Fire Services Review

City of Paso Robles, CA

November 15, 2016

CITYGATE ASSOCIATES, LLC
FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Business of Better Government

Fire Service Delivery Policy Choices

- There are no mandatory federal or state regulations directing the level of fire service response times or outcomes. Thus, communities have the level of service they desire and can afford.
- The body of regulations on the fire service states that *if fire services are provided at all, they must be done so with the safety of the firefighters and citizens in mind*.
- Deployment is about the ***speed*** and ***weight*** of the response:
  - **Speed** = single, neighborhood-based units controlling moderate emergencies quickly.
  - **Weight** = multiple units amassing quickly enough to stop serious fires.

Fire Service Deployment Principals

- Community-desired outcomes
- Risks to be protected
- Response-time components
  - Dispatch, crew turnout, and travel
- Critical tasks – determine staffing needed
- Fire station geographic coverage incident response history and times
- Reliability of response – multiple incidents
- Plan to match desired outcomes to staffing, apparatus, and geographic coverage

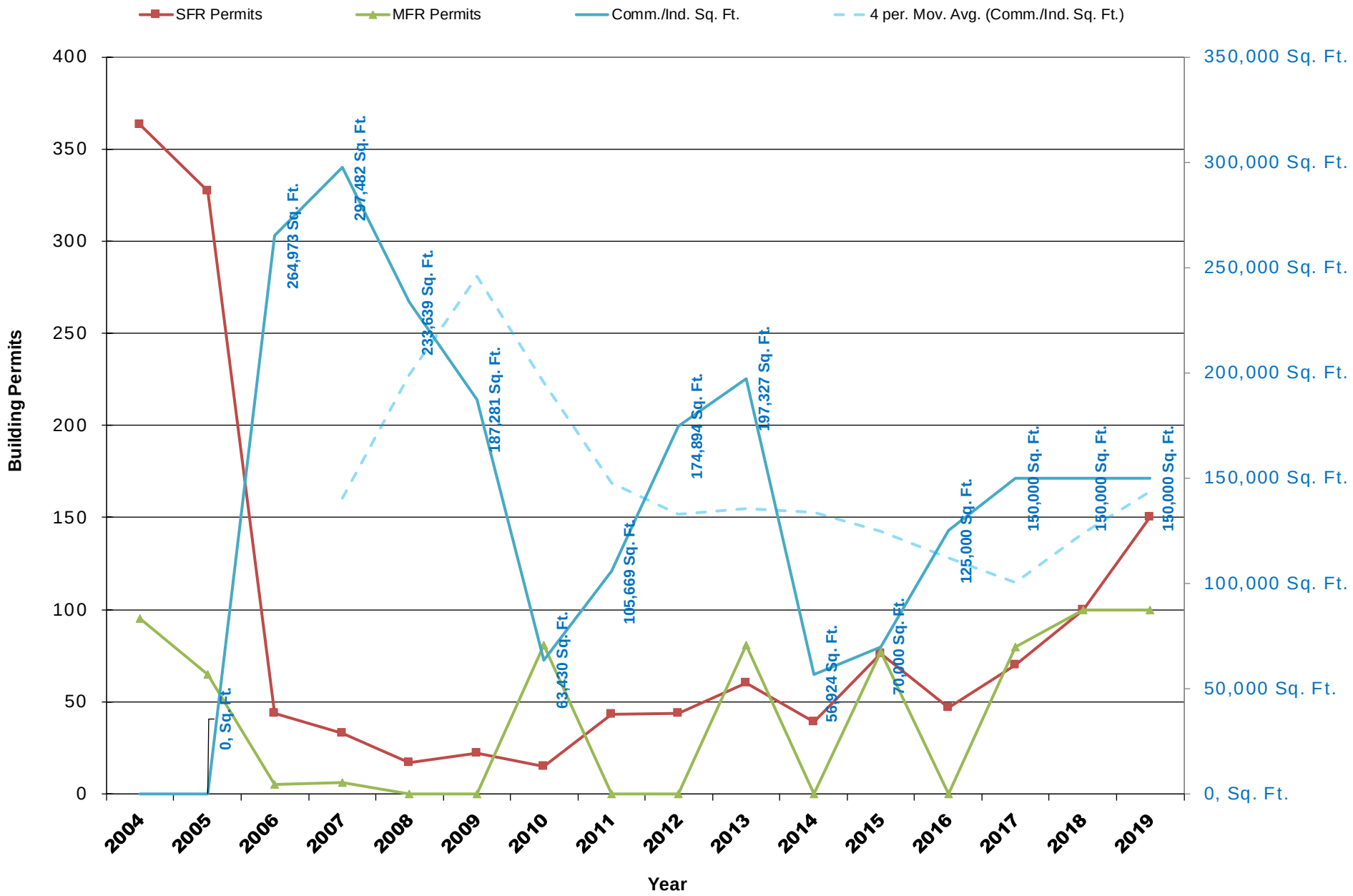
Risks to Be Protected – Summary

- 18 square miles
- 31,398 residents
- Employees
- Businesses – the local economic engine
- Visitors – in town and on Highway 101 and 46
- Historic structures – downtown
- Wildfire potential
- Special hazards, such as hazardous chemicals, the railroad, and technical rescues

Special Risks and Projections

- 258 assisted living units, approximately 200 more proposed
- Building permits estimated in 2016:
  - 47 residential; previously 76 in 2015
  - 125,000 square feet of commercial/industrial
- Significant and on-going hotel and meeting room expansion
- Growing as a "destination area" – tourism and permanent residential

Paso Robes Building Permits
Annual Permit Volumes and Residential Unit Production
2004 - 2016



Critical Tasks On-Scene – Contain Fire Inside Building 15 Firefighters	Task Clock Time	Elapsed Time from 9-1-1
Pre-arrival time of dispatch, turnout, and travel time at desired goal point		07:00
First-due engine on scene, size up, pull fire attack line	Begin Time	07:00
Ladder truck on scene / ventilation	00:40	07:40
First ladder to roof	02:54	
Forcible entry	04:05	
Attack team entry pre-connect	04:05	11:05
Second engine on scene	04:20	
Provide water supply line	05:22	
Rescue-ambulance on scene	05:00	
First Chief Officer on scene, transfer command	05:40	
Third engine on scene, second Chief Officer	07:27	
Primary search completed	08:03	15:03
Roof ventilation completed	08:06	
Rapid Intervention Crew established	08:21	
Water on fire	09:05	
Fire knocked down	09:10	16:10
Secondary search completed	09:20	
Fire under control	09:30	16:30
Total Time to Control:	**09:30**	**16:30**
Total Personnel:	**16**	

Current Fire Station Staffing

- Two City stations x three firefighters per crew minimum = six personnel total
- Regional paramedic ambulance coverage
- CAL FIRE
  - One year-round station with two firefighters
  - Two wildfire season stations with three firefighters each
  - One rescue unit staffed with paid call firefighters
- Principal mutual aid from County and Atascadero
- Goal is to deliver 15 firefighters to building fires

Current Headquarters Staffing

- One Fire Chief
- One Battalion Chief
- One Administrative Assistant

Fire Station Spacing 1.5 Miles

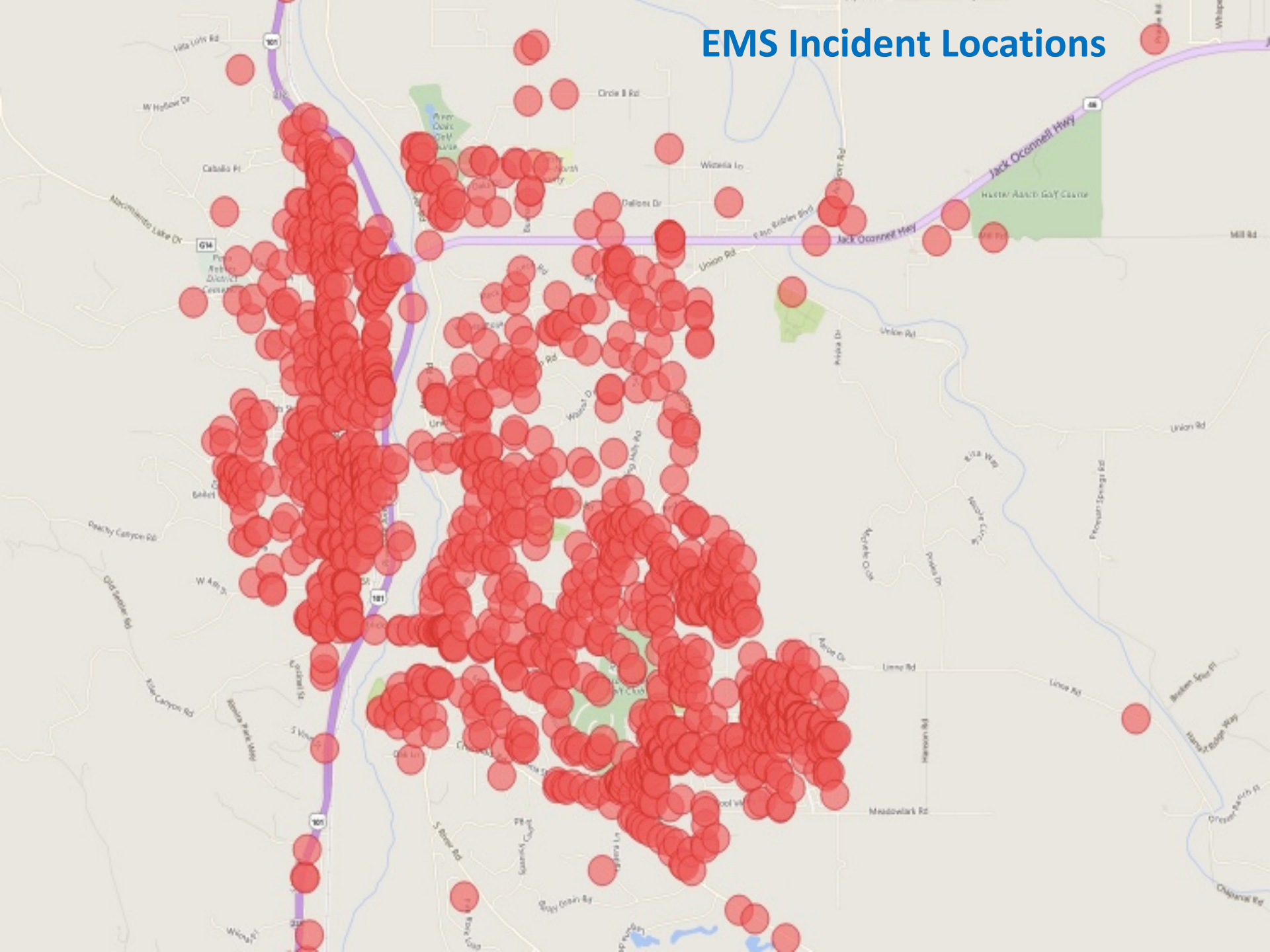
Existing Response Time Policy

- 2003 General Plan Safety Element
  - Maintain .8 to 1.3 firefighters per 1,000 population
  - Currently at .68/1,000
  - 4-minute response to 90% of calls
  - No current response time policies containing *all* best-practices-needed elements
- Budget goal of 4 minutes to 90% of the incidents; *start* time not defined

Current Response Time Delivered – 2015

- 3,310 incidents, or nine per day
- 22 *structure* fires, 96 fires of all types
- 2,412 emergency medical incidents – 73%
- For fire and EMS incidents, **7:48** minutes/seconds to 90% of the incidents
- Response time components:
  - Dispatch = **0:54** seconds
  - Turnout = **2:24** minutes/seconds
  - Travel = **5:54** minutes/seconds

EMS Incident Locations



EMS Incident Severity, Simultaneous Incident Demand, and Mutual Aid Incidents

- In 2015, 2,412 EMS incidents
- 1,830 or 76% resulted in an ambulance transport
  - 1,705 moderate
  - 125 acute
- Busiest incident hours are 9:00 am to 6:00 pm
- Simultaneous incidents occur 1.5 times per day
- Mutual aid into the City is needed about once per week

Key Deployment Findings

- The City is completely dependent on mutual aid to staff a serious fire, if the goal is to confine the fire inside the building of origin and to stop the significant spread of wildfires
- The City's use of fire paramedics is beneficial, especially when the ambulance is not available inside the City
- Economics and social changes have eliminated volunteers and severely constrained the availability of per diem firefighters

Key Deployment Findings (cont.)

- Six firefighters on duty is a small fire, “first-aid” fire force
- Two fire station locations cannot provide urban/suburban *travel* time coverage to 90% of the existing City limits
- The fire apparatus are in good condition and of the type needed
- Fire Station 2, built in 1960, even with a prior remodel, is small, will not meet long-term needs, and might not be in the best 50-year location on a main road

Headquarters Facts and Finding

- Two Chief Officers is seriously insufficient for senior-level work and supervision
- Additionally, Incident Command must be provided 24/7/365
- Training, safety, and fire prevention programs all need attention by the appropriate number of credentialed personnel
- Safety laws must be followed, which requires oversight
- There is no depth, redundancy, or succession plan for the two Chief Officers
- *The minimum Citygate-recommended headquarters team consists of at least <u>five</u> personnel; there are three at present*

Possible Considerations Going Forward

- Adopt best-practices performance measures to include all pieces of the response timeline:
  - 1:30-minute/second call processing time
  - 2-minute turnout time
  - 4- to 8-minute *travel* time for differing population density areas
- Consider measures to state desired service goals:
  - Confine fires to inside buildings or to parcel
  - Provide paramedic care above that of the regional ambulance system

Considerations (cont.)

- In headquarters, consider in the near term:
  - A second Battalion Chief
  - A non-sworn Fire Prevention Officer
  - Relief clerical support shared with another department
- The City needs a current Fire Service Master Plan to:
  - Match goals to economic capacity and risk
  - Drive phased staffing and fire station changes
  - Inform the residents regarding what they do and *do not* have

Possible Response Time Goals – By Population Density

Current City Performance Minutes/ Seconds	Total Response Time	Dispatch Time	Turnout Time	Travel Time
	7:48	0:54	2:24	5:54

Response Time Component	Structure Fire Urban Area	Structure Fire Suburban Area	Structure Fire Rural Area
	>1,000 people per square mile	500-1,000 people per square mile	<500 people per square mile
First Due Travel Time	5:00	6:00	8:00
Total Response Time	8:30	9:30	11:30
First Alarm Travel Time	8:00	10:00	12:00
First Alarm Total Response	11:30	13:30	15:30

Phased Station/Staffing Possibilities for the Next Master Plan to Consider

- Inquire about a shared staffed unit with the ambulance operator
- Seven per shift today; six is the minimum
- Raise to eight per shift; six stays the minimum
- When absences do not require the two "over" positions, operate a two-firefighter EMS/Quick Attack Unit
- When economics can fund nine per shift with overtime for absence coverage, then operate a third fire engine crew
- When funds allow, overstaff each shift again with one or two personnel to control overtime

Revenue Options

- Provide fire services within the General Fund's and existing Community Facilities District's ability
- Consider a supplemental tax for fire services, such as a general property tax increase, sales tax, utility users tax, a hotel tax increase, or combinations thereof

Next Steps

- Ask staff to return with:
  - Near-term service level goals for *existing* staffing
  - Funding options and timing for modest staffing increases:
    - As soon as possible, a minimum of one additional Battalion Chief and .5 office support position
    - Ideally, three firefighters to raise shift staffing to eight
- Discuss timing and funding for a Fire Services Master Plan to allow Council and the community to consider:
  - Mid- to long-term service levels, staffing, and stations
  - Revenue strategies to support the Master Plan

Questions?