



MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 16, 2021

FROM: Michael J. Ortega, PE
City Manager

TO: Honorable Mayor Romero
and Council Members

SUBJECT: Continuity of Operations and Service Delivery

The Mayor and Council have shown incredible leadership and resiliency in combating the COVID-19 pandemic to protect our community and workforce. I am pleased to report back that the decision made at the October 19, 2021, Mayor and Council Meeting to ensure compliance with the Vaccine Policy has been met with success.

When we last met, staff had just begun the process of individually verifying each employee's vaccine status. This was time consuming and important work. As of today, nearly 95% of staff is compliant with the vaccine policy: meaning they are fully vaccinated or have received an exemption or accommodation. Daily reports track partially vaccinated, unvaccinated, and pending exemptions or accommodations and we have seen the number of compliant individuals steadily increasing. I will present the November 22 data report tracking vaccine compliance at the November 23 Mayor and Council meeting.

After extensive work with each department to examine staffing levels, combined with the ever-increasing compliance, I can confidently say that we will not encounter significant adverse impacts to service as a result of some employees choosing not to comply with the vaccine policy.

Attached you will find the City of Tucson Strategic Staffing Plan. This plan lists Community Commitments which are non-negotiable goals for delivering core services for each functional area, and strategies to maintain these commitments in the event of staffing level changes. This analysis creates a strong road map to ensure continuity of service to the community.

This recent work to analyze staffing levels has also exposed the areas in our organization where maintaining adequate staffing levels has been a consistent challenge over the last five years. This not only presents the occasional disruption in service delivery, but it can also contribute to employee burnout and impact morale. Over the last eighteen months, we have focused on maintaining public health and safety in the constantly changing landscape of the pandemic. It is now crystal clear that we must also focus our attention on analyzing staffing levels and the work environment across the organization to mitigate impacts and create a more resilient organization.

Organizations both private and public are currently struggling with staffing issues as workers reevaluate what they need and expect in the workplace. This phenomenon has largely been related to the pandemic and dubbed the Great Resignation. Additionally, we have evaluated data related to eligible retirees. More than 800 employees are currently eligible for retirement. We are

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now keenly aware of the Silver Tsunami approaching the organization, and the impacts our aging workforce will have on our ability to provide service as they retire.

Recruitment and retention issues were at the heart of our most recent budget discussions, and thanks to Mayor and Council's leadership we were able to implement market rate salary increases across the board. This important budgetary decision gives us a significant leg up on tackling the staffing issues now in front of us.

To fill vacancies, we have intensified marketing and recruiting and are improving processes for hiring and onboarding. The pace and urgency of staff's work on this matter has been remarkable. On October 31, 2021, staff initiated a job recruitment campaign blitz for the more than 70 classifications listed on the City's job portal. These open positions are marketed in print and digital ads in six cities across the west. This blitz will run through the end of the calendar year and be replaced in the long-term by a new contractor with nationwide recruitment experience. This contractor will provide the City with an excellent new resource for marketing jobs and recruiting top talent. In addition to these efforts, a professional recruiter has been engaged for public safety positions and an additional recruiter will be onboarded specifically to assist with filling IT vacancies.

Marketing efforts are already paying dividends with nearly 1,300 applications entering the system over the last three weeks. Operational changes are being made to handle the influx of applicants. BSD has created a task force to review applications and expedite interviews. Staff in BSD is committed to innovating and creating new strategies for recruiting, interviewing, and onboarding new staff. Our goal is to onboard new employees in 30 days. You will see workforce development strategies in a separate agenda item.

Just as the issue of staffing is not confined to one department, nor will the remedy be provided by one department. It will take flexibility and ingenuity to realize where there are staffing challenges and where there are opportunities for work across departments to find solutions. Within the last two weeks alone, we have redesigned the process for hiring temporary labor and changed the Administrative Directive to allow temporary workers to be drivers for the City. Changes to processes like these, where possible, will assist in shoring up short-term staffing challenges and address long standing challenges in using those workers.

Additionally, a Memorandum from Mayor Romero requested that this Study Session item address several specific challenges. The following are responses to the requested information:

1. **Hire above the approved number of employees for the next Tucson Fire Department Academy.**

Through Monday, November 12, the City has received 251 applications for the Firefighter Recruit position. The Tucson Fire Department is looking at opportunities to expand the size and frequency of their training classes. TFD has 23 vacant sworn positions (3.64% vacancy rate). The next training class is planned to begin on January 17, 2022 and will have 40 recruits. I am working with Chief Ryan to expand the currently planned academy size, and hold additional academies during the same year. Based on current and expected vacancies, it will take us at least 18 months to get to the point of over hiring for sworn positions. Ultimately, the goal is to have enough fully trained TFD sworn personnel to address attrition

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before the position becomes vacant. A second training class is currently planned for July 2022 or sooner.

It is important to note that the concept of over hiring for positions will be considered in several other areas including, IT, equipment operators, dispatchers, and other areas as our analysis warrants. We have not traditionally approached filling positions in this way, but this concept will be important as we address employee burnout and morale.

2. Open Additional Community Safety Officer (CSO) Positions.

The CSO positions are open continuously for ongoing recruitment. As of November 8, the City has received 35 additional applications for CSO. This is in addition to the 20 offer letters that recently went out to successful candidates. This position will be continually advertised and recruited.

3. Consider wage adjustments for CSOs, bus drivers, and Environmental Services truck drivers.

The CSOs and ES truck drivers were included in the City's recent market analysis, with each receiving 11.6% and 3.6% respectively. The CSO position plays an integral role in the Community Safety Health and Wellness Program and as such, the role of CSO continues to evolve. To support the Community Safety Health and Wellness Program these positions will be evaluated to align the classification and pay structure. This analysis will be completed in early 2022.

The ES truck drivers were reviewed as part of the market rate analysis. The challenge facing the City and other companies is a shortage of truck drivers. The City has expanded its capabilities to allow contractors to operate City equipment. This position is also ideally suited for many of the workforce development changes being presented by BSD in a separate agenda item.

During the study session on November 9, 2021, wage adjustments for the EGSD Code Inspectors were also discussed as a concern. The very recent market review indicated that they were 13.7% percent below market, which resulted in a corresponding increase. We will however review this analysis and ensure that it up to date.

4. Offer a special exemption to employees who participate in the State of Arizona COVID-19 Antibody Testing Initiative with the University of Arizona.

Participants in this program, whose doctor would provide a medical exemption, were granted a medical exemption. I will be working with the University of Arizona medical team associated with this study to develop a further recommendation on this piece of the policy.

5. Expedite hiring process for all positions.

An extensive review of the City's hiring processes has been conducted and a path forward for an expedited process has been developed and in the process of implementation. The goal is a 30-day turnaround from job opening to hiring offer.

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6. Consider a retention bonus for employees who have elected to take a vaccine.

We are considering the potential of a retention and extension bonus as part of the plan to address staffing levels citywide. Other options under consideration as part of a retention strategy include a student loan repayment program and City-sponsored childcare.

You have taken numerous actions to help us address pay and benefits at the City to ensure that we remain competitive in the workforce. The work to raise minimum wage and adjust salaries to market rate during this last budget cycle puts us at a significant advantage as we face the staffing challenges outlined above. We are grateful that our recent work has brought these challenges to light, so that we can take swift action. We will turn this opportunity into a great recalibration as we adjust our workplace policies and procedures to meet the desires of today's workforce and the service needs of our community.

City of Tucson Strategic Staffing Plan for December 1, 2021

FINAL DRAFT 11-15-2021

Scope

City staff have assessed staffing levels across the organization, including both current challenges and the potential impacts associated with possible terminations and/or resignations that could occur on or near December 1, 2021 for staff that choose not to comply with the City's COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate.

This document presents information across three main functional areas: Public Works, Community Safety, and Support Services. For each functional area, a series of **Community Commitments** is listed – these are non-negotiable goals that the City has set in delivering our core services. Then, the staff readiness to meet these Community Commitments is described for each operating department given current vacancy conditions as well as the vacancies that could result from staff that choose to be terminated. The actions that are being taken to address any staffing challenges are described within each functional area, where applicable, and actions that address staffing challenges city-wide are discussed under the Support Services section.

Through this assessment, we have identified areas where our current staffing levels are fragile, resulting in significant overtime requirements, employee fatigue, and occasional impacts to service delivery. We also recognize that the City of Tucson is not unique in facing these staffing challenges as they are present across the marketplace. Where we excel as an organization is in our collective ability to face these challenges head-on, and we already have several actions already in motion. Notably, this assessment concludes that the city is well positioned to withstand the relatively minor staffing losses anticipated to occur due to the Vaccine Mandate.

Public Works

Community Commitments (Non-Negotiable Goals):

- Provide safe roads for our community and emergency vehicle use, including addressing potholes and maintaining our traffic signals.
- Provide essential refuse and recycling services to all existing residential and commercial customers and solid waste disposal services at the Los Reales Sustainability Campus.
- Provide fleet & building maintenance support to all city departments in line with their core services.

- Ensure all Public Housing residents and Section 8 participants remain housed.
- Comply with Federal funding program requirements to ensure funding is maintained (e.g., HUD, FHWA, FTA).
- Maintain parks facilities in a clean and safe condition for self-directed public use.
- Sustain our core senior meal and recreation programs for vulnerable populations.
- Assure all emergency and major economic development projects are fully reviewed, processed, and inspected on time.
- Provide safe and reliable water service to all parts of our service area while ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements.

Staffing Conditions (Data as of 11/15/2021)

- **Housing and Community Development (HCD)** potential terminations: 4 Total Projected (Maintenance Technician, Housing Specialists, and Administrative). Current vacancies are 22.5 of 144 (15%) and critical functions are being met with this staffing level. **There are no projected impacts to the Community Commitments from pending terminations.**
- **Environmental and General Services Department (EGSD)** potential terminations: 10 Total Projected (Equipment Operators, Sr. Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Trades, Environmental Scientist). Current vacancies are 84.5 of 417.5 (20%) and core functions are largely being met with the current staffing level. Actions are underway to address two pain points: the Brush and Bulky Program is about one week behind schedule and the case backlog for Code Enforcement has grown significantly. Potential impacts to core services from pending terminations are minimal; the potential impacts are to “non-core” services and some proactive maintenance activities. The largest staffing challenge is to Equipment Operators and Mechanics. Additional operator and labor resources can be provided by the other Public Works departments, by onboarding temporary staff, and by contracting with retired Equipment Operators. **These available resources will assure no impact to the Community Commitments.**
- **Parks and Recreation (P&R)** potential terminations: 4 Full-time Employees Projected (Parks Grounds Maintenance, Recreation Assistant) plus up to 46 Non-Perm positions (Parks Grounds Maintenance, Recreation, and Aquatics). Current full-time vacancies are 23 and critical functions are being met with the current staffing level. Potential impacts to core services from pending terminations include coverage of KIDCO and deteriorated parks grounds conditions. Full-time recreation staff will be reassigned to KIDCO as needed. Additional labor resources can be provided by the other Public Works departments and/or through Non-Perm staff and use of our Temp Agency Contracts to

meet backlog issues. **These actions will assure no impact to the Community Commitments.**

- **Planning and Development Services (PDS)** has no pending terminations. Current vacancies are 12 of 70 (17%), with several pending hires in process and contracted staff in place to offset the current vacancies. Critical functions are being met with this staffing level, although the department does have a significant backlog of work and receives staff support from other departments. **There are no projected impacts to the Community Commitments as there no pending terminations.**
- **Department of Transportation and Mobility (DTM)** potential terminations: 2 Total Projected of 4 Total Potential (Streets). Current vacancies are 34 of 294 (12%) and critical functions are being met with the current staffing level. A potential impact to core services from pending terminations are possible backlog growth in street maintenance. Additional labor resources can be provided by the other Public Works departments to meet backlog issues if they arise. **These actions will assure no impact to the Community Commitments.**
- **Tucson Water (TW)** potential terminations: 9 Total Projected of 14 Total Potential (Water System Operators, Engineering, Cross Connection Control Specialist, Electronics, Communications, Utility Technicians, Equipment Operators, Water Service Locator, Utility Account Relations Specialists, Construction Inspector, Utility Service Representative). Current vacancies are 78 of 573 (14%) and critical functions are being met with the current staffing level. Potential impacts to core services from pending terminations are minimal as internal staff resources will be reallocated to cover core functions. Areas of potential concern are Water System Operators (certified staff reallocations are already in progress, followed by priority recruitment); Cross Connection Control (addressed through overtime until replacement hired), Electronics Technician and Supervisor (priority for recruitment and accessing outside vendors), and the other areas of potential staff losses have active recruitments underway. **These actions will assure no impact to the Community Commitments.**

Community Safety

Community Commitments (Non-Negotiable Goals):

- Provide consistent delivery of core charter emergency services and EMS services
- Aggressive recruitment and training of new personnel to increase staffing levels in key operational areas (police officers, call takers, dispatchers, firefighters, police records specialists, and community service officers)
- Completion of required annual certification training for all public safety team personnel
- Community Safety Health and Wellness collaboration (supporting community efforts to reduce community homelessness, substance misuse, mental health crises, and to connect those in need with the right resources)

Staffing Conditions (Data as of 11/15/2021)

- **Public Safety Communications Department (PSCD)** estimates 3 employees who fail to meet City AD compliance will be separated from City employment of 10 Total Potential non-compliant staff. This accounts for 4% of operational staff. PSCD is authorized full staffing at 164 employees (based upon current authorized PCN count). The department also forecasts the loss of 3 contract employees (equivalent to 2 FTEs) directly related to City AD non-compliance.
- Normal attrition has occurred though the COVID-19 vaccination mandate (3 additional employees). The required City AD and December 1 compliance date impacts the timing of ongoing department consolidation but does not drive it.
- The department has adjusted to staffing shortages through using commissioned police and fire personnel to maintain incoming call-processing to national standards. The most significant direct impact and workflow changes involve the Police Dispatcher position. This position is now down to 9 personnel (out of 42 authorized). PSCD is working with TPD to prepare for field work-flow changes forecasted to go live at the end of November.
- PSCD has open and continuous hiring for the Specialist 1 (call taker) position. Classes have been starting every 6 to 8 weeks throughout 2021 and will continue in 2022. One more class will start in 2021, and the department is working hard to end the calendar year with more employee PCN's filled than it started with at the beginning of the year. This requires maintaining current staff, adding new staff, and reducing overall attrition. Twenty-eight new employees are in various stages of call taker training, 3 employees are in PD dispatcher training, 2 employees are in Lead training, and 6 supervisors are in training.

Despite the ongoing staffing challenges in PSCD, the team has been able to maintain the Community Commitments. We project that the Community Safety departments will need to maintain the current “all-hands-on-deck” approach over the next 90 to 120 days as additional staff are on-boarded and as current staff receive the necessary training to cover all functional areas. Terminations resulting from the vaccine mandate will not materially affect maintenance of the Community Commitments.

- **Tucson Fire Department (TFD)** is estimated to separate up to 22 Total Projected staff of 31 Total Potential who fail to meet City AD compliance. This accounts for 3% of the total TFD staff. TFD is currently authorized 687 (632 commissioned) but will increase to 700 (645 commissioned) on January 1, because of a SAFER award for 13 grant-supported positions. TFD is currently authorized 55.5 professional staff positions.
- Nine of those positions are vacant. TFD also has approximately 25 commissioned members on some form of non-deployable status due to various long-term leaves. Based on the MOU TFD has with the TFFA, 10% of the workforce is allowed scheduled leave each day. There is also unscheduled sick leave every day.
- A fire recruit academy is starting January 2022, with a projected class size of 40. The class will not become deployable until June 2022. Another 40-person academy class can start summer of 2022, with the new fire-fighters deployable January 2023.
- TFD deploys operational personnel on three shifts. The average size of the three shifts is 180, with minimum frontline staffing need of 170 firefighters. The department has articulated workflow and service delivery changes based on deployable staffing models of 160, 140, and 130.
- The primary mechanism for TFD to maintain level of service under these lower staffing models is mandatory overtime, with resulting personnel fatigue. Therefore, the staffing models based on 160 personnel or less are only viable over relatively short duration. The need to continue, and if possible, overlap recruit academies is essential for the mid-to long-term health of the operation. **In the near-term, the terminations resulting from the vaccine mandate will not materially affect maintenance of the Community Commitments.**
- **Tucson Police Department (TPD)** is projected to have up to 30 sworn and 1 CSO separations for failure to comply with the vaccine mandate. The following table shows the current staffing levels and impact of a 4% loss in sworn personnel overall, a 5% loss in sworn personnel assigned to patrol, and a 2% loss in Community Service Officers (CSOs).

	Patrol Services Bureau (PSB)	Investigative Services Bureau (ISB)	Analysis Engagement Oversight	All TPD Sworn	Patrol Services Bureau CSOs
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	Sworn	Sworn	Bureau (AEOB)		
Authorized Staffing	649	162	18	881	48
Current Staffing	556	135	18	729	48
Potential Separations	26	4	1	30	1
Current Staffing less Potential Separations	530	131	17	699	47
% Loss	5%	3%	5%	4%	2%

TPD has been impacted by staffing challenges well before the onset of the pandemic and the resulting vaccine mandate. Several operational adjustments have been made to focus on the highest-priority community needs with the current deployable staff. Further attrition due to the potential terminations, coupled with ongoing staff losses for other reasons, could result in the following service impacts:

- Delayed response times to both emergency and non-emergency calls for service.
- Diminished ability to meet non-emergency work demands that impact the entire Community Safety Team.
- Employee fatigue due to extended work schedules/ mandatory overtime needed to meet service demands.
- Increased resignations and retirements, increased use of accrued leave and FMLA use, additional ADA accommodations, and an increased demand for mental health support resources.

Additional staffing pressures include:

- Strong market conditions in both the private and public sector that decrease the department's ability to attract and retain qualified candidates (this is a challenge for the entire PST).
- Long recruiting, hiring, and training periods for all PST entry positions. TPD training is 10 to 12 months before a new employee can be deployed on their own.

Despite the ongoing staffing challenges in TPD, the team has been able to maintain the highest priority Community Commitments. Staffing will continue to be a challenge for TPD over the next two years as the city-wide initiatives to drive recruitment and

retention will take time to have full impact. In the near-term, the terminations resulting from the vaccine mandate will not materially affect maintenance of the Community Commitments.

Support Services

Support services encompass the functional roles of the Business Services Department and the Information Technology Department. This plan is to outline how these departments will support the other areas of the City, enabling continued service delivery to the public. It is important to note that while we have identified specific risks, all support services continue to work to maintain the security and efficiency of the organization. The efforts discussed below are in addition to these daily activities to serve the organization and the community.

Community Commitments (Non-Negotiable Goals):

- Secure the City's data and information technology infrastructure.
- Maintain the operability of the City's networks, communications infrastructure, and its core applications.
- Hire and retain a qualified workforce.
- Accurately pay employees and vendors, and satisfy contractual obligations.

Risks:

The risk assessment for support services focuses on two core components. The first component is the risk associated with the loss of personnel in both Business Services and IT. The second assessment is the larger risk to the organization associated with the loss of personnel in other departments. The organizational risk focuses on three fundamental areas: security, process, and necessary resources.

Departmental Risks:

- **Business Services and IT have limited employee termination risk.** The losses due to the vaccination mandate are not anticipated to significantly impact the operations of either department.
- IT's larger risk relates to the ability to recruit and retain qualified individuals. This challenge existed before vaccination mandate went into effect.

Organizational Risks:

- As of 11/15/2021, citywide there is a possibility of 156 permanent employees facing termination, with 82 not currently vaccinated and 74 partially vaccinated. This group poses a specific security threat based on their individual access to information, infrastructure, and assets.
- The speed of the City's bureaucratic processes must improve to keep pace with the current, dynamic needs of the City.
- The lack of applicant pools to fill critical positions throughout the City.

General Strategies to Address Risks:

- Using a marketing-based approach to find qualified individuals within the IT sector to fill the long-term staffing needs. In the near-term, the City will use existing temp contracts to fill current vacancies until permanent employees can be hired.
- Evaluate and reimagine critical processes to ensure that the City will provide reasonable risk avoidance balanced with the speed of business.
- Supporting and partnering with departments to find qualified candidates. This includes a strike team approach to rapid application review, analysis to help qualified candidates find the right job at the City, and the development of entry level employment opportunities to develop long-term employable candidates for higher level positions.
- Detailed assessment of security risks and the implementation of information technology security measures in response to the assessment.
- Review of current security protocols and implementation of security best practices.

Resources to be Added:

- Temporary IT professionals or contracted services to fill current vacancies. This will provide the needed capacity to support the organizational infrastructure needs.
- Acquisition of additional security tools for inbound email security, outbound data loss prevention, social media, mobile devices, digital risk, email encryption, electronic discovery, and email archiving.
- Using these strategies, there will be no impact to Community Commitments in this area.