THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

COUNCIL PRESIDENT TODD GLORIA

THIRD DISTRICT

July 9, 2014

Honorable Judge David J. Danielsen
Presiding Judge
San Diego Superior Court
220 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: Grand Jury Report: "Proposed Response to San Diego County Grand Jury Report Entitled Emergency Response Times: Does Your ZIP Code Dictate Your Chance of Survival?"

Dear Judge Danielsen:

Pursuant to California Penal Code section 933 (c), the San Diego City Council provides the following responses to the findings and recommendations included in the above referenced Grand Jury Report:

FINDINGS

Below are the Mayor and City Council's responses to each of the findings:

Finding 01: *There is a need to improve response times in some areas of the city.*

Response: The Mayor and City Council agree with the Grand Jury's finding.

Finding 02: *Due to varying traffic and road conditions, Fire and Medical Rescue units should be outfitted with the best equipment to improve routing when possible.*

Response: The Mayor and City Council agree with the Grand Jury's finding.

Finding 03: *There could be a better use of ambulances for emergencies if there were better and more efficient means to screen medical emergency calls.*

Response: The Mayor and City Council disagree with the Grand Jury's finding.

While it is agreed that efficient and effective call screening is key to ensuring the right type and number of resources are sent to medical emergencies, the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department has since 1997 employed the most sophisticated medical call screening protocol program available and since August of 1998 been designated as an Accredited Center of Excellence for its medical dispatching performance.

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Known as the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS), this nationally-accredited medical dispatching program requires that 9-1-1 dispatchers be trained as Emergency Medical Dispatchers and follow a scripted algorithm of questions to precisely determine the nature and severity of the medical emergency and the type and level of resources that should be dispatched. These protocols are continually monitored and modified as needed to ensure desired patient outcomes by the City's contracted Medical Director.

Finding 04: *There are not enough free or affordable training resources in the areas that need CPR training the most.*

Response: The Mayor and City Council agree with the Grand Jury's finding.

Finding 05: *Application of some of these funds to establish strategically-placed additional fire stations in areas with slow response times would improve the response times.*

Response: The Mayor and City Council agree with the Grand Jury's finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS 14-31 THROUGH 14-33

Below are the City Council's responses to recommendations 14-31 through 14-33, which were directed to the City Council:

Recommendation 14-31: *Assign a high priority to placement of new fire stations in areas with slow emergency response times.*

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

This recommendation was implemented on June 29, 2011 with the City Council's adoption by resolution of the Citygate Working Group Five-Year Implementation Plan. This Plan incorporated the findings and recommendations of the Citygate & Associates Fire Service Standards of Response Coverage Deployment Study published in February 2011.

The Five-Year Plan identifies specific action steps to mitigate longer-than-desired emergency response times in 19 areas of the City of San Diego. The Plan focuses available resources to improve response times in those areas of greatest need first and in accordance with the priority list set forth by Citygate & Associates. The City recently broke ground on a new fire station in Mission Valley, and the Mayor and City Council have included funding in the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget to conduct a one-year pilot program of a Fast Response Squad (FRS) concept in Encanto and to site and staff a temporary fire station in Skyline. In addition, proceeds from the planned issuance of a $120 million infrastructure bond will be used to acquire land and design a fire station for Home Avenue (City Heights) and to design a permanent fire station in Skyline. These projects comprise three of the top six Citygate priority areas for response time improvement.

Recommendation 14-32: *Consider changing the contract with its ambulance service provider to avoid responses to 9-1-1 calls that are not real emergencies.*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

As currently structured, the City's ambulance provider contract requires compliance with a 12-minute response time standard for life-threatening emergencies (85% of medical calls); a 15-minute response time standard for urgent but not life-threatening emergency calls (9% of medical calls); and a 30-minute response time standard for non-emergency calls (6% of medical calls). The screening protocol discussed in response to Finding 03 permits the City to limit the response of first responder medical resources to only life-threatening emergencies.

This call screening protocol results in an appropriate balance of resource use. For example, deployment of "lights and sirens" emergency response is limited to potentially significant medical emergencies. This approach is consistent with national best practices and the community's expectation that all 9-1-1 calls for service receive the appropriate level of ambulance response.

According to the Fire-Rescue Department, the only category of medical calls for which an alternate response protocol could be considered is non-emergency calls (6% of medical calls) These calls could be out-sourced to a rotating list of Basic Life Support providers operating in the City. This was once the practice but was changed approximately 20 years ago. The policy change was made in response to concerns about maintaining quality control and a desire to have all categories of calls contribute to the funding of paramedic-level care.

Based on national best practices and desired service levels, changes to the City's current call screening and ambulance response protocols are not warranted.

Recommendation 14-33: *Continue its efforts to equip all San Diego Police patrol cars with AEDs since quite often a police officer is the first responder on scene.*

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

This recommendation has been partially implemented with the placement of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in 21 police patrol vehicles in 2012. This was done at a cost of $29,000 and paid via a community grant and Community Projects, Programs and Services funding from two council districts. Equipping each patrol vehicle would cost $1,495. Total cost of deployment for the 508 units patrol vehicle fleet would be $759,460 with a bi-annual maintenance cost of approximately $16,256 for replacement of electrode pads and $152,400 every four years for replacement of both pads and batteries.

The San Diego Police Department will consider requesting funding for the placement of additional AEDs in patrol vehicles as part of the Fiscal Year 2016 budget development process. This request will need to be evaluated alongside several other high priority equipment needs. In the meantime, the department is submitting a grant application to the San Diego County Law Enforcement Foundation for approximately seven AEDs and will continue to pursue grants, donations, and other funding sources to acquire additional AEDs.

Making AEDs more readily accessible in the community by placing them in law enforcement vehicles that are constantly patrolling our streets will result in lives saved. AEDs deployed by law enforcement prior to the arrival of fire department responders can increase the effectiveness of paramedics' resuscitation efforts, giving victims the best possible chance of survival.

According to statistics provided by the San Diego Project Heart Beat, the City's AED placement program, approximately 25 percent of the lives saved through their program have been the result

of partnerships with law enforcement agencies, which comprise only a small fraction of their overall AED deployment locations. In addition to the San Diego Police Department, the San Diego Harbor Police Department, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, and various college campus police departments throughout the County have successfully used AEDs to save lives.

RECOMMENDATION 14-34

Below is the Mayor and City Council's response to recommendation 14-34, which was directed to the Fire-Rescue and Police Departments:

Recommendation 14-34: *Implement a vigorous campaign to educate the public on the correct use of 9-1-1.*

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's current 9-1-1 education efforts are focused primarily on elementary school-aged children. The department teaches students about the proper use of 9-1-1 using coloring books in both English and Spanish. The department also provides extensive information about 9-1-1 and Fire Dispatch procedures on its website.

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department and San Diego Police Department plan to improve their public education campaign regarding 9-1-1. The departments will jointly develop a campaign designed to provide the public with information on the appropriate use of the 9-1-1 system to report emergencies. The departments intend to accomplish this by September 1, 2014.

Sincerely,

TODD GLORIA
Council President
City of San Diego

Encl: City Council Resolution R-309102

Item 334
7-1-14

(R-2014-837)

RESOLUTION NUMBER R- 309102

DATE OF FINAL PASSAGE JUL 01 2014

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO APPROVING THE CITY COUNCIL'S JOINT RESPONSE WITH THE MAYOR TO THE 2013/2014 SAN DIEGO COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT TITLED "EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIMES: DOES YOUR ZIPCODE DICTATE YOUR CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL?".

WHEREAS, on April 29, 2014 the 2013/2014 San Diego County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) filed a report titled "Emergency Response Times: Does Your Zip Code Dictate Your Chance for Survival?" (Report) that requested responses from the San Diego Police Department, the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, and the City Council; and

WHEREAS, under California Penal Code section 933(c) each public agency reviewed by the Grand Jury must comment to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under its control within ninety days after the filing of the Report; and

WHEREAS, the Grand Jury requested that the City Council respond to recommendations 14-31 through 14-33 of the Report and the San Diego Police Department and San Diego Fire-Rescue Department respond to recommendation 14-34 of the Report; and

WHEREAS, the Office of the Independent Budget Analyst has prepared a proposed joint response from the Mayor and City Council to the Report as set forth in IBA Report Number: 14-22 dated June 10, 2014, for the City Council's consideration; and

WHEREAS, the proposed responses were discussed at the June 18, 2014 meeting of the Council's Public Safety & Livable Neighborhoods Committee, before being considered by the full City Council; and

WHEREAS, under Charter section 280(a)(1) this resolution is not subject to veto by the Mayor because this matter is exclusively within the purview of the City Council and not affecting the administrative service of the City under control of the Mayor; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the City of San Diego, that the City Council approves and adopts IBA Report Number: 14-22 dated June 10, 2014 as its joint response with the Mayor to the 2013/2014 San Diego County Grand Jury report titled "Emergency Response Times: Does Your Zip Code Dictate Your Chance for Survival?".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council President is authorized and directed, on behalf of the San Diego City Council, to execute and deliver the above described response to the Presiding Judge of the San Diego Superior Court no later than July 28, 2014.

APPROVED: JAN I. GOLDSMITH, City Attorney

By _____
Noah J. Brazier
Deputy City Attorney

NJB:hm
06/19/2014
Or.Dept:PSE
Doc. No. 808851_2

Passed by the Council of The City of San Diego on JUL 01 2014, by the following vote:

Councilmembers	Yeas	Nays	Not Present	Recused
Sherri Lightner	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ed Harris	☑	☐	☐	☐
Todd Gloria	☑	☐	☐	☐
Myrtle Cole	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mark Kersey	☑	☐	☐	☐
Lorie Zapf	☑	☐	☐	☐
Scott Sherman	☑	☐	☐	☐
David Alvarez	☑	☐	☐	☐
Marti Emerald	☑	☐	☐	☐

Date of final passage JUL 01 2014.

(Please note: When a resolution is approved by the Mayor, the date of final passage is the date the approved resolution was returned to the Office of the City Clerk.)

AUTHENTICATED BY:

KEVIN L. FAULCONER
Mayor of The City of San Diego, California.

(Seal)

ELIZABETH S. MALAND
City Clerk of The City of San Diego, California.

By _____, Deputy

Office of the City Clerk, San Diego, California

Resolution Number R- 309102