



# City of Hermosa Beach

Civic Center, 1315 Valley Drive, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254-3885

May 18, 2017

Dear Resident and/or Property Owner:

The City of Hermosa Beach recently made an important, positive change in the way Hermosa Beach will provide fire services. On April 25, 2017, the Hermosa Beach City Council voted unanimously to contract fire services in Hermosa Beach with the Los Angeles County Consolidated Fire District (County Fire), which is the same agency that provides the LA County Lifeguards that patrol our beach.

The decision to contract fire services with County Fire was not made lightly. The process started in January 2016 with recognition by the Fire Chief and City Council that the staffing and resources of the Hermosa Beach Fire Department are insufficient to meet the mandates and demands of modern fire service. The City reached out to the City of Manhattan Beach to explore a Joint Operating Agreement to address the challenges facing Hermosa Beach. When that effort produced no result (similar to a prior effort with the City of Redondo Beach), the City Council focused on two options: Increasing funding and staffing of the Hermosa Beach Fire Department; and contracting with County Fire.

Over the next 15 months, the City hosted public meetings, town halls, study sessions, community meetings, and engaged in third-party analysis to assess the ability of the Hermosa Beach Fire Department to cost-effectively meet the many mandates and demands of modern fire service. The City also contacted some of the 58 cities in the County (out of 88 total cities) that contract with County Fire and confirmed their high level of satisfaction with County Fire.

The City evaluated everything from relative cost performance over time of contracted County Fire versus municipal fire service to response times, depth and breadth of services, and training and promotional opportunities.

The City Council received the unanimous recommendations of the Hermosa Beach Firefighters Association, Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission, and Future Fire Services Citizens Advisory Committee that a contract with County Fire will provide Hermosa Beach with world-class services, local control, state-of-the-art resources, and a deeper pool of personnel that will provide better protection and service than a Hermosa Beach Fire Department can provide. As Citygate – one of the top consulting firms in the country – found:

*[County Fire's] proposal completely meets the operational needs, present and future, for Hermosa Beach's risks and expected emergencies. There is no way a one-station fire agency can ever cost effectively afford the headquarters team bench depth, specialties, and extra technical response capacity as found in [County Fire's] proposal.*



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The City Council's commitment to world-class fire services is reflected in its commitment to fund the County Fire contract (\$4.7 million in year one) and the City's legacy costs for pension and medical benefits to already-retired Hermosa Beach firefighters (\$1.4 million per year). The total cost of \$6.1 million per year is approximately \$1 million more per year than the City has budgeted in recent years for fire services, and it will provide a higher, more sustainable level of service than any other option, including the same level of funding for a Hermosa Beach Fire Department. Furthermore, as the City's legacy costs reduce to zero in coming decades, the City's costs will be limited to the County Fire contract.

The number one concern of any firefighter who reports for duty is helping those in need and saving lives. We are confident you – our residents and business owners – will receive protection and service from County Fire that is proven to be among the best and most cost-effective in the world. As its Vision Statement provides: *"The Los Angeles County Fire Department will be an exemplary organization acclaimed for our national reputation, our regional strength, and our hometown attentiveness as we provide fire protection and life safety services."*

County Fire will operate out of the Hermosa Beach station, which the City and County will renovate with a 5-year interest-free loan from the County. Because County Fire will operate out of Hermosa Beach, with equipment and personnel support from County Fire stations in the South Bay, we expect emergency response times to be the same or better than the City currently enjoys.

Hermosa Beach firefighters will become County firefighters and, along with all County firefighters (many of whom live in Hermosa Beach and the South Bay), will be able to bid for positions in the Hermosa Beach fire station. We expect the City will have more local firefighters, and our current firefighters will get to work closer to their homes. Additionally, when disaster strikes, local County firefighters will respond to the Hermosa Beach station, increasing available personnel.

Lastly, County Fire will continue to celebrate annual events, including the Pancake Breakfast, once the transition to County Fire is complete in or about January 2018. In the meantime, please join us to thank our Hermosa Beach firefighters and welcome County Fire at a "meet and greet" hosted by the City, the Hermosa Beach Firefighters Association, and the County at Hermosa Beach City Hall, 1315 Valley Drive, on July 9, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Sincerely,

Mayor Justin Massey

Fire Chief Pete Bonano