



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Robert Sapien, Jr.  
Jim Shannon

**SUBJECT:** See Below

**DATE:** June 10, 2026

Approved

Date:

6/12/2026

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Citywide

**SUBJECT: Retroactive Authorization to Apply for the Fiscal Year 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt a resolution retroactively authorizing the City Manager or her designee to apply for a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency/Department of Homeland Security for funding to help support the opening of Fire Station 32.

## **SUMMARY AND OUTCOME**

This action will allow the City Manager, or her designee, to apply for the partial funding of the salaries and benefits for 7.0 Firefighter positions for a three-year period through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program, helping to support the activation of an engine company at Fire Station 32 beginning in June 2027.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Fire Department's (Department) mission is to protect lives, property, and the environment through prevention and response. The Department deploys resources to provide timely and effective response to all community risks, including fire, rescue, hazardous materials releases, and emergency medical services requests. The City has been working diligently to restore resources eliminated in Fiscal Year 2010-2011<sup>1</sup> and Fiscal Year 2011-2012<sup>2</sup>, utilizing previously awarded SAFER grant funds from 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2014 awards, and collaborative solutions to increase ongoing General

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/50625/637152074933900000>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/50645/637152094524730000>

Fund resources through the City Council's budget approvals in recent years. However, while working to restore resources, emergency incident responses have increased approximately 52% from Fiscal Year 2011-2012 to Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (from 73,327 incidents to 111,373 incidents). The reduction of resources combined with steadily increasing incident volume has made it challenging to meet the established City Response Time Performance Standard requiring the arrival of the first response resource traveling lights and sirens in 8 minutes, 80% of the time, including call processing, turnout, and travel time segments.

In November 2018, San José voters passed Measure T, the Disaster Preparedness, Public Safety and Infrastructure Bond Measure which enabled the construction of five fire stations, including the new Fire Station 32. As part of the 2025-2026 Mid-Year Budget Review, the City Council approved deferring the opening of Fire Station 32 – previously scheduled to open in spring 2026 – to help mitigate the projected General Fund revenue shortfall in 2025-2026 and in acknowledgement that a longer-term deferral was one of many budget balancing strategies under consideration as part of the 2026-2027 Proposed Operating Budget development.

As one of the many strategies to address the \$50.3 million ongoing General Fund shortfall forecasted for 2026-2027, the 2026-2027 Adopted Operating Budget defers the activation of Fire Station 32 for two years. The reductions included the elimination of 3.0 Fire Captain, 4.0 Fire Engineer<sup>3</sup>, and 7.0 Firefighter positions<sup>4</sup>, decreases overtime funding by \$181,000, and decreases non-personal/equipment funding by \$75,000 for operations and maintenance costs associated with the new fire station, totaling \$4.7 million of General Fund savings in 2026-2027, increasing to \$4.8 million in 2027-2028. While the deferral does not reduce existing service levels, the budget reduction action continues the significant service gap in a high-demand area currently covered by four surrounding engine companies, which already handles over 22% of the total citywide call volume.

The Adopted Operating Budget further noted that Fire Station 32 would be reevaluated as part of the 2027-2028 Proposed Budget cycle and be prioritized for activation earlier than 2028-2029 should budgetary conditions improve. As part of the City Council's approval of the Mayor's June Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2026-2027, the City Council directed the Administration to apply for SAFER funding to support the hiring of new firefighter positions necessary to open and permanently staff Fire Station 32, working with San José Firefighters Local 230 and other partners to support a strong application, while also ensuring that the requirement local match and other ineligible grant costs can be accommodated within the City's limited budgetary resources.

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<sup>3</sup> Total includes 1.0 Fire Engineer relief position

<sup>4</sup> Total includes 5.0 Firefighter positions assigned to paramedic duties – including 1 relief position

## **ANALYSIS**

The guidelines for the 2025 SAFER grant were recently released, and the application period was open from May 19, 2026, through June 22, 2026. It is important to note that SAFER only pays for new Firefighter positions; it does not pay for the promotion of existing employees into a Fire Engineer or Fire Captain position. Since a new engine company requires 7.0 Firefighter (3.0 EMTs, 3.0 Paramedics, and 1.0 Paramedic for relief staffing), 3.0 Fire Engineer, and 3.0 Fire Captain positions, SAFER funds can only pay for a portion of the Firefighter positions and the City will need to pay the entire cost of the Fire Engineer and Fire Captain positions (see discussion in Fiscal Impact section below).

The Department applied to SAFER to add 7.0 new Firefighter positions, to activate Fire Station 32's engine company located at 1138 Olinder Court to serve the community in City Council District 7 and the surrounding area. If awarded, the new positions would start with the Firefighter Recruit Academy scheduled to begin in January 2027. Upon graduation in June 2027, Fire Station 32 would be activated with the new SAFER funded 7.0 Firefighters, and 3.0 Fire Engineer and 3.0 Fire Captain positions would be funded on an overtime basis.

In accordance with 2025 SAFER guidelines, the partial funding for the requested positions would be paid over the course of three years (first half of fiscal year 2026-2027 to the first half of Fiscal Year 2029-2030). The Hiring Activity category under SAFER grant allows for the hiring of new, additional firefighters, and requires a cost share from recipients. A detailed explanation of the cost share requirement is provided below in the Fiscal Impact section of this memorandum. At the end of the period of performance, SAFER requires awarded agencies to continue funding the positions, which is already assumed in the 2028-2029 Base Budget in the General Fund, as the ongoing funding for the Fire Station 32 engine company is scheduled to resume in 2028-2029<sup>5</sup>. However, a funding strategy is necessary to ensure sufficient City funds for the SAFER match and ineligible grant costs in 2026-2027 and 2027-2028.

## **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

FEMA will commence the panel review process and anticipates awarding 2025 SAFER funds no later than September 30, 2026. If awarded the grant, the acceptance and appropriation of the 2025 SAFER funds will be brought forward for City Council consideration at that time.

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<sup>5</sup> While funding is assumed in the Base Budget, it is not yet guaranteed and is subject to future City Council appropriation. Securing SAFER Funds ensures that the activation of Fire Station 32 would continue.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The 2025 SAFER-funded three-year value of 7.0 Firefighter positions is estimated at \$5.2 million. The 2025 SAFER grant requires contributions of non-federal funds as a cost share. Percentage contributions and estimated costs are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Cost Sharing Requirement for 2025 SAFER Hiring Activity Category

Year	FEMA Share		City Share		Total Estimated Cost
	%	Estimated Amount	%	Estimated Amount	
Year 1	75%	\$1,004,884	25%	\$334,961	\$1,339,845
Year 2	75%	\$1,419,458	25%	\$473,153	\$1,892,611
Year 3	35%	\$683,067	65%	\$1,268,553	\$1,951,620
<b>Estimated Totals</b>		<b>\$3,107,409</b>		<b>\$2,076,667</b>	<b>\$5,184,076</b>

As discussed above, a significant amount of costs to activate Fire Station 32 are not covered by SAFER. The full activation cost is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Total Estimated Cost and Funding Split

	2026-2027*	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030***	Total
7.0 Firefighter (EMT/Paramedic)	\$669,926	\$1,616,226	\$1,922,114	\$975,810	<b>\$5,184,076</b>
3.0 Fire Engineer	\$64,005**	\$813,447**	\$1,015,180	\$538,490	<b>\$2,431,122</b>
3.0 Fire Captain	\$73,451**	\$920,915**	\$1,378,069	\$713,151	<b>\$3,085,586</b>
Operations and Maintenance	\$6,700	\$78,800	\$82,700	\$43,400	<b>\$211,600</b>
<b>Total Estimated Cost</b>	<b>\$814,082</b>	<b>\$3,429,388</b>	<b>\$4,398,063</b>	<b>\$2,270,850</b>	<b>\$10,912,383</b>
SAFER Funding	\$502,445	\$1,212,170	\$1,057,163	\$335,630	\$3,107,408
City Match	\$167,481	\$404,056	\$864,951	\$640,179	\$2,076,667
Ineligible Costs (City)	\$144,156	\$1,813,162	\$2,475,949	\$1,295,040	\$5,728,307
<b>Total Estimated City Cost</b>	<b>\$311,637</b>	<b>\$2,217,218</b>	<b>\$3,340,900</b>	<b>\$1,935,219</b>	<b>\$7,804,974</b>

\*Firefighters begin as Firefighter Recruits in January 2027; Fire Station 32 begins operation in June 2027, including overtime for Fire Engineer and Fire Captain positions.

\*\*Overtime costs only.

\*\*\*Through grant period tentatively estimated for December 31, 2029. Operations would be continued on an ongoing basis in the General Fund.

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If awarded, over the three-year grant period, the total cost to operate the engine company at Fire Station 32 is approximately \$12.2 million, of which \$3.1 million would be paid by SAFER and \$9.1 million would be paid by the City. In 2026-2027, the City's estimated obligation of \$312,000 would need to be reallocated from other departments or other uses as part of a future budget process in 2026-2027. The estimated City obligation of \$2.2 million in 2027-2028 would need to be prioritized from one-time funding sources as part of the 2027-2028 budget development process. While the costs in 2028-2029 and onward are already assumed as part of the 2028-2029 Base Budget, appropriation of funds will be subject City Council approval as part of the 2028-2029 Adopted Operating Budget.

### **COORDINATION**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City Council Agenda website for the June 23, 2026 City Council meeting.

### **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT**

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

### **CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. P17-006, Grant Application with no commitment or obligation to enter into an agreement at the time of application.

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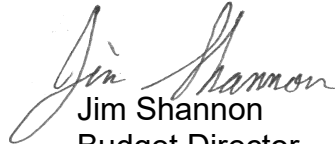
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**PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING**

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.



Robert Sapien, Jr.  
Fire Chief, Fire Department



Jim Shannon  
Budget Director

For questions, please contact Athena Trede, Deputy Director, Fire Department, at [athena.trede@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:athena.trede@sanjoseca.gov) or (408) 794-6953.