

# Agenda Report

February 4, 2019

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:** Public Safety Committee

**FROM:** Fire Department

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO A JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT FOR THE LOS ANGELES AREA REGIONAL TRAINING GROUP OF FIRE PROTECTION AGENCIES**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 21065 of CEQA and Sections 15060 (c)(2), 15060 (c)(3), and 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines and, as such, no environmental document pursuant to CEQA is required for the project; and
2. Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City's membership in the Los Angeles Area Regional Training Group Joint Powers Authority to participate in a regional effort to integrate resources and information related to training firefighters and researching fire protection and safety issues that are crucial to the City and its surrounding population.

**BACKGROUND:**

There are 30 fire agencies within Los Angeles County, and each Fire Chief is a member of the Los Angeles Area Fire Chiefs Association (LAAFCA). These agencies collectively employ 9,000 firefighters and 2,000 civilian personnel and serve a population of over 10 million people. Over a decade ago, LAAFCA recognized the need for the regional delivery of standardized training and established the Regional Training Group (RTG), which is largely supported through U.S. Department of Homeland Security Preparedness Grant Programs (DHS). Pasadena Fire Department (PFD) personnel have participated in the RTG since its inception and have had an increased leadership role with LAAFCA and the RTG over the past four years. The RTG is currently administered by an Executive Director and Member Agency support staff. Personnel

time contributed and assigned to the RTG is the responsibility of each Member Agency, and may be reimbursed if approved by the LAAFCA.

The RTG has proven to be successful at creating, conducting and evaluating regional training through multi-agency integration. The outcomes have been remarkable in comparison to what independent fire departments can accomplish on their own. RTG's efforts have increased resource leverage and the capacity of first responders to handle critical work required in the event of terrorism or other large-scale disasters. The 30 agencies in the Los Angeles region have built cooperative relationships by promoting trust with the goal of achieving improved interoperability.

While effective, the RTG's past practice has been limited to DHS grants as its funding source, through partnerships with governmental agencies represented in LAAFCA. This is because these grants generally require application and administration by a governmental agency. Furthermore, over the past three years, there has been a \$60 million dollar reduction in DHS funding. Therefore, the RTG is transitioning to a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), to establish itself as its own governmental agency and enable the RTG to apply, administer and host its own grant programs. The PFD would like to continue participation within the RTG under the newly established JPA, purposed to provide innovative and cooperative regional training even as Federal funds diminish. The JPA will be able to receive and expend funds, enter into legally binding agreements, acquire property and equipment, hire personnel, and perform other activities that promote the purposes and benefits identified within the Agreement.

Under the newly established JPA, Member Agencies will obtain:

- Non-Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense (CBRNE) related In-Service Training
- Use of RTG Training which will offset or augment annual training budgets for participating agencies
- Confidence that mutual aid and automatic aid agencies from the LA Region are trained to function seamlessly at a competent and professional level
- Membership in a nationally recognized fire service training program which is intended to partner with Community College and University programs

Revenue generating possibilities for the JPA in addition to DHS grant funds include:

- Granting access of RTG developed training to Fire Departments outside of the LA region for a fee
- Donations and endowments from private donors, entities or higher learning centers/universities
- Private partnerships related to studies, research, training or other activities that support regional training

While there are many positive reasons to participate in the newly established JPA, negatives to consider include:

- Direct funding from Member Agencies may become necessary to support the activities (modest to extensive dependent upon scope)

- Staff (occasionally, expert staff) is needed to implement the trainings/programs of the JPA Board (through contract, in-house, employment arrangement)
- The JPA is subject to liability exposure (contractual, general, employment) for which insurance is recommended

The City Attorney's office has reviewed the proposed JPA. A copy of the full JPA is attached to this staff report. Additionally, 15 of the 30 cities have approved the RTG JPA Resolution. By becoming an early adopter to the RTG JPA, the Fire Chief will become a member of the Board of Directors and will help determine critical aspects of the JPA. Directors are not entitled to compensation by the JPA, but can approve expenditures for resources including equipment, services and employees. The Member Agencies will also be asked to approve bylaws and guidelines for the JPA, develop policies and strategies for regional training, create a budget and comprehensive plan for funding, and establish committees as needed.

Staff recommends that the City of Pasadena enter into a JPA for the Los Angeles Area RTG and participate in developing a cooperative fire service program with a governance structure that ensures an equitable and sustainable level of standardized all-risk training. Once participating fire agencies submit approved Resolutions, the JPA will submit required documentation to the Secretary of State for formal recognition and adoption.

#### **COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

The proposed contract furthers the City Council's strategic planning goal to ensure public safety.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

The action proposed herein is not a project subject to the CEQA in accordance with Section 21065 of CEQA and State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060 (c)(2), 15060 (c)(3), and 15378. The execution of an agreement for integrated training of firefighters and research of fire protection and safety matters is an organizational and administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. Therefore, the proposed action is not a "project" subject to CEQA, as defined in Section 21065 of CEQA and Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Since the action is not a project subject to CEQA, no environmental document is required.


#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The current budget for the RTG is \$2,940,000, with funding coming from the DHS State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) and Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) as approved by LAAFCA. There are no fees associated with the RTG for participating agencies. Similarly, no anticipated fees or costs are associated with Member Agencies for the new Los Angeles Area RTG JPA at this time. Once established, the budget for


the RTG JPA will be subject to annual review by the Board and the Member Agency. Funding by Member Agencies may be considered if potential revenue streams decline and member Cities wish to remain as Members. In the event that funding is requested, the Fire Chief will have the opportunity to evaluate costs and vote as a Board Member.

Members may submit written notice of immediate withdrawal from the Authority with no penalties incurred within 180 days after the Bylaws are adopted. Upon expiration of the 180 days, Members may withdraw 60 days after giving written notice to the Executive Director with a pro-rata return of monetary contributions or payments that have been made to the Authority and have not been expended.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Approved by:

  
STEVE MERMELL  
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Attachment A – RTG JPA Resolution

Attachment B – Joint Powers Agreement for Los Angeles Area Regional Training Group

Attachment C – Participation in the Los Angeles Area RTG JPA as of January 2019