


LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

March 4, 2025

RONNIE R. VILLANUEVA
INTERIM FIRE CHIEF

February 3, 2025

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 25-010

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Ronnie R. Villanueva, Interim Fire Chief

SUBJECT: 2050 VISION OF LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT DEPLOYMENT

FINAL ACTION: Approved Approved w/Corrections Withdrawn
 Denied Received & Filed Other

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) has submitted two Standards of Cover (SOC) analyses (BFC 23-055 and BFC 24-115) in alignment with the top two priorities of the LAFD Strategic Plan (1.1.1 and 1.1.2). Both studies found that the LAFD is critically understaffed, under resourced, and underfunded, with measurable room for improvement in the deployment of resources. This report will outline a specific, measurable, incremental increase in LAFD staffing and deployment while also outlining an improved set of metrics to improve the customer service delivery of the LAFD.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board:
Receive the report and transmit it to the Mayor and City Council.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

DISCUSSION

In many ways, the current staffing, deployment model, and size of the LAFD have not changed since the 1960s. The population of the City of Los Angeles has increased from 2,479,015 in 1960 to 3,898,747 in 2020 while the LAFD shrank from 112 stations to 106 stations. During that span of time the staffing did not grow proportionally. At the same time, the call volume increased from 100,985 incidents in 1969 to 514,211 incidents in 2024, which included 228,029 incidents requiring ambulance transport.

The LAFD is staffed by 3,538 sworn positions and 369 civilian members. This staffing represents a ratio of .91 members per 1,000 residents of Los Angeles. This ratio is precisely half the recommended ratio outlined in NFPA 1710, which details a best practice of 1.81 firefighters per 1,000 residents. This staffing level can also be

compared internally to other City Departments that serve an identical population. Compared to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Department of Water and Power (DWP) the LAFD staffing is one-third the size, and the budget is less than half the size.

The LAFD is in a unique position demographically to hire sufficient personnel to reach a recommended number of firefighters per resident because of the recent hiring of 1,578 members in the last ten years. This positions the agency to hire additional civilian and sworn members while retirements are in a rare slowdown. If no action is taken in the next fifteen years then the LAFD will not have the ability to hire faster than members are retiring. This vision recommends moving toward a staffing level of 1.81 firefighters per 1,000 residents. At the current population of Los Angeles, this would require 7,360 members, a population of 5 million would require 9,200 firefighters, and in the event that the City grows to 6 million by 2050, 11,040 firefighters would be necessary. An LAFD of any of these three sizes is smaller than the current (2024) staffing of DWP and LAPD.

The LAFD could take this opportunity to “right-size” the organization to improve customer service experience. In 2024, response times increased in two measurable ways. The 90th percentile call time is a nationally recognized metric agencies across America use to measure performance. The LAFD is nearly double the recommended time. NFPA recommends a 90th percentile call time of four minutes (4:00). The LAFD is on record with a 90th percentile call time nearly eight minutes (7:53). Seen from a different angle, the LAFD average overall response time to EMS calls is also nearly eight minutes (7:36). A reasonable goal that has been in place since the 1990s for the LAFD is to have a 90th percentile call time of five minutes or less. Ideally, the LAFD could meet the NFPA 1710 recommendation in a manner that neighboring agencies already do.

The recommended 2050 end state requires additional staffing, infrastructure, civilian support staff, and funding. However, some initial actions can be taken to improve customer service by reducing response times. In the short term, the SOC recommends additional staffing to existing resources. This can take the form of fully staffing existing Fire Engines and smaller light apparatus called Fast Response vehicles, currently known as Brush Patrols. Any form of funding can immediately improve the response capability of the LAFD.

Overall improvement to LAFD deployment will take years. In an incremental fashion, the LAFD will need to hire additional firefighters, build additional facilities, and be supported with additional funding. Sufficient progress can be made in five-year increments. In the next five-year period, several high-profile events will add to the complexity of the LAFDs' response. A World Cup, Olympic Games, and Mayoral election cycle occur in the next five years. During this time, 194 LAFD firefighters are scheduled to retire. The goal of hiring 750 firefighters and 100 civilians will begin to correctly size the LAFD staffing model. During this time, a Bond measure will need to be pursued.

During the period of 2031 - 2035 progress will need to increase in pace to hiring 1,300 firefighters and 100 civilians while building 30 stations. New LAFD headquarters

facilities, Supply and Maintenance, and Recruit Training Facilities will support the increased pace of growth. A combination of rebuilt fire stations and new fire stations will strategically fill in gaps in response coverage.

Growth will need to continue apace during the years 2036 - 2040. The 150th anniversary of the LAFD will occur in this period. According to current demographic data, 1,699 current LAFD members will be eligible for retirement during this period. This five-year period marks the beginning of a large exodus of LAFD personnel. Hiring at the pace described in the paragraph above will be critically important in this period to make up for retirements.

In the next two five-year periods that encompass 2040 - 2050, hiring and infrastructure projects will need to continue at the described pace to ensure that hiring goals and station goals can be met by 2050. Large promotional movements will occur in this period. Large-scale fleet replacement projects include the timely replacement of LAFD boats, aircraft, and specialty apparatuses during this period.

If no action is taken and the population of Los Angeles grows as predicted, the LAFD will deteriorate in the following ways. The ratio of firefighters to population will degrade to .69 per 1,000 residents. Response times could increase to a 90th percentile of over nine minutes (9:00), and the overall average response time could be over ten minutes (10:00). Both increases are based on the increases from 2005 - 2025. Of the current 106 fire stations, 82 would be over the recommended age of 50 years of frontline service.

However, if the 2050 vision is followed, the LAFD could increase customer service in the following ways. The ratio of firefighters to population could increase to 1.81 per 1,000 residents. An associated increase in civilian staff would increase the administrative performance of the organization. 90th percentile response time could be at or near four minutes. This vision would result in the modernized deployment of 168 fire stations. The LAFD could be radically improved by the construction of 140 new fire stations, a new headquarters to centralize LAFD command staff, and new training and maintenance facilities.

CONCLUSION

The deployment of LAFD field resources and construction of LAFD facilities has made slow progress in the last 60 years. Current facilities are, in some cases, over 80 years old. A 2050 vision of the LAFD improves customer service, positions the city to thrive during daily emergencies and natural disasters, and ensures that the visitors and residents of Los Angeles receive timely, world-class emergency services.

Board report prepared by Battalion Chief Eric Roberts, Planning Section.

Attachment
Google Slide Presentation

LOS ANGELES CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

2025 - 2050 VISION



NFPA RECOMMENDS
1.81 FIREFIGHTERS
PER 1,000 RESIDENTS



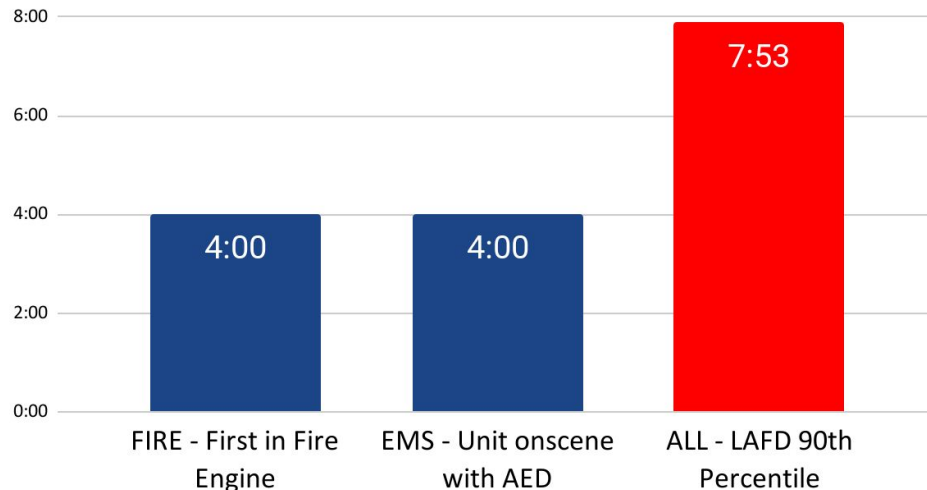
THE LAFD 2024 STAFFING

- 3,539 AUTHORITIES
- POPULATION: 4 MILLION
- **.91** FIREFIGHTERS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

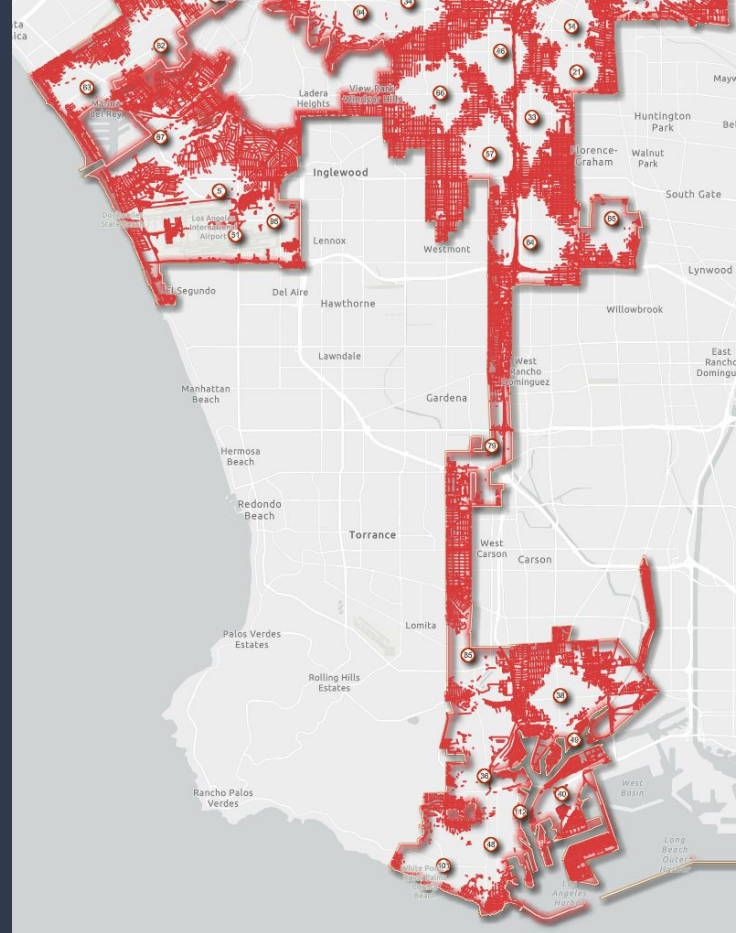
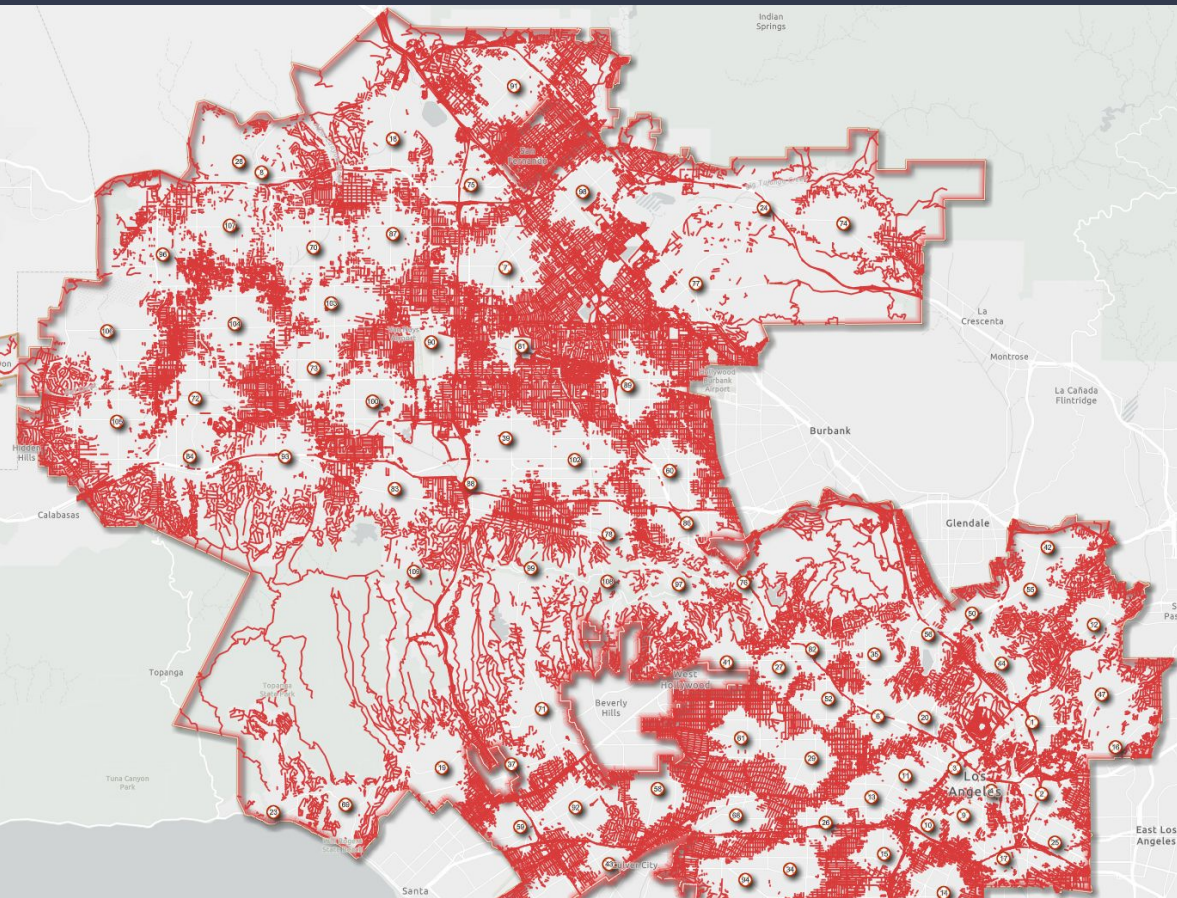
THE LAFD 2024 RESPONSE

- 90TH PERCENTILE: **7:53**
- AVERAGE CORT: **7:36**
- 106 FIRE STATIONS
 - 70 OVER AGED STATIONS

NFPA 1710 Recommendations

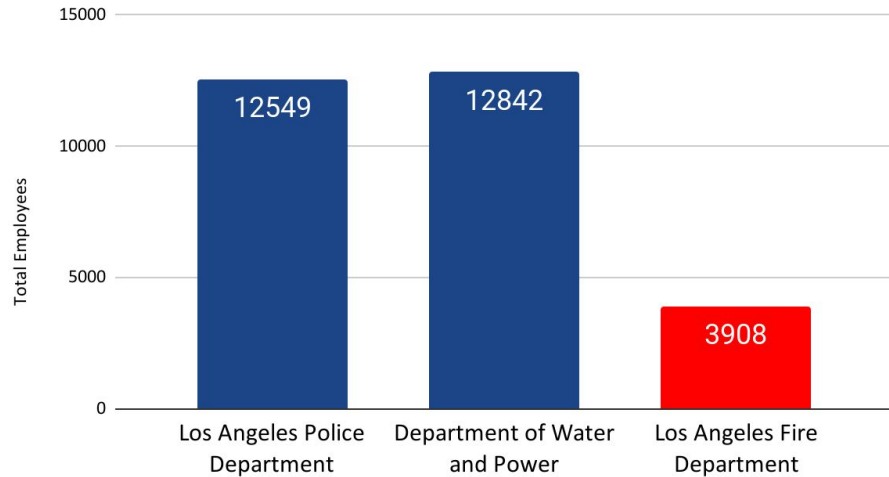


AREAS IN RED ARE NOT REACHABLE IN 4 MINUTES

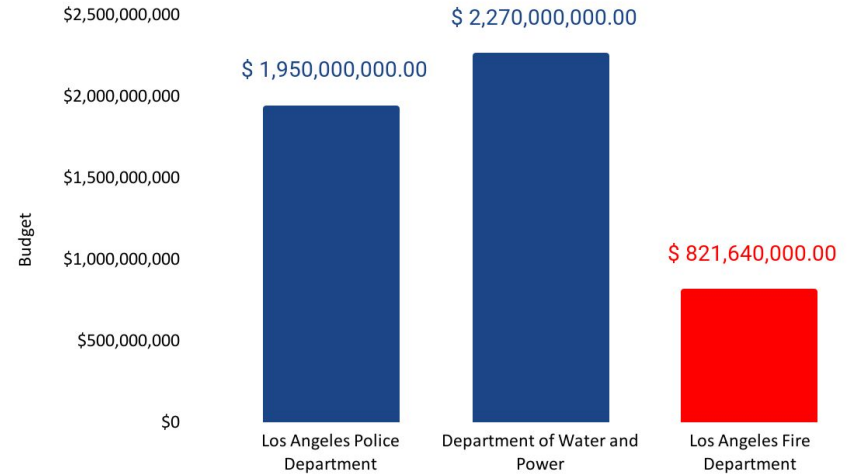


INTERNAL COMPARISON WITHIN CITY SERVICES

Total Employees

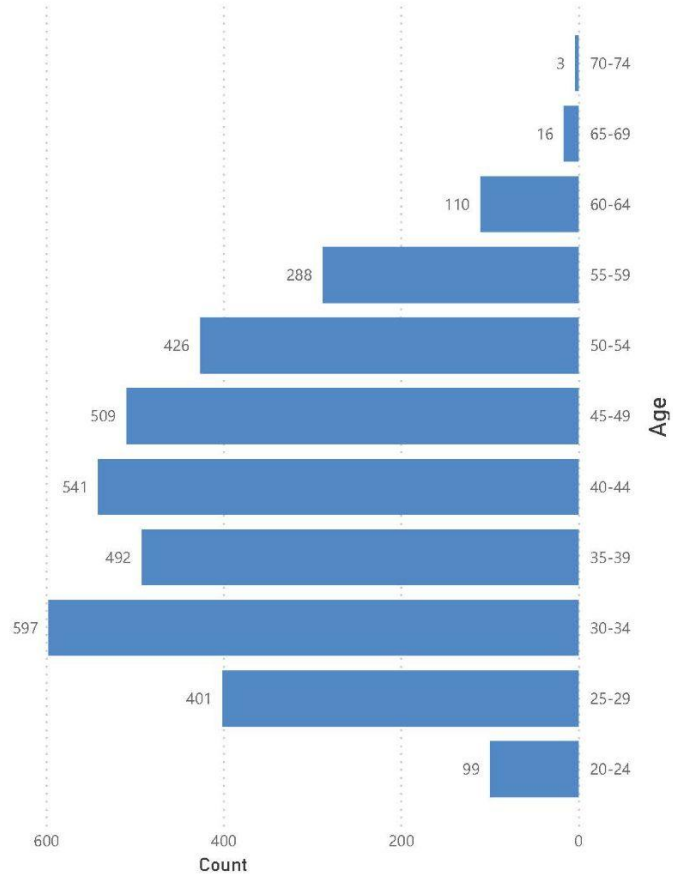


Annual Budget

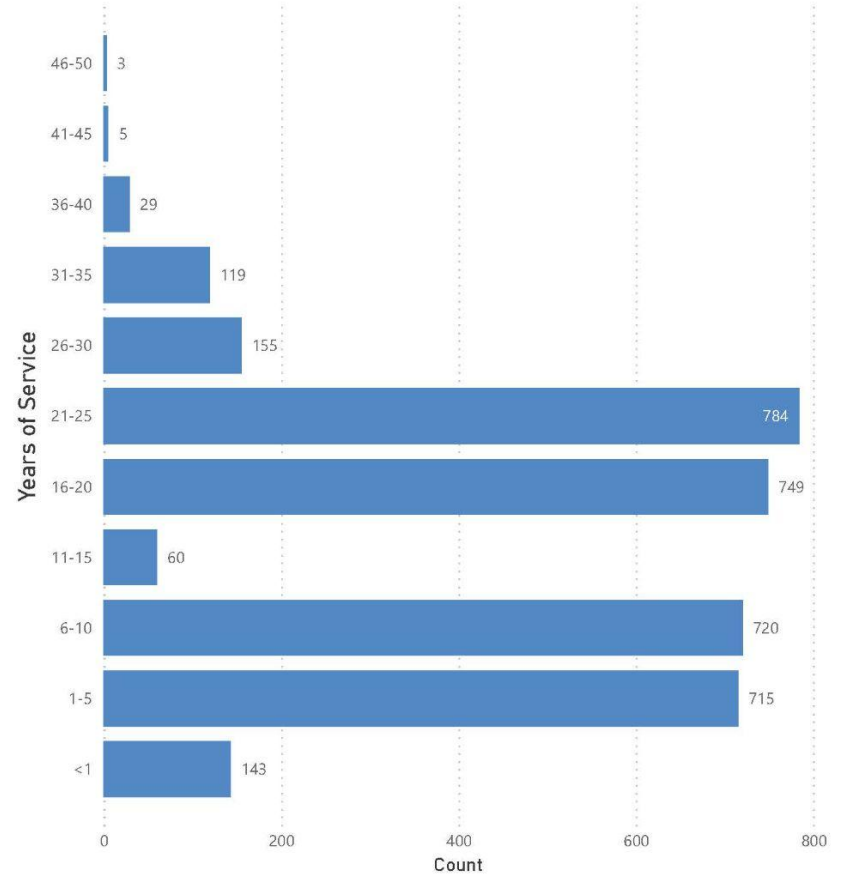


COMPARABLE CUSTOMER
BASE, $\frac{1}{3}$ THE STAFFING
AND $\frac{1}{2}$ BUDGET

Breakdown by Age



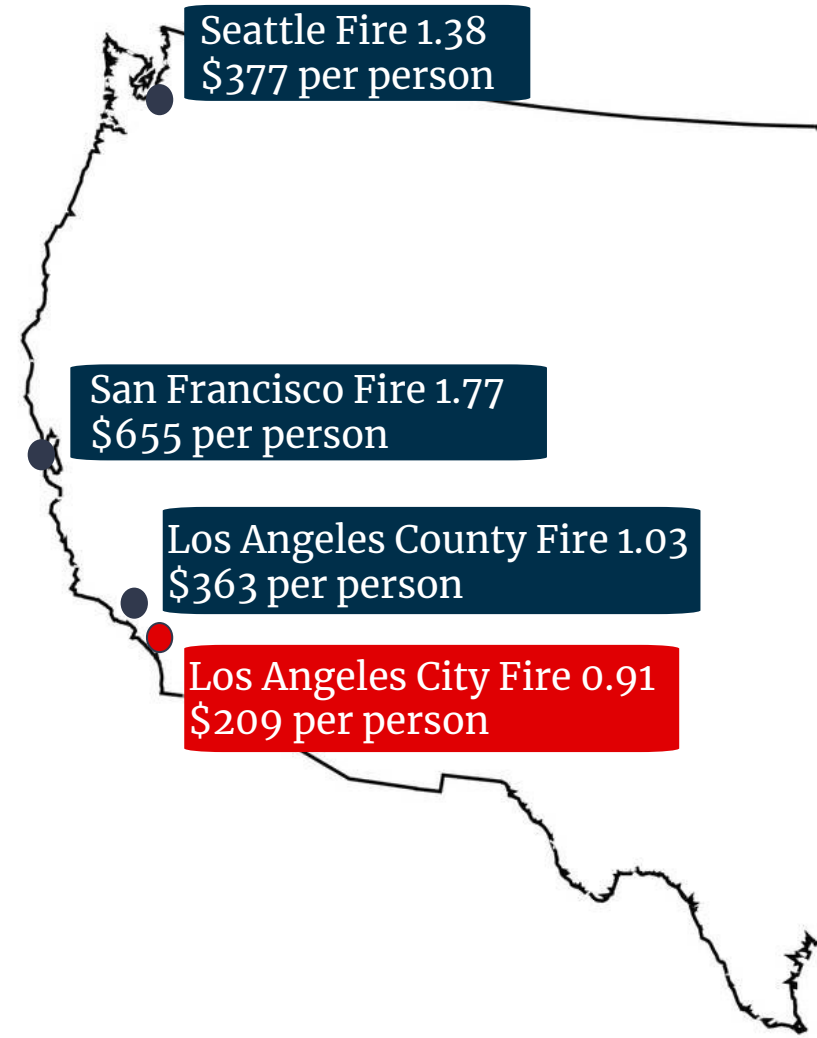
Breakdown by Years of Service



** As of 02/03/2025

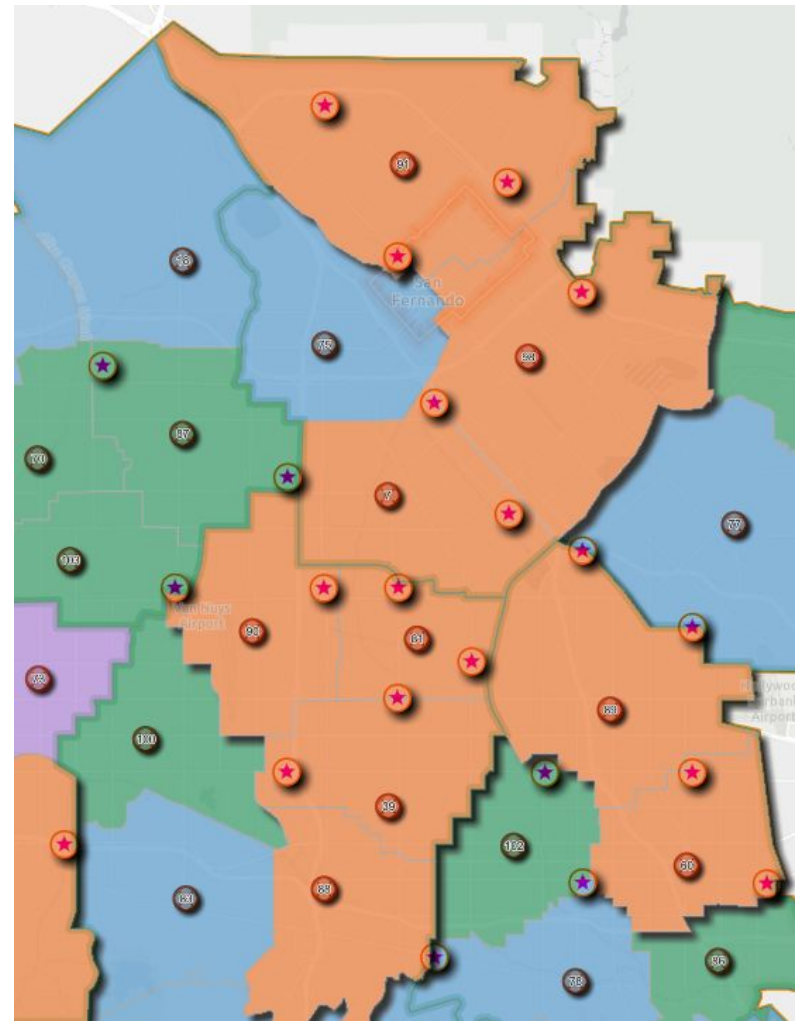
EXTERNAL STAFFING & BUDGET COMPARISON

- NFPA recommends a staffing level of 1.81 Firefighters per 1,000 residents.
- Budget spending is calculated per person.



THE LAFD IN 2050

- 9,200 AUTHORITIES
- 1.81 FIREFIGHTERS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS
- POPULATION 5 MILLION
- 90TH PERCENTILE: 4:00
- AVERAGE CORT: 4:00
- 168 FIRE STATIONS
 - ZERO OVER AGED STATIONS



ROAD MAP TOWARD 2050 VISION

IMMEDIATE ACTION

FULLY STAFF 200 HUNDRED SERIES
APPARATUS WITH FOUR (4)
MEMBERS WHERE POSSIBLE.

i. 378 additional Firefighters

PURSUE 32 ADDITIONAL
AMBULANCES/FRVS

i. To be staffed during peak hours

ii. 192 additional Firefighters

CIVILIAN SUPPORT STAFF

Prioritize Civilian Hiring



2025 - 2030

- 194 total DROP exits. Begin to hire in this period.
- Goal of hiring 750 sworn in this five year period. Net gain of nearly 550.
- Hire 100 Civilians.
- Goal of building 20 stations in this period.
- Goal of starting LAFD HQ, Shops, Drill Tower.
- Bond Measure in progress.



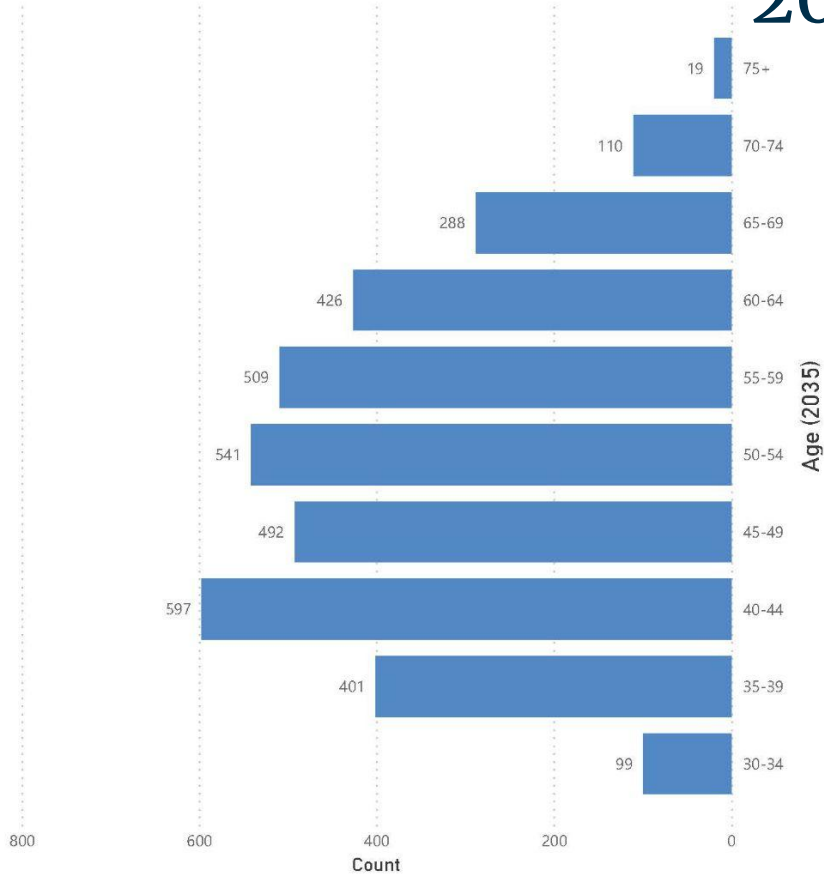
2031 - 2035

- Hire 1,300 firefighters in this five year period.
 - Some Promotional movement.
- Hire 100 Civilians.
- Goal of building 30 stations in this period.
- Complete LAFD HQ, Shops, and Drill Tower.

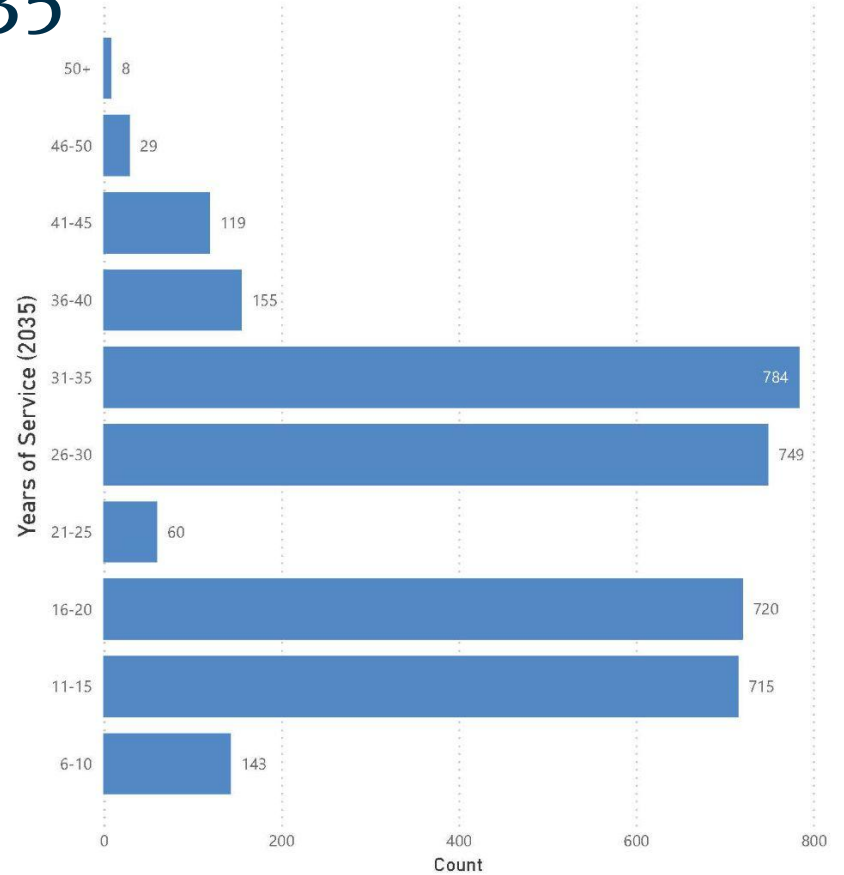


2035

Breakdown by Age



Breakdown by Years of Service



** Assuming no new hires or retirements in the next 10 years.

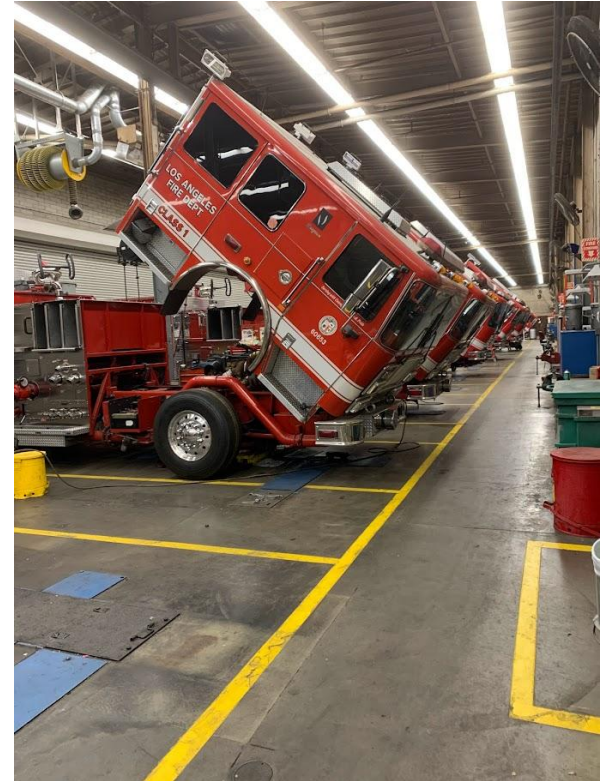
2036 - 2040

- Hire 1,300 firefighters in this five year period.
 - Large Promotional movement.
- Hire 100 Civilians.
- Goal of building 30 stations in this period.
- 150th Anniversary of the LAFD in this period.
- Begin to see large retirements in this period.



2041 - 2045

- Hire 1,300 firefighters in this five year period
- Hire 100 Civilians.
- Goal of building 30 stations in this period.
- Large retirements in this period.



2046 – 2050

- Hire 1,300 firefighters in this five year period.
 - Hiring now only keeps up with attrition.
- Hire 100 Civilians.
- Goal of building 34 stations in this period.
- Air Ops, Boats need attention.
- Large retirements in this period.



2050 END STATE IF NO ACTION TAKEN

IF NO ACTION TAKEN:

3,539 AUTHORITIES

.69 FIREFIGHTERS PER 1,000
RESIDENTS

POPULATION 5 MILLION

90TH PERCENTILE: 9:00

AVERAGE CORT: 10:00+

106 FIRE STATIONS

82 OVER AGED STATIONS



2050 IDEAL END STATE



2024 GOLD WINNER – STATION DESIGN OF THE YEAR

IF FULL ACTION TAKEN:

9,200 AUTHORITIES FILLED

500 ADDITIONAL CIVILIANS

1.81 FIREFIGHTERS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

POPULATION 5 MILLION

90TH PERCENTILE: 4:00

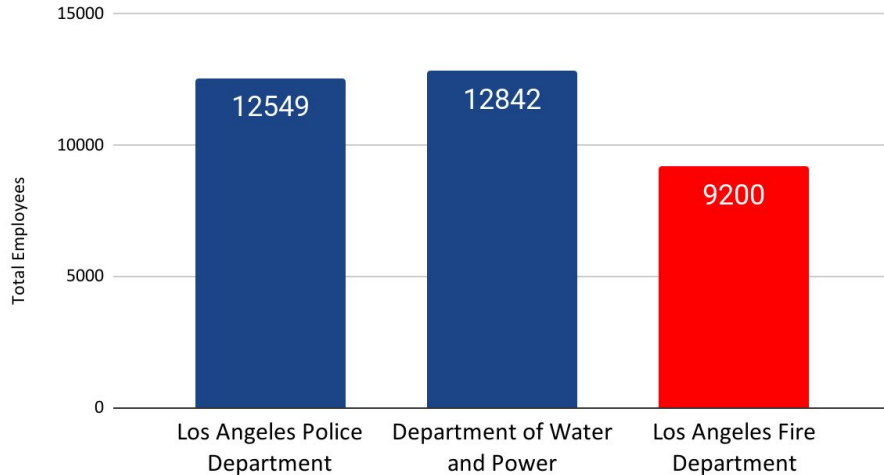
AVERAGE CORT: 4:00

168 FIRE STATIONS (144 NEW)

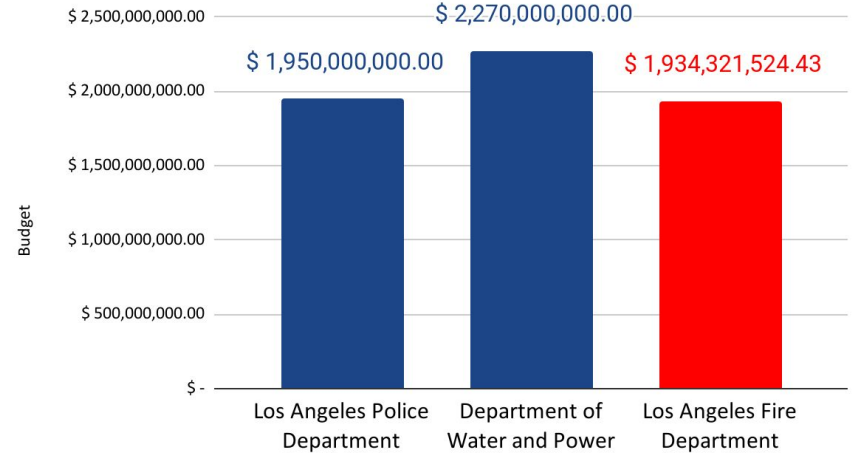
ZERO OVER AGED STATIONS

2050 INTERNAL COMPARISON IF VISION IS FOLLOWED

2050 - Total Sworn & Civilian employees



2050 Budget Estimate



PROPOSED 2050 LAFD IS
SMALLER AND CHEAPER
THAN THE CURRENT
(2025) LAPD AND DWP

LOS ANGELES CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

2025 - 2050 VISION

