

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE April 5, 2019

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Requested Information Update**

During the Monday, March 18th Budget Accountability Report at the Government Performance & Financial Management Committee (GPFM) questions were raised regarding the police and fire departments performance on the Dallas 365 report. The performance measure for the Fire Department is for an EMS Basic Life Support (BLS) response time of arrival to be within 5 minutes on 90% of the calls. The performance for the Police Department is a response time of arrival to priority one calls within 8 minutes, on 60% of the calls.

These measures for performance were set by the individual departments based on several factors. The goals are intentionally set to both challenge the department but also be realistic and attainable.

Dallas Fire Rescue Department

The response time calculations and standards used in the Fire Service are based on the national Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments. This standard specifies requirements for effective and efficient organization and deployment of fire suppression operations, emergency medical operations, and special operations to the public by career fire departments to protect citizens and the occupational safety and health of fire department employees. The goal is consistent with the recommendation of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) which states an EMS Basic Life Support (BLS) response should be within 5 minutes or less for fire departments with Advanced Life Support (ALS) arrival within 9 minutes such as the Dallas Fire-Rescue Department.

Dallas Police Department

Police Departments do not have a national standard on response times. It is difficult to establish a national or regional standard for police response to emergency calls. A number of factors can determine police response time. Most police departments have a response list that ranks different types of emergencies from high to low, with top priority going to callers who are in need of assistance due to a life-threatening emergency. Other factors can include the number of incoming calls at the time of your call, number of officers available to respond and number of officers needed to respond to a specific situation. The staffing levels of the department and geography also need to be considered when setting response time goals for individual police agencies. To ensure the goals set by the Dallas Police Department are in line with other major departments, a survey of similar sized departments in Texas was conducted. The survey showed that each department prioritizes calls differently and calculates response times differently.

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The Dallas Police Department breaks calls down into four different priorities. A goal response time for each priority is set and tracked daily. The goals are as illustrated below.

Dallas Police Department Response Time Target Goals

Priority 1: 8:00 Priority 2: 12:00 Priority 3: 30:00 Priority 4: 60:00

The Dallas Police Department strives to respond to all 911 calls in a timely manner. Response times are reported daily to each of the patrol divisions and are reported on the department's monthly dashboard. To ensure accountability in response to the most critical priority one calls, an additional measure and goal was added to the Dallas 365 performance measures. The measure is "percentage of responses to Priority 1 calls within eight minutes". The target is to achieve this goal on **60 percent** of the calls. This measure was set due to the fact that the department was performing well under the 60th percentile. For fiscal year 2017-2018 the department averaged a response time of under 8 minutes on only 50.4% of priority one calls. Over the past year the department has initiated efforts to improve response times. Officers were moved from specialized units to serve in a call answering capacity, staffing was re-aligned through the bid process and an additional shift was created during peak call load hours. The strategy has been successful as the department has seen improved response times for every priority in 2019. The department is currently meeting the goal for priority one calls with an average response time of 7.77 minutes versus 8.89 minutes YTD last year. The Police Department has asked KPMG who is currently conducting an efficiency study of the department to review call prioritization and response time goals to ensure the department is providing the proper response to 911 calls in the city of Dallas.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Chief Hall at 214-671-3901.



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