City-Operated Ambulance Program Proposal

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City Council Meeting

March 4, 2025

Fullerton Ambulance History

2003
Care Ambulance (now Falck) is contracted as ambulance provider

2018
New public/private partnership ("alliance") model. Care/Falck remains contracted for ambulance transport only

2023
New three-year agreement with Falck begins on Jan 1, 2024

2024
Added 4th ambulance to cover 12-hour daily peak call volume

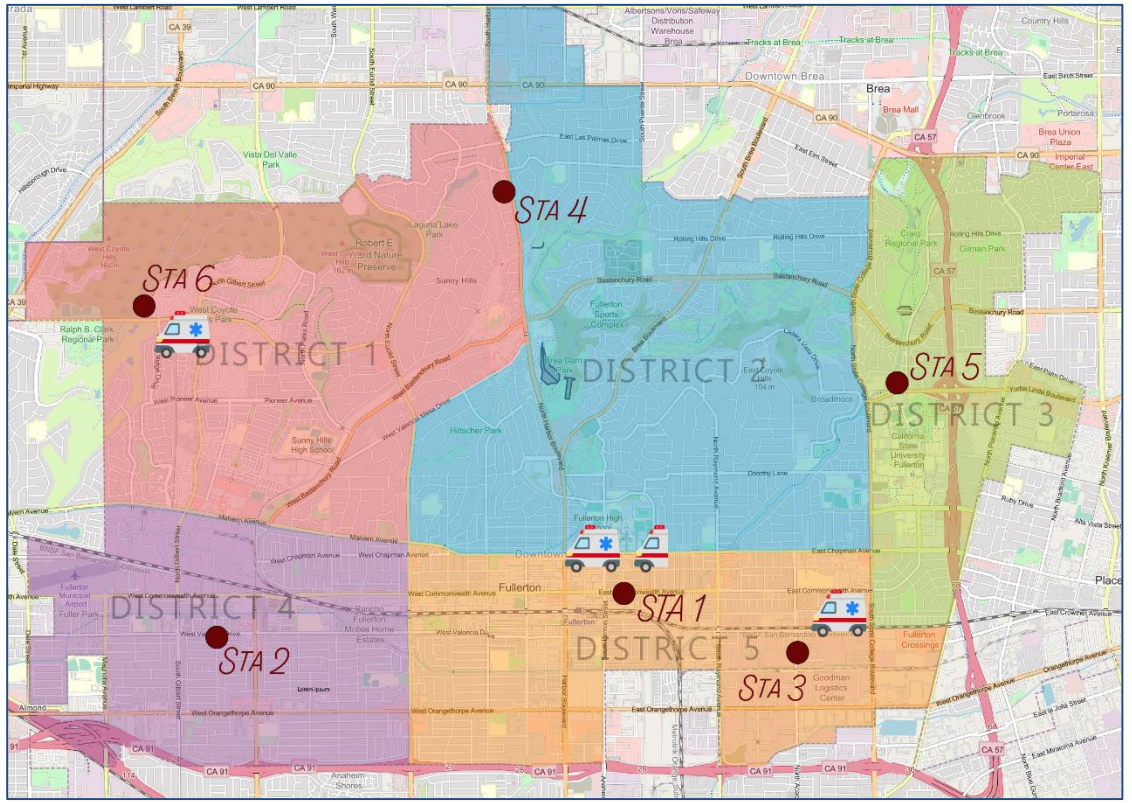
2026
Current agreement expires

Current Ambulance Model Benefits

- Stable partnership with Falck (formerly Care) for over 20 years
- Current contract offers competitive pricing
  - Expires 12/31/26 with two optional 1-year extensions
- No staffing liabilities, vehicles, or equipment under City responsibility

Current Ambulance Deployment

- Three 24-hour ambulance units deployed at Fire Station #1, #3, and #6
- One 12-hour ambulance unit deployed at Fire Station #1 (8 AM to 8 PM)
- Staffed by two Falck Ambulance Operators per shift, under the supervision of the on-duty Fire Captain
- Ambulance Operators (AO) reside at fire stations with residential quarters for sleeping and meals



Ambulance Operators

Ambulance Operator (EMT-B)

- 146 hours coursework + 24 hours clinical training
- Skills and Responsibilities
  - Basic Life Support (BLS): CPR, splinting, oxygen therapy, and bleeding control
    - Transport patients to hospitals
    - Operate emergency vehicles safely
    - Monitor basic patient vitals

Firefighter Paramedic (EMT-P)

- 450 hours coursework + 160 hours of clinical training + 480 hours field internship
- Skills and Responsibilities:
  - Advanced Life Support (ALS): Intubation, IV medications, EKG interpretation, defibrillation
    - Perform more advanced medical interventions
    - Administer controlled substances and advanced airway management
    - Handle critical or life-threatening conditions

Current Unit Hour Cost

Year 1 (2024)	Year 2 (2025)	Year 3 (2026)
$85.00	$90.00	$95.00
January 2024	July 2025	December 2026

Proposed Ambulance Model Benefits

- Identical service levels
- Direct oversight of staffing, training, patient care, and emergency response times
- Complete vertical integration with current fire and emergency medical services
- Customized ambulance vehicle specifications to City's EMS needs
- Recruitment pool into Fire Suppression
- Significant cost savings

Cost Breakdown

- **Labor Costs**
  - Eighteen (18) Full-Time AOs
  - Six (6) Part-Time AOs
- **Vehicles and Equipment**
  - Seven (7) Type III Ambulances
  - Power gurney and automatic patient loading system
  - Communications equipment (radio equipment, mobile data computer, phone)
- **Vehicle Maintenance and Fuel**
- **Operating Expenses**
  - Telecom, Insurance, IT Allocation

City-operated Cost Structure

EXPENSE	CY 2026†	CY 2027	CY 2028	CY 2029	CY 2030
LABOR	$1,808,764	$1,867,115	$1,932,519	$1,989,876	$2,054,438
VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	$355,621	$355,621	$355,621	$355,621	$355,621
OPERATING EXPENSES	$119,710	$123,302	$127,001	$130,811	$134,735
SUBTOTAL	$2,284,095	$2,346,037	$2,415,141	$2,476,308	$2,544,794
10% CONTINGENCY	$228,409	$234,604	$241,514	$247,631	$254,479
TOTAL COST	**$2,512,504**	**$2,580,641**	**$2,656,655**	**$2,723,938**	**$2,799,273**
UNIT HOUR COST	$81.95	$84.17	$86.33	$88.84	$91.30

† *Based on a full year of city-operated service beginning January 1, 2026*

5-Year Cost Comparison

YEAR	CONTRACTED RATE	CITY RATE	CONTRACTED ANNUAL COST	CITY ANNUAL COST	ANNUAL SAVINGS
2026	$95.00	$81.95†	$2,912,700	$2,512,504†	**$400,196†**
2027‡	$105.00	$84.17	$3,219,300	$2,580,642	**$638,659‡**
2028‡	$108.15	$86.33	$3,324,964	$2,656,655	**$668,309**
2029‡	$111.39	$88.84	$3,415,355	$2,723,939	**$691,417‡**
2030‡	$114.74	$91.30	$3,517,816	$2,799,273	**$718,543**

† *Based on a full year of city-operated service beginning January 1, 2026*

‡ *Estimated*

Department Qualifications

- **Fullerton Fire Department**
  - Longstanding experience managing EMS operations, including patient care, EMS system performance, and billing administration
  - Advanced Life Support (ALS) resources and emergency response coordination
- **Expertise in Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**
  - **EMS Manager Rhonda Rosati**
    - Registered Nurse with 15 years of EMS experience
    - Extensive background in clinical oversight, EMS operations, and regulatory compliance
  - **Deputy Chief of Administration Jon Fugitt**
    - Supervised Ambulance Operators as both a Fire Captain and Battalion Chief
- **Preparations - Business Operations**
  - Deputy Chief Jonathan Fugitt, EMS Manager Rhonda Rosati, and Administrative Analyst Andrew Yang completed an intensive 3-week Ambulance Business Academy course

Ambulance Operator Classification

- **Schedule:**
  - 24-hour rotating shifts to mirror Fire Suppression (48 on | 96 off)
  - 56-hour average workweek (full-time)
- **Qualifications**
  - 18 years of age; High school diploma or GED
  - Pass background check and drug screening
  - CA Class C Driver License
  - CA DMV Ambulance Driver Certificate
  - CA EMT-1 Certification
  - CPR Certification (American Heart Association or American Red Cross)
- **Non-Regular Employee Resolution**
  - Competitive base hourly rate
  - Paid 15x overtime rate after 40 hours per week
  - CalPERS enrollment (Misc) for full-time employees (enrollment for part-time employees after 1,000 hours worked)
  - Limited Term Classification with maximum 2-year employment tenure (extendable at Fire Chief's discretion)

Challenges And Considerations

- **AO Recruitment & Retention**
  - Competitive labor market for EMTs in Southern California
  - Need to balance wages and benefits to remain competitive with cost control
- **Vehicle Procurement & Supply Chain Delays**
  - Global supply chain disruptions could delay ambulance acquisition
  - Lead times for new ambulances are 8–12 months
- **Transition Logistics**
  - Terminate existing contract while ensuring uninterrupted service
  - Coordinating staffing, training, licensing, and deployment readiness before go-live
- **New Administrative Responsibilities**
  - Absorbing new responsibilities without adding administrative positions
  - Increased workload for Fire Administration and Operations, as well as for City (HR and Finance)

Implementation Timeline

- **Immediately:** Place initial reservations for ambulances for December 2025 delivery
- **July 2025:** Return to City Council for Vehicle and Equipment Purchase Authorization
- **August 2025:** Finalize AO Position Classification with HR
- **September 2025:** Open AO recruitment process
- **October 2025:** Finalize Agreements for Mutual Aid and Surge
- **December 2025:** Conduct background checks, personnel onboarding
- **January 2026:** Two-week AO Training Academy
- **February 2026:** Launch City-Operated Ambulance Program

Proposed Motion

Approve the proposed transition to the city-operated ambulance program:

1) Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to initiate the process of terminating the agreement with Falck Mobile Health Corp.

2) Direct the Fire Department to develop a detailed transition plan for a city-operated ambulance program, targeting February 2026 for implementation.

Questions?