



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
MANAGER'S REPORT

DATE ISSUED: December 3, 2003 **REPORT NO.** 03-242

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Docket of December 8, 2003

SUBJECT: Initial 30-Day Post-Fire Overview

REFERENCE: October 28, 2003 Memo from Mayor Murphy

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

Beginning the evening of Saturday, October 25, 2003, the San Diego region began suffering from the largest wildfires in state history. The largest of the fires, the Cedar fire, burned 280,278 acres countywide. In the City of San Diego, the fire burned 28,676 acres, destroyed 335 structures and damaged 71 structures.

The City of San Diego's public safety personnel did an outstanding job with the resources available to them. The Fire-Rescue Department protected 672 housing units in Tierrasanta and 950 housing units in Scripps Ranch, saving a total of 1,622 units valued at \$515 million. The City's Police Department evacuated areas of Scripps Ranch, Tierrasanta, and San Carlos with 18,162 homes and an approximate population of 53,570. These valiant efforts by the City's public safety staff were achieved with no deaths or significant injuries to either civilians or uniformed personnel.

In addition, the fire took a personal toll on the City as 46 City employees lost their homes in the fire, including 23 from the Police Department and 1 from the Fire-Rescue Department.

This document addresses the City's internal actions during the fire and is a high-level, 30-day response to Mayor Dick Murphy's October 28, 2003 memo requesting an assessment of the City's efforts during the fires and seeking recommendations for improvement for the future. In addition, specific issues raised by members of the City Council during the Council meeting of November 3, 2003, are addressed. The questions and issues are outlined below.

Questions from the Mayor's October 28, 2003 memo:

1. What did we do right?
2. What did we do wrong? What needs to be changed?
3. What changes do we need to make in the City's fire codes?
4. Do we need any changes in our force composition?
5. Do we need any additional equipment?
6. Do we need to make any changes in our mutual aid system?

Issues identified during the November 3, 2003 City Council discussion:

1. Fire resistant roofs
 2. Brush management near structures
 3. Aerial firefighting support for the City and region
 4. Erosion/Runoff Control Plan
 5. Multi-Agency task force to review regional response and coordination
 6. Educational campaign
 7. Review of water pressure
 8. "Law of the Moment"
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- A. Insurance
 - B. Cost Recovery
 - C. Development Services Department Priority Treatment

This report has been prepared as a 30-day follow-up and, as such, must be considered an interim overview of internal efforts and not a detailed accounting of each action taken within the City or an accounting of the regional efforts involved in the emergency. An assessment will be made early in calendar year 2004 that will more comprehensively identify the resources needed Citywide to improve response to both major and day-to-day incidents affecting public safety. This assessment will include previously identified needs, as well as additional resources, and an estimate of costs to meet those needs.

Because the overall Cedar fire was managed by the California Department of Forestry (CDF) several commissions and reports will ultimately document activities to fight the fire and make recommendations for change at the regional and state levels. City of San Diego officials are directly involved in these efforts. The San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force has been established to provide a forum for representatives of all public safety disciplines to review, discuss and develop proposals for all risk service enhancements in the region and will report to the City Council and County Board of Supervisors in accordance with their established timeline. The State of California has established a Blue Ribbon Commission to review the efforts to fight the fires and provide recommendations to prevent destruction from future fires. There is also a county-wide study underway in regard to aerial firefighting needs, the first phase of which will be complete by the end of December. Locally, the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee of the City Council will be addressing Fire-Rescue Department needs at their December 10, 2003 meeting. Additionally, on a long-term basis, the Fire-Rescue Department is currently participating in a fire accreditation process

that includes risk assessment and a review of standards of coverage and is to be complete on February 15, 2005.

In addition to regional and state reviews, there will be an ongoing internal City review of the actions that took place following the fires. In subsequent months, additional information will be gathered and a series of follow up reports will be provided to further supplement the information contained within this report. These reports, some of which are identified below, will include recommendations for change, costs, and proposed timelines for implementation of any changes necessary to improve the City's public safety preparation and response to future fires and other emergencies.

- January 2004 Brush Management Coordination efforts of the Engineering & Capital Projects, Park and Recreation, Development Services, Planning and Fire-Rescue departments
- January 2004 Building code change recommendations to the Board of Building Appeals and City Council
- February 2004 Financial impact of the fires
- February 2004 Emergency Operations Center report prepared by the City's Office of Homeland Security

DISCUSSION

In a public safety emergency such as the recent wildfires, clearly the Fire-Rescue and Police departments are the first and most heavily involved of the City's operations. As public safety departments, their roles are critical and are deserving of significant attention in a follow-up report. Additionally, the City's Emergency Operation Center (EOC) was vital to the City's oversight and management of City operations during the emergency. Assessments of the City's efforts in each of these important areas have been prepared and are given individual attention as full attachments (see Attachments 1, 2, and 3) to this report.

Staff from many other City departments were also called into action and worked diligently to serve the public. Some were active in the EOC, while other staff had specific operational responsibilities and worked in the field in direct support of the public safety departments. The assessments of these efforts are outlined within the body of this report, in response to the specific questions and issues raised in the Mayor's memo and the Council direction.

OCTOBER 28, 2003 MEMO FROM MAYOR MURPHY

The first section of this report provides responses to the six questions specifically raised in the Mayor's memo of October 28. Responses to these questions for Fire-Rescue, Police, and the EOC are contained in their attached individual reports.

Question 1: WHAT DID WE DO RIGHT?

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)

Activation and staffing of the EOC: Once the Office of Homeland Security (OHS) Director received a situation status report from the Fire-Rescue and Police departments' Department Operations Center (DOC) staff, Deputy City Manager Rey Arellano was advised and concurred to the EOC activation. Activation occurred at 9:45am on October 26, 2003.

The staffing level was to be at an EOC Level II (partial staffing) with personnel to assume the roles and responsibilities of the five EOC Section Chiefs (Director, Operations, Logistics, Planning and Finance). San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (SD-OES) was notified. The OHS Director commenced the recall/notification process utilizing the EOC Callback Directory.

The EOC was operational by approximately 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, October 26, with most Section Chiefs in place and making subsequent notifications of other staff for the identified Branches of their Section. The first hourly briefing was held at the same time.

Media releases were well coordinated between the City's Communications Manager in the EOC, Police Public Information Officer (PIO) in their DOC, Fire-Rescue PIO in their DOC, and the Mayor's staff with routine press briefings at the Fire Communications Center in Kearney Mesa.

A Job Order number was created by the Finance Section Chief and disseminated to all participating departments to track labor and expenditures associated with the fires in preparation for the reimbursement process.

WATER DELIVERY

Immediate activation upon notification and effective implementation of the Water Department's Department Operations Center (DOC): Staff operating the Water Department's DOC and the systems available to them at the Chollas Operations Facility worked well and ensured there was enough water and adequate water pressure throughout the emergency. Although some pump stations were rendered inoperable as a result of downed electrical lines, portable generators were immediately deployed to maintain water pressure and flow to the impacted areas. The City's water system was effectively operated remotely from the Water Department's DOC, and as a result, sent over 23 million gallons (MG) of water into the critical fire areas.

New facilities built as part of an expanded Capital Improvement Program enabled the delivery of water in this emergency: The Water Department's recent rate increases enabled the completion of several capital projects which allowed for the efficient delivery of water to the fire-ravaged areas. The following projects completed over the last several years resulted in improved pressure and flow in the northern areas:

- *Black Mountain Reservoir* – Provided an additional 25 MG of storage to the North City area, which allowed supplies to be diverted to the areas in need of fire protection, while maintaining adequate supplies for the other areas of the City.
- *Waring Road Pump Station* – Provided additional capacity and reliability to pump water from the Alvarado service area into the Tierrasanta area to supplement the water supply.
- *Deerfield Pump Station* – Provided an additional and reliable supply to the Mission Gorge and San Carlos areas to supplement the water supply.
- *Pomerado Pump Station* – Provided a back-up supply to the southwestern portion of Scripps Ranch.

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

Emergency generator service to City's communications sites: About 1:00 p.m. on October 26 the fire interrupted power to the City's Communications sites on Mount Woodson and Lyon's Peak, the primary transmitter sites for the paging system that services the Fire Department. Both on-site emergency generators were automatically activated and continued to provide power to the sites (three days for Mount Woodson and five days at Lyon's Peak) using more than 200 gallons of propane, until SDG&E was able to restore power to the sites. This emergency provision worked exactly as planned and was successful in averting communication failure.

Continuous emergency communications systems maintenance: When the emergency began, Information Technology and Communications Department (IT&C)/Communications Division personnel were immediately called into service for a continuous emergency communication systems maintenance watch to provide immediate assistance to Fire-Rescue and Police Dispatch Centers for any communication equipment failures that might occur in the City's wireless system networks. Staff worked throughout the emergency to monitor the Public Safety Radio System for problems, to respond to and correct identified communication problems (both in the field and at the City Communications Shop), and to provide technical support and equipment as needed.

Equipment provision: IT&C/Communications Division personnel also supplied portable and mobile radios, bank chargers, batteries, base stations, and power packs to operate base stations for the communications interface with CDF and Fire Communications. In addition, they provided communications interfacing at Gillespie Field, Viejas Indian Reservation, and Heartland Fire for rapid response for San Diego mutual aid.

The Division also organized an emergency Citywide drive to collect additional pagers for the temporary use of the Fire-Rescue Department. Using the employee contact plan services of the Public and Media Affairs Office, City employees were asked to bring in pagers to make them available for the effort. Within minutes of the information being sent out, employees were already bringing in pagers. The Division collected a total of 502 pagers, quickly exceeding the target goal of 200.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) resources: The IT&C GIS Program presented its GIS resources at the Fire Communications Center on Wednesday, October 29. We assembled three staff from the IT&C GIS team, one staff from SANDAG, and two staff from Fire-Rescue Department's GIS section. This group met with staff from SanGIS, the County of San Diego,

and the City's GIS software provider, ESRI, to provide coordinated support. This team worked long hours from October 29 - November 5 at the Fire Communications Center to provide map support to Fire-Rescue operations and damage assessment teams. On November 6, the GIS function relocated back to the IT&C offices and continues to be the centralized location for all City GIS requests related to the fires. Many maps were developed (and continue to be produced), including the following for both the Scripps Ranch and Tierrasanta areas:

- * Fire Perimeter
- * Damage Assessment
- * Shaded Fire Damage
- * Hillsides
- * Slopes
- * Parcels Damaged
- * Contours
- * CityGreen & Fire Boundaries
- * Ownership
- * Fire Progression
- * Ortho (aerial) Photos
- * Storm Drains
- * Map Books (11X17)
- * Soils
- * Geo-hazards
- * Parks & Open Space
- * Land Use
- * Watershed

GIS proved to be a great tool for assisting staff in the field to assess all damaged/destroyed properties; to analyze fire behavior due to slopes, land use, contours, etc; to help define best locations for sand bag placement and mitigating water run-off and mudslide issues; and many other purposes.

EVACUATION CENTERS

Mira Mesa High Evacuation Center: The Mira Mesa High School served as an evacuation center, principally for the Scripps Ranch community. This site was activated early on by the Red Cross in conjunction with the San Diego Unified School District. This site was opened on Sunday, October 26, operated by the Red Cross and at any given time provided shelter to approximately 400 people.

Balboa Park Evacuation Center: As directed from the EOC and in conjunction with the Red Cross, a City emergency evacuation center was established at the Activity Center located in Balboa Park. Led by Park Ranger staff, the evacuation center opened at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 26. The center was intended to relocate evacuees that were staged at the Qualcomm Stadium parking lot. However, as additional needs emerged reflecting fire activity in the east county, several non-city evacuees were accommodated. No one was turned away. In order to accommodate pets, staff set-up a fenced indoor area to shelter pets, including dogs, cats and a parrot. Hundreds of volunteers offered assistance which was gratefully accepted and coordinated by City staff and the Red Cross. In addition, a wide variety of food and beverage, blankets and clothing, and other items was accepted at the center. The center closed at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 29. Approximately 350 clients were served.

Generally, this project was very successful. City staff did a commendable job of setting up the center, providing round the clock supervision, coordinating volunteers and processing donations.

Qualcomm Stadium Evacuation Site: The Qualcomm Stadium parking lot site was selected by the Police Department to serve as a staging area, and it became a temporary evacuation site providing support to approximately 2,500 people. After assessing the situation, the EOC determined that an indoor evacuation facility was needed, thus the mobilization of the Balboa Park Activity Center. Given the intensity of the situation, it is understood why this site was chosen; however, in retrospect, an earlier selection of indoor facilities, complete with ample floor space, restrooms, showers, etc., would have been preferable. (At the very least, this would have required one less move for evacuees.) The stadium evacuation site was opened on Sunday, October 26 at approximately 10:00 a.m. and was used until approximately 5:00 p.m. on October 27.

The Police Department took charge of the operation. Fortunately, stadium staff and other entities were on-site preparing for the October 27 football game and were able to quickly facilitate the operations. Qualcomm Stadium staff provided medical equipment from the first aid office, set up temporary electrical power and kept areas in the parking lot and stadium clean. Parking controllers helped direct traffic into the lot and security personnel secured areas of the stadium. The stadium's concessionaire provided food and water at no cost.

The stadium took on a life of its own. Various groups arrived to provide counseling and assistance with temporary shelter. Medical personnel set up first aid stations. Businesses and individuals began dropping off food, clothing and other necessities.

There were no security problems. The only problem with the operations was that people were reluctant to leave the stadium. Many people slept in their vehicles or put up tents in the parking lot. The air quality at the stadium was very poor, and there were concerns with people not being in an enclosed area. Therefore, on October 27 the Police Department began urging people to go to an enclosed shelter. By approximately 5:00 p.m., the stadium lot was cleared.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Year-round coordination efforts of City public information professionals: Year-round coordination resulted in the relationships necessary to quickly implement media relations, cable access channel information, web communications, and employee communications during the emergency.

Prior training and planning: This training enabled the use of department public information officers who already had a familiarity with the EOC public information office.

City departments volunteered their public information officers (PIOs) to assist with a centralized effort: PIOs initially worked from the public information room of the EOC and later worked from the City Administration Building and the San Diego Local Assistance Center. The Library, Community and Economic Development, and Planning departments each contributed a dedicated public information officer throughout the effort to add a degree of consistency to the process. The Water Department rotated public information officers through on a daily basis and was represented on each day. Other departments with public information officers also contributed staff time to the efforts.

Efforts were coordinated with City TV and the Web Team of IT&C: Information to assist fire victims and the general public was posted on the City's cable television channel and on the City's web site, and regularly updated throughout each day. This practice is continuing. During the fire, the count of daily unique visitors to the web site went from 20,000 to 70,000 unique visitors each day. Cable Access Channel staff provided a quick training on the process for manually updating the City TV24 bulletin board, and an easier method of updating the cable channel was developed and implemented. The web team utilized a format for a web page that had been used in the past to quickly and efficiently provide information. As the event progressed, the web team added value to the web content by researching appropriate links that public information staff did not have time to research. As the page become more extensive, the web team developed a new, easier-to-use format that presented the additional information in a more sophisticated manner.

Fire-Rescue Department's public information staff led direct interface with the media from the Fire Communications Center: The Police Department's DOC had been activated and Police public information staff's role was to disseminate the information to the media. Public and Media Affairs oversaw the multi-department effort from the EOC, and coordination between the three departments and public information staff working on the web page and the cable channel was consistent in the days the EOC was open.

Police Department's Citizen Access Phone System: This system provided a direct number for the public to talk with trained volunteers, and almost 13,000 calls were taken.

Coordination with the Human Resources Department to facilitate employee communication: Communication to employees included the City Manager's letter to general employees, a personal letter to employees who lost their homes, a broadcast message sent to employees early in the week of the fire, and an employee assistance page on the City's intranet.

Communications previously arranged between public information senior staff at multiple agencies worked as planned: The County's Public and Media Affairs Office contacted the City's Public and Media Affairs Office mid-morning on Sunday, October 26, to advise that the County's EOC had been opened. Communication between the County, City, and other public information staff was always open and available, thanks to preplanning efforts between those agencies. This allowed correction of errors, a direct line of communications when needed, and a comfort level that there was a mechanism to resolve issues that might be of concern to the public.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY OPERATIONAL DEPARTMENTS

Rapid Damage Assessment of Burned Structures: Buildings that were damaged by the fire in the city were formally assessed and documented within 72 hours of the event. The Fire-Rescue and Development Services departments' staff formed 11 damage assessment teams that documented all the structures destroyed by the fire and all structures with visible damage from the fire, which totaled more than 400 structures. This enabled early assessment of the amount of damage that occurred and needs for the recovery and rebuilding process. It also enabled City staff to get an

early start on pulling and copying building permit records and plans needed for documentation purposes for the recovery process.

Mission Trails Regional Park: Mission Trails Regional Park staff did an immediate assessment of fire damage and developed an interim public access control plan that was implemented immediately and a temporary erosion control plan that is being implemented in consultation with the City's erosion control consultant.

Transportation Department operations: The Transportation Department's emergency support unit responded to requests from the Police Department to provide safety cones, barricades and signage for street closures on October 27. Heavy equipment operators were dispatched to work in support of the Fire-Rescue Department to knock down potential safety hazards such as fireplaces, walls, and portions of structures. Following the fires, in conjunction with Park and Recreation staff, tree crews marked and removed all trees that posed potential hazards to the right of way. Eight street sweepers provided sweeping services in the Scripps Ranch and Tierrasanta areas from Wednesday, October 29, through Friday, October 31. In addition four sweepers provided sweeping services on Monday, November 1, and Tuesday, November 2.

The Transportation Department has provided approximately 14,000 filled sandbags and approximately 156 yards of sand and gravel to the residents of Scripps Ranch and Tierrasanta. Electrical crews inspected all lights in the burn areas to ensure safety and that operational needs were met. Electrical crews restored all street lights where electricity was available by October 31. As electricity became available, staff returned and repaired the associated street lights. All storm drain inlets in the burnt areas were fitted with mesh and fiber rolls to ensure debris did not enter the storm drain system. Assessments were made by staff to determine the impact to Street Division's infrastructure inventory.

Metropolitan Wastewater Department (MWWD) operations: MWWD was fortunate that it sustained relatively little damage to any of its facilities or equipment. MWWD personnel responded to the various aspects of this fire in a prompt, creative and efficient manner, rendering aid and adapting to rapidly changing conditions. Due to the rapid and unpredictable spread of the fire, department staff moved and re-established the Central Operations Management Center (COMC) and the DOC so that effective communication and operation of the system was uninterrupted. Wastewater Collection (WWC) crews responded to various challenges, such as placing potentially impacted pump stations on emergency generators so operation would not be impacted by power failures. In addition to their traditional responsibilities, crews volunteered for fire fighting, traffic control and other support duties when asked or when they determined the need for action.

Environmental Services Department operations: Environmental Services Department employees played a significant role in protecting the landfill and in assisting with the recovery process in the fire's aftermath. On Sunday, October 26, when the fire spread to the Miramar Landfill, there was a very real possibility that landfill structures and equipment would be lost. Through the efforts of dedicated employees, millions of dollars worth of equipment and critical structures were saved. After ensuring the orderly departure of customers and non-essential personnel, staff used a bulldozer to cut a large firebreak along the northwest corner of the landfill. Using water

tankers, staff wet down adjacent vegetation and the areas around the Field Operations Station, Fee Booth and Administration office. Motive equipment was moved to a safe location.

The loss of the landfill structures would have crippled the department's ability to conduct operations and provide disposal service to the public. Staff's actions allowed the landfill to re-open Tuesday morning despite significant air pollution, even though landfill crews were still dealing with hot spots throughout the facility for another week and a half. City Refuse Collection crews were on the job by Tuesday, despite concerns over air quality, and worked a holiday schedule, with collection activity continuing through Saturday.

SAN DIEGO LOCAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

Successfully established and serving the community: The San Diego Local Assistance Center (LAC) opened its doors Wednesday, October 29 at noon. It was the first LAC to open and provide services to residents affected by the fires. The Center, located at the Scripps Ranch Community Recreation Center (11454 Blue Cypress Drive, San Diego) provides a one-stop location for information and assistance from various local, state and federal agencies. Operating hours for the first two weeks were Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.. As of November 12, hours were changed to Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00p.m., and Sunday noon - 4:00 p.m. (open November 16 & 23 only, closed on Sunday thereafter).

The LAC is staffed and supported by City, county, state and federal agencies, as well as non-profit and volunteer organizations. It provides a single facility at which individuals, families and businesses can access available disaster assistance programs and services. Its primary goal is to assist the affected communities by providing a centralized location for services and resource referrals. The LAC opened with 17 stations, and grew to 44 stations in response to community needs. Over 2,200 customers have been assisted. By all accounts, the LAC has met or exceeded all expectations. Many favorable comments have been received from those with extensive experience dealing with disasters of this nature (e.g., FEMA and Small Business Administration officials). They cited the overall excellence in organization, implementation and operation of the center. Local elected officials also expressed their appreciation for the effectiveness of the center to assist those affected by the fire.

The LAC activities have included the following:

- Established a cross-departmental Command Center reflecting the five core functions within the Standardized Emergency Management System to provide common terminology, unity of command and integrated communications as outlined in the Governor's Office of Emergency Services Guide. Functions were added to assist with smooth operations. The functions include:
 - Management – Community & Economic Development
 - Planning – Development Services
 - Operations – Fire-Rescue
 - Logistics – Park & Recreation
 - Finance/Administration – Police

- Public Information Office – Community & Economic Development
 - Agency Liaison – Office of Homeland Security/CSC Manager
 - Volunteer/Donation Coordination – Community Service Center Manager
 - Oversight Team – Center Manager, Planning, Agency Liaison, FEMA, State Office of Emergency Services
- San Diego Data Processing Corporation and IT&C did an excellent job setting up computers, network connectivity, telephones, faxes and radios in the LAC.
 - Conducted regular debriefing meetings with Command Center staff to ensure the LAC was responding to the needs of staff, participating agencies, and the community.
 - Filled in missing needs as they arose (phones/copiers for FEMA until they could get their equipment in), contacted additional agencies to provide services - IRS, Post Office, City of Poway, State Employment - as victims identified their needs.
 - Provided stations inside the LAC to only direct service providers (agencies).
 - Referred all for-profit/private companies to Community Service Centers and areas outside LAC.
 - Provided space in the facility parking lot for insurance companies to park vans and process claims.
 - Coordinated media relations through the public information function. During the early stages of operation there were a significant number of media attempting to get into the LAC to interview affected individuals. The public information function developed a sensitive response to media requests for information while recognizing the need for affected citizens to receive services without interruption.
 - Coordinated with Council Districts 5 and 7 and all City Departments to respond to requests for services in the affected areas (i.e. sandbags, porta-potties, debris removal, etc.).
 - Coordinated with Community Service Centers (Scripps Ranch and Tierrasanta) to provide resource information and donated materials to victims.
 - Updated the fire emergency website to inform the community of the services available at the LAC.
 - Established a “reception” table at front to greet visitors and provide them with a guide packet to the services provided in the Center and any assistance needed.
 - All City Department personnel involved with requests for staffing, funding, and troubleshooting were extremely responsive and provided the highest level of service.

Permit Assistance: The Development Services Department provided on-site demolition permits, building permit plans and records information on damaged structures, and information and applications for new permits to rebuild.

Active Water Department presence at Local Assistance Center (LAC) and immediate actions to address citizens impacted by the fires: Water Department staff provided immediate assistance to citizens directly impacted by the firestorm and continue to provide a high level of support through its active participation at the LAC. Additionally, in an effort to quickly alleviate concerns regarding water-related services and billing issues, several critical decisions were immediately made:

- Residents who lost homes will not be billed for water or sewer services during the fire period (as of 10/17/03).

- Residents who lost homes had their accounts unilaterally closed to immediately preclude any additional water and sewer charges from being incurred. Any services currently being provided at these sites are at the direct request of the customer.
- There will be no cost for restoration of water services.

Additional Environmental Services Department services: Beginning Wednesday, October 29, Code Compliance Officers, Recycling Specialists and Hazardous Material Inspectors were available both at the Local Assistance Center and in the communities of Scripps Ranch and Tierrasanta. To date, Environmental Services has had over 400 service contacts at the center. Several of our management staff have also been present at the service center and participated in the numerous community meetings that have been held. Beginning Thursday, October 30, roll-off bins were provided to assist citizens in clearing their home sites and sifting through fire debris in the aftermath of the fire. Staff recycled over 100 tons of recyclable metals placed in the public right of way and disposed of over 1,300 tons of fire debris placed in roll-off bins. Environmental Services staff also arranged for household hazardous waste to be collected at 47 individual home sites in Scripps Ranch and one home in Tierrasanta. On-site household hazardous waste pickup will continue weekly for the next four weeks. In response to health concerns regarding asbestos, staff collected ambient air samples to determine if there were health risks associated with living or working in the area. Samples were taken at two sites in Scripps Ranch on November 11 and two sites in Tierrasanta on November 12. These samples showed no health risks from exposure.

Environmental Services staff have also worked closely with the City Council offices to identify agencies that will provide technical assistance and funding to rebuild homes with state-of-the-art energy efficiency and, when practicable, renewable energy systems. San Diego Gas and Electric, the San Diego Regional Energy Office, and the Department of Energy have agreed to provide significant support to these efforts.

Current Status: Staff is currently working on a plan to reduce the size of the operation and relocate it to a smaller facility. We are identifying space needs and determining whether the operation can be relocated to the Scripps Ranch Community Service Center.

Question 2: WHAT DID WE DO WRONG? WHAT NEEDS TO BE CHANGED?

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)

Notification procedures: Notification guidelines need to be reviewed and modified to ensure timely notification of key City staff by the Public Safety Communications Centers (Fire-Rescue and Police). The OHS Director received notification of the pending emergency at approximately 8:45 a.m. on Sunday, October 26, several hours after Fire Communications had staffed up for a major fire. The OHS Director became aware of the threat or impingement of fire on the community of Scripps Ranch via a news broadcast.

An appropriate notification technology to disseminate timely accurate information needs to be identified, procured and implemented. A possible solution is an existing outcall notification

system acquired by Police via a grant; an assessment needs to be made of this system's capacity and expandability. This would greatly assist with the process of notifying or recalling personnel to staff the EOC, which is currently inefficient.

Resource coordination: The trained Planning Section Chief, alternate and their support staff (all of whom are Fire-Rescue personnel) were not available due to their deployment in traditional fire related activities. A viable planning function was not implemented in the EOC and staff relied on the Fire-Rescue and Police DOC planners to address public safety planning and coordination issues at the field and DOC levels.

While contact was immediately established with the Fire-Rescue and Police DOC and the San Diego County EOC staff by their EOC peers, information regarding the situation status and resource deployment was extremely sketchy during the first several hours of the operation. Accurate information concerning the boundaries of the fire and deployment of resources was not readily available to the EOC. GIS support was not requested initially in either the EOC or Fire Communications and could have greatly assisted decision makers during the first three days of this incident by providing maps showing progression of the fire, where operations were happening, and other data. GIS should be a recognized function of both the EOC and the primary departmental operations center. This support should be provided centrally by IT&C which would assemble GIS hardware/software and staffing from a variety of places including IT&C GIS staff, SanGIS, SANDAG, ESRI, etc. Since IT&C is already a recognized seat in the EOC, it will make this a part of its responsibilities in the future.

The "local assistance center" concept had recently been developed and disseminated by California OES and therefore was not well understood, nor had EOC personnel trained on making the transition to LAC operations. The documentation for the activation of an LAC will be maintained in the EOC for future utilization by the EOC Planning Section in preparing for the Recovery Phase of a disaster or major emergency.

WATER DELIVERY

Earlier activation of Department Operations Center (DOC): Earlier notification of the Water Department would have facilitated more time to assess and evaluate the situation. Although the Department was able to effectively support the water needs of the emergency, notification of the situation at the same time as the "first responders" (Police and Fire-Rescue departments) would have created a greater opportunity for staff to operate in a more pro-active manner and allowed for decisions to be made that anticipated the system adjustments necessary to optimize water delivery to critical service areas.

Liaison with the Fire-Rescue Department: Designating a liaison with the Fire-Rescue Department would have been valuable. Staff who operated the Water Department's DOC would have benefited from current information on the status of the fire. Information such as the status of the fire activity, number of engines and crews deployed, and the anticipated direction of the fire would have been helpful to anticipate water resource demands to the impacted areas. During this fire emergency the Water Department's DOC relied on the information provided from the City's EOC. It is recommended in the future that Water Department staff be stationed at the Fire

Command Center so that staff can anticipate water needs and effectively address the emergency situation.

Identification /Establishment of Alternate Department DOC: During this fire emergency, the Department's DOC at the Chollas Operations Facility housed key staff and provided the system and equipment to ensure sufficient water supply at appropriate pressure levels was available for the emergency. Although the Department experienced no problems in communicating with the City's EOC or with its field staff, this post-fire assessment has identified a need to establish alternate department DOC locations in the event that the existing location is rendered inoperable or inaccessible due to an emergency. Initial recommendations include the creation of an alternate DOC location jointly with other key departments or utilities, or the creation of a "mobile command unit", which could easily be relocated depending on the situation.

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

Tailored support to FEMA after the fire: For a similar future event, IT&C would be better prepared to tailor the level of support provided to FEMA's requirements to avoid duplication. IT&C will also document staff actions to serve as guidance for a future event.

EVACUATION CENTERS

Balboa Park Evacuation Center: Areas of improvement, identified by center staff, include a higher level of coordination with respect to Red Cross responsibilities, i.e., pre-screening clients to ensure legitimacy and improved information gathering and dissemination functions.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Establishment of a joint interagency web page: This was identified by the interagency communications group after 9/11 as key to allow all agencies to present a common face to the public and provide a mechanism for ongoing collaboration. Public information staff from all agencies involved need to communicate and place all relevant information on their web pages with appropriate cross-links. This effort has been part of a City/County/Port/Airport Authority process to create a "regional government" web page. The page has not yet been developed and was not available during the firestorm 2003 efforts. Both the County and the City developed their own pages independently, and, with this tool for collaboration missing, incomplete information was sometimes provided to the public and the media, in particular regarding the local assistance centers.

Coordination of information disseminated on the web page, cable channel, and Citizen Access Phone System (CAPS) needs to be improved: In some cases, information was missing on one mode of communication or had been deleted appropriately on one, but not the other. It would be appropriate if the CAPS system had a direct link with public information staff to coordinate and share information being given to the public. The CAPS personnel also need to have access to a web-based computer so they can see what information the City is providing online.

New protocols for operating the EOC public information office need to be developed: This would provide for a trained, core staff to manage the day-to-day implementation during an emergency, only relying on other department public information officers to fill in as-needed. Consistent EOC training for all public information officers has long been a goal of the Public and Media Affairs Office and through FY 2001 was regularly accomplished. However, recent budget cutbacks have moved the training lower on the priority list. The new protocol should include a two-hour refresher course every six months for the core public information staff.

Local Assistance Center media contacts: Although media contacts were managed effectively and consistently, it was a significant challenge. The pace of the updates and changes requiring effective communication and coordination was challenging.

Cable television system for public information: The temporary emergency system equipment used during this response was adequate and simple to initiate. A new permanent system located in the EOC executive management room would, however, make for an optimal configuration. A total of \$4,000 in equipment would meet this requirement for the next three to four years until it became obsolete. A generic, dedicated, professional-looking background for the video messages has now been created and will be available for any future messaging needs. The Cable TV Office will also investigate the possibility of integrating the City's emergency messaging capabilities with the emergency alert systems operated by the local cable television operators.

Information technology advanced preparation: The City should identify a disaster response team and determine the roles, responsibilities and protocol ahead of time. Information technology needs should be identified and advanced planning such as infrastructure, access to appropriate software, web pages and links, and on-call staff should be prepared and ready to put into place in an emergency situation. Additionally, IT&C would want to stress flexibility of response in order to respond effectively to an emergency that rapidly changes requirements. The goal would be to provide an appropriate level of support as needed to maintain the communications system infrastructure, and to assure continuous communication effectiveness in changing circumstances.

Communication with non-safety employees: There needs to be a simple alert system in place to get messages out to all non-safety employees. Use of the media was successful during this emergency, but attempting to convey a more complex message via the media would have been difficult. There could be a uniform place or number for employees to call for information, and while the intranet was used as a means of notifying employees, a pre-formatted City intranet page would be valuable.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY OPERATIONAL DEPARTMENTS

Early arborist involvement for tree removal identification: Emergency tree removal that occurred in the Scripps Ranch community generated concern of Park and Recreation Department staff and several community members that many of the "marked" trees were only charred and did not require removal. After much discussion with Fire Department personnel, Park and Recreation Department staff and community leaders, it was agreed that Park and Recreation's arborist and Park Forestry District Manager would assist in making the final determination of trees that were to be removed. Ultimately, approximately 150 trees were removed by crews from

the Park and Recreation Department and the Transportation Department's Streets Division. It is recommended that department Park Forestry staff, which includes a certified arborist, be engaged early on in the identification stage of trees requiring removal, especially in urban areas.

Metropolitan Wastewater Department operations: MWWD is exploring the establishment of multiple, geographically separated locations to establish Central Operations Management Center capability in the event of a problem at the primary facility, Metropolitan Operations Center. Similar arrangements for alternate Department Operations Center locations will be identified as well.

MWWD will explore more formal protocols with the Water Department, Police, and Fire-Rescue related to sharing of equipment, arrangements for escort and the like. The interactions went well during this emergency, but there may be room for improvement. The potential for the expansion of mutual aid agreements similar to the one currently in place with other area sewer agencies will also be explored.

Question 3: WHAT CHANGES DO WE NEED TO MAKE IN THE CITY'S FIRE CODES?

The attached Fire-Rescue report includes information in regard to recommended changes to the fire codes.

Please also see Issues 1 and 2 on pages 17 and 18 for additional information regarding codes.

Question 4: DO WE NEED CHANGES IN OUR FORCE COMPOSITION?

The attached assessments regarding the Fire-Rescue Department and Police Department include specific responses to this question.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)

The City's Office of Homeland Security (OHS) has been authorized to hire four additional staff members in conjunction with administering the programs that will result from Homeland Security related grants. These positions are currently limited positions; staff has been working through the processes of classification, recruitment and selection to fill these positions. Once the new staff is on board, OHS should have adequate resources available to perform the concurrent activities required for an EOC activation. OHS intends request these positions be made permanent through the FY 2005 budgeting process.

The Planning Section function of the EOC needs to be transferred from reliance on Fire-Rescue staff to other City staff who do not already have a Public Safety role. The Development Services Director has committed to assuming the lead role as the primary EOC Planning Section Chief and will be working with OHS to identify an alternate and support staff to be trained.

Additionally, EOC management benefited from having an Environmental Services Department representative although this is not a designated member; Environmental Services will be included as a designated member of the Logistics section.

Question 5: DO WE NEED ANY ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT?

The primary equipment needs identified are included with the Fire-Rescue Department and Police Department assessments included as Attachments 1 and 2.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)

OHS has been working with IT&C, San Diego Data Processing Corporation (SDDPC) and SD-OES to procure and implement an information management application for the City and County EOCs and DOCs. Grant funds have been identified and staff has been working with a vendor. In order to maximize the utilization of the application (now and in the future), funding and support needs to be identified for EOC projection and switching equipment, replacement computer systems and GIS integration. Related improvements include the positioning of a GIS workstation in the EOC to facilitate mapping functions and the ability to capture and view video transmissions from a mobile unit in the field (e.g., helicopter).

EOC members expressed concern that Thomas Brothers Map Books and City Telephone Directories were out of date. The initial purchase of these documents was made a few years ago with one time emergency management funds. OHS will request funding to provide general support materials in all the EOC desks via the FY 2005 budget process. Individual departments or agencies with positions in the EOC will still be required to maintain the support documents and/or materials that they need to carryout their EOC responsibilities.

Question 6: DO WE NEED TO MAKE ANY CHANGES IN OUR MUTUAL AID SYSTEM?

The Fire-Rescue Department assessment (Attachment 1) includes information on the mutual aid system.

NOVEMBER 3, 2003 CITY COUNCIL ISSUES

The next section of this report addresses issues raised during discussion of Item 200 (Declaring a State of Local Emergency) at the November 3, 2003 City Council meeting. There were four issues specifically called out in the motion and four other suggestions for which information was requested by Councilmembers.

Issue 1: FIRE RESISTANT ROOFS

The City of San Diego adopted in 1999 a Building Code amendment that increased the roof materials covering requirement to Class B as compared to the State Building Code Class C minimum requirement. In addition, non-combustible Class A roof covering material is required

in areas defined as having a high brush fire hazard. That includes the areas in the City east of I-805, which are also immediately adjacent to canyons or large areas of natural, non-irrigated vegetation. Class B rated roofing materials are effective against moderate fire test exposures, are not readily flammable, afford a moderate degree of fire protection to the roof deck, and are not expected to produce flying brands. Class C roofing material is effective against light fire test exposures and provides a measurable degree of fire protection to the roof deck and are not expected to produce flying brands.

City staff is developing proposed new building code regulations which will improve fire resistance of structures in high hazard areas (those adjacent to canyons or large areas of natural vegetation). The proposed new regulations will be published for public comment to the Board of Building Appeals in early January and will be submitted to the City Council for consideration later that month. The regulations will call for Class A roofing that is effective against severe fire test exposures and affords a fairly high degree of fire protection to the roof deck Citywide, and a ban on all wood shake or wood shingle new or replacement roofs Citywide. Additionally, the City will continue to require non-combustible Class A roofing materials in high hazard areas. Other building code changes being considered in high hazard areas include provisions for exterior fire-rated walls, protection of exterior openings, boxed eaves and restrictions on the use of exposed wood siding or exposed wood structures in those areas for residential and commercial construction. The draft regulations will be provided as information to those families who lost their homes and may be in the design process as soon as it is available in December.

Issue 2: BRUSH MANAGEMENT NEAR STRUCTURES

Overview

The City has existing regulations in effect that provide for brush management zones around new and existing structures. Since 1989, the City has actively reviewed all new development for compliance with brush management regulations.

In January 2000, brush management zones, which designate the regulations for trimming height of various types of landscaping, were revised. The zones changed from a three-zone system to a more simplified two-zone system to help improve the clarity of the brush management requirements and to make brush management enforcement easier. With this code change, City Council created a Citywide exemption that does not require a permit to perform brush management if done in accordance with the Code.

Open Space: Open Space Brush Management staff, in consultation with Fire Prevention staff, attempts to implement the Municipal Code *100-foot from structure* brush management guideline where private property abuts City-owned open space. This involves 50% thinning of the last 50-60 feet (Zone 2), per the Municipal Code.

Maintenance Assessment Districts: Maintenance Assessment District staff in Tierrasanta and Scripps Ranch responds to and evaluates all citizen requests for brush management in City-owned open space, and refer to the Open Space Brush Management staff if brush thinning is needed.

Open Space Division Brush Management thins the brush if needed under Municipal Code requirements if staff can get the property on the schedule in a reasonable period. If not, the staff will issue the homeowner a Right of Entry Permit to perform brush management in compliance with the Municipal Code.

What needs to be changed?

A review of the Brush Management Program policy and regulations conducted by the City of San Diego and also conducted jointly with other agencies should be considered. The review should address the effectiveness of the regulations in regard to improving fire protection of new and existing development, and the potential impacts of these regulations on the environmental and aesthetic qualities of the City. Brush Management Program regulations should be modified to remove inconsistencies, improve clarity, and provide public education in the importance of performing proper brush management and how to do it. Brush Management regulations that provide for effective brush management zones around structures should also provide for appropriate erosion control and habitat protection.

Park and Recreation cannot perform adequate brush management for the urban edges of City-owned open space due to insufficient program staffing. City open space consists of 22,000+ acres, although only a portion is urban interface edge. Owing to budget cut backs, staffing has been reduced over the years to the current level, which includes two Laborers and one Utility Supervisor (currently vacant due to hiring freeze and partially back-filled). A fourth position (one Laborer) is carried as a supplemental position in this year's fiscal budget. This crew operates five days per week.

In response to this crew being reduced as a result of budget reductions over the last decade, an effort was made to extend services via contracts with the County of San Diego Probation Department and Alpha Project for the Homeless. These contracts include six to eight participants per day, providing service four days per week. These programs have limitations, however, based on participant training and motivation. Neither program allows participants to operate gas powered equipment (chain saws, power trimmers with brush blade, wood chippers) due to liability concerns. Historically, based on limited program funding and the contractual limitations described above, the crew has been able to brush manage up to a third of an acre per day or approximately 50-70 acres per year based on terrain, access challenges and weather conditions.

The City needs consistent, clear handouts to provide to homeowners explaining brush management regulations and techniques. Conflicts between Public Safety and Land Development Codes regarding depth of brush management and number of zones have created some confusion in the field. Engineering and Capital Projects, Development Services, Planning, Park and Recreation and Fire-Rescue departments are working to ensure a consistent message is conveyed to the public regarding brush management, including providing a comprehensive, understandable brochure and other guidelines as to how best to implement brush management practice and requirements. These departments will jointly prepare a Brush Management Coordination report to be presented in January.

Do we need changes in our force composition?

Park and Recreation does not have an accurate measurement of the urban edge/brush management area of the open space, however, the MHPA urban edge measurement multiplied by a 50-foot Zone 2 brush management depth provides an estimate of roughly 1600 acres. To provide adequate brush management for this urban edge area of the City-owned open space on a two-year cycle (one-half of the City per year) would require roughly 10 crews as described above at a cost of \$4.2 million, exclusive of any equipment or administrative staff.

Do we need any additional equipment?

To meet brush management needs identified above, the department would require the purchase of approximately 10 brush trucks and 20 pickup trucks, at a cost of roughly \$1.1 million.

Issue 3: AERIAL FIREFIGHTING SUPPORT FOR THE CITY AND REGION

Per Attachment 1, a regional Fire-Rescue helicopter program with an appropriate size fleet is essential to support the safety of firefighters and protect the community. A county-wide study is being performed to identify the needs of this program. The firm of Conklin and de Decker has been retained to perform the study, which is estimated to be completed by the week of December 29, 2003. The issue of funding for the regional helicopter will be before the City Council for consideration on December 8.

Issue 4: EROSION/RUNOFF CONTROL PLAN

Overview

In response to erosion concerns, the Engineering and Capital Projects Department/Field Division and General Services Department/Stormwater Division have been working with a number of residents and property owners. These departments are providing the residents and property owners with advice to address immediate concerns related to interim measures such as sandbagging, coordinating the screening of all storm inlets in the affected area to preclude sediment or ash from getting into streambeds, and assisting in open space areas and Mission Trails Regional Park.

Additionally, the City has entered into an agreement with GeoSyntec Consultants who, in coordination with San Diego State University's Soil Erosion Research Laboratory, will provide the City with the following:

- Preliminary Site Reconnaissance – Conducting aerial and ground surveys of fire areas to identify any flood and erosion hazards that represent a threat to life and property. The reconnaissance will verify locations of drainage areas and assess site conditions (soils and vegetation), condition of structures, condition of drainage facilities, and identify potential hazards and impacts.

- Early Action Measures – Provide a written report on immediate actions that need to be taken, including the cleaning of storm drains, constructing new sediment basins, and instructing temporary velocity reduction measures.
- Hazard Mitigation Plan – Assess and rank each site identified in the Preliminary Site Reconnaissance as to the geological, flooding, and structural hazards present and potential impact to public health and safety, and damage to private/public property damage, infrastructure, roadways, and receiving waters. Mitigation measures will be developed for each highly ranked site. Appropriate mitigation measures will be selected for each site and rough cost estimates prepared. This information will be used as the basis for Damage Survey Reports (DSR) which is necessary toward reimbursements from agencies such as FEMA and State OES.
- Site Specific Hazard Mitigation Plan – Prepare detailed plans and specifications for each site based on conceptual approval of the DSR by the funding agency. This plan will reflect a cost-effective approach to fitting Best Management Practices to existing terrain and include a plan for monitoring performance along with an effective maintenance program.

Regarding runoff impact to the City’s water system, fortunately Water Department lands are a relatively small portion of the total burned watershed area. As a result, Water Department staff is able to actively work with federal, state and local agencies to guide post-fire rehabilitation treatments in lands not owned or controlled by the Water Department, so that impacts to the City’s source water system are minimized.

The Water Department is actively pursuing both post fire assessment assistance and financial support from a number of agencies, including BAER (Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation) Teams, Natural Resource Conservation Service, US Geological Survey and the California Department of Forestry. The overall goal of these efforts is to establish and implement erosion control and flood prevention treatments in the short term, and to prescribe treatments for post-fire rehabilitation over many years.

In addition to the inter-agency outreach efforts, the Water Department is routinely monitoring the areas affected by the fires. The Water Quality Laboratory has 20 stream water quality monitoring stations established in these areas, plus monitoring stations on each of the reservoirs. The Department’s goal is to make the best quality, most treatable water available to the Water Treatment Plants.

Issue 5: MULTI-AGENCY TASK FORCE TO REVIEW REGIONAL RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

Mayor Murphy and County Supervisor Greg Cox have established the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force. The mission of the Task Force is to provide a forum for representatives of all public safety disciplines to review, discuss and develop proposals for all risk service enhancements in the San Diego region. This Task Force will be co-chaired by Sheriff Bill Kolender and Fire Chief Jeff Bowman. An interim report will be developed within 90 days from the Task Force’s first meeting, which is scheduled for December 16, 2003, followed by a final report 180 days following the interim report.

In addition, Mayor Murphy and Fire Chief Bowman have been selected by then Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger to a Blue Ribbon Commission to review the effort to fight the State's recent wildfires and provide recommendations to prevent destruction from future fires. Eighteen firefighters, community officials, along with local, state and federal representatives will be named to the commission. An initial report is expected within 120 days.

Issue 6: EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

The Fire-Rescue Department has an annual campaign that requires all local engine companies to pass out canyon rim safety brochures to all homes and other structures along urban interface or canyon rim areas within the City of San Diego. Walking their districts allows the fire crews to pre-plan and answer questions from contact with citizens living in these areas. In addition, two personnel assigned to the Brush Management Section of the Fire Prevention Bureau respond to complaints and violations related to brush and weed abatement issues. These personnel are also available to community groups for public education. This portion of the Fire-Rescue public education campaign is understaffed and under-funded to meet the needs of the community of San Diego.

Issue 7: REVIEW OF WATER PRESSURE

During the firestorm, the Water Department was able to effectively manage water flows, pressure and storage to the Scripps Ranch and Tierrasanta areas. Staff was diligent in monitoring all critical areas of the water system during the emergency, and was able to effectively address all system issues that approached any level of concern by actions such as re-routing water and utilizing emergency generators.

At this time, the Water Department is conducting a detailed analysis of those specific areas of the water system that enabled water delivery to the firestorm areas. Based on this information, the Department will be modeling scenarios in order to further increase the City's readiness for this and other potential future emergencies.

Issue 8: LAW OF THE MOMENT

The Police Department assessment in Attachment 2 addresses this issue.

ADDITIONAL NOVEMBER 3, 2003 CITY COUNCIL ISSUES

The next section of this report addresses issues raised during discussion of Item 401 (Waiver of City Fees Associated with Fire Damage) at the November 3, 2003 City Council meeting. There were three issues identified for which Councilmembers requested information.

Issue A: INSURANCE

Workers' Compensation: The automated Workers' Compensation claims reporting system recently implemented by the Risk Management Department performed well. Employees injured

in the course of responding to the fires were able to file claims by telephone, and claims handlers were able to move quickly to approve medical services. In the past, claims were filed via written reports, and it often took days or weeks after the injury to approve claims. The new system served our injured employees well, and the efficiencies gained conserved scarce resources in Risk Management.

In addition, the system allowed the department to quickly set up special codes for tracking claims costs associated with the fires, which will be very helpful in efforts to recoup costs from FEMA and other reimbursement opportunities.

Property Insurance: At this point, it appears that the City was adequately insured for property losses associated with the Fire. We are pursuing claims associated with lost City-owned homes (at City reservoirs), destroyed vehicles, extraordinary costs, and business interruption. As part of a risk pool that includes the County of San Diego, we are able to split our deductibles with the County for the Fire which is viewed as a single “occurrence”. We are coordinating our property claims with the County for this purpose. With regard to lost revenues from business interruptions, we are pursuing claims associated with the loss of the scheduled Monday Night Football game at Qualcomm Stadium, and other interruptions of revenue generating activities at other City facilities.

Public Liability: Risk Management has received inquiries regarding potential claims from fire victims, but no actual claims at this point. The City Attorney’s Office has assisted Risk Management in formulating responses to those inquiries, as well as suggesting additional inclusions in the standard denial letter. The City and the Fire-Rescue Department are ordinarily immune from liability pursuant to Government Code section 850.2 and 850.4.

Issue B: COST RECOVERY

Reimbursement: The Financial Management Department, City Auditor and Comptroller, and the City’s Office of Homeland Security have taken many steps toward ensuring the City will maximize reimbursement from the FEMA and the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (OES) for expenses as a result of the Cedar fire. Special job orders for fire containment, recovery and damage assessment were established the day of the fire to immediately begin the cost recovery effort. Additional job orders have since been established to ensure the City is properly tracking personnel and non-personnel expenses associated with the fire clean-up efforts, repairs and mitigation and support for the LAC located in Scripps Ranch. Financial Management staff has held preliminary meetings with the departments directly involved in reimbursement eligible activities to brief them on reimbursement requirements. In the following months, staff will continue to document and capture eligible expenses while working closely with FEMA and OES officials to complete all reimbursement requests.

City Revenue: The Cedar fire is likely to have some impact on the City of San Diego’s revenue position. Although SDG&E does not expect an impact to our franchise fees, and any lingering effect on tourism is expected by ConVis to be mild to moderate, there are likely impacts on Property Tax and Sales Tax. The County has offered waivers on Property Tax, which will have an impact in Fiscal Year 2004 and future fiscal years, depending on the rate of rebuilding of

homes. Preliminary estimates of lost Property Tax may amount to approximately \$300,000 in anticipated receipts in Fiscal Year 2004. We anticipate a boost in Sales Tax during the period of rebuilding, due to increased activity in the construction and retail segments.

***Issue C: DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT PRIORITY
TREATMENT (Fee Waivers and Expedited Rebuild Permits)***

Fee Waivers: Waiving of demolition permits fees, waste disposal fees, building permit fees and reimbursement of concrete and brick recycling fees by City Council provided financial support to property owners whose homes and buildings were destroyed or damaged by the fire.

Reimbursement is being pursued for the Development Services Enterprise Fund, and the Environmental Services Refuse Disposal and Recycling Enterprise funds, from sources other than the General Fund, to pay for the fee waivers. The permanent determination of a funding source for the waived fees will provide guidance for funding future fee waivers related to reconstruction of private property homes and buildings as a result of disasters. A City policy to provide fee waivers for reconstruction of private property homes and buildings due to this disaster has been approved by the City Council.

Fire Reconstruction Permits Priority: Designation of fire reconstruction permit applications as the highest priority for expedited development review of building permits in the City will facilitate rebuilding the destroyed or damaged homes in the affected neighborhoods. The increased building permit workload will be met by a combination of additional staff, contractual services and staff overtime.

SUMMARY

City staff will continue to review operations during this incident and identify ways to enhance our preparation for future emergencies. As described above, the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force at the local level and the Blue Ribbon Commission at the state level have been established and include representatives from the City. Both will be reviewing the efforts during the fire and providing recommendations to enhance preparedness for future incidents. Additionally, there is a county-wide study underway regarding aerial firefighting needs and, as described in Attachment 1, the Fire-Rescue Department is currently participating in the Fire Accreditation process which includes risk assessment/standards of coverage review. As this process concludes in February 2005, it will assist in identifying the fire resources required to provide enhanced service to San Diego communities.

In addition, City staff will continue to review internal actions that took place following the fires. Numerous follow-up reports will be provided to further supplement the information contained within this report. These will include reports on the brush management coordination, building code changes, financial impact of the fires, and the EOC to be presented during January and February 2004. An assessment will also be made early in calendar year 2004 that will more comprehensively identify the resources needed Citywide to improve response to both major and day-to-day incidents affecting public safety. This assessment will include an estimate of costs to meet those needs. Additionally, a comprehensive review of City departmental needs (Police,

Fire-Rescue, Park and Recreation, etc), including those previously identified, will be conducted and presented to the City Council as part of the annual budget process.

In closing, given the resources available and the unique nature and size of this fire, City staff from the Fire-Rescue and Police departments and all operational and support departments did an outstanding job in protecting and serving the public. In turn, the public did an excellent job of cooperating and working with City staff to help our personnel do their jobs in the best way possible both during and after the fire. Finally, the Mayor and City Council responded to the needs of their constituents in a caring and straightforward way both at the community level and in obtaining additional resources to support the City. This teamwork in a time of tragedy saved lives and property and speaks to the character of the people who work for and live in the City of San Diego. I thank all of them for their efforts and look forward to implementing any improvements necessary to do an even better job in the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael T. Uberuaga
City Manager

MU/LKC

Attachments: 1. [San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Post Fire Assessment](#)
2. [San Diego Police Department Post Fire Assessment](#)
3. [Emergency Operations Center \(EOC\) Assessment](#)