

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE March 21, 2019

TO Honorable Members of the Public Safety and Criminal Justice Committee

SUBJECT **Dallas Fire-Rescue Department's Accident Response Pilot Blocker Program**

Dallas Fire-Rescue responded to over 16,124 accident calls on freeways in 2018. The normal response to these incidents is from an engine, a truck, and a rescue. The truck is dispatched to accidents on freeways to provide protection for personnel from the Dallas Police Department (DPD), the engine, and to provide immediate assistance, block traffic, and extricate patients. Truck companies carry a variety of tools for all types of situations. The role of the engine company includes fire suppression and medical assistance for the Rescue.

Due to the ever-increasing cost of new fire apparatus, the risk to personnel, and the increasing frequency of apparatus being struck while operating on freeways, a proposed pilot project of utilizing "Blocker" apparatus is being implemented. The "Blockers" will be older, decommissioned DFR fire engines slated for auction. All standard equipment has been removed, the pump has been disabled and 6,000 pounds of sand has been added to the water tank. The exterior will have display directional arrow boards added to each side and the rear of the engine.

The proposed pilot program would consist of two (2) "Blockers" staffed with one person each and operate 24 hours daily for a 3-month trial period. The areas chosen for the pilot program were derived from 3 years of collision data involving DFR vehicles. During that 3 year time-frame, 62 freeway blocking accidents occurred. Most of these accidents were on freeways near Station 19 (East Grand Ave. and Samuell Blvd.) and Station 43 (Lombardy Ln. and Harry Hines). Over one-third of the accidents were on a stretch of Interstate 30 between downtown and Buckner Blvd.

The "Blockers" would respond in addition to the conventional apparatus assigned to freeway accidents, but would park upstream from all other apparatus and allow the truck company to clear from the incident immediately upon completion of any emergency operations. The driver of the "Blocker" unit, upon parking/positioning, would get clear of the unit and move to a shielded position with either an engine company or a police unit. The "Blocker" unit would stay on scene with the engine company until released by Police.

The intent of this program is multifold – to reduce risk to emergency responders working on high-speed roadways, to prevent expensive apparatus from being struck, reduction in response times by placing the trucks back in service, and to reduce maintenance/repair time and cost of front-line equipment after a collision. This efficient solution has the potential to save responders' lives, improve response, and lower our maintenance and repair costs.

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Empathy | Ethics | Excellence | Equity

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Please let me know if you have any questions.



Dominique Artis, Fire Chief
Dallas Fire-Rescue Department

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Chris Caso, City Attorney (Interim)
Carol A. Smith, City Auditor (Interim)
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