

**Public Safety Commission  
Tuesday, September 4, 2012**

**June 4, 2012: PSC Recommendations to Council**

- 1) The most important recommendation of this commission: Increasing AFD's firefighting resources, because ultimately it's all about available manpower. The Loop 360 corridor has only two fire stations, and AFD must have a third as soon as possible, with both an engine company and a ladder company, and ideally located south of the Colorado River. This will require the new station to be included in the November 2012 bond election. Massive areas of vegetation on either side of the highway require rapid response by firefighters in order to suppress any fire before it becomes uncontrollable, and to begin to provide lines of defense against wildland fires that are being blown toward Austin. (It is already seen that the two existing stations provide throughout the rest of the year significantly insufficient fire protection for the several thousand structures in this very large geographic area of western Austin and that are in these stations' first alarm territories, increasing their average response times for fire and medical emergencies.) Because the construction of a new fire station could not be completed until 12-18 months after its authorization by voters, the additional firefighters and their apparatus could be housed in temporary buildings. In addition, all fire apparatus throughout the City must be staffed with four firefighters. Currently AFD has three ladder companies with only three firefighters each., and AFD's three rescue units should be increased from two firefighters to four firefighters each, to allow them to serve an additional role as manpower squads.
  - **360 Station – Not accepted as part of the overall bond package.**
  - **4 Person staffing (Full funding by SAFER Grant) – On 3 remaining ladder companies & the 3 heavy rescues by Summer 2013**
  
- 2) All City of Austin departments, such as the Austin Water Utility and the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, when using "prescribed burns" for vegetative fuel mitigation, must have these efforts under the direct risk assessment and operational control of AFD. (Recently in the Denver area several deaths and a large area of damage occurred as a result of such protocols not being in place.)
  - **AFD is currently working with these departments and crafting a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize the relationship.**

3) AFD must be given sufficient funding to allow: a) The purchase of protective clothing and equipment for its personnel; b) The training of its personnel in the methodology of wildland firefighting; c) The ability to bring in off duty personnel when the National Weather Service declares a “Red Flag Warning” so that additional firefighters are immediately available to attack emerging fires.

- **Fire Chief received approval in this year’s budget to purchase additional wildland protective equipment for operations personnel –**
  - **Leather firefighting boots,**
  - **Wildland helmets,**
  - **Shirts,**
  - **Goggles, and**
  - **Shrouds.**
- **AFD completed training and certification of all operations personnel in wildfire firefighting (\$130/190)**
- **AFD will receive an additional \$500K in overtime.**

4) AFD must establish a wildland fire mitigation division charged with planning and implementing programs for wildland fire prevention and vegetative fuel mitigation; and wildland fire suppression with the necessary technology.

- **Proposal was sent to the City Manager’s office for consideration in the FY13 budget**

5) AFD must be given the authority to develop and implement a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The plan will clarify and refine the City’s wildland fire risk and priorities, and will address in detail critical elements such as wildland fire response, risk assessment by area, hazard mitigation, community preparedness and, structure protection. (Most structures can have increased fire “resistance”, but cannot be made “fireproof”.)

- **Proposal was sent to the City Manager’s office for consideration in the FY13 budget**

6) The International Wildland Interface Code (IWUIC) must be immediately adopted with modifications recommended by AFD. It contains provisions addressing fire spread, accessibility, defensible space, water supply, etc., for all buildings located in or near wildland areas.

- **Work in progress – working with the Law Department on drafting language and currently in the Buildings and Standards Committee process**

7) In addition to its current relationship with the Travis County StarFlight helicopter program that can respond with water drops, AFD must have a similar relationship with the Texas National Guard's helicopter program so that it can be activated quickly for additional water drop ability.

- **AFD has established relationships with Texas National Guard, Texas Department of Public Safety, STARflight, and Austin Policy Department. All have agreed to joint training and policy development.**

8) The City must work with Travis County to consolidate the County's Emergency Service Districts (ESDs) with AFD for one unified, county-wide fire service.

- **AFD has had continuing conversations with ESDs 6, 3, 9, & 10 in an effort to explore the options of unified fire service.**

## Public Safety Commission

### Wildfire Review

September 4, 2012

- AFD conducted over 44,000 home visits in the rollout of three wildfire safety campaigns (Ten Tips to Keep your Home Safe from Wildfire, Safe Outdoor Cooking and Grilling Tips, Safe Smoking).
- Created a Joint Wildfire Task Force (City and County) developed a local version of the national "Ready Set Go" program.
- Published 20,000 Ready Set Go booklets (Jointly funded by the City & County).
  - Delivered 10,000 Ready Set Go Booklets to the City & County
- Developed Continuity of Operation Plans Travis County ESD's and partners.
- Updated the 311 call center with wildfire education to provide to callers.
- Created a website for a repository of wildfire information.
- AFD trained and certified every firefighter in S130/190 Wildfire. Making AFD the only metro department in the State of Texas to achieve this (and possibly the largest metro department in the country).
- AFD conducted over 100 neighborhood and community meetings to educate the community in actions they can take to protect themselves and their neighborhood.
- AFD received a grant funded Type III brush truck from the State of Texas that can be utilized to bolster the wildfire response.
- All AFD brush trucks have been modified to be more mobile in the wildfire environment (bumper modifications).
- AFD has modified the wildfire hose pack based on recommendations of our wildfire experts.
- AFD has purchased wildfire protective equipment for all operations personnel.
- AFD has developed evacuation plans in cooperation with TCSO, DPS, TxDOT, and APD for two high risk neighborhoods with plans to continue to do all neighborhoods.
- Joint Wildfire Taskforce has sponsored numerous public relations campaigns - including PSA's on wildfire readiness.

### **Seasonal Hand Crew Pilot Project at Lake Travis Fire Rescue (ESD 6)**

- Time in training and set up this year.
- Working mostly in Steiner Ranch and Riverplace clearing about 10 acres.
- Intend to get more project work going for the balance of the program.
- Actual costs of mechanical fuel removal are around 1 to 2K per acre; we hope to get that lowered in the years to come with the goal of 1K per acre.

### ***Objectives of the Seasonal Hand Crew Pilot Project***

- Home inspection programs
- Selective thinning
- Debris Disposal
- Chipping (with or without chip removal)
- Pile burning

City of Austin Jurisdiction  
2010, 2011, and 2012  
Grass, Brush Fires, and WUI incidents

by Type Month	2012	2011	2010
Jan	27	83	43
Feb	15	74	20
Mar	15	69	29
Apr	52	190	50
May	26	71	28
Jun	51	60	11
Jul	52	82	20
Aug	42	101	45
Sep	0	133	18
Oct	0	55	36
Nov	0	30	45
Dec	0	12	76
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>421</b>

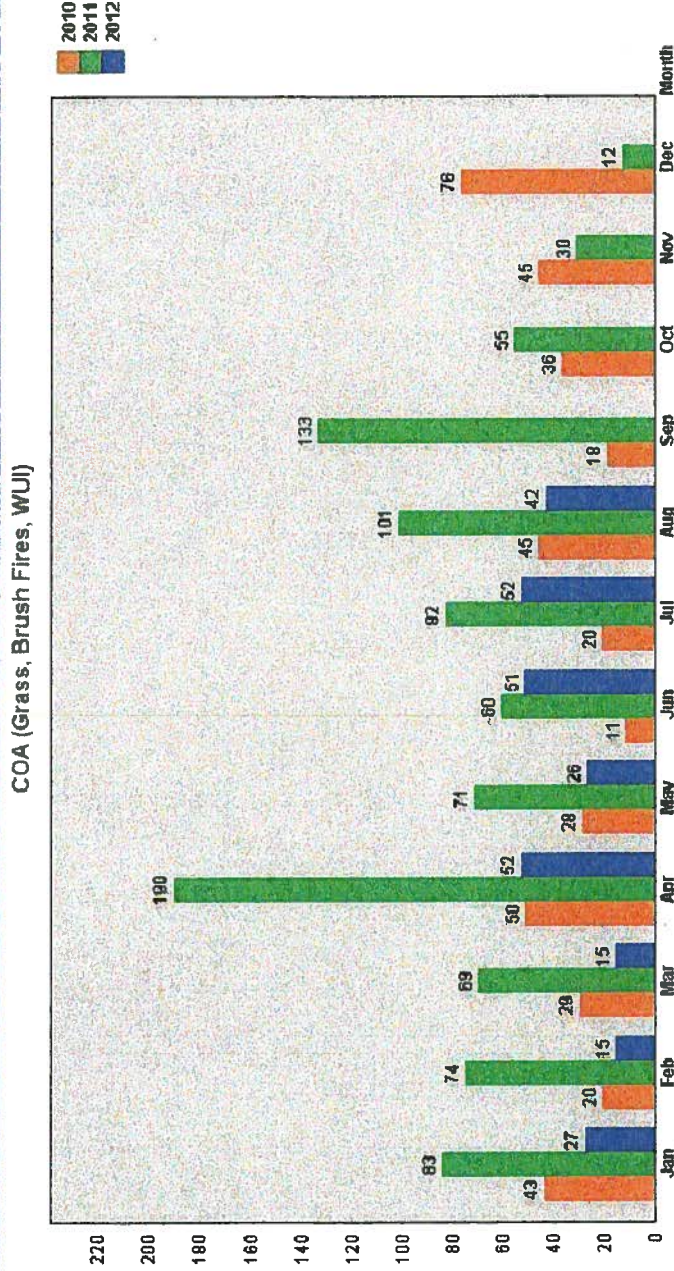
**Current Selections**

Fields: Values

Jurisdiction: AFD

Problem: BRSHL - Brush Alarm / Light, BRUSH - Brush Fire, GRASS - Small Grass Fire, WUI - Urban Interface, WUIL - Urban Interface / Light

COA (Grass, Brush Fires, WUI)



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