

City of La Verne, City Council Agenda Report



DATE: September 15, 2025
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Ken Domer, City Manager
SUBJECT: UPDATE AND DIRECTION REGARDING APPOINTMENTS TO A CITY COUNCIL AD HOC SUB-COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.

SUMMARY

The City of Pomona received a Notice of Termination of its contract with the Los Angeles County Fire Protection District and the City Council directed staff to review fire service options. This item seeks the appointment of two City Council members to an Ad Hoc Sub-Committee on Regional Fire and Emergency Medical Services to work with the City Pomona to ensure the continuation of regional fire and emergency medical services.

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council receive an update regarding the City of Pomona fire and emergency medical services and appoint two City Council members to an Ad Hoc City Council Sub-Committee to identify and discuss regional needs and future fire and emergency medical services in the east San Gabriel Valley.

DISCUSSION

Since 1994, the City of Pomona (Pomona) has been served by the Los Angeles County Fire Protection District (LA County Fire) for fire and emergency medical services. Based largely on the escalating costs of the contract, Pomona and LA County Fire were unable to agree to terms and Pomona was given a 365-day Notice of Termination on April 16, 2025 by LA County Fire Department. On July 7, 2025, the Pomona City Council directed its City Manager to review options for providing fire services. The three options reviewed are: (1) to remain in contract with LA County Fire; (2) pursue the re-formation of a stand-alone City of Pomona fire department; or, (3) continue evaluation of an innovative, collaborative, and financially sustainable regional model.

The La Verne Fire Department (LVFD), a professional and highly capable all-risk fire, rescue and emergency medical services (EMS) department, is adjacent to the City of Pomona. As such, LVFD maintains a mutually beneficial automatic aid agreement with each of the cities around La Verne which LA County Fire serves, including Pomona. The agreement operates cooperatively and equitably with LA County Fire to meet regional fire, rescue, and EMS needs. Accordingly, Pomona staff contacted City Manager Ken Domer and LVFD Fire Chief Chris Nigg regarding regional fire and emergency medical service needs. The City of Pomona has hired industry and agency formation experts, Emergency Services Advisors (ESA), to assist in a comprehensive review of its options. La Verne staff members, including Fire Chief Nigg, Deputy Fire Chief Coatney, Finance Director Lopez and LVFA Executive leadership have met

with ESA to discuss the region's needs and the La Verne Fire Department's deployment model.

While this item is not a discussion on what is the best option for the City of Pomona, modern and best practices in fire and emergency medical services demonstrate that there are financial and performance benefits likely to be realized from a localized regional model. Fire service deployment that leverages technology and comprehensive automatic aid with all stakeholders ensures the public always receives a closest unit response, regardless of jurisdictional boundary. Prior to this modernized approach, large-scale regional fire agencies offered significant depth, and a highly attractive option for fire and EMS delivery. However, as with most large organizations, there is a point at which costs become less manageable as the organization continues to expand. This is essentially the challenge that Pomona is facing. However, an alternative inherently exists between La Verne and Pomona, where economies of scale efficiencies can still be potentially achieved via a smaller, more personalized regional approach.

On September 15, 2025, the same day as this item is to be heard, the Pomona City Council will also receive an update and consider appointing its own Ad Hoc City Council Sub-Committee to further address potential options for fire and emergency medical services. The goal of the La Verne Ad Hoc City Council Sub-Committee is to discuss regional options at the policy level, exchange information with the Pomona Ad Hoc Sub-Committee, with each to report back to their respective Councils for informational needs and community engagement. Discussions and exchange of information between the Ad Hoc Sub-Committees does not bind the two cities to any one option, but instead allows the policy-makers to more fully explore the future of fire and emergency medical services for the east San Gabriel Valley. Regardless of whether Pomona enters into a new agreement with LA County Fire, re-establishes its own municipal fire department, or makes a determination that greater efficiencies and service levels could result from a regional partnership, La Verne will need to pursue inclusion and information sharing to ensure its residents are poised to remain equitably served through automatic aid.

While the City Council is asked to appoint an Ad Hoc Sub-Committee through this action, the Ad Hoc Sub-Committee will only be formed if the Pomona City Council takes similar action at their meeting. If formed, the members of the Ad Hoc Sub-Committee will report back any discussions during future City Council meetings under the "Council Comments and Conference/Meeting Reports" section unless action is required. If action is required, a future City Council Discussion Calendar item will be added for public comment and City Council consideration.

As stated earlier, over the last five years the La Verne Fire Department, under the leadership of Fire Chief Chris Nigg, has taken great strides in creating a professional and highly effective fire and emergency medical response agency. Staffing has been increased and a new deployment model implemented to ensure that response times for emergency medical services are below industry standards. The use of La Verne ambulances, staffed by full-time La Verne ambulance operators, has created another layer of professional and efficient first responders that reflects the modern approach to responding to the growing number of emergency medical calls.

While the La Verne Fire Department is highly effective for La Verne, the potential of greater

regional collaboration could provide our residents with significant benefits, including improved emergency response, greater operational efficiency, and increased cost-effectiveness through shared resources from a larger organizational operation. Accordingly, working with the City of Pomona to develop alternatives for their operations could also lead to potential benefits for the City of La Verne and its residents.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is no fiscal impact from the formation of an Ad Hoc Sub-Committee. If any formal budgetary item related to continued discussion, research, or use of technical consultants arises from this process, an agenda item will be placed on a City Council meeting for consideration, public comments, and formal action.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Not applicable.

LEGAL REVIEW

The City Attorney has reviewed this item.

ATTACHMENTS

None

Coordinated with:
Chris Nigg, Fire Chief