

Date: August 19, 2024

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Kevin Riper, Director of Financial Management



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: Response to Questions from the Budget Oversight Committee and the City Council Budget Hearing on August 13, 2024

On August 13, 2024, during the Budget Oversight Committee meeting, City staff provided an overview of General Fund revenues, and an overview of the FY 24 Mid-Year Performance Report highlights and key drivers for the Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 25) Budget, including a CalPERS and vacancies overview. Additionally, at the City Council Budget Hearing, the Departments of Police, Fire, Public Works, and Parks, Recreation, and Marine provided overviews on the Proposed FY 25 Budget. This memorandum provides responses to questions and/or comments raised by members of the City Council during that time.

From Budget Oversight Committee

1. Please provide the vacancy rate by Department in the General Fund Group.

The following table shows the vacancy rate by Department in the General Fund Group as of August 14, 2024. This data includes only budgeted and full-time positions, and excludes non-career positions, pooled positions, and any positions requiring administrative clean-up in the Human Resources Management System (HRMS) at the time of this date.

Department	Vacant FTE	Filled FTE	Total FTE	Vacancy %
CITY AUDITOR	1	13	13	5%
CITY CLERK	3	13	16	19%
CITY MANAGER	6	28	33	17%
CITY PROSECUTOR	2	32	34	7%
CIVIL SERVICE	1	20	21	5%
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	6	23	29	21%
DISASTER PREP & EMERGENCY COMM	16	75	91	18%
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	3	12	16	20%
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	27	93	120	22%
FIRE	52	413	465	11%
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	13	20	33	40%
HUMAN RESOURCES	0	1	1	0%
LAW	3	22	25	12%
LEGISLATIVE	6	43	49	12%
LIBRARY SERVICES	8	86	94	9%
PARKS RECREATION AND MARINE	26	129	155	17%
POLICE	241	870	1,111	22%
POLICE OVERSIGHT	3	4	7	43%
PUBLIC WORKS	45	209	254	18%
TOTAL	462	2,105	2,567	18%

From Budget Hearing

- 2. On Page 512 of the FY 25 Proposed Budget Book, the City's Waste Diversion Rate Key Measure indicated that in order for the City of Long Beach to comply with the Solid Waste Disposal Measurement Act (SB 1016), the City may not generate more than 7.6 lbs of waste per person per day (lbs/p/d). The City is below the State's target by generating 5.7 lbs/p/d. Please explain.**

SB 1016 establishes the City of Long Beach's baseline of disposal at 15.2 pounds of trash per person per day. To meet the requirements of SB 1016, jurisdiction must dispose of not more than 50 percent of the target, which sets the City's requirement at 7.6 pounds of trash per person per day. In 2022, the City's disposal rate was determined to be 5.7 pounds of trash per person per day, which is lower than the limit and meets the requirement. The disposal rate is calculated using the jurisdiction's population (or, in some cases, employment) and its disposal as reported by disposal facilities.

- 3. On Page 369 of the FY 25 Proposed Budget Book, why is there \$0 of Revenue Budget in the Police & Fire Public Safety Oil Production Act Fund Group within the Fire Department's Narrative?**

The Police & Fire Public Safety Oil Production Act Fund Group was established to provide dedicated funds for police officers and firefighters by assessing a special production tax on oil producers in Long Beach. Also known as Proposition H, the tax assessed on June 1, 2024, was \$0.382/barrel oil produced, and will remain the same rate until May 31, 2025. In FY 25, Proposition H revenue is projected at \$2.2 million – half of which is programmed for the Fire Department and the other half to the Police Department. The projected revenue includes a budgetary reduction to reduce the City's reliance on oil revenue where actual revenue received above these budgeted figures will be available for one-time uses.

Although related expenditures are reported as part of each department's FY 25 budgeted expenditures, oil production tax revenue is classified as a Citywide revenue and reported as part of the Citywide Department. As such, budgeted Police & Fire Public Safety Oil Production Tax revenue will report as \$0 in each of the department's budget book chapters.

- 4. How many Swift Water Rescues did the City have last year? Is there additional funding and equipment necessary for them?**

The Fire Department confirms that there were 17 Swift Water Rescues in FY 23. The Department is currently purchasing new personal protective equipment and Swift Water Rescue tactical equipment, totaling approximately \$47,000, for responding engine companies. This purchase will be funded by existing budget in the General Fund Group and General Grants Fund Group in the Fire Department.

5. Please clarify the cost of the Paramedic Assessment Unit.

The Fire Department deploys four types of apparatus when responding to emergency medical calls. Depending on the type of call and service requested by a Long Beach community member, the Fire Department will deploy a (i) Basic Life Support Ambulance operated by two Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) Ambulance Operators, (ii) an Advanced Life Support (ALS) Ambulance operated by two Firefighter/Paramedics, (iii) an EMT fire engine or truck, or (iv) a Paramedic Assessment Unit (PAU), which is a fire engine staffed by an EMT Fire Captain, Fire Engineer, Firefighter, and one ALS Firefighter/Paramedic. In the case of the Paramedic Assessment Unit, the presence of a Firefighter/Paramedic allows this unit to respond to emergency medical calls and provide immediate advanced life support until an ambulance transport unit arrives. The benefit of this model is that the Firefighter/Paramedic can detect possible illness or injury and determine the most appropriate emergency care and transportation for the patient.

For a Firefighter to become a State-certified Firefighter/Paramedic, a Firefighter is removed from their assignment at a City fire station and is enrolled in a City-funded 10-month paramedic certification program. This includes full-time coursework at a State-approved paramedic school, clinical hours in an emergency room, intensive care or trauma care hospital unit, and a field internship on an ALS ambulance transport unit. After completing the education requirements, the staff must pass their State examinations to achieve their California paramedic license. After completing this process, a Firefighter is qualified to earn the Paramedic Skill Pay, which is equivalent to 19 percent of a top step firefighter and applied hourly. As the Firefighter/Paramedic promotes to the Fire Engineer or Fire Captain classification, they are relieved of serving as a paramedic, although many staff continue to maintain the State requirements to keep their paramedic license active. This results in the City of Long Beach employing Fire Captains and Fire Engineers who can serve as paramedics but have promoted out of the Firefighter/Paramedic classification.

The Paramedic Assessment Unit Pilot Program is a strategy that involves activating Fire Captains and Fire Engineers to serve as paramedics, if they hold an active State paramedic license. This program utilizes existing paramedic skills held by City staff and leverages retrospective paramedic education costs, which are funded by the City's General Fund. The Paramedic Assessment Unit Pilot Program's costs include paying a per-diem Paramedic Skill Pay of \$169 per 24-hour shift to Fire Captains and Fire Engineers who volunteer for this program. As a pilot program, this program would operate for 6-months, or 183 days, and convert three existing fire engines into Paramedic Assessment Units. The total labor cost for a 6-month program is \$92,782. Additional equipment for each new unit includes a pharmaceutical security storage box, advanced life support pharmaceuticals, intubation kits, City mobile devices, and other medical consumables. The equipment costs for three new Paramedic Assessment Units total \$22,932. Accordingly, activating three new Paramedic Assessment Units for a six-month pilot program totals \$115,714.

In contrast, activating all eight remaining fire engines and four remaining fire trucks that do not offer paramedic support is estimated to cost \$740,220 in labor costs and \$601,735 in equipment costs. The total cost for full activation of engines and trucks to become Paramedic Assessment Units is \$1,341,945.

6. Please provide the budget for the Long Beach Greenbelt and the associated maintenance enhancement.

The Long Beach Greenbelt referenced at the August 13th Budget Hearing were the Termino Greenbelt, which is located between 7th Street and Termino Avenue, and the P.E. Railway Greenbelt, which is located between Termino Avenue and 10th Street and is currently undeveloped. The contract costs for these two sites are as follows, inclusive of maintenance:

Greenbelt Site	Contract Cost (per Year)
Termino Greenbelt	\$ 10,303
P.E. Railway Greenbelt	\$ 3,799
Total	\$ 14,103

The total contract cost amount for all grounds landscape Citywide is \$7,119,047 and includes both contracts with Azteca and Parkwood for parks and Tidelands grounds routine landscaping.

7. Please provide information on the 5-year tree trimming cycle.

The cost to fully fund a 5-year tree trimming cycle would be an additional budget of \$1,250,000 structurally. The Public Works Department is currently operating on a 6-year tree trimming cycle and is currently exceeding budget by \$800,000 annually maintaining this trimming cycle. A 5-year tree trimming cycle would allow the Department to utilize the tree trimming contractor more frequently and consistently, and that would allow the City to trim approximately 3,500 more trees annually (from 16,500 to 20,000).

8. Please provide a status on the construction of the Crime Lab.

As of the date of this memo, design will be submitted for plan check this week. Construction is anticipated to commence in early 2025 pending a favorable response for proposals and contractor availability. Completion of construction is anticipated spring of 2026.

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If you have any questions, please contact Budget Manager Rebecca Bernstorff at (562) 570-6408.

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