, 90% of the time.

Attachments B.1 shows service needs in the recommended station areas including the number and type of incidents in 2017, population and density in the area, and the number of residents who do not benefit from the City's superior (Class 1) Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating.

Attachment B.2 provides answers to typical questions regarding why the area needs a fire station. The Fire Department recommends that stations be constructed in the following order based on incident volume, response times, ISO rating and growth/density: Travis Country, Del Valle/Moore's Crossing, Loop 360/ Davenport, Goodnight Ranch, and Canyon Creek.

Attachment C.1 describes the necessary station type, staffing and apparatus, co-habitation of Fire and EMS services, as well as construction costs, one-time equipment purchases and annual operating costs.

Attachment C.2 provides an estimate of the costs associated with constructing and staffing five stations, one opening every two years.

The potential funding sources for construction costs of the five stations is voter-approved bonds or certificates of obligation (COs). The Bond Election Advisory Task Force has recommended \$31 million for construction of three fire stations in the 2018 Bond. Another consideration relevant to this resolution is the ongoing work by staff from Financial Services and the Office of Real Estate Services to implement a public private partnership (P3) model for the acquisition of new City facilities. The P3 approach has already been approved by Council for a new Planning and Development Center and work continues on the

application of the model to a new Austin Energy Headquarters and a new Municipal Court building. Using the P3 approach is anticipated to reduce the time and potentially the costs of bringing new facilities online. If the P3 model proves unworkable for the acquisition of new fire stations, the 10-year timeline presented in this memo may not be achievable.

In summary, the construction and operating costs (in millions) are shown below based on the first new station opening in October 2020 and each subsequent station opening every two years. This compressed timeline assumes successful application of the P3 approach to deliver new stations. The timeline to deliver five new stations in ten years would be impacted should the City use its traditional capital delivery process.

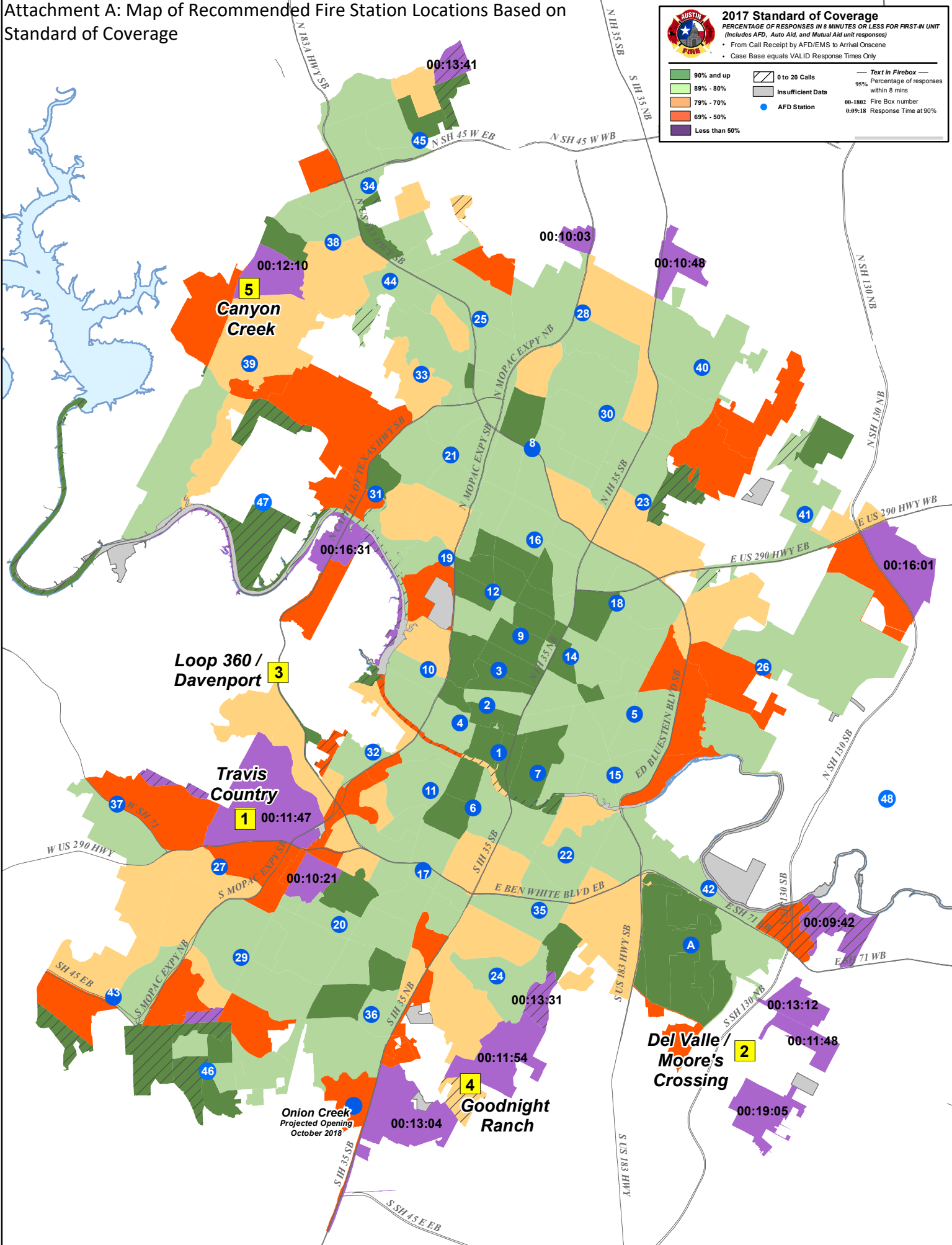
Estimated Station Costs and Operating Budget Impact
(in millions)

	1. Travis Country	2. Del Valle / Moore's Crossing	3. Loop 360 / Davenport	4. Goodnight Ranch	5. Canyon Creek	Total Station Costs
Projected Opening Date	Oct. 2020	Oct. 2022	Oct. 2024	Oct. 2026	Oct. 2028	
Construction Costs	\$14.7	\$11.4	\$20.5	\$12.5	\$18.1	\$77.2
One-time Equipment	\$1.4	\$2.6	\$2.4	\$1.4	\$1.4	\$9.2
Total	\$16.1	\$14.0	\$22.9	\$13.9	\$19.5	\$86.4

Year	Annual Operating Costs					Total Annual Operating Costs
<i>FY 2019</i>						\$0.0
<i>FY 2020</i>	\$3.0					\$3.0
<i>FY 2021</i>	\$3.1					\$3.1
<i>FY 2022</i>	\$3.2	\$5.2				\$8.4
<i>FY 2023</i>	\$3.3	\$5.3				\$8.6
<i>FY 2024</i>	\$3.4	\$5.5	\$4.3			\$13.3
<i>FY 2025</i>	\$3.5	\$5.7	\$4.5			\$13.7
<i>FY 2026</i>	\$3.6	\$5.8	\$4.6	\$3.6		\$17.7
<i>FY 2027</i>	\$3.7	\$6.0	\$4.8	\$3.7		\$18.2
<i>FY 2028</i>	\$3.8	\$6.2	\$4.9	\$3.8	\$3.8	\$22.6
Total 10-year	\$30.8	\$39.7	\$23.1	\$11.2	\$3.8	\$108.6

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager over Public Safety
Elaine Hart, Chief Financial Officer

Attachment A: Map of Recommended Fire Station Locations Based on Standard of Coverage



Attachment B.1: Constructing Five Fire Stations - Service Needs in the Area

	1. Travis Country	2. Del Valle / Moore's Crossing	3. Loop 360 / Davenport	4. Goodnight Ranch	5. Canyon Creek
Incidents	1,870	284	133	385	382
Incident Breakdowns	Fire - 5%, Medical - 59%, Rescue - 2%, Hazmat - 1%, Other* - 33%	Fire - 6%, Medical - 73%, Rescue - 0%, Hazmat - 1%, Other* - 20%	Fire - 6%, Medical - 51%, Rescue - 1%, Hazmat - 3%, Other* - 39%	Fire - 6%, Medical - 68%, Rescue - 1%, Hazmat - 2%, Other* - 24%	Fire - 5%, Medical - 66%, Rescue - 1%, Hazmat - 1%, Other* - 27%
COA Full Purpose Response Times 90%	11 minutes, 47 seconds	13 minutes, 12 seconds	16 minutes, 31 seconds	11 minutes, 54 seconds	12 minutes, 10 seconds
Percent of Area Developed	48%	20%	22%	19%	28%
Population <i>(Census ACS 2017)</i>	17,083	6,871	6,715	11,413	11,211
Building Sq Footage <i>(TCAD 2017)</i>	13,792,944	4,002,557	5,540,388	7,076,291	9,861,734
Homes at Risk <i>(Wildfire & Flood)</i>	397	117	293	299	242
ISO - Residents with Class 10	0	175	0	0	0

*Other incidents include: fire alarm activations, broken water pipe, bee/swarm attack, lift assist, smoke investigations, and public assist

Attachment B.2: Constructing Five Fire Stations - Service Needs in the Area

	1. Travis Country	2. Del Valle / Moore's Crossing	3. Loop 360 / Davenport	4. Goodnight Ranch	5. Canyon Creek
Current Growth in Area	Office Buildings (Southwest Crossing, ARM/Encino Trace), Residential (Harper Park - being built)	School (Expansion of DVHS), Residential (Lexington Park expansion, Oak Ranch expansion)	Residential (Villas at Davenport Ranch expansion), Office Buildings (Spiceworks)	Residential (Goodnight Ranch), New Streets (Slaughter Extension, Vertex Blvd)	Commercial (ExtraSpace Storage), Residential (Grandview Hills expansion)
Why do the residents need this station?	Continued increase in both incident volume and response times. Limited street network impact closest station's ability to access area within 8 mins. Response times are consistently above our 8 min goal, now reaching +11-12 mins (+3 to 4 mins over.)	Future growth in area is projected (commercial along Hwy 71, residential expansion). Continued increase in both incident volume and response times. Distance from current stations are impacting response times. Response times are consistently above our 8 min goal, now reaching +13 mins (+4 to 5 mins over.)	Continued increase in both incident volume and response times. The next closest station's ability to access area within 8 mins is impacted by both distance and limited street network. Response times are consistently above our 8 min goal, now reaching +16 mins (+5 to 7 mins over.)	Significant growth in area (Goodnight Ranch). Continued increase in both incident volume and response times. Distance from current stations is impacting response times. Response times are consistently above our 8 min goal, now reaching +11-12 mins (+3 to 4 mins over.)	Continued increase in both incident volume and response times. The next closest station's ability to access area within 8 mins is impacted by both distance and limited street network. Response times are consistently above our 8 min goal, now reaching +12 mins (+3 to 4 mins over.)
Why do the residents need these units at these stations?	Engine & Ambulance - needed for first-due and advanced life support response. BC & Commander - These existing units (St 27, St 902), will be moved from other stations. This area will have better access to provide incident command to the west (71), east (71/290), and Mopac for north & south response.	Engine & Ambulance - needed for first-due and advanced life support response. Ladder - Closest Ladder to this area is FS42, which is greater than 5 miles away. Area has two schools and COTA. Location would allow for good access to Hwy 71 & 130. Brush Truck - Due to the grasslands, a Brush Truck is needed to cover this area of the city. Closest BT is at FS24 (Dove Springs)	Engine & Ambulance - needed for first-due and advanced life support response. Ladder - Closest Ladder to this area is FS17 & FS19, which is greater than 5 miles away. Area has large commercial, multi-story buildings, and schools. Location would allow for good access to 360, FM2244, and FM222 Brush Truck - Due to the topography & vegetation, a Brush Truck is needed to cover this area of the city. Closest BT is at FS21 (Spicewood Springs)	Engine & Ambulance - needed for first-due and advanced life support response.	Engine & Ambulance - needed for first-due and advanced life support response.
How much will response times improve with this station?	3-4 min improvement 11-12 min current - improved to 8-9 mins	4-5 min improvement 13 min current - improved to 8-9 mins	5-7 min improvement 15-16 min current - improved to 8-10 mins	3-4 min improvement 11-12 min current - improved to 8-9 mins	3-4 min improvement 12 min current - improved to 8-9 mins
Will the residents see an improved ISO rating with this station?	No impact. Entire area receiving a Class 1	Yes, significant reduction. With a station closer than 5 miles, the current Class 10's will improve to Class 1's. This will reduce the resident's insurance rates by >50%	No impact. Entire area receiving a Class 1	No impact. Entire area receiving a Class 1	No impact. Entire area receiving a Class 1
Is there COA-owned land nearby?	Only parkland (Oakhill Neighborhood Park, Gaines Creek Neighborhood Park)	Yes. 6 acre tract in Moore's Crossing MUD.	None	Yes. Soon-to-be dedicated lot by Goodnight Ranch PUD	Yes. Small (1 acre) lot off Boulder. Dedicated for public safety use by Canyon Creek. Also, parkland in area.
How did you rank this station? Rank is based on the following: Incidents - 40%; Response Times - 40%; Homes at Risk (Wildfire, Flood) - 10%; ISO Class 10 - 10%	Travis Country has high incident volume (MoPac, 290, 71, commercial, residential) and long response times.	Moore's Crossing has moderate incident volume and long response times. Plus, approximately 175 homes or 7% of residents in the area have ISO Class 10 Rating (double insurance rates)	Loop 360 has moderate/low incident volume (360, commercial, residential) and very long response times.	Goodnight Ranch has moderate incident volume and long response times. This area is experiencing significant growth in residential and commercial (Goodnight Ranch PUD)	Canyon Creek has moderate incident volume (620, commercial, residential) and long response times. The closest units are single unit stations and fairly far away.

Attachment C.1 : Detail of Estimated Station Costs and Operating Budget Impact
(in millions)

	1. Travis Country	2. Del Valle / Moore's Crossing	3. Loop 360 / Davenport	4. Goodnight Ranch	5. Canyon Creek
Projected Opening Date	Oct. 2020	Oct. 2022	Oct. 2024	Oct. 2026	Oct. 2028
Station Type	4 Bay Station (10,596 sq ft)	4 Bay Station (10,596 sq ft)	4 Bay Station (10,596 sq ft)	3 Bay Station (9,650 sq ft)	3 Bay Station (9,650 sq ft)
Lot Acquisition	To be Purchased	6 acre lot dedicated by Moore's Crossing MUD	To be Purchased	Lot being dedicated by Goodnight Ranch PUD	Small lot donated by Canyon Creek (1 acre)
Department	AFD & EMS	AFD & EMS	AFD & EMS	AFD & EMS	AFD & EMS
Unit Types	1 Engine, 1 BC, 1 Ambulance, 1 EMS Commander	1 Engine, 1 Ladder, 1 Ambulance, 1 Brush Truck	1 Engine, 1 Ladder, 1 Ambulance, 1 Brush Truck	1 Engine, 1 Ambulance	1 Engine, 1 Ambulance
CONSTRUCTION COSTS					
Construction Estimate	\$11.7	\$8.7	\$13.6	\$8.0	\$11.0
Contingency	\$2.3	\$1.7	\$4.1	\$2.4	\$3.3
Cost Escalation	\$0.7	\$1.0	\$2.8	\$2.1	\$3.8
Total Construction Costs	\$14.7	\$11.4	\$20.5	\$12.5	\$18.1
ONE-TIME EQUIPMENT COSTS					
2018 Apparatus Purchase Cost	Engine - \$0.725, Ambulance - \$0.40 <i>(BC and Commander moved from other stations)</i>	Engine - \$0.725, Ladder - \$1.20, Ambulance - \$0.40 <i>(Brush Truck moved from another station)</i>	Engine - \$0.725, Ladder - \$1.20, Brush Truck - \$0.191 <i>(Ambulance moved from FS902)</i>	Engine - \$0.725, Ambulance - \$0.4	Engine - \$0.725, Ambulance - \$0.4
Apparatus (AFD & EMS)	\$1.1	\$2.3	\$2.1	\$1.1	\$1.1
Equipment / Furnishing Costs <i>(IT, alerting, furniture, SCBA)</i>	\$0.3	\$0.3	\$0.3	\$0.3	\$0.3
Equipment & Apparatus Total	\$1.4	\$2.6	\$2.4	\$1.4	\$1.4
ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS					
Average Apparatus Maintenance Costs	1 AFD Unit - \$0.065 1 EMS Unit - \$0.016	AFD - \$0.16 Engine, Ladder, Brush Truck 1 EMS Unit - \$0.016	AFD - \$0.16 Engine, Ladder, Brush Truck	\$0.065 Engine 1 EMS Unit - \$0.016	\$0.065 Engine 1 EMS Unit - \$0.016
Average Facility Operations Cost	\$0.054/Year	\$0.054/Year	\$0.054/Year	\$0.054/Year	\$0.054/Year
Personnel Costs <i>(based on 2018 staffing costs)</i>	\$2.90 Total <i>(Engine - \$1.90, Ambulance - \$1.00)</i>	\$4.65M Total <i>(Engine - \$1.90, Ladder - \$1.75, Ambulance - \$1.00)</i>	\$3.65 Total <i>(Engine - \$1.90, Ladder - \$1.75)</i>	\$2.90 Total <i>(Engine - \$1.90, Ambulance - \$1.00)</i>	\$2.90 Total <i>(Engine - \$1.90, Ambulance - \$1.00)</i>
Annual Operating Total	\$3.0	\$4.9	\$3.9	\$3.0	\$3.0


**Attachment C.2 : Summary of Estimated Station Costs and Operating Budget Impact
(in millions)**

	1. Travis Country	2. Del Valle / Moore's Crossing	3. Loop 360 / Davenport	4. Goodnight Ranch	5. Canyon Creek	Total Station Costs
Projected Opening Date	Oct. 2020	Oct. 2022	Oct. 2024	Oct. 2026	Oct. 2028	
Construction Costs	\$14.7	\$11.4	\$20.5	\$12.5	\$18.1	\$77.2
One-time Equipment	\$1.4	\$2.6	\$2.4	\$1.4	\$1.4	\$9.2
Total	\$16.1	\$14.0	\$22.9	\$13.9	\$19.5	\$86.4
Year	Annual Operating Costs					Total Annual Operating Costs
<i>FY 2019</i>						\$0.0
<i>FY 2020</i>	\$3.0					\$3.0
<i>FY 2021</i>	\$3.1					\$3.1
<i>FY 2022</i>	\$3.2	\$5.2				\$8.4
<i>FY 2023</i>	\$3.3	\$5.3				\$8.6
<i>FY 2024</i>	\$3.4	\$5.5	\$4.3			\$13.3
<i>FY 2025</i>	\$3.5	\$5.7	\$4.5			\$13.7
<i>FY 2026</i>	\$3.6	\$5.8	\$4.6	\$3.6		\$17.7
<i>FY 2027</i>	\$3.7	\$6.0	\$4.8	\$3.7		\$18.2
<i>FY 2028</i>	\$3.8	\$6.2	\$4.9	\$3.8	\$3.8	\$22.6
Total 10-year	\$30.8	\$39.7	\$23.1	\$11.2	\$3.8	\$108.6



MEMORANDUM

TO: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Robert Luckritz, Chief, Austin-Travis County EMS 

DATE: April 15, 2022

SUBJECT: Vacancy Staffing Plan 2022

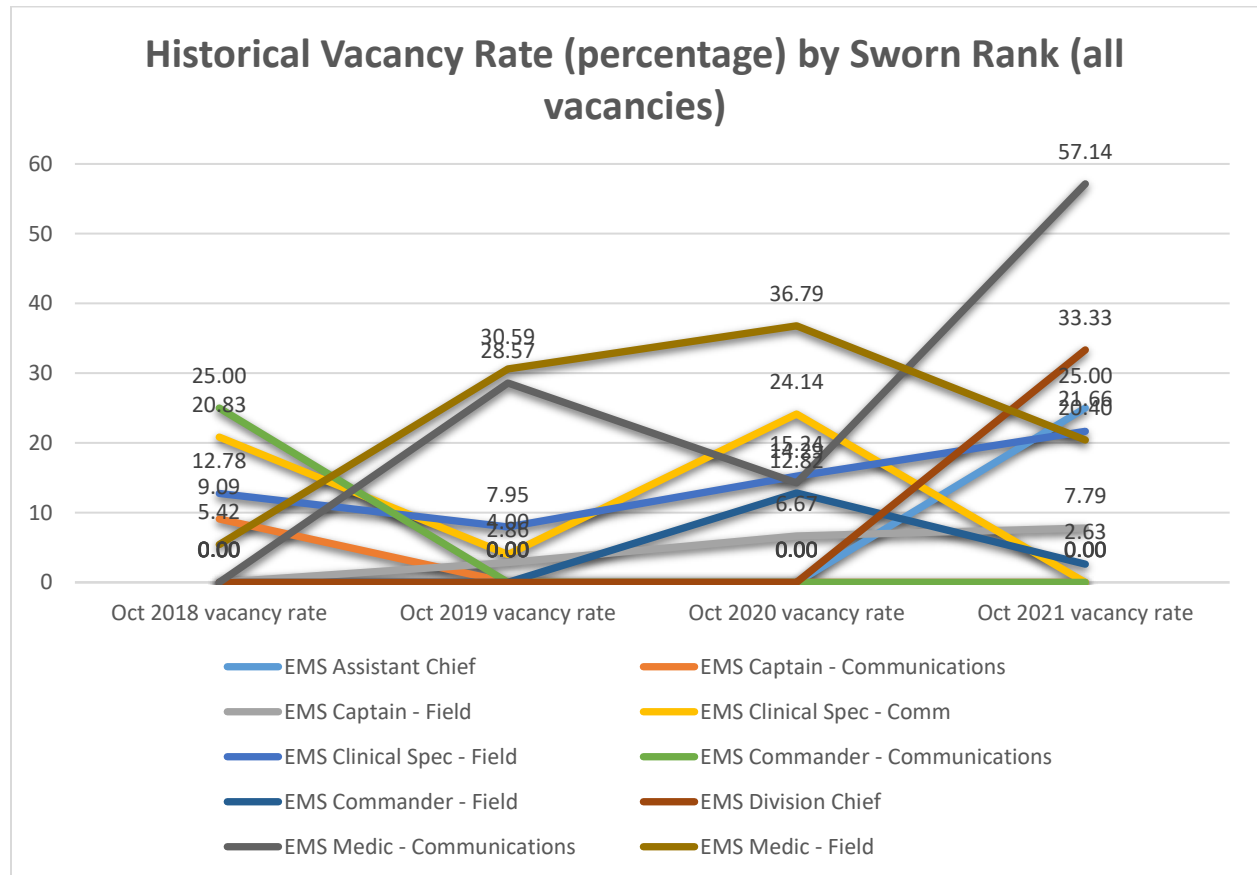
As directed by Resolution 20220217-036, this memorandum outlines the requested information about Austin-Travis County EMS its current staffing levels and vacancy trends, retention and recruitment challenges, plan and timeline to fill vacancies, public safety facility needs, and recommendations for budget and City Council action.

Current Staffing Levels

The chart below reflects our current sworn vacancies by classification rank. Medic - Field and Medic - Communications are entry-level positions. All other positions are filled by promotion processes as defined by our labor contract with Austin EMS Association (AEMSA).

Classification	Vacant	Authorized
ASSISTANT CHIEF	1	4
DIVISION CHIEF	3	9
COMMANDER-COMMUNICATIONS	0	4
COMMANDER-FIELD	1	38
CAPTAIN-COMMUNICATIONS	0	11
CAPTAIN-FIELD	2	77
CLINICAL SPECIALIST-COMMUNICATIONS	3	29
CLINICAL SPEC-FIELD	72	277
MEDIC-COMMUNICATIONS	9	14
MEDIC-FIELD	58	201
Total	149	664
CIVILIAN, FULL-TIME	14	81
Department Total	163	745

Our historical vacancy rate for the past four years is reflected in the following chart. We have reduced the vacancy rate for EMS Medic – Field but have seen increases in Medic – Communications and Clinical Specialist – Field.



The attrition rate for all sworn EMS in calendar year 2021 was 8%.

Identify challenges leading to vacancies in each department, including but not limited to retention and recruitment.

Growth

The City of Austin has experienced exponential growth in recent years. According to census data, between 2010 and 2020, the City of Austin grew 21%, and the city is projected to continue to grow 2.5% annually. In 2021, Council approved 64 additional FTEs to address this growth, nearly doubling the existing vacancy rate. While these positions are needed, they artificially increased the existing staffing shortage. Moving forward, to ensure adequate coverage, the department will need to continue to add units and associated FTEs to cover those areas.

Recruiting

The EMS Recruiting unit currently operates with only 3 civilian staff members (2 FTE's and 1 Temp) shared with the Human Resources section who are responsible for marketing and running full-cycle hiring processes, among many other tasks. There are no sworn employees assigned full-time to Recruiting; instead, Recruiting Ambassadors (full-time Field and Communications medics of varying ranks) assist with outreach efforts when available and are compensated in overtime pay. Because recruiting is not a core duty assignment and the scheduling availability of Recruiting Ambassadors is limited, in-person outreach efforts are also typically limited to the Austin metro area. Social media (Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn) and other online communities/job sites are utilized to extend reach beyond the Austin metro.

In terms of the applicant pool: because Cadet positions at ATCEMS require certification (minimum EMT-Basic) up front, this limits the number of individuals who are qualified to apply. Nationwide, there are also fewer individuals entering the EMS profession (enrollment numbers in EMT and Paramedic schools are down) which further limits the applicant pool. Low enrollment and graduation numbers coupled with industry attrition has created an ultra-competitive recruiting environment for all EMS agencies. Rising costs of living and decreased affordable housing inventory contribute to the overall recruiting challenges.

Hiring Process

Current hiring processes were created at the inception of Civil Service for EMS and are not reflective of the current recruiting and staffing challenges. Medics - Field and Communications are required to have an EMT certification. Medics - Field are required to have one year of EMS experience. EMS has a number of automatic application disqualification criteria that have been reviewed for their current applicability.

Hiring processes are planned and carried out in cycles to fill academy classes. In the past, Recruiting used set application periods (typically of 3-6 weeks) to accept new applications for each hiring cycle. Additional applications were not accepted until the active hiring process had concluded (prospective candidates could instead join an email list for updates). Moving forward, the time gap between application periods will be reduced/removed, which will allow individuals to apply at any time while actively searching for jobs.

Retention

During the previous year EMS has seen an unusual increase in the number of voluntary separations from medics ranging from less than one year of tenure with the department up to retirement eligibility. Specifically, during the 2021 calendar year, the department had a total of forty-three (43) separations in which twenty-five (25) were resignations and eighteen (18) consisting of retirements. Exit interviews of those medics voluntarily exiting the organization revealed issues with career burn out, career field changes, career development i.e., physician and nursing career advancement, relocation back with family residing out of state, and internal transfers with AFD.

Promotion

The highest number of vacancies is at the Clinical Specialist – Field rank. This is the first promotion rank and is not eligible for entry-level hire according to Civil Service rules. Medics – Field are required to have

a paramedic certification to be eligible to promote to Clinical Specialist – Field. There are currently 60 Medics – Field with paramedic certification who have not promoted. A recent survey indicated that several of these medics felt that they lacked the clinical experience and knowledge to successfully complete the credentialing process required by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer after promoting to Clinical Specialist – Field while others expressed concern at having to change their schedules. This is a priority we are continuing to work with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer who determines the training and credentialing requirements for Clinical Specialists – Field.

Provide each department's plan to fill current vacancies, including a detailed timeline.

Recruiting

As part of the EMS recruiting process, EMS will be dedicating additional sworn staff to assist in the recruiting efforts, as well as separating our recruiting budget from our Human Resources budget. This will allow us to better understand the expenses necessary to effectively recruit new EMTs and Paramedics. [Target: June, 2022]

ATCEMS is working to increase national visibility of the department. The department is uniquely positioned to recruit individuals looking to serve as single-role EMS providers in a municipal system and those areas where those opportunities are low should be targeted. EMS will join other EMS agencies in sending recruiting staff to regional and national EMS conferences and professional organizations, thus increasing our recruiting engagement and visibility to potential EMS applicants across the country. Increasing our visibility in the EMS industry and at EMS education institutions locally and nationwide will enhance our ability to attract qualified applicants.

ATCEMS is working to improve its recruiting materials, including its website, social media presence and in-person materials. We are working to increase collaboration between the Public Information Division, the Community Outreach Division, and the Recruiting Team. With that, we anticipate being able to coordinate in development of recruiting videos.

Reducing Barriers to Entry in Existing Process

The department has begun reviewing the existing barriers to entry to the academy process. We are reviewing existing disqualifiers, and beginning May 2022, the department will eliminate the one-year EMS experience requirement for entry-level positions. We will also reduce and clarify several automatic application disqualifications that do not represent a significant safety risk. The application period for each hiring cycle will be extended. We expect this will increase our number of qualified applicants for entry-level positions.

In addition, the department is evaluating prerequisites for employment, particularly in the communications division. The existing requirement for EMT certification prior to employment as a Medic-Communications is not in line with similar organizations. The department plans to retain this requirement for Clinical Specialists - Communications but is considering reducing the entry requirement to Emergency Care Attendant (ECA) coupled with a department provided education as an Advanced Emergency Medical Dispatcher. The prerequisite of ECA can be provided via study sessions for non-certified individuals prior to the entry examinations.

The recruiting team has been directed to provide coaching and shepherding of potential applicants to ensure that applications are completed and not disqualified due to clerical errors, and to focus on individuals that expressed a passion and positive work ethic, rather than technical expertise.

Develop a Plan for Direct Hire and Community Engagement

EMS is developing a pilot program to target communities with limited access to professional education and provide them with training and internships related to EMS. In order to do this, EMS will need to launch an EMT program targeted at historically underserved communities. EMS is currently working to develop criteria for entry and develop a curriculum for these courses.

The current City of Austin and AEMSA contract contains provisions for an EMS intern program, allowing the department to hire non-certified employees into an initial EMS certification training program. Those who successfully complete the training program and become certified are given a priority status to entry-level Field or Communications Medic positions.

The initial EMS certification training requires additional instructors with EMS teaching credentials. Civilian instructors would augment our existing sworn instructors as dedicated classroom and skills instructors to expedite training. The EMS department has conducted intern classes in previous years with minimal success due to limited teaching and recruiting resources.

EMS will work with City of Austin leadership and community groups to connect with underserved communities that have limited access to professional education and with members interested in an EMS career. Engagement will include information sessions, ride-along programs and a pilot Citizens Academy where attendees can learn more about EMS opportunities.

Reducing Barrier to Promotion to Clinical Specialist

65% of current vacancies require credentialing at a PL-5 Advanced Life Support Provider through the Office of the Chief Medical Officer. There are currently 60 Medic-Field providers certified as Paramedics that are not credentialed at the PL-5 Level. If those 60 providers promoted, 77% of those vacancies would be filled. A recent survey of those 60 providers indicated that some were not promoting because they did not feel prepared for the training required for credentialing, while others did not want to change their schedules after promoting.

EMS leadership is collaborating with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer (OCMO) to create solutions for expediting the PL-5 training and credentialing process. This includes separating the PL-5 training class from the promotion test cycle. Historically, a PL-5 class was held after a Clinical Specialist – Field promotion testing cycle was complete. EMS is proposing that OCMO conduct multiple classes per year, asynchronous from promotion testing. This may allow more participation from paramedics interested in promoting.

EMS will also explore reassigning Medics full-time to training for the duration of the PL-5 class. This will allow those attending to class to focus more on the requirements for training without additional work obligations. This should improve the success rate of PL-5 training.

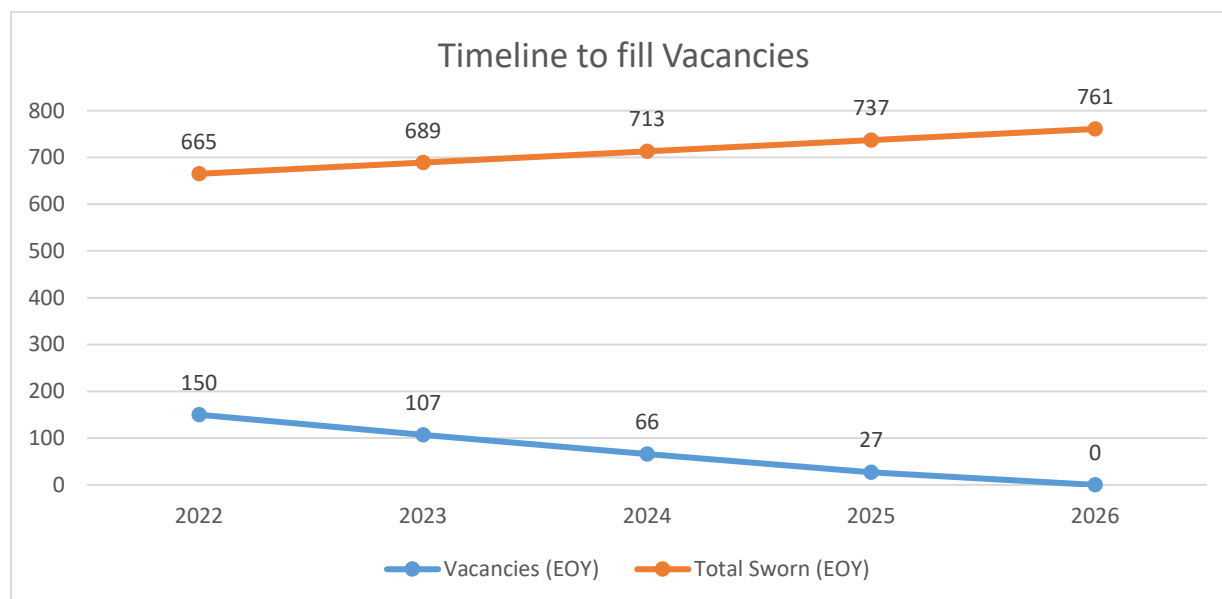
Also in coordination with OCMO, EMS is developing a pilot program to accelerate new-hire Medic-Field with paramedic certifications through PL-5. Through this, high-performing new employees would be selected to complete PL-5 training within their first year.

EMS will continue to provide educational materials, resource and mentors to individuals who feel they are not prepared yet for promotion. Building knowledge and skill base while also increasing confidence is an important component for successful promotion candidates.

Timeline

The department has two new-hire Academy classes scheduled for the remainder of 2022 (July and October). For the past few years, we have held three Academy classes per year. Our last Academy classes have averaged 15 Medics per class. Our goal for 2023 is to hold 4 Academy classes with an average of 30 medics per class for a total of 120 new hires per year.

The need for additional resources to balance workload is immediate. However recruiting, hiring and onboarding will take time. Our staffing plan over five years considers the factors of a population growth of 2.5% per year, annual EMS turnover of 8%, 120 new hires per year and adding 24 new personnel for two additional ambulances each year beginning in year 2, as well as additional Medics – Communications for increased 911 call-center volume.



Identify potential expanded or new public safety facilities needs to accomplish vacancy needs.

EMS has two locations dedicated to training. New-hire Academy classes are held at the Public Safety Training Center. Continuing Education classes are held at the EMS Education, Development and Wellness Division at 4201 Ed Bluestein. We can meet our current training needs at these facilities; however, we would recommend expanding the Public Safety Training Center soon. The campus at Ed Bluestein is also scheduled to be repurposed soon and we will need to relocate that Division.

Many EMS systems across the country are using high-fidelity simulation training to accelerate onboarding, improve clinical performance and enhance professional development. High-fidelity simulation labs include recreating environments that EMS providers practice in, such as a dark alley or a residential bedroom, and using advanced manikins that provide realistic 'patients' that breathe, have a pulse, have varying skin tones, and detailed anatomy. These simulation labs require the use of additional computer hardware, video equipment and rooms dedicated to simulation use that can be configured for a number of scenarios. While we can repurpose a training room for simulation training currently, any new public safety training space should include high-fidelity simulation labs.

Recommendations and a timeline for necessary City Council actions to implement, including budgetary actions.

The following recommendations are provided for City Manager consideration for inclusion in current - year action and future-year budget development. To increase our recruiting and onboarding activity, the EMS department requires enhancements in both personnel and equipment. With an anticipated increase in hiring, we need to increase our recruiting staff with civilian and sworn staff. This will help plan and direct recruiting activity as well as facilitate intake and processing of applications.

The increase in hiring will also require more training personnel. Two additional sworn Training Captains are needed for planning, development and directing new-hire Academy classes as well as EMT, Paramedic and continuing education training. Adding civilian EMS instructors will augment our existing sworn training staff to facilitate successful training of new hires and EMT, Paramedic, Emergency Medical Dispatch and Emergency Care Attendant courses. Many of the clinical training requirements for successful EMS onboarding can be accomplished through appropriate simulation training. The department will require this equipment to expedite the onboarding process.

For both recruiting and onboarding, additional Field Training Officers (FTO) are needed. These FTOs will allow us to host more EMT and paramedic students from local EMS schools like Austin Community College as well as other EMS organizations across the country. This is a significant recruiting tool as many EMS professionals decide to work for the organizations where they intern. FTOs are also an integral part of the training process.

FY 2022:

- 1 Commander for Recruiting
- 1 Captain for Recruiting
- 1 Civilian for recruiting and hiring process for sworn personnel
- 4 Civilian EMS Instructors
- 2 Field Captains – Instructors for Academy
- High fidelity simulation training lab
 - 7 High-fidelity manikins
 - AV & Computer equipment
 - Cadaver lab training
- Textbooks for EMT classes and Promotional Exam material
- Funding for more Field Training Officer stipends and training

FY 2023:

- 26 sworn personnel
 - 24 to staff 2 ambulances
- 2 Medics - Communications2 new ambulances and associated response equipment
 - Goodnight Ranch and downtown/entertainment district

FY 2024:

- 30 sworn personnel
 - 24 personnel to staff 2 ambulances
 - 5 Commanders - Field for new Command district
 - 2 Medics - Communications
- 2 new ambulances and associated response equipment
 - Canyon Creek and north central Austin
- 1 Command vehicle and associated response equipment

FY2025:

- 26 sworn personnel
 - 24 to staff 2 ambulances
 - 2 Medics - Communications
- 2 new ambulances and associated response equipment
 - South Austin and east central Austin

FY 2026:

- 26 sworn personnel
 - 24 to staff 2 ambulances
- 2 Medics - Communications2 new ambulances and associated response equipment
 - East Austin and central Austin