

ASSESSMENT OF THE REDONDO BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT



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GOAL



- ▶ 1. **Determine the current state of the RBFD** and **provide recommendations** for improvements and efficiencies.
- ▶ 2. **Research, survey and interview City leaders and community stakeholders** to document their perspectives and expectations of the RBFD.
- ▶ 3. **Identify a benchmark of fire department related operations** that City leadership can use to evaluate services of the RBFD, any future studies of the LA County Fire Department, or any local regionalization with other fire departments.
- ▶ 4. Utilize the assessment's document to assist the City of Redondo Beach in **determining the most desirable qualifications and skill sets for the next Fire Chief.**
- ▶ 5. Serve as a **transition document for the new Fire Chief.**

METHODOLOGY



Rather than just focus on the RBFD internally, it was important to get the expectations and sentiments of all the stakeholders. For this reason we focused our attention on the following three groups:

- ▶ **1. City Leadership** - to include the Mayor, and the elected members of the City Council, City Manager, Assistant City Manager and the City Attorney
- ▶ **2. The RBFD Members** - to include all sworn and civilian personnel
- ▶ **3. The Community** - to include community stakeholders, business owners, families, the School District, and a City-wide survey

In the Harbor we added Harbor Commissioners (City leadership), boaters, marina managers and yacht club leadership (Community), and all personnel from the RBFD assigned in the Harbor (RBFD) and LA County Fire Chief over Baywatch.

PRIORITY MATRIX



Information gained through interviews and surveys in the 3-tiered approach pointed us in the direction of priorities or concerns. For transparency, the topics were developed independently by each of the authors, then combined and categorized as follows:

PRIORITY MATRIX								
	Dept. Reorganization / Leadership	Efficiency / service delivery	Response times	Training	Emergency Mgmt	Communicaton / Engagement	Policy / Procedure / accountability	Prevention
RBFD Members	X	X		X		X	X	X
City Leadership	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
The Communnity		X	X		X	X		X

PROCESS



- ▶ **Thoroughly research each of the priority areas**, by conducting additional interviews, reviewing departmental data, or oftentimes creating new transparent data sets
- ▶ **Make recommendations** based on stakeholder expectations and desires, and/or consistent with best practices in the industry
- ▶ Things that did not rise the level of inclusion in the Priority Matrix, but were mentioned enough to cause concern were **included in the OTHER OBSERVATIONS** section of the report. These include Diversity, Tri-City Concept, Ladder Truck, and Leave Time
- ▶ **In total 68 recommendations were made, 24 of which have already been completed through administrative decisions, and 15 are currently underway**

TAKEAWAYS



- ▶ The RBFD is **loved by the community but somewhat misunderstood** and could benefit from additional communication and engagement **(86-98% satisfaction)**
- ▶ The RBFD must **focus on what it can do**, not what just what it has to do (proactive v. reactive)
- ▶ Community trust and sentiment is high **but those feelings are not shared by City leadership**. Increased communication and inclusion is needed
- ▶ The RBFD has functioned as daily 'consequence managers' **failing to focus forward** into the future. This is exacerbated by a tremendous lack of administrative personnel, forcing chief executives into admin and clerical work that should be civilianized
- ▶ **Imbalance in the Division Chief level** has caused the agency's biggest concern but it can be remedied with clear expectations, change of focus on priorities, exploration of different approaches to schedules, and a clear unified vision moving forward
- ▶ Running short with 10 vacancies plus IOD's, had negative impacts on the wellness of the staff, budget, and morale. **Maintaining full staffing** must continue through proactive management and, over-hires, and attention to succession planning.

TAKEAWAYS



- ▶ Service delivery meets community expectations, but **an over-response is seen as inefficient** and mentioned by all stakeholders. Move toward a tiered dispatch system and streamlined resource deployment
- ▶ **Of the 7200 calls per year, 70% are medical** and 60% of those are basic life saving (BLS) as opposed to advanced life saving (ALS), **and 1.3% of total calls result in fire**, yet the RBFD only staffs 2 rescue vehicles. Service delivery should be refocused on community need
- ▶ Although the information was not available during our research, **the RBFD has now received a Class 1 rating** from the Insurance Services Office (ISO) that was not included in the assessment

RECOMMENDATIONS



There are 68 recommendations in the assessment and the staff report contains a snapshot of the executive summary of 21 recommendations. All 21 are crucial, but by **selecting just those recommendations that require some level of council direction, we have highlighted the following:**

- ▶ Hire additional administrative/clerical staff**
- ▶ Have RBFD continually monitor/evaluate/measure and improve how long it takes to arrive on scene when called to an emergency**
- ▶ Have the RBFD take the lead in the City's emergency management continuum**
- ▶ Redefine the Harbor Patrol's mission and deploy accordingly**
- ▶ Explore cooperative agreements with neighboring south bay cities to share executive personnel, logistical and resources/facilities**

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION



- ▶ **1. Instituting an over-hire program at the firefighter rank.**
 - ▶ maintain full staffing, succession planning, 4-person truck, open diversity pool
- ▶ **2. Hiring additional administrative staff.**
 - ▶ Reallocation of funding for admin specialist (from Harbor)
 - ▶ Add senior mgmt analyst (assisting DC in charge of Emergency Mgmt)
 - ▶ Add part time Fire Inspectors/Interns (lessen load on crews so they can train, + value, creation of a hiring bench)
- ▶ **3. Creating a cooperative agreement for shared battalion chief services.**
 - ▶ MOU for 1-year pilot with Manhattan Beach, El Segundo, and/or possibly Torrance
 - ▶ Solves many of the issues identified in the DC rank with respect to schedules
- ▶ **4. Harbor Patrol operations.**
 - ▶ 5 options presented in report. Option 5 recommended with 24/7 coverage + MOU with County for redundancy and increased landside paramedic services. Maintenance of skills/qualifications but change of classification in MOU
 - ▶ DC becomes Harbor Master working out of Station 3
- ▶ **5. The purchase of new technology for the fire station alerting systems.**
 - ▶ Countdown clocks for response times and wellness of the crews for alerting