

FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Seattle Fire Department (SFD) provides fire protection and emergency services to the study area. Fire Station 10, located at 301 2nd Avenue S. in Pioneer Square is the closest station to most parts of the study area. Other stations responding to this area include the Harborview Station (near Terry Avenue/Alder Street) which has two medic companies, and Stations 5 (near Alaskan Way/Madison Street), 6 (near 23rd Avenue/Yesler Way), and 2 (near 4th Avenue/Bell Street). A new Fire Station 10 is under construction between 4th and 5th Avenues on S. Washington Street, expected to be occupied by the first quarter of 2008. This facility will provide for easier vehicle egress than the current station.

Equipment and staff resources at Fire Station 10 include:

- Ladder – 7 person crew
- Engine – 4 person crew
- Aid Van – 2 person crew (staffed by the Engine crew)
- Haz-Mat Van – 7 person crew (staffed by the Ladder crew).

The average response times for first-in companies, based on all incidents for during 2006, are shown below:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Advanced Life Support | 4.3 minutes |
| Basic Life Support | 4.5 minutes |
| Fire/Rescue/Haz-Mat | 4.5 minutes |

Table 3-32 shows seven years of fire/emergency call data generated by the study area. Data in the last two years show a trend toward more basic and advanced life support calls, and no increase in fire-related calls. Fire Station 10 handled 61% of the study area’s responses over the seven-year period of 2000-2006. The other cited stations handled 32% of the responses, and miscellaneous other stations responded to the remaining 7% of calls from the study area. Citywide trends show increases in call volumes, and increasing numbers of responses handled by crews from stations outside the immediate service area (Roberts, SFD, 2007).

**Table 3-32
Number of Fire/Emergency Incident Responses in Study Area, From All Stations**

| Type | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | TOTAL |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Advanced Life Support | 1,077 | 1,047 | 1,077 | 1,090 | 945 | 1,140 | 1,247 | 7,623 |
| Basic Life Support | 2,130 | 1,989 | 2,079 | 2,179 | 2,580 | 2,979 | 3,172 | 17,108 |
| Fire/Rescue/Haz-Mat | 840 | 796 | 731 | 708 | 725 | 677 | 702 | 5,179 |
| TOTAL | 4,047 | 3,832 | 3,887 | 3,977 | 4,250 | 4,796 | 5,121 | 29,910 |

Seattle Fire Department identifies a need for additional staff to serve citywide growth expected in the coming decade. Voter approval of EMS levies will influence funds available for staffing increases. A November 2007 vote has a proposal to fund another fully-staffed medic unit. Recent and anticipated Downtown growth will generate additional call volumes over time, which could lead to the need for expanded staffing of stations serving Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, including the South Downtown vicinity (Hepburn, 2007).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

FIRE/EMERGENCY PROTECTION IMPACTS WITH FUTURE GROWTH

All Alternatives

Protection can be provided to future development up to 240 feet

Future development evaluated in the zoning alternatives for this EIS includes building types and sizes that can be served by the Seattle Fire Department. This includes buildings up to the highest height limits of 180 feet and 240 feet. Reviews of future development proposals would ensure that fire safety and building code requirements are met, addressing needs such as sprinklers, standpipes and accessibility. As noted in the Water Utility section in this chapter, Seattle Public Utilities anticipates that adequate fire flow volumes can be provided to the vicinities in the study area.

Relationship to north parking lot and “over-tracks” development

The potential for larger developments in certain locations is of interest to the Seattle Fire Department, with respect to meeting fire and life safety standards and maintaining emergency accessibility.

- The potential for fires or hazardous material incidents at the railroad track level is a fire/emergency impact concern with future development above railroad tracks. Such development would be required to meet the standards of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 130, which entails providing sufficient ventilation, lighting, egress and life safety protection systems for the railroad track area. Adequate separation of the buildings above from rail activity and potential emergency incidents below would also be required, which is likely to increase the protective and structural standards for such buildings (English, SFD, 2007). Future reviews, including SEPA review, would be necessary to make specific conclusions about potential impacts of this kind of development proposal. However, the Preferred Alternative assumes that commercial buildings at the “over-tracks” property would likely not be present over the main-line railroad tracks and that openings would remain present to allow for emergency access. This means a somewhat reduced probable potential for worst-case safety impacts under the Preferred Alternative.
- Sufficient accessibility for emergency equipment should be maintained at all times in the Qwest Field north parking lot vicinity. This includes during event times, and load-in/load-out of large equipment and display materials, which occurs periodically for trade shows, large concerts and similar events. Based on existing and anticipated configurations of streets, it appears likely that emergency accessibility can be maintained, even during times when certain streets might be affected by load-in/load-out. At such times, a route passable to emergency equipment should be maintained. Future individual events would continue to be subject to safety permits from city agencies, and review by the Stadium Area Parking and Access Review Committee (PARC).

Equipment and Staffing

Future building development up to 240 feet would not generate the need for additional special types of equipment (English, SFD, 2007). A haz-mat van, ladder, engine and medic aid van would be available nearby from Fire Station 10, and other equipment from supporting stations. However, additional numbers of vehicles and staffing for those vehicles are likely to be necessary over time as populations increase in the study area.

Additional growth in the study area is likely to increase the number of calls for service from SFD. Due to the currently high volume of emergency calls in Downtown, such increases could contribute to further strains on the ability to effectively respond with current equipment and staffing resources. Given the

magnitude of growth studied in this EIS, the projected growth in the study area could lead to significant adverse cumulative impacts on fire/emergency protection by 2030 (English, Hepburn, SFD, 2007). In other words, additional equipment and staffing resources beyond currently identified resources may be needed over time to maintain fire/emergency protection in the study area.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

POSSIBLE MITIGATION STRATEGIES

To address the identified possibility of a long-term cumulative significant impact of growth on fire/emergency protection, the following mitigation strategy is presented.

- Explore methods to address cost impacts to SFD of providing additional staffing and equipment to serve cumulative future growth in the study area. Consider defining impact fees or similar strategies that would be proportional to the level of impact anticipated with individual developments.

SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Long-term growth in the study area could lead to significant adverse cumulative impacts on fire/emergency protection by 2030. However, such impacts could be addressed through dedication of additional staffing and equipment resources when needed.