

CITY OF REDONDO BEACH

Budget Response Report

#20

May 30, 2024

Question:

What is the process to obtain ambulance transport rights from Los Angeles County?

Response:

In 2023, the Redondo Beach Fire Department (RBFD) responded to approximately 6,000 Emergency Medical responses with over 4,000 of those requiring ambulance transportation. Currently McCormick Ambulance provides ambulance transportation services for the City of Redondo Beach (City) as part of an exclusive operating agreement that was granted by the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency (County) in 2016. This bidding process occurs every ten years.

In 2016 the City submitted a bid to provide ambulance transport services for Redondo Beach, but the contract was ultimately awarded to McCormick Ambulance by the County. If the City is interested in bidding for ambulance transportation rights in 2026, the City would need to allocate funding in the next year and a half to hire a consulting firm, with an estimated cost of \$80,000, to determine the cost, benefit, and operational requirements of an ambulance transportation program. The consultant would also assist with the submittal of the City's bid in early 2026.

Background

The Emergency Medical Services System and the Prehospital Emergency Medical Care Personnel Act, or as it is generally known, the "EMS Act," is codified in California Health and Safety Code - HSC § 1797, which comprehensively regulates emergency medical care in California. Enacted in 1980, the Act provides for the creation of emergency medical procedures and protocols, certification of emergency medical personnel, and coordination of emergency responses by fire departments, ambulance transporters, hospitals, and other providers within the emergency medical services ("EMS") system. Redondo Beach is the local agency that provides prehospital emergency medical services under Health & Safety Code § 1797.201, also referred to as "201 Rights"

The law that governs ambulance transport rights in the EMS Act is Health & Safety Code § 1797.224. Commonly referred to as "224 Rights", this section allows local EMS agencies to create "exclusive operating areas" for EMS providers that have provided

services continuously, and in the same manner and scope, as they provided on January 1, 1981. Unlike a Section 201 grandfathered right, a “Section 224” right is a discretionary one that a local EMS agency may grant. RBFD is the local Emergency Medical Services agency.

Over 30 years ago the City, acting as the local Emergency Medical Services agency, waived/granted their 224 rights and subsequently allowed the County to bid on the exclusive operating area of Redondo Beach, which is now designated as exclusive operating area number 8 (EOA #8). The County was awarded the ambulance transportation rights for EOA #8 and the County, in turn, subcontracted to a private ambulance company which today is McCormick Ambulance.

City Program/Proposal

There are several consulting firms that provide EMS and Ambulance Transportation feasibility studies which include a comprehensive evaluation of the finances, insurance payer mix calculations, and the other details necessary to inform City’s on the risk, benefit, and service requirements to consider for an ambulance transportation proposal.

Providing ambulance transportation would likely require the City to develop an ambulance transportation program which would entail hiring new employees, providing new infrastructure, and administrative oversight to the program. An initial investment of \$2.2M would likely cover the startup and first year operating costs for vehicles, radios, medical equipment, infrastructure, personnel costs, personnel protective equipment, maintenance, overhead, initial training and program delivery. On-going annual costs for personnel and program management would be approximately \$900K. It is anticipated that once the program is fully implemented, it would generate \$2.9M in annual revenue and net the General Fund approximately \$2M per year.

Estimated Costs

Year One Equipment and Infrastructure Start Up Costs	\$1.2M
Year One Personnel Start Up Costs	\$1.0M
Total First Year Start Up Costs	\$2.2M
On-going Annual Personnel Costs	\$900K
On-going Annual Gross Revenue	\$2.9M
On-going Annual Net Revenue to the General Fund (\$2.9M-\$900K)	\$2.0M

An Ambulance program would require RBFD to employ a minimum of 12 full-time and 6 part-time civilian Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) whose sole responsibility would be to respond to emergency medical incidents within the exclusive operating area of the City of Redondo Beach and provide transportation to desired hospitals. The EMT’s would staff two Basic Life Support ambulances, 24-hours daily, and one, for 10 hours, during

peak-times when the highest call volume is predicted throughout the city. These members would each be assigned a Department mentor and would participate in a two-week training academy instructed by the Department's Firefighter Paramedics. This continuous training and mentorship activity would support growth and development of the employees and enhance the services provided to the community. To yield the most efficient emergency response times, and provide adequate supervision and accountability of personnel, the ambulances and employees would be housed at Fire Stations 1 and 2. The current infrastructure of the stations would require modifications to accommodate the change. Having Redondo Beach Fire Department employees provide transportation services would ensure continuity of patient care and enhance the quality of service provided to the community. The program would also serve as a career pathway for RBFD Cadets.