



The Sonoma County Grand Jury

SANTA ROSA FIRE STATION DEPLOYMENT

February 20, 2004

Summary

The 2003-2004 Sonoma County Grand Jury investigated the deployment of Santa Rosa Fire Stations in relation to the populations served. During the past 20 years, the City of Santa Rosa has had a tremendous increase in both area and population; however, no new fire stations have been constructed and/or relocated during that time. The Grand Jury is concerned that the City had not realigned its Fire Department resources so that emergency response times could eventually meet the goals established by the City. The Grand Jury, therefore, encourages the City Council to move quickly toward the construction of recommended new and relocated fire stations, and to clearly define standards of response coverage in the form of a policy statement.

Reason for Investigation

A complaint was received expressing concern that the Fire Station proposed in the *Southwest Area Plan* had neither reached the development stage nor has a firm date for construction been established. As development continues in the Southwest Area, traffic will increase accordingly, and the emergency response time will continue to exceed an already unacceptable level.



Background

In June, 1994, the Santa Rosa City Council adopted the *Southwest Area Plan* which sets forth the following:

- Objective: "Provide fire safety for southwest Santa Rosa"; and
- Policy: "Develop a new centrally located fire station facility to serve southwest Santa Rosa".

In June, 1994, the City Council also adopted the *Southeast Area Plan* which set forth the following:

- Goal: "Provide adequate fire protection services for the study area";
- Objective: "Establish a new fire station in the southeast area"; and
- "The Area Plan calls for a new fire station on the south side of Kawana Springs Road, just east of Petaluma Hill Road. It is expected that the new station will be needed by 1997, based upon anticipated growth. The actual date may vary if growth is faster or slower than expected"; and

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- Policy: "Timing for construction of the new southeast fire station shall be as recommended by the Fire Department. It is expected that a new station will be needed by 1997.

On June 18, 2002 the City Council adopted the *General Plan* update which provides the vision of Santa Rosa in year 2020. Section 2-4 of the *General Plan* states that the Land Use Diagram in the *General Plan* supersedes the Land Use Diagram in both the *Southwest Area Plan* and the *Southeast Area Plan*. However, *policies* contained in those plans would still be in effect.

Investigative Procedures

The grand jury:

Interviewed:

- Santa Rosa City Manager
- Santa Rosa Fire Chief
- Santa Rosa Deputy Director, Community Development – Planning
- Roseland Fire Protection District Board Chair
- Roseland Fire Protection District Bookkeeper/Clerk
- Complainant

Reviewed the following documents:

- Santa Rosa Fire Department, *Final 2-In/2-Out Report*, October 1999.
- Firescope, Inc., *Santa Rosa Fire Station Location & Deployment Study – Final Report*, March 2002.
- "Santa Rosa Fire and Police Information". Draft. July 31, 2003.
- "2003/2004 Santa Rosa Fire Department Budget".
- "2003/2004 Santa Rosa Operations and Maintenance Budget".
- *Santa Rosa Capital Improvement Program*, 2002-2003 and 2003-2004.
- "Fire Department Incident Summary by Station" report, 1998-2002.
- Contracts, agreements and amendments between the City of Santa Rosa and the Roseland Fire Protection District (RFPD), 1977-1991.
- Several RFPD documents detailing the history, organization, current Board of Directors, and Director's meeting compensation.
- RFPD board meeting minutes, June 2001 thru August 2003.
- RFPD financial data from FY2001-FY2004.
- Various reports documenting Santa Rosa Fire Department response times throughout the city from 1996 – 2003.
- The Santa Rosa Fire Department's current response plan map.
- Commission on Fire Accreditation International, Inc., *Creating and Evaluating Standards of Response for Fire Departments*, 4th ed. CD-ROM. Chantilly, VA: Circa 2002.
- The *Southwest Area Plan* and *Southeast Area Plan* both dated 6/24/1994.
- The *Santa Rosa General Plan* adopted by the City Council 6/18/02.
- Santa Rosa population data 1980-2003 from the Department of Community Development.
- Santa Rosa impact fee update reports for the "Capital Facilities Fee", "Southwest Fee" and "Southeast Fee" dated 9/24/02; and the, "City of Santa Rosa Fee Schedule", January 2004.
- Various other minor reference documents.

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Attended:

- Informational meeting with the Director of the Sonoma County Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO).
- Informational meeting with the interim Santa Rosa Fire Chief.
- LAFCO Board of Directors meeting on October 1, 2003 at which time the City of Santa Rosa updated LAFCO on the status of the Southwest Area/Roseland and the Farmer's Lane Extension.

Findings

- F1. The Santa Rosa Fire Department is responsible for protecting life, property, and the environment from fire, explosion and hazardous materials incidents. The Fire Department responds to calls including structure, wild land and other fires, medical emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, automobile accidents, and citizen calls for other assistance.
- F2. The *Santa Rosa General Plan* adopted by the City Council on June 18, 2002 establishes as Policy under PSF-E-1: "Provide for citizen safety through expedient response to emergency calls". It continues: "The fire response goal is 4 minutes to 80 percent of emergency calls, 5 minutes to 90 percent of emergency calls, and 6 minutes or less to all emergency calls". This response goal is not being met. Emergency response times are as follows:
- For 2002, actual performance across all 9 Santa Rosa area fire stations was:
- a. 4 minutes or less 32% of the time vs. 80% goal
 - b. 5 minutes or less 62% of the time vs. 90% goal
 - c. 6 minutes or less 86% of the time vs. 100% goal.
- F3. The City operates eight fire stations including (under agreement dated December 20, 1977 and February 8, 1983) the Roseland Fire Protection District station. Both of these agreements state that the City will provide fire protection service in the District consistent with the fire protection provided within the City limits. The City also has an agreement with the Rincon Valley Fire District which integrates its station into the citywide response matrix.
- F4. In 1982 the last City fire station was constructed, Station 2 located on Stony Point Road. Since then, the City's population has grown from 88,100 in 1982, to 151,900 in 2002, or about 72% growth. And during that same period, the number of emergency calls per year to the Fire Department increased from 4,709 to 16,301, or more than 246% - three times faster than the population growth rate.
- F5. In October 1999 the Fire Department prepared the *Final 2-In/2-Out Report* in response to a January, 1998 OSHA and subsequently May, 1999 Cal OSHA mandate requiring all firefighters to wear Self Contained Breathing Apparatus, to operate in a "buddy system" and station more than one firefighter outside when firefighters are inside of a burning building making an interior attack on a structure fire. Based on this report the City funded additional personnel and equipment. In addition the Fire Department proposed that a Fire Station Locations and Deployment Analysis be undertaken.
- F6. The City authorized the *Santa Rosa Fire Station Location & Deployment Study – Final Report* which was completed by an outside consultant and provided to the City Council in Study Session on March 26, 2002. *In order to meet the City's established goals for emergency response times, the study recommended that various fire stations be relocated*

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and that three new stations be constructed. All of these projects are currently in the City's "Capital Improvement Program" (CIP), but to date have not been funded. Those recommendations were as follows (see also the map attached as exhibit A):

- Fire Station 5 on Parker Hill Road should be moved from its present location to the vicinity of Fountain Grove Parkway and Parker Hill Road.
- Fire Station 6 on Calistoga Road should be moved from its present location to Middle Rincon Road.
- Fire Station 8 on Burbank Ave. should be moved from its present location to the vicinity of Sebastopol Road and Timothy Road.
- A new fire station should be constructed in the vicinity of Mendocino Avenue and Steele Lane.
- A new fire station should be constructed in the vicinity of Northpoint Parkway and King Fischer Way.
- A new fire station should be constructed in the vicinity of Kawana Springs Road and Franz Kafka Avenue.

F7. Impact fees have been and are continuing to be collected to fund the construction of fire stations in Southwest and Southeast Santa Rosa. The relocation of fire stations, however, is not being funded by the impact fees collected.

F8. During the ten year period ending 2002, the population in the Southwest area grew at three times the rate of the City of Santa Rosa [62.4% vs. 20.9%]. Response time in that area is among the longest in the City because the majority of the growth has taken place in the outer boundaries of Fire Station 8 which serves that area. The following tables compare the number of emergency calls and response times over a six year period for Station 8 to Santa Rosa city-wide:

Station 8 (SW Area)				Santa Rosa City-wide			
	4 min. or less (goal is 80%)	5 min. or less (goal is 90%)	6 min. or less (goal is 100%)		4 min. or less (goal is 80%)	5 min. or less (goal is 90%)	6 min. or less (goal is 100%)
2002	414 (27%)	819 (54%)	1263 (83%)	2002	3880 (32%)	7490 (62%)	10432 (86%)
1997	393 (29%)	724 (53%)	1035 (75%)	1997	3271 (33%)	5903 (60%)	8120 (83%)

Conclusions

Because of the large population increase and longer response times in Southwest Santa Rosa, there appears to be an immediate need to relocate station 8 and construct a new station on Northpoint Parkway.

The City will need to be more creative in the deployment of Fire Department personnel to staff an additional station in the Southwest Area. Because of possible operating budget restraints it may be necessary to spread engine companies in order to staff the additional station and thereby provide resources closer to the response area.

Emergency response times will never meet the goals stated in the General Plan until the remaining recommendations in the *Santa Rosa Fire Station Location & Deployment Study – Final Report* (see F6 above) are fully implemented.

Recommendations

- R1. The City Council must provide the funding in FY 2004-2005 for designing and constructing the new and relocated fire stations in the Southwest Area of Santa Rosa as recommended in the *Santa Rosa Fire Station Location & Deployment Study – Final Report* in order to bring the response times in line with the established goals of the City.
- R2. The City Council must promptly establish a time table for designing and constructing the new fire stations to be located in the vicinity of Mendocino Avenue and Steele Lane, Kawana Springs Road and Franz Kafka Avenue, and the relocation of Fire Stations 5 and 6.
- R3. As a guide, the City Council must clearly define standards of response coverage in the form of a policy statement by the end of FY 2004-2005. As a guide, the City should use the self-assessment program as outlined by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, Inc. in their document *Creating and Evaluating Standards of Response Coverage for Fire Departments*.
- R4. As soon as possible and as often as necessary, the Roseland Fire Protection District Board of Directors should proactively represent the needs and concerns of the citizens served by the District to the City Council regarding less than adequate emergency response times and any further delays in constructing the new and relocated fire stations.

Required Responses to Findings

Santa Rosa City Council - F6, F7, F8.

Required Responses to Recommendations

Santa Rosa City Council - R1, R2, R3

Roseland Fire Protection District Board of Directors – R4

Exhibit A: Firescope, Inc. "Proposed Fire Station Locations." Santa Rosa Fire Station Location & Deployment Study. March 2002.

