

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA MATERIAL for Supplemental Packet 2

Meeting Date: April 29th 2025
Item Number: 17
Item Description: Fire Facility Revenue Measures
Submitted by: Councilmember Terry Taplin

Adding Meeting date, Adding Councilmember Taplin's first name, standardizing the font and text size throughout, updating place holders in Financial Implications, removed blank gap between "Rationale For Recommendation" and "Alternative Actions Considered"



Internal

BERKELEY CITY COUNCILMEMBER
TERRY TAPLIN
DISTRICT 2

CONSENT CALENDAR

[DATE]

4/29/2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Terry Taplin

Subject: Fire Facility Revenue Measures

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager the assessment of potential 2026 revenue ballot measures to support capital improvements to fire department facilities and return recommendations for council adoption.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Community polling to help set priorities for a bond initiative that will exclusively pay for remodeling or replacement of fire facilities is expected to cost between ~~\$\$x20,000~~ and ~~\$\$x50,000~~.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Berkeley Fire Department Facilities Master Plan (FMP) establishes a ten-year timeline to implement critical remodels and replacements of fire facility capital improvements necessary to keep pace with the department's evolving and expanding mission, meet the growing demand for service in the city, and comply with modern building codes and industry standards, and align with best practices. Needed improvements include renovation and expansion (Fire Stations 3, 6, and 7), on-site replacement (Fire Stations 2, 4, and 5), relocation (Fire Station 1, Fire Administration, Fire Training Center), and remodeling (Fire Warehouse).

The 2023 Standards of Coverage and Community Risk Assessment (SOC) indicate that the city has an appropriate number of stations, which need to be maintained to retain this status. Furthermore, the SOC recommends strategic staffing in the downtown core and additional staffing during wildfire weather, both of which are beyond the current capacity of existing stations.

The budgets below represent an "Order of Magnitude Cost Plan," intended to estimate costs within a broad range rather than the lowest possible amount. These figures are for planning purposes and exclude escalation beyond 2024, property acquisition, and program management

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costs. They do include construction, equipment, furnishings, design, environmental review, permitting, and related fees. The proposed phasing prioritizes projects with the highest call volumes and staffing needs. Station 1 is slated to begin first as a relocation; once complete, the original facility can serve as temporary housing for future replacements.

SEQUENCED PROJECTS				INDEPENDENT PROJECTS			
Design Start		Rough Order of Magnitude Costs		Design Start		Rough Order of Magnitude Costs	
		LOW x \$ Million	HIGH x \$ Million			LOW x \$ Million	HIGH x \$ Million
2024	Fire Station 1 Relocation New site on/near San Pablo Ave	\$42	\$47	2023	New Headquarters Site TBD	\$33	\$36
2026	Fire Station 2 Replacement Temporary Location - Station 1, 4, 5	\$51	\$56	2023	Training Center Phase 1 Renovation Phase 2 Replacement Regional Site TBD	\$81	\$90
2028	Fire Station 5 Replacement Temporary Location - Station 1, 4, 2	\$53	\$58	2026	Fire Station 3 Renovation + Expansion Temporary Location - Station 2, 5	\$12.0	\$16
2030	Fire Station 4 Replacement Temporary Location - Station 2, 6	\$36	\$41	2028	Fire Station 6 Renovation + Expansion Temporary Location - Trailer on site	\$11.6	\$15
				2030	Fire Station 7 Renovation + Expansion Temporary Location - TBD	\$10.0	\$13
TOTAL Rough Order of Magnitude Project Cost						\$330	\$372

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BACKGROUND

The history of Berkeley's fire service begins in 1877 with the first volunteer hose-and-bucket brigade founded by residents of West Berkeley. Following Berkeley's incorporation, the Board of Town Trustees recognized Beacon #1 Fire Company as the Volunteer Fire Department. The Town Trustees established the Paid Fire Department on October 1, 1904, and appointed James Keney as Berkeley's first fire chief. Over the last one hundred and twenty-one years, the Berkeley Fire Department has provided dedicated exemplary service to the community 24 hours a day responding to medical emergencies, fires, hazardous material events, technical rescues, utility emergencies, water rescues, disaster response, active shooter incidents, vehicle extrications, and other critical and life-threatening events. The cities growing population, increasing density, increasing physical height of structures along with advances in technology have driven an expansion and evolution of the Department's mission which require modern facilities with a footprint of adequate size to sustain operations.

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Since 1995, the volume of local calls for service for emergencies has grown from 6,300 to 17,500 calls annually in 2024. There are now spikes of over 300% in the daily average call volume during extreme weather events that necessitate additional surge staffing. Space for these additional employees and emergency response vehicles is required in the city's firehouses. As

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these extreme weather events increase in frequency, the Department is planning for how to integrate these modifications into its long-term infrastructure plans.

In order to fulfill the modern mission of the fire department and in order to be prepared and to address hazards while adhering to emission standards, apparatus have grown in size including wildland engines, ambulances, off-road vehicles and boats, and other equipment.

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Research spanning decades, continents, and more than 80,000 firefighters validates the connection between firefighting and occupational cancer. Cancer is the most dangerous threat to firefighter health and safety today. Firefighters have a 9 percent higher risk of being diagnosed with cancer and a 14 percent higher risk of dying from cancer than the general U.S. population, according to research by the CDC/National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH). This has driven fire station best practices have evolved to update spatial layouts to include dedicated turnout and decontamination rooms, dedicated fitness rooms, airlock separation between apparatus bays and living quarters, and reorganized circulation, to minimize exposure to carcinogens.

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In order to fulfill commitments to reduce carbon emissions and promote the health of firefighters and the community at large, the City of Berkeley and the Berkeley Fire Department are moving to electrify stations and apparatus. The process of electrifying fire stations is expensive, and staff has determined that the investment that would be required should be deferred until the fire stations undergo needed remodels, rebuilds or relocation. To invest in these upgrades prior to these known and impending actions was not seen as fiscally responsible when the analysis was completed.

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To accommodate the needs of our existing diverse and inclusive workforce, and to create spaces that welcome higher percentages of under-represented groups, the Department calls for increased privacy and accessibility in stations via gender-neutral restrooms, single occupancy bedrooms, and dedicated offices for supervisors.

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The majority of the city's fire stations were built in the 1960s, receiving seismic upgrades in the 1990s while the Training Facility was built in 1996, the Public Safety Building in 2000, and Station 7 in 2006. Despite having undergone some degree of modification since construction, most fire stations currently lack the specifications to properly house modern apparatus, equipment, and cannot absorb additional units and new staff, to meet current policy, codes, and health, safety, and inclusion standards. Many stations also contain outdated features, hinder alignment with best practices for health and the environment.

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ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

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There are no immediate impacts from conducting polling, however, if a tax measure was successful and this work occurred it would allow for electrification of the Department's fleet in alignment with the City's long-term goals outlined in the Municipal Fleet Electrification Plan. According to current policy, any new construction in Berkeley is required to be all electric. Going all-electric for buildings and the fleet will require significant revisions to the site power supply including:

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- Changing the type of power entering the building (from single to three-phase in most instances)
- Increasing the electrical service to 800 or 1200 amps
- Installing solar arrays and energy storage systems

This move improves health and safety at stations and addresses environmental considerations by:

- Improving indoor air quality by eliminating natural gas (for heating and cooking) in the buildings
- Decreasing fossil fuel reliance and carbon pollution by providing electric charging stations for fire department vehicles and apparatus, and staff's personal electric vehicles
- Employing clean energy sources while the power grid is up and during emergencies when it is down

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RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Renovation, replacement, and relocation of stations and facilities are required to align the Department with best practices, address modern needs, and keep up with operational demands. Furthermore, the city's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan indicates that the city is vulnerable to earthquake, wildland-urban interface fire, extreme heat, events, and assesses the likelihood of each to be high and the impacts of each risk to be severe. Additionally, daily calls for service and the response-needs of the city continue to grow.

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ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Waiting to pursue revenue measures in subsequent cycles, seeking to use General Fund dollars, and inaction were all considered but the current recommendation was ultimately decided.

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CONTACT PERSON

Internal

Councilmember Taplin

Council District 2

510-981-7120

Attachments:

1. Fire Department Master Plan

2. Standards of Coverage

2.

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