

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Napa County retained Citygate Associates, LLC to conduct a Standard of Response Cover planning analysis (fire station and crew deployment) along with a Master Plan implementation study of non-response (administrative) services for the Napa County Fire Department. This comprehensive study is presented in several sections including: this Executive Summary summarizing the most important findings and recommendations; the deployment analysis supported by maps and response statistics; the administrative functions review; the assessment of volunteer fire service organization; and the fiscal costs associated with the proposed Master Plan recommendations. The final section integrates all of the findings and recommendations presented throughout the report and concludes with priorities and fiscal impacts.

Planning for the Napa County Fire Department (the Department) involves two stages of effort: a short-range plan that addresses current service delivery needs in light of the County's economic situation and a longer range plan that addresses fire services delivery as the County continues to evolve.

Thus, Citygate made recommendations and designed solutions that will maintain the Fire Department's capabilities in the near term while providing a firm foundation upon which the Department can evolve over the longer term.

POLICY CHOICES FRAMEWORK

First, the Napa County leadership must understand there are no mandatory federal or state regulations directing the level of fire service response times and outcomes. Thus, communities have the level of fire services that they can afford, which is not always what they would desire. However, the body of regulations on the fire service provides that *if fire services are provided at all, they must be done so with the safety of the firefighters and citizens in mind* (see regulatory discussion on page 15). Given this situation, the overall challenge for Napa County is to design fire services within the fiscal constraints that limit its ability to staff, train and equip a safe and effective fire/medical response force in a community experiencing slow growth and negative pressures on operating volunteer fire services.

OVERALL CITYGATE PERSPECTIVE ON THE STATE OF NAPA COUNTY'S FIRE SERVICES

In brief, Citygate finds that the challenge of providing fire services in Napa County is similar to that found in many California counties: providing an adequate level of fire services within the context of limited fiscal resources, competing needs, growing populations and uncertainty surrounding the exact timing of future development.

Citygate evaluated all aspects of the Department during the preparation of this deployment study and administrative implementation master plan and three critical challenges for Napa emerged. To address these challenges, there are other findings and recommendations that deserve specific and particular consideration. Finally, the remainder of the recommendations only requires the regular, ongoing attention they currently receive.

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Throughout this report, Citygate makes observations, key findings and, where appropriate, specific action item recommendations. Starting in Section 6 on page 97, all the findings and recommendations are presented together, in order. Overall, there are 30 key findings and 27 specific action item recommendations.

It needs to be stated at the front of this study that Citygate Associates team members who spent time in Napa found the fire staff at all levels very cooperative and helpful. They are committed to their county, agency, and mission. Given the struggle to keep pace in the Department and County to cope with tight revenues, there is pride and on-going effort to deliver the best customer service with the currently available resources. Fires are being attended to with successful outcomes and medical calls are being answered with excellent patient care.

It is imperative that the reader of this study understands that while there are issues to be planned for and improved upon in the Department, there is not a problematic, “won’t do it, can’t do it” culture to be overcome. The employees of the Department are eager for a plan that gives direction and for the resources to do an even better job for the citizens of Napa County.

In this Executive Summary, instead of citing all the findings and recommendations, Citygate will highlight the most critical ones across three challenges:

MAIN CHALLENGES

One can summarize the fire service challenges that face Napa County in three themes: *insufficient revenue for deployment of more firefighters; insufficient headquarters staffing; and negative pressures on volunteer fire services.* Because of slow growth of revenue over the past decade due to recessions and state revenue policies towards the counties, the Department has not been able to add career staffed field resources, while at the same time, the volunteer organizations are undergoing some significant challenges.

Challenge 1: Field Operations Deployment (Fire Stations)

Fire department deployment, simply stated, is about the *speed* and *weight* of the attack. Speed calls for first-due, all risk intervention units (engines, trucks and ambulance companies) strategically located across a department. These units are tasked with controlling everyday average emergencies without the incident escalating to second alarm or greater size, which then unnecessarily depletes the department’s resources as multiple requests for service occur. Weight is about multiple-unit response for significant emergencies like a “room and contents structure fire”, a multiple-patient incident, a vehicle accident with extrication required, or a complex rescue or wildland fire incident. In these situations, departments must assemble enough firefighters in a reasonable period in order to control the emergency safely without it escalating to greater alarms.

In Section 2 of this study, Standards of Cover (Deployment) Analysis, Citygate’s analysis of prior response statistics and use of geographic mapping tools reveals that Napa County has a weight of attack problem. There are not enough total on-duty firefighters to handle more than one serious emergency or 1 to 3 less serious emergencies at once, particularly if the volunteers cannot provide an immediate response to fill out the necessary staffing.

The maps in Volume 2 and the corresponding text explanation beginning on page 38 of this volume show that Napa County is staffed for one serious fire at a time **or** 1 to 3 medical calls for

service. This model has served the community well over its growing years, but is now increasingly strained to handle more than one serious event and to provide equitable coverage in all of the suburban population density neighborhoods. The County is no longer a quiet farming only area. Napa County should grow its fire defenses commensurate with the risk and call for service growth.

Summarized in priority order, Napa has two fire deployment deficits that need improvement:

1. There are not enough career firefighters on duty on all engines to provide the “weight” of response to serious and or multiple emergencies since the volunteer response is uncertain.
2. The areas around volunteer stations #18 (Angwin) and #21 (Deer Park) have turned into urban/suburban population densities and need to start planning for career fire crews in addition to the on-going need for volunteers.

Citygate’s recommendations are designed to improve these issues as fiscal resources allow. By increasing staffing on the current number of career companies, there will be more firefighters and more fire attack units on the street. More attack units are achieved without adding more engines. With more staffing per crew, it is less likely that moderate emergencies will draw in more understaffed units to make up an effective response force. This leaves more uncommitted engines for simultaneous emergencies.

The County needs to adopt two service level measures for its fire services – suburban and rural. While it makes sense that many of the rural residents know and accept the fact they moved out beyond the reach of urban fire, police and ambulance services, the reality is many do not. Increasingly, many residents are newcomers from urban areas, and/or only reside in the County part-time in second homes. Yet the County has a mix of pockets of higher density population where at least suburban levels of fire service make sense given the risks present. To make a cost effective allocation of resources, Citygate recommends Napa County adopt two service goals that are sensitive to these differences so the public knows what to expect from their tax dollar.

Thus, Citygate’s **key** deployment findings and recommendations are summarized below. For reference purposes, the findings and recommendation numbers refer to the sequential numbers in the main body of the report. Note that not all findings and recommendations that appear in this report are listed in this Executive Summary.

Finding #1: The County lacks a fire deployment measure that includes a time measure definition, plus risk and outcome expectations. The deployment measure should have a second part to define multiple-unit response coverage for serious emergencies. Making these changes will meet the best practice recommendations of the Commission on Fire Accreditation International and drive future policy decisions on the level and costs of fire services.

Finding #2: With staffing of only two firefighters on **four** of five County dedicated year-round units, the tactical work that any one unit can do is very limited. This can be seen in the slow critical task completion times. On serious emergencies this draws in more units to make up an effective response force. This is costly for two reasons: (1) it drains more units than necessary; and (2) the farther out units do not have a

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timely response. The more typical staffing for suburban population density fire crews is three firefighters responding on an engine.

Finding #3: With only 20 line career firefighters on duty year-round plus another 15 wildland season firefighters and one chief officer as incident commander, the County's response system is spread very thin and does not have the speed and weight of response in all the areas that already contain over 1,000 people per square mile. Yes, there are also the additional CAL FIRE specific wildland units during fire season, but they are not dedicated to County structure fires and medical calls.

Finding #4: The mapping analysis overall for the 4-minute travel time area for career fire crew staffing and the 10/14-minute volunteer travel time maps demonstrate that the basic fire station locations themselves are good in that they cover most of the more built-up road network in the County. However, as the critical tasking section of this report points out, fire stations do not put out fires or handle medical emergencies -- firefighters do.

Finding #6: Volunteer stations #18 (Angwin) and #21 (Deer Park) have significant workload, indicative that their population densities are higher than the "rural area" definition as shown on the population density map.

Finding #7: Citygate believes this map series from 18 through 24 (as contained on pages 32-38 of Volume 2 of this report) shows there is effective coverage from the Napa City park site for the majority of Volunteer Station #10's area. If Volunteer Engine #10 was positioned there in a joint facility, then the private vehicle driving would be reduced and the engine could be more quickly staffed to respond.

Finding #8: The City and County fire departments would both benefit from construction and operation of a joint fire station in the Browns Valley area that would house one City career firefighter engine and the re-located County Volunteer Engine #10.

Citygate's deployment recommendations are designed to improve these issues. As the phasing section of this report explains in detail in Section 6, achieving improved fire station coverage in Napa County will take even more time and fiscal resources than the County immediately has. However, it must be understood that not all areas today receive an equal opportunity (not guaranteed, due to prior emergencies, etc.) of a timely fire response. The County needs to address this situation as it continues to slowly grow.

Recommendation #1: The County should adopt revised performance measures to direct fire station location and crew size planning. The measures should take into account a realistic crew turnout time of 2 minutes and be designed to deliver outcomes that will save patients medically salvageable upon arrival; and to keep small, but serious fires from becoming greater alarm fires. Citygate recommends these measures be:

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- 1.1 Distribution of Fire Stations for Built-up Suburban Areas:** To treat and transport medical patients and control small fires, the first-due unit should arrive within 7 minutes, 90 percent of the time from the receipt of the 911 call. This equates to 1 minute dispatch time, 2 minutes crew turnout time and 4 minutes drive time spacing for single units.
- 1.2 Effective Response Force for Built-up Suburban Areas:** To confine fires near the room of origin, to stop wildland fires to under 5 acres when noticed promptly and to treat up to 5 medical patients at once, a multiple-unit response of at least 15 personnel should arrive within 11 minutes from the time of 911 call receipt, 90 percent of the time. This equates to 1 minute dispatch time, 2 minutes crew turnout time and 8 minutes drive time spacing for multiple units.
- 1.3** Emerging suburban and rural areas should have fire unit travel time coverage of 10 minutes and 14 minutes, respectively.

Recommendation #2: Napa County should adopt fire deployment measures for different service areas based on population density per square mile ranging from rural to emerging suburban based, along the lines proposed in this table, which are consistent with national recommendations as discussed in Section 2 of this report:

Citygate’s Proposed Deployment Measures Based on Napa Population Densities

	Structure Fire Urban Area	Structure Fire Suburban Area	Structure Fire Rural Area	Wildland Fires Populated Areas	Wildland Fires Remote Areas*
	>1,000 people/sq. mi.	500-1,000 people/sq. mi.	<500 people/sq. mi.	Permanent open space areas	
1 st Due Travel Time	4	10	14	10	10
Total Reflex Time	7	13	17	13	13
1st Alarm Travel Time	8	15	20	12	20
1st Alarm Total Reflex	11	18	23	15	23

*CAL FIRE Responsibility Lands

Recommendation #3: Given the County Fire Department’s need to re-locate Volunteer Fire Company #10, the City and County should seriously consider construction and operating a joint fire station in Browns Valley that would house one City career firefighter engine and the re-located County Volunteer Engine #10.

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Recommendation #4: The County should increase the staffing on the four year-round engines staffed with only two firefighters to 3 firefighters to improve initial attack and first alarm effectiveness on a year-round basis. The County cannot continue to be so heavily dependent on wildland season CAL FIRE crews and/or the volunteers who are not always immediately available.

Challenge 2: Administrative and Headquarters Support Services

The County has a beneficial relationship with CAL FIRE as its fire services contractor. As the County has and will continue to slowly grow, there must be an increased understanding that partial headquarters resources from CAL FIRE are not enough to adequately lead, train and supervise the Napa County only resources.

For the overall headquarters support program, Citygate's key findings are:

Finding #15: For the size of the County and assigned workload, the Fire Marshal and Prevention programs are properly staffed only for the short-term *current needs*. *As the County continues to grow, additional prevention staff will be necessary.*

Finding #16: The management team reports it has been difficult to recruit and retain fire prevention personnel, most likely due to the state pay scales and local cost of living.

Finding #17: The Napa County Fire Department does not have an adequate repair shop. The shop is inadequate to handle this size fleet. It lacks floor space, lifts, specialized equipment and overhead height. With the huge investment in apparatus and the need to properly maintain it, this is an essential component of the Fire Department's facility program. Included in the shop should be a fire pump test pit, as this is an essential component.

Finding #22: One captain assigned to provide the necessary training to nine volunteer fire companies of 200+volunteers is not enough. With holidays and vacation, this person is available only about ten and a half months a year to meet with each company monthly and provide basic training to all newcomers.

Finding #23: There is no consistent basic training plan for new volunteers. This means that when a new volunteer makes application to join, he or she will not know what is expected of them or what they will receive.

To address these and other related findings, Citygate recommends:

Recommendation #6: Develop a joint financing plan with the state to replace the outmoded and inadequate vehicle repair shop.

- Recommendation #8:** The County needs to consider adding a Public Information Officer that could handle a broad range of information, education and preventative programs.
- Recommendation #9:** There needs to be an evaluation of turnover in the fire marshal, prevention and other specialty positions. *Fire staff should also consider whether they have prevention staff filled at the appropriate level for the work.* If the CAL FIRE pay scale is significantly below market, then a determination should be made if the technical headquarters positions in fire should be converted to Napa County employees.
- Recommendation #12:** The Department should remove apparatus that predates NFPA 1901 (1991 edition) until they receive the necessary safety upgrades to meet the minimum safety requirements. At the very least, these units should be in reserve status.
- Recommendation #14:** The training division needs an additional training officer to provide continuity and a robust program for the volunteer firefighters and the career force as well.

Challenge 3: Volunteer Fire Services

This report and study effort will point out the significant challenges the volunteer fire chiefs and the County face in fielding an available, safe and well-trained force under today's very strict state and federal regulations on firefighting. These regulations, when combined with an increasingly two-income commuter based economy, second home residents, and more acreage converting to viticulture, means the quantity of available volunteers is rapidly diminishing.

Napa County has always been visionary in the cooperative provision of fire services. In fact, it was the first agency in California to sign a contract for service with CAL FIRE in 1927. The partnership continued very successfully over the years. In the last decade, the County has extended more and more support to the volunteer firefighters. However, the County is now stuck in a "partially" in-charge position. The volunteer fire companies and chiefs are independent, yet receive substantial County fiscal support, as will be detailed later in this study. Given the current state of regulations on providing fire services, giving this kind of support largely if not entirely makes the County liable for personnel over which it has no direct control.

The time has come to evolve the volunteer program into its second century of service by making the volunteer fire companies fully Napa County volunteers, under a singular administrative and operational chain-of-command, while also increasing the fiscal and operational support the volunteers need to continue as a safe, effective emergency force in the rural areas.

The County cannot afford to provide fire services without volunteers, nor can it afford to lose them over partial, inadequate support and regulatory liability issues. The era of operating simple volunteer fire services via local fund raisers is drawing to a close given the expensive and technical nature of the modern fire service.

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For the overall volunteer firefighter program, Citygate's key findings are:

Finding #27: The volunteer system does, can, and will work going forward where people can be found with the time to give to training as well as emergency responses from work and home.

Finding #28: The volunteer organization needs clerical, training, and logistical support available when they are available (e.g., weekends and evenings).

Finding #29: It is Citygate's understanding that, since the volunteers are covered by workers' compensation and other insurance, and are paid a stipend for their services, they are in fact "Napa County Volunteers."

Finding #30: The volunteer command, control and fiscal support system needs a complete overhaul into one integrated department that makes the volunteers wholly part of the Napa County Fire Department.

To address these and other related findings, Citygate recommends:

Recommendation #18: The County Board of Supervisors needs to bring under full County control the volunteer fire companies. This can be done, with respect for and continued involvement of the volunteer chiefs and firefighters, by implementing recommendations #19 through #27:

Recommendation #19: Using interest-based techniques to listen to the volunteer needs, craft a new chain-of-command that, while respecting the local community role of a volunteer chief, understands that the role has to be under the complete and uncontested control of the County fire chief as appointed by the Board of Supervisors. All authority, responsibility, and accountability have to reside with Napa County which is supporting the system.

Recommendation #20: The County needs to evaluate the facilities and equipment in volunteer control, develop a method of cost of absorption as County property, and assume responsibility for maintenance and replacement over a reasonable timeline.

Recommendation #21: The revised system should be founded on the values of deep appreciation for, understanding of, and true support for the 200+ volunteers; they cannot be treated as a secondary system to wither away.

Recommendation #24: Napa County's fire officers, both career and volunteer, need to have career development training, mentoring plans, and the fiscal support for such training. This will ensure that they have the skill sets necessary to safely and effectively lead the Department.

MASTER PLAN PHASING AND COSTS

Given the likely near term growth, the following costs are estimated in current dollars to show the order of magnitude of what is ahead for Napa fire services in the near to mid term.

While all the recommendations can be worked on in parallel and some will take several fiscal years both in time and funding, Citygate recommends the following priorities:

Priority One

- ◆ Absorb the policy recommendations of this master deployment plan and adopt revised fire department performance measures to drive the location and timing of fire stations;
- ◆ If it chooses to increase career year-round firefighter staffing on the four 2-firefighter units, the Board can direct staff to prepare a final cost and timeline plan;
- ◆ The Board of Supervisors should make the policy decision on completely making the volunteers part of the County. If they do so, they can direct staff to work aggressively on an implementation plan with the volunteer chiefs;
- ◆ County Staff needs to further study the recommended needs for the additional headquarters positions identified in this report;
- ◆ County staff can assess the cost of absorbing the volunteer fire companies and mobile property as County assets;
- ◆ When the volunteer conversion plan, its costs and the recommended headquarters positions are fully understood, staff can make the appropriate FY 08/09 budget requests;
- ◆ If the Board of Supervisors so directs, work with the City of Napa to determine the feasibility of a joint fire station in Browns Valley.

Priority Two

- ◆ Add the resources as directed by the Board of Supervisors;
- ◆ Continue to implement the volunteer program conversion plan;
- ◆ Based on the outcome of discussions with the City of Napa, fund the design and re-location of Fire Station #10.

On-Going

- ◆ Continue to add personnel per the master plan as fiscal resources allow.

Phasing Plan Estimated Costs

If the County decides to begin adding staff to the stations as recommended by Citygate, the table below provides an *illustration* or sample of how this might be phased in over several years as additional revenue becomes available and the associated annual estimated cost in FY 07-08

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dollars. Any final phasing and costs per fiscal year cannot be prepared until after the Board has set forth the appropriate policy direction.

Sample Phasing Plan

Phase	Item	Operating Cost	Capital Cost
One	Detailed study and costing of Master Plan Recommendations	Staff Time	0
Two	Increase Staffing to 3-FF on Two Crews	\$ 337,982	
	Add Training Captain	\$ 156,435	
	Add CAD/RMS Specialist	\$ 140,970	
	Add Apparatus Mechanic	\$ 94,364	
	<i>Subtotal:</i>	\$ <u>729,751</u>	
	Assessment of Volunteer Stations and Immediate Repairs:		\$ 100,000
Three	Increase Staffing to 3-FF on Two Crews	\$ 337,982	
	Add Fire Prevention Specialist II	\$ 93,267	
	<i>Subtotal:</i>	\$ <u>431,249</u>	
	Partial share of Joint Volunteer Station 10 with Napa City:		\$1,000,000
Four	Add 3-FF career crew in Angwin	\$1,045,600	
Five	Add 3-FF career crew in Deer Park	\$1,045,600	
	Five Phase Totals:	<u>\$3,252,200</u>	<u>\$1,100,000</u>

Concluding Thoughts

With regard to Napa County's fire services, County residents need to know that they do have a caring, committed, fire department. However, it must continue to evolve with the changing demands for service, develop an appropriate distribution of fire stations, and maintain a viable volunteer force and a support organization adequate for the Department. The Department needs the support of the community to acquire the additional resources to perform emergency services in an equitable and timely manner for all the residents and visitors in Napa. The continuing, historic and beneficial relationship with CAL FIRE should be continued. However, Napa residents and leaders have to understand the state resources are not present in the County to just protect Napa. The Napa County Fire Department has to develop its own capabilities, in addition to being cost effectively led by CAL FIRE staff.