

---

Performance Audit of the  
San Diego Fire-Rescue  
Department,  
Lifeguard Services Division

**LIFEGUARD SERVICES SHOULD  
STRENGTHEN ITS WORKFORCE  
PLAN, AND THE CITY SHOULD  
EXPLORE OPTIONS TO INCREASE  
FUNDING FOR LIFEGUARD  
OPERATIONS**

Office of the City  
Auditor

City of San Diego



This Page Intentionally Left Blank



## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

May 27, 2015

Honorable Mayor, City Council, and Audit Committee Members  
City of San Diego, California

Transmitted herewith is an audit report on the City of San Diego's Lifeguard Services Division, Fire-Rescue Department. This report was conducted in accordance with the City Auditor's Fiscal Year 2015 Audit Work Plan, and the report is presented in accordance with City Charter Section 39.2. The Results in Brief is presented on page 1. Audit Objectives, Scope, and Methodology are presented in Appendix B. Management's responses to our audit recommendations can be found after page 43 of the report.

We would like to thank staff from the City departments for their assistance and cooperation during this audit. All of their valuable time and efforts spent on providing us information are greatly appreciated. The audit staff responsible for this audit report are Sunny McLernon, Kevin Christensen, Nathan Otto, Chris Kime, and Kyle Elser.

Respectfully submitted,

Eduardo Luna  
City Auditor

cc: Scott Chadwick, Chief Operating Officer  
Stacey LoMedico, Assistant Chief Operating Officer  
Mary Lewis, Chief Financial Officer  
Jan Goldsmith, City Attorney  
Rolando Charvel, City Comptroller  
Javier Mainar, Chief, Fire-Rescue Department  
Rick Wurts, Chief, Lifeguard Services Division  
Cybele Thompson, Director, Real Estate Assets Department  
Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst  
Brian Pepin, Director of Council Affairs

OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR  
1010 SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 555, WEST TOWER • SAN DIEGO, CA 92101  
PHONE (619) 533-3165 • FAX (619) 533-3036

TO REPORT FRAUD, WASTE, OR ABUSE, CALL OUR FRAUD HOTLINE (866) 809-3500



This Page Intentionally Left Blank

# Table of Contents

<b>Results in Brief</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Audit Results</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Finding 1: Lifeguard Services Should Develop a More Robust Workforce Plan</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Finding 2: The City Should Review Its Beach Concessions Contracts to Ensure It Is Receiving Fair Market Rates</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Other Pertinent Information</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix A: Audit Recommendation Priorities</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Appendix B: Objectives, Scope and Methodology</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix C: Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Services Division, Classification Descriptions and Distinguishing Characteristics</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix D: Workforce Management Steps</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix E: Fire-Rescue Department’s Lifeguard Services Division Long-Term Plan to Increase the Diversity of the Applicant Pool</b>	<b>39</b>

## Results in Brief

Lifeguard Services Division's (Lifeguard Services) mission is to provide the highest quality safety services in coastal and aquatic environments through rescue, education, outreach, medical aid, beach management, code enforcement, and injury and drowning prevention. To carry out this mission, Lifeguard Services employs approximately 100 full-time lifeguards, and hires additional part-time lifeguards to increase beach and bay coverage during the summer months. Additionally, Lifeguard Services' Boating Safety Unit (BSU) provides ocean rescue services to boaters, and staffs the Lifeguard Services Communication Center 24-hours per day. Lifeguard Services also has river, dive, and cliff rescue personnel who are certified for underwater criminal investigations.

About 40 percent of Lifeguard Services' full-time lifeguards will be eligible to retire within the next five years. Lifeguard Services staff also generally separates from service before they are retirement eligible. Some of the skill sets needed for Lifeguard Services to operate can take years for staff to develop and become certified, especially the skills needed to staff the BSU. Because of the length of time certain skills take to develop and certify, and the potential retirement and separation of a large portion of its staff, Lifeguard Services risks facing a critical skills shortage.

Lifeguard Services has taken steps to reduce the impact of future retirements and separations through various planning efforts. However, it should develop a more robust and coordinated workforce plan to address retirements, separations and future growth of the division. The workforce plan should include strategies to ensure that critical skills are available to meet anticipated growth and operational needs. Additionally, the workforce plan should include recruitment strategies to diversify the racial and gender make-up of the division.

In its Five Year Needs Assessment, Lifeguard Services has projected \$5.2 million in future costs for personnel and equipment, as well as unfunded capital improvement. Some of these items have funding, but significant needs remain.

The City enters into contracts with beach concessioners who offer services such as surf camps and kayak rentals. These contracts require that 10 percent of gross sales be paid to the City. We reviewed other cities that enter into contracts with beach concessioners and found

that they are generally collecting higher revenue percentages. One city reported that payment of 15 percent revenue to the city was standard for these types of concession contracts. The City should review the fee terms of the concession contracts to ensure that it receives a percentage of annual concession revenue consistent with other municipalities' contracts with concessionaires operating on public beaches.

# Background

With 17 miles of coastline and 4,600 acres around Mission Bay Park, the City of San Diego (City) offers a wide variety of beaches and amenities. To provide the public the highest quality safety services in this extensive coastal and aquatic environment, the City has tasked Lifeguard Services Division (Lifeguard Services) to carry out rescues, present education and outreach programs, provide medical aid, manage beaches, enforce laws, and prevent injuries and drowning incidents. Through this variety of safety and enforcement services, Lifeguard Services protects City residents and visitors.

Lifeguard Services employs full-time, year-round lifeguards, including supervisors to guard certain beaches, and seasonal lifeguards to work primarily in the summer to guard additional beaches and increase hours of guarded beaches. Previously part of the Police, and then Park & Recreation Departments, Lifeguard Services is currently a division of the Fire-Rescue Department

## *History of Lifeguard Services in San Diego*

Ocean lifeguard services in the City began in 1914. Originally, Lifeguard Services was part of the Police Department, but in 1947 Lifeguard Services was transferred from the Police Department to the newly formed Park & Recreation Department.

In the 1950s, the Lifeguard Services Dive Rescue Team was formed, and with the creation of Mission Bay, the Mission Bay Harbor Patrol was founded. In 1972, a Municipal Code section was added to give lifeguards the specific title of Public Officer, with the right to arrest for misdemeanors and infractions.

## *Lifeguard Services Operations*

More than 20 million people visit City beaches in a typical year. In fiscal year 2014, Lifeguard Services reported performing 5,299 water rescues, 4,282 medical aids, and more than 267,460 preventative actions. Additionally, Lifeguard Services reported 48 cliff rescues, and responded to 296 boating-related incidents.

Annually, Lifeguard Services, as part of the Fire-Rescue budget, publishes key performance indicators to assess different aspects of how well it is meeting its goals. As illustrated in Exhibit 1, two metrics track the number of drowning incidents at guarded beaches: (1) in relation to beach attendance, and (2) the number of lifeguards per 1,000 beach-goers.



**Exhibit 1**

**Performance Measures**

Performance Measure	Actual FY 2011	Actual FY 2012	Actual FY 2013	Actual FY 2014	Target FY 2015
San Diego drowning incidents per San Diego beach visit at guarded beaches (in millions)	0 : 22	0 : 20	0 : 22	0 : 17	0 : 24
U.S. Lifeguard Association’s standard: drowning incidents per beach visit (in millions)	1 : 18	1 : 18	1 : 18	1 : 18	1 : 18

Performance Measure	Actual FY2011	Actual FY2012	Actual FY2013	Estimated FY2014	Target FY2015
San Diego Lifeguards per 1,000 population	0.13	0.14	0.11	0.11	0.11

Source: City of San Diego, Fire-Rescue Department 2014 and 2015 Adopted Budgets.

Lifeguard Services operates nine oceanfront stations that are open year round, and conducts water rescue of swimmers, divers, and surfers, as well as coastal cliff rescues. All full-time lifeguards are trained Emergency Medical Technicians, and all hourly (seasonal) lifeguards are, at a minimum, American Red Cross Emergency Response certified.

Lifeguard Services’ BSU, which operates out of Quivira Basin in Mission Bay, handles harbor patrol functions and ocean rescue services for boaters. BSU personnel also staff the Lifeguard Communications Center 24-hours per day.

The River Rescue Team handles rescues of persons or animals during periods of flooding.

The Dive Rescue Team conducts underwater searches and recoveries, and members are certified Public Safety Divers and qualified in underwater criminal investigations.

Since 1954, Lifeguard Services has operated the San Diego Junior Lifeguard Program. The program is designed to teach children and teenagers a variety of ocean skills including beach safety, ocean and wave education, first aid and CPR, and water rescue techniques. According to Lifeguard Services, the program hosted about 1,200 students in 2014.

Lifeguard Services also operates an aquatic education and outreach program, Waterproofing San Diego, which provides aquatic education and drowning prevention. The program includes aquatic education lectures, swim lessons, and an aquatic experience at the ocean or a local pool.

*Lifeguard Services Equipment* Lifeguard Services patrols the beaches from nine permanent lifeguard stations and up to 40 seasonal stations during the summer. These permanent lifeguard stations are located in Ocean Beach, South Mission Beach, Mission Beach, North Pacific Beach, Pacific Beach, the La Jolla Children's Pool, La Jolla Cove, La Jolla Shores, and Lifeguard Headquarters on Mission Bay. Black's Beach does not have a lifeguard station, but there are year-round lifeguard operations in this area.

*New Lifeguard Stations* According to Lifeguard Services management, the lifespan of a lifeguard tower is only about 30 years due to the difficult beach environment. Lifeguard Services recently completed construction on a new station at La Jolla Shores. However, many of the other Lifeguard Services' main towers have been identified as needing to be rebuilt or reconstructed. Construction projects are currently underway on new towers at La Jolla Cove, the La Jolla Children's Pool, and South Mission Beach. A new tower is in the design process for North Pacific Beach. Additionally, Lifeguard Services officials stated the Ocean Beach Station is in need of replacement, but no funding has been identified for the project.

*Staffing and Training* In addition to the positions of Chief and Marine Safety Captain, Lifeguard Services, as of November 2014, staffed 94 full-time lifeguards that protect the City's guarded beaches year-round. These positions are categorized by the ranks described in **Exhibit 2**.

**Exhibit 2**

**Lifeguard Staffing and Duties**

Lifeguard Category	Number of Staff	Duties
Lifeguard I (LGI)	200-255 part-time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain surveillance over an assigned area to protect life and property</li> <li>• Prevent accidents</li> <li>• Educate</li> <li>• Make warnings on beach regulations</li> </ul>
Lifeguard II (LGII)	57 full-time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All LGI duties</li> <li>• Serve as the in-charge guard</li> <li>• Perform cliff rescues</li> <li>• Law enforcement duties</li> <li>• Respond to other emergency calls</li> <li>• Certain LGIIs are also assigned to the Boating Service Unit (BSU) and function as emergency dispatchers, bay patrol boat operators (Level 1), fire boat operators (Level 2), and surf boat operators (Level 3)</li> </ul>
Lifeguard III (LGIII)	15 full-time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform full range of LGI and LGII duties</li> <li>• Serve as Field Training Officers for all boat operations and personal watercraft operations</li> <li>• Operate cliff rescue vehicle</li> <li>• Perform other training and leadership functions</li> </ul>
Level 1 Certification*		Certified as a Bay Boat Operator
Level 2 Certification*		Certified as a Bay Boat and Fire-Rescue Boat Operator
Level 3 Certification*		Certified as a Bay Boat, Fire-Rescue Boat, and Surf Boat Operator
Lifeguard Sergeant	18 full-time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervise Lifeguard Services operations of an assigned area</li> </ul>
Marine Safety Lieutenant	4 full-time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervise Lifeguards in a district (or BSU), perform various special projects and administrative assignments</li> </ul>

\* LGIIs are eligible for the LGIII position once they have: (1) attained all three certification levels, (2) become a Field Training Officer in all boat operations, and (3) a cliff rescue vehicle operator.

Source: San Diego Civil Service Commission Lifeguard class specifications and Lifeguard management.

## Audit Results

### *Finding 1: Lifeguard Services Should Develop a More Robust Workforce Plan*

Lifeguard Services Division (Lifeguard Services) risks facing a critical skills gap in the next five to ten years. Our analysis of Lifeguard Services demographic data revealed that the Lifeguard Services' workforce is potentially approaching a wave of retirements that will affect available skill sets. We estimate that about 40 percent of the current Lifeguard Services workforce will be eligible to retire within the next five years. Additionally, certain lifeguard skill sets associated with the Boating Service Unit (BSU) can take many years to develop and certify.

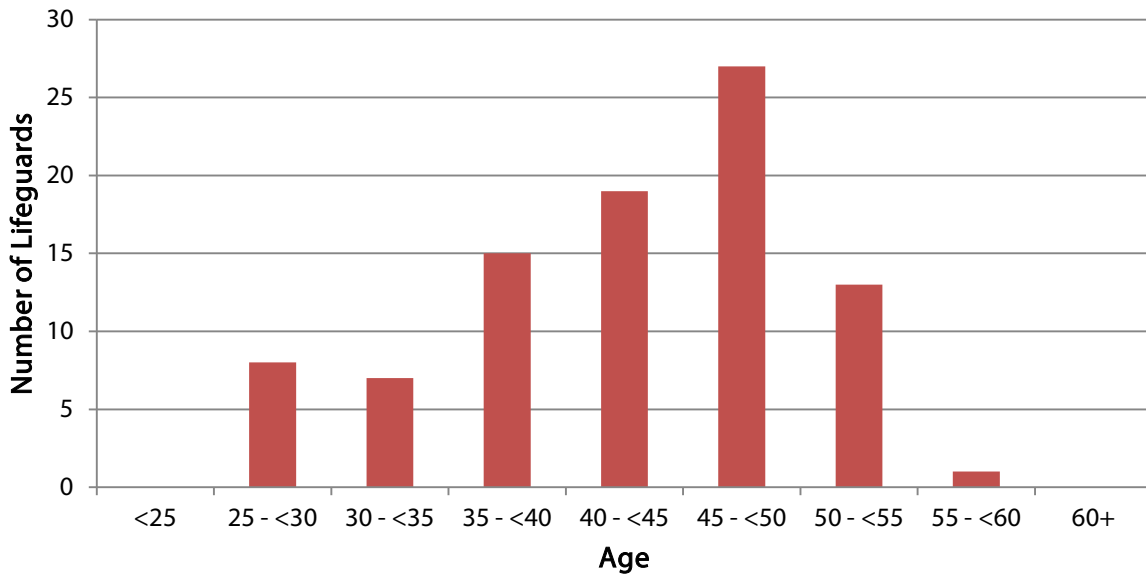
Lifeguard Services has taken several actions to help address the impact of future retirements and separations. However, we found that Lifeguard Services does not have a formalized workforce plan. It should further develop and coordinate its current plans for hiring, training and recruitment to ensure a robust workforce plan. The Lifeguard Services' workforce plan should include strategies to ensure a skilled workforce is available to continue operations and meet operational expansion goals. Furthermore, the workforce plan should include additional recruitment strategies to diversify the racial and gender makeup of the division, which has been shown to have a positive effect on organizational performance.

#### **Workforce Separations and Retirement**

Over the past decade, a full-time lifeguard separates from Lifeguard Services, on average, at approximately the age of 46. Although there are many factors that influence the decision to separate, there are currently several lifeguards near or over this age. **Exhibit 3** shows the age distribution of the current Lifeguard Services workforce.

*Exhibit 3*

**Age Distribution of Lifeguard Services Full-Time Workforce**



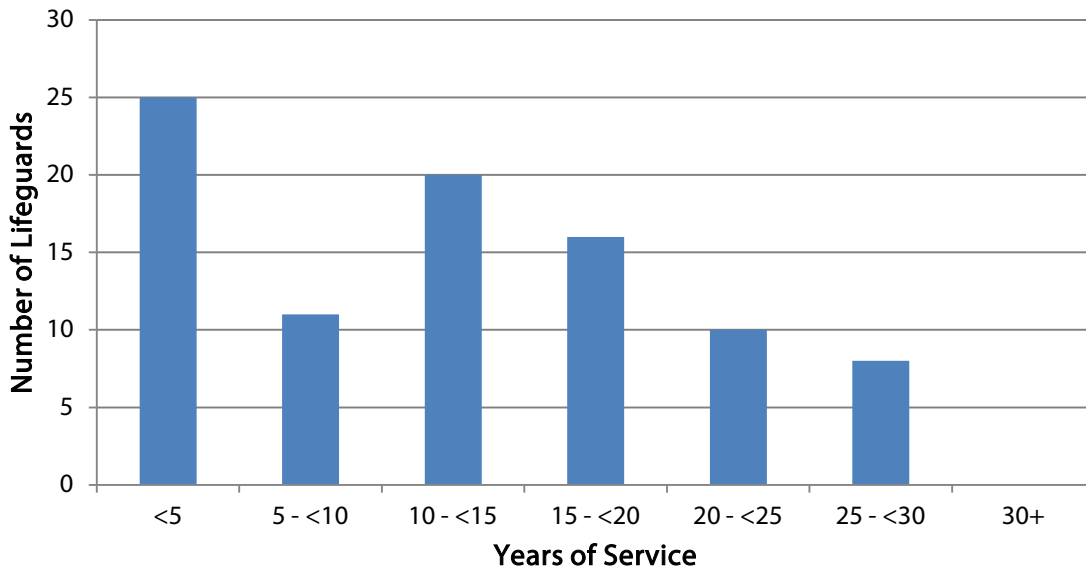
Source: OCA generated, using Personnel Department data.

Based on the age of the Lifeguard Services' workforce, years-of-service data, and retirement eligibility data, the retirement and separation rate in Lifeguard Services is projected to be higher than it has been over the last 10 years. Currently, about 20 percent of the Lifeguard Services operations workforce has been with the City in a full-time capacity for at least 20 years. Another 18 percent has been with the City in a full-time capacity for 15 to 20 years. Therefore, in five years almost 40 percent of Lifeguard Services' current classified workforce will have 20 or more years of service with the City.

**Exhibit 4** shows the years of service distribution of Lifeguard Services' current operations workforce.

**Exhibit 4**

**Years of Service Distribution of San Diego Lifeguard Full-Time Force, as of 6/30/2014**



Source: OCA generated, using Personnel Department data as of June 30, 2014.

Excluding staff enrolled in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP), it is difficult to predict when someone will retire or separate from employment.<sup>1</sup> However, a review of the current age and years of service of the workforce illustrates that about 15 percent of staff is nearing or already past retirement eligibility. Assuming the workforce remains the same, and using the retirement eligibility standards of 20 years of service and minimum 50 years of age, we estimate that about 38 percent of the Lifeguard Services workforce will be eligible to retire by June 30, 2020 (shown in **Exhibit 5**).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) is a voluntary program which provides eligible members an alternative method of accruing benefits from SDCERS while employed by the City of San Diego.

<sup>2</sup> Current average age of separation within Lifeguard Services' classified operations employees is about 46 years of age.

**Exhibit 5**

**Classified Lifeguards Who Will Achieve Retirement Eligibility**

	June 30, 2015	June 30, 2016	June 30, 2017	June 30, 2018	June 30, 2019	June 30, 2020
Number of Lifeguards Achieving Retirement Eligibility of 20 Years of Service and 50 Years of Age	15	18	20	23	29	34
Percent of Operational Workforce	17%	20%	22%	26%	32%	38%

Source: OCA generated, using Personnel Department data.

However, as historical separation data shows, these anticipated attritions could be accelerated if the LGII and LGIII employees separate near age 46, rather than age 50.<sup>3</sup>

As separations and retirements impact the workforce, the LGIII classification will be the most affected. The LGIII classification requires the most internal certifications, and based on information available, has historically taken more than a decade to obtain the necessary skills for this job.

*Lifeguard IIIs Have the Most Experience and Highest Level of Skill Sets*

The LGIII classification requires a high number of mission-critical skill sets. In addition to protecting life and property, and instructing and leading subordinate lifeguards, LGIIIs staff the main watchtowers, operate three types of boats used by Lifeguard Services, operate Rescue 44 (the cliff rescue vehicle), and serve as a field training officer (FTO) for other lifeguards to learn these skills and responsibilities. Consequently, due to the time needed to develop and subsequently achieve necessary certifications, retirements and accelerated separations could impact Lifeguard Services' ability to meet skill set needs.<sup>4</sup>

We found that based on the available information, it can take an average of 13 years for Lifeguard Services staff to achieve all certifications needed to be eligible for LGIII – with the actual time period to achieve full certification ranging from 4.5 to 23 years.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, we found that for staff that has been promoted to the LGIII classification, it has taken an average of 20 years from their

<sup>3</sup> This calculation is based on date of birth and original City hire date. It does not account for any gaps in service or service purchase credits.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C for a listing of certifications and job requirements for each Lifeguard position classification.

<sup>5</sup> The 13 year calculation is based on original hire date, not original full-time employee date.

original LGI hire date to obtain this classification. According to Lifeguard Services, there are many factors that influence how long it takes a lifeguard to obtain all certifications needed to qualify as a LGIII. These factors include availability of FTOs, individual interest, division needs, and the necessary ocean conditions for exams.

Lifeguard Services is aware that the length of time it can take to certify a lifeguard as a boat operator level 1, 2 and 3 may hinder its ability to fill the LGIII positions as they become available. In response, it has established a Succession Planning Committee which has met intermittently since June 2014. This committee identified training obstacles that have impacted the amount of time it takes lifeguards to be certified in the critical BSU skills. Action steps the Committee identified include reducing the amount of certifications to be achieved in specific times, and disseminating clearer instructions to training officers.

Other solutions Lifeguard Services is currently working on to address the potential skills gap include: academies for highly technical skill sets, making trainings priority for candidates that show interest and potential, and communicating to operational supervision that training is a high priority. Additionally, Lifeguard Services stated that if needed, it does have the option to temporarily under fill a LGIII position with a LGII in order to ensure continuity of services.

**Workforce Expansion and Skill Gap Analysis**

In February 2014, Lifeguard Services provided to a City Council subcommittee a Five-Year Needs Assessment that provides a vision and list of resources for Lifeguard Services. This assessment covers staffing, equipment, training needs, administrative assistance, and capital improvement project (CIP) goals.

Additionally, in August 2014, the Personnel Department requested that all departments provide a two-year assessment of hiring needs. The Fire-Rescue Department prepared this assessment for the Department as a whole. Aside from seasonal hiring needs, Lifeguard Services identified 10 hires/promotions needed in Fiscal Years 2015 and 2016 to maintain operations and fill expected attrition of staff.

Based on the Five-Year Needs Assessment and the hiring needs assessment requested by the Personnel Department, the minimum number of hires Lifeguard Services would need to meet its future operational goals is 21 fulltime lifeguards. In addition to the 10 positions identified in the workforce plan to replace employee attrition, Lifeguard Services has identified 11 operational expansion positions. By adding 11 additional LGIII positions, this expansion



would increase the total number of LGIII positions to 26, or a 75 percent increase. **Exhibit 6** displays the position growth identified in the five-year assessment.

**Exhibit 6**

**Workforce Expansion, Based on Five-Year Assessment**

Classification	Current Number of Staff	Planned Staff Expansion	Total Needed in 5 Years (Current + Planned)
Lifeguard II	57	1	58
Lifeguard III	15	11	26
Sergeant	11	1	19
Lieutenant	4	0	4

Source: OCA generated, using current position detail reports from SAP, and Lifeguard Services' Five-Year Needs Assessment.

In addition to operational expansions, Lifeguard Services will also have to plan for the replacement of staff retirements and separations from service.

**Workforce Gap Analysis** As stated previously, many factors influence the decision to retire or separate from service. However, presuming that an additional 11 LGIII positions will be added to Lifeguard Services (per its Five-Year Needs Assessment), and 13 of the 15 current LGIIIs will be retirement-eligible, potentially 24 LGIII positions could need to be filled.<sup>6</sup>

**Exhibit 7** shows the current and planned amount of positions per classification, the number of lifeguards eligible to retire (based on 20 years of service and 50 years of age requirement), anticipated staff in 2020, and the resulting personnel gap. In addition to a quantitative assessment, Lifeguard Services should also identify specific skill needs such as Field Training Officers (FTO), budgetary skills, certifications, and other skill sets needed to meet operational goals.

<sup>6</sup> Average age of separation is 46 years old, not 50 years old. Therefore the actual number of LGIII positions to be filled may be higher than 24.

**Exhibit 7**

**Workforce Gap Analysis**

Classification	Current Positions	# of Positions Planned for 2020	# Eligible to Retire, 2020	Staff Available in 2020	GAP (FTEs)
Lifeguard II	57	58	12	45	-13
Lifeguard III	15	26	13	2	-24
Lifeguard Sergeant	18	19	8	10	-9

Source: OCA generated, using position detail report from SAP and the Five-Year Needs Assessment developed by Lifeguard Services. This table does not show the Lifeguard Chief, Captain, and four Lieutenant positions.

**Strategic Workforce Plan Creation**

Effective workforce planning enables the organization to:

- link workforce requirements directly with the agency’s mission;
- develop a comprehensive picture of where gaps or future gaps exist in competencies;
- identify and implement competency and position gap reduction strategies, especially for mission critical skills; and
- identify and overcome internal and external barriers to accomplishing strategic workforce goals.

According to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management’s “End-to-End Hiring Initiative,” the best practice for creating a strategic workforce plan is to create a team of key personnel from different organizational levels.

The primary elements of a workforce analysis methodology include a review of the following:

- Involving top management in developing the plan;
- Identifying work functions;
- Identifying staff requirements;
- Projecting workforce supply, and analyzing gaps;
- Developing priorities and implementing solutions; and
- Evaluating/updating the plan periodically.

A workforce plan would allow Lifeguard Services to strategically use all separation, retirement, and expansion information to ensure that it is able to continue to meet its mission. See **Appendix D** for detail on creating a workforce plan.

In order to ensure that Lifeguard Services continues to serve and protect City residents and visitors, the Division should further develop a strategic workforce plan that will align its available human capital with critical skills requirements and long term operation strategies.

**Workforce Planning Should Include Additional Strategies to Encourage Diversity in the Lifeguard Services Workforce**

Diversity is critical to public safety agencies. Individuals from diverse backgrounds bring a broad range of cultural understandings and language skills to the agency. Empirical studies have shown a positive correlation between workforce diversity and organizational performance. Historically, Lifeguard Services is a predominately Caucasian male workforce.

Like other lifeguarding agencies in the state, Lifeguard Services' workforce make up is not representative of the current workforce available. We found that the Lifeguard Services can better strategize ways to improve its conformance with the labor force availability by recruiting more Hispanic and female individuals.

The Personnel Department's *2013 Annual Equal Employment Report* compares the racial and gender makeup of the Lifeguard Services to the San Diego County (County) labor force availability.<sup>7</sup> As shown in **Exhibit 8**, the Lifeguard Services' staff is not representative of the County labor force in terms of Hispanic, Asian, or Pacific Islander ethnicities. Females are also under-represented.

---

<sup>7</sup> Labor force availability data shown are based upon the actual representation of all ethnic groups and gender in the San Diego County workforce for each occupational category. The figures are extracted from the U.S. Census to establish the percentage of the various groups as identified by the census in the labor market in work similar to that done by City employees.

**Exhibit 8**

**City of San Diego Annual Equal Employment Opportunity Report, 2013**

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander	Other	Female	Male
County Labor Force Availability (%)	71%	0%	19%	6%	4%	32%	68%
City Lifeguard Services (%)	85%	2%	8%	3%	1%	16%	84%
County Labor Force Availability (number of people)*	212	0	58	18	13	95	205
City Lifeguard Services (number of people)	256	5	25	10	4	49	251

\* County Labor Force Availability (number of people) was calculated using the percentages of County Workforce presented in the EEO report, and applying it to the total City Department Workforce presented in the EEO report.

Source: 2013 City of San Diego Annual EEO report published by San Diego Civil Service Commission, Personnel Department.

However, for context, it is important to note that the Lifeguard Services is not the only lifeguarding agency facing diversity challenges. As shown in **Exhibit 9**, the State of California’s Park and Recreation Department’s lifeguard workforce is similar to San Diego’s Lifeguard Services in terms of ethnic and gender representations.

**Exhibit 9**

**State of California, Department of Park and Recreation Analysis of Lifeguard Workforce, 2013**

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander	Other	Female	Male
State Labor Force Availability (%)	76%	3%	11%	5%	5%	41%	59%
California State Lifeguards (%)	87%	0%	8%	2%	2%	17%	83%
State Labor Force Availability (number of people)	648	27	90	47	39	350	501
California State Lifeguards (number of people)	741	3	68	18	21	145	706

Source: California Department of Parks & Recreation, Utilization Analysis, calendar year 2013.

The City's Lifeguard Services percentages and numbers are based on Lifeguard Services' total workforce, including part-time employees. The percentage of Lifeguard Services' full-time female staff is even lower, at 6.8 percent, which includes seven females among the 102 full-time lifeguards.

However, according to Lifeguard Services, this statistic is better than other public lifeguard agencies in Southern California. According to a survey that Lifeguard Services performed in 2014, Los Angeles County staffed 11 female full-time lifeguards out of the 155 total full time lifeguards – about 7.1 percent of the workforce. According to the Lifeguard Services' survey, the cities of Coronado, Del Mar, Encinitas, Imperial Beach, and Oceanside do not staff any female full-time lifeguards.

*City Encourages Diversity, but Barriers Exist*

As stated in the *2013 Annual Equal Employment Report*, City departments are encouraged to work toward equitable representation of all groups present in San Diego's general population. The report states appointing authorities are responsible for reviewing their own departments; emphasis is placed upon establishing fair and equitable representation of all segments of San Diego's population in all occupational groups of the City's workforce. The report reiterates that appointing authorities should realize that this review is entirely consistent with the merit principle upon which the City's employment system is based. There is no requirement to hire, transfer, or promote a person who is not qualified on the basis of objective job-related criteria.

In order to bring Lifeguard Services into conformance with the labor force availability of San Diego, it should improve its recruitment of Hispanic and female individuals. Because of the potential increase in separations and retirements in Lifeguard Services, now is an opportunity for Lifeguards to incorporate additional specific strategies to augment workforce-diversifying recruiting efforts.

According to recruiting strategists, when looking to develop and employ a recruitment strategy, the best approach is multi-pronged, which also includes valuing diversity. This approach not only affects the bottom line but also ensures that workforce is representative of clients—in this case, beachgoers. Studies and research are available which document factors that contribute to underrepresentation of certain groups.

Shown in **Exhibit 10** are factors that affect workforce diversity. Three types of barriers can generally be described as:

- (1) Cultural or sociological barriers, which are common to certain communities or cultures;
- (2) Hiring barriers, which are related to the skill set and ability to qualify for a job; and
- (3) Structural barriers, which result from institutional policies and practices that have an adverse effect on minorities and women.

Additionally, there are other types of barriers that affect workforce diversity.

The process of identifying and reviewing such barriers and evaluating the impact they have on workforce makeup can help management to remove such barriers, if appropriate. However, not all barriers to workforce diversity can be removed. For instance, some careers have very strict, but necessary, physical strength requirements that may be a barrier to females striving to enter the field. If management identifies and evaluates the strength requirement and finds it necessary, then that barrier should not be removed. However, there may be ways to mitigate its impact, such as initially clearly defining physical strength testing requirements so that all applicants can fully prepare and train for testing.

**Exhibit 10** also lists potential steps and actions already undertaken by Lifeguard Services to address the workforce diversity barriers listed.

*Exhibit 10*

**Summary of Workforce Diversity Barriers**

Barriers	Description and Summary
<p><b>Cultural or Sociological</b></p>	<p>Cultural or sociological barriers to diversity include barriers, such as certain communities or ethnicities lacking knowledge about the existence of the career. For instance, some research has shown that lack of minority participation in special operational groups is due to lack of knowledge of the career opportunities. To help overcome these potential cultural or sociological barriers to diversification of its workforce, Lifeguard Services should continue to strive to minimize this barrier to the best of its ability. One key step to minimize this cultural barrier would be to conduct outreach to all communities of San Diego.</p> <p>The Lifeguard Services' Waterproofing San Diego initiative – if fully rolled out as envisioned by Lifeguard Services leadership – could help reach all San Diego communities, and ensure that they are aware of lifeguarding as a career.</p> <p>As part of this initiative, the San Diego Junior Lifeguard Program (SDJG) intends to continue its four-phase aquatic outreach program. The goal of this program continues to be “waterproofing” the youth of San Diego through aquatic education and drowning prevention. The program includes water safety presentations, swim lessons, an aquatic experience at the ocean or a local pool, and the opportunity to enroll in the SDJG program if the individual passes the required swim test.</p> <p>The SDJG provides scholarship opportunities to families in financial need. According to Lifeguard Services, in 2014, 100 scholarships were awarded (8% of participants). This included 24 scholarships for the Jackie Robinson YMCA youth, 32 for City Heights' youth, and 44 general scholarships.</p> <p>Additionally, Lifeguard Services also states that it is conducting recruiting efforts at local high schools and colleges from both men's and women's aquatic programs.</p>
<p><b>Hiring</b></p>	<p>To attract diverse candidates, it is important to have management committed to diversifying the organization. One of the critical steps is to ensure that organizational branding reflects inclusion. Since the “face” of an organization that most people will first see is its website, diversity should be reflected on the website. This includes everything from the mission statement, to the employees shown online, to corporate videos and testimonials from employees themselves.</p> <p>Recruiting at Marine or Navy job fairs may also help Lifeguard Services recruit diverse candidates. Certain job duties within the military require physical capabilities and tests similar to Lifeguard Services' physical tests. Because Navy and Marine bases are in close proximity, San Diego is in a unique</p>

Barriers	Description and Summary
	<p>situation to target veterans who are discharging from active duty.</p> <p>Most employers have educational, physical fitness, medical and background requirements. According to a RAND study, health, education, and other socioeconomic statistics show that some of these hiring requirements pose barriers for women and racial minorities. As noted earlier, identifying barriers does not imply that all barriers should be removed; but it is a step to assessing which requirements are critical, and which requirements can be modified in order to assist in diversifying the workforce.</p> <p>To identify potential barriers to hiring, Lifeguard Services should review its educational, fitness and background requirements to ensure that these do not pose any unnecessary barriers to diversifying its workforce.</p>
<b>Structural</b>	<p>Structural barriers generally include policies or practices which have an adverse impact on diversity. However, structural barriers also include the formal systems that guide and control the work of the organization.</p> <p>One structural barrier that Lifeguard Services should review is the way it hires Lifeguard II (LGII) staff. Currently, LGII staff is typically hired from the Lifeguard I (LGI) staff. This practice allows Lifeguard Services to access a LGII applicant pool that is already familiar with its policies, practices, facilities, and beaches. However, in a review of the last ten years' data for LGIs promoted to LGIIs, we found that on average, those who were promoted to LGIIs had been LGIs for eight years before they were promoted<sup>8</sup>. As noted earlier, LGIs are part-time hourly positions that do not have guaranteed hours, and do not have benefits. Typically, they are hired for the peak summer season, although some may be offered hours into the fall months.</p> <p>Although this hiring methodology is a proven training ground for Lifeguard Services and allows Lifeguard Services' supervisors and management to know candidates well, before they are hired, it may create a hiring barrier for anyone who is unable to be a seasonal, un-benefited worker for eight years before they receive full time work. This hiring practice could be a barrier to increasing diversity within the Lifeguard workforce. To further explore if this is a barrier to diversity, Lifeguard Service should consider asking if lack of full-time employment is a factor in leaving Lifeguard Services during exit interviews.</p> <p>However, Lifeguard Services also pointed out that the part-time working option is beneficial to some; for example, college students that are unable to work full-time, but need income.</p>

Source: OCA generated, based on workforce studies.

<sup>8</sup> This figure was based on Lifeguard Services personnel data using original hire date and date promoted to LGII. Lifeguard Services pointed out that not all LGIs wish to immediately move into a full-time LGII position.



*Fire-Rescue and Lifeguard Services Officials Support Diversity* Fire-Rescue Department officials reiterate the Department's strong support of the City's Vision and Strategic Goals of valuing the prioritizing of people, and the importance of promoting diversity. Lifeguard Services states that it supports a workforce that reflects the diversity of the San Diego community, and it has put in place some efforts to increase diversity within the lifeguard applicant pools.

According to Lifeguard Services, advancing drowning prevention programs and improving water safety throughout the City is intended not only to help prevent accidents, but to increase the racial and gender diversity of lifeguard applicant pools. Additionally, according to Lifeguard Services, it is making efforts to seek to inspire people from communities all over San Diego to become proficient swimmers, and it advocates for all qualified swimmers to apply for Lifeguard Services positions. Lifeguard Services believes that one result of these ongoing efforts will be a more diverse workforce in terms of both the gender make-up and ethnicity through a growing and increasingly diverse applicant pool. To review Lifeguard Services' long-term plan to increase the diversity of the applicant pool, see **Appendix E**. This plan has many steps to address sociological barriers, and identifies a long-term plan to help increase diversity within the applicant pool. By following the steps below, Lifeguard Services can make its diversification plan even more robust and effective.

*Diversification Strategies to be Incorporated into Workforce Planning and Recruitment* We reviewed several diversification strategies used by other agencies. Many of these documents are related to fire or police departments, and some of the recruitment issues surrounding race and gender that fire and police departments are facing are consistent with those faced by Lifeguard Services. Studies show that orchestrating strategies appropriate for individual departments is an art, not a simple formula. However, research and experience suggest five key elements of such strategies:

1. Commitment by top leadership: Leadership must be visible in articulating the goal of diversifying the workforce.
2. Monitoring and accountability: Evaluate what is working in the effort to diversify, and identify and remove barriers as needed.
3. Human resource management procedures: Commitment to transparency, objectivity, and performance.
4. Behavior policies: Establish zero-tolerance policies for behaviors that would undermine diversity efforts.

5. Sustained effort: Commit to a deliberate effort over three to five years, if not longer.

**Exhibit 11** lists strategies employed by other agencies to improve the diversity of its personnel.

**Exhibit 11**

**Diversification Strategies**

Area of Improvement	Recommendations and Examples of Successful Diversification Steps
Marketing and Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branding and advertising designed to include photos highlighting the diverse nature of the teams.</li> <li>• Employ internet advertising over relevant websites such as <i>Latinos for Hire</i>, <i>Women for Hire</i>, and <i>AfricanAmericanJobsite.com</i>.</li> <li>• Staff attendance/participation in career fairs suited to meet targeted audiences.</li> </ul>
Community Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One public safety agency implemented “Youth Academies” to generate interest in the career.</li> </ul>
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address work-life balance.</li> <li>• Address aspects of organizational culture that threatens the retention of workers.</li> </ul>
Early Training Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Departments with pre-training programs reported a 52.6% pass rate for women, a statistically significant increase over the 34.6% reported by departments not providing training.</li> </ul>
Department Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and addressing facility issues in the long-term and short-term. Short-term objectives include modifications in practices that may have an immediate impact on the facility’s ability to accommodate both genders. Long-term objectives include new construction and major renovations.</li> </ul>
Diversity Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies include the incorporation of ongoing diversity education to all personnel in efforts to increase employee awareness regarding benefits of a diverse workforce.</li> <li>• Creation of diversity training for management and diversity awareness training for existing employees.</li> </ul>
Create an Oversight Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of an “Equity Compliance Unit” or committee that assesses and recommends changes to ensure that the organization is meeting its diversification goals.</li> </ul>

Source: OCA generated from diversity studies.

**Recommendation# 1** Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Services should develop a workforce plan that includes the following components:

- Involving management to develop a plan with measurable goals;
- Identifying critical work functions required to maintain capacity and capabilities;
- Identifying staffing requirements, including operational expansion plans;
- Projecting workforce and identifying gaps;
- Developing priorities and solutions to maintain needed capabilities and meet operational expansion goals; and
- Periodically evaluating factors and goals that affect workforce planning. (Priority 3)

**Recommendation# 2** Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Services should, as part of the workforce plan's priorities and solutions, develop a recruiting plan that is tailored to increase ethnicity and gender diversity. The strategies to increase diversity of Lifeguard applicants and hires should include:

- Outreach to all communities;
- Job advertisements in mediums like newspapers and job boards Lifeguard Services has not previously used, and that targets underrepresented groups;
- Recruiting materials reflective of a diverse workforce;
- Review of current hiring practices for the Lifeguard II position to evaluate options that do not exclude applicants that cannot afford to work seasonally and part-time for several years before they are able to obtain full-time employment; and
- Establishment of a small diversity committee to periodically evaluate whether its diversification strategies are meeting its goals. (Priority 3)

***Finding 2: The City Should Review Its Beach Concessions Contracts to Ensure It Is Receiving Fair Market Rates***

The City should review its beach concession contracts to ensure they are in line with other cities' beach contract terms. Specifically, the City of San Diego (City) should ensure that the revenue percentage paid to the City is a fair market percentage.

**The City Regulates Concession Activities for Surf Camps and Kayak Concessions**

In August 2004, the City launched a program that required surf camps to apply for permits through a request for proposal (RFP) process in order to operate on certain City beaches. According to City management, the RFP process and fees charged to the surf camp operators were calculated to fund the administration and enforcement of the program

In September 2007, resident concerns about commotion from unlicensed kayak operations in the La Jolla Shores neighborhood resulted in a City Council member request to regulate kayak operation through an RFP and permitting process. In 2008, the Real Estate Assets Department issued a RFP and selected six kayak operators. Another round of contracts were issued in 2011. The City recently completed negotiations for three-year terms contracts, with extension options that would total five years with concessionaires. According to Lifeguard Services these newly negotiated contracts made substantive changes to management of boat ramp scheduling.

**Lifeguard Services Begins Ambassador Program to Oversee Concessions**

Lifeguard Services has been responsible for monitoring the contracts and activities of kayak and surf camp concessions. In 2008, the La Jolla Shores Association, a community group made up residents, sought the creation of a position within the Lifeguard Services, called "ambassador," to monitor the more than 45,500 annual visitors to the La Jolla Shores beach, activities at the beach and the boat ramp where kayaks launch.

The Ambassador position is a LG I special assignment, with 'Ambassador Operations' during peak summer season extending from the second week in June through Labor Day, every day of the week. San Diego employs four seasonal lifeguard ambassadors to monitor certain coastal areas, including the surf camps and kayak operations at La Jolla Shores.

Lifeguard officials stated the increase in concession activities has strained its operations making it difficult to monitor the operations of the kayak concession ramp and storefronts and stopping illegal kayak rentals while also ensuring beach safety.

Meanwhile, the demand on the Lifeguard Services has increased as the number of citations and actions required have increased. For example, Lifeguard Services reported 72 kayak-related incidents in 2006; 616 incidents in July and August 2011; and 938 kayak incidents in June through September 2013.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of the increased incidents, Lifeguard Services has allocated a growing amount of resources to the program. As can be seen in **Exhibit 12** below, the number of Ambassador Program hours staffed has consistently increased.

***Exhibit 12***

---

**Total Lifeguard Services Ambassador Program Hours**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Ambassador Hours Reported	1,751	1,898	2,249	2,463	2,524

Source: OCA generated based on Lifeguard Services hours reported in SAP.

---

Lifeguard Services officials stated they would like another position to help deal with the monitoring of the concessions in La Jolla Cove and La Jolla Shores. The Lifeguard Services Division also identified in its Five Year Needs Assessment the need to add a sergeant to be responsible for organizing and coordinating training in the summer months. One area of focus for this suggested position is oversight of the ambassador and beach concession, which require continuous monitoring, management, and enforcement. Additionally, this position would oversee the continued need to either create concession RFP's for new operations or renew contracts.

---

<sup>9</sup> Incidents that occurred are either water incidents or land incidents. Water incidents are broken down into guided tours or rentals. They include; rescues, medical aids, swim lane, swim zone, rocks, and caves incidents. Land incidents include; kayak storage, blocking emergency access lanes, time allotment schedule, and not having a monitor during operations.

**Concession Contracts with Surf Camps and Kayak Concessions** As stated above, contracts entered into between the City and various concessionaries operating surf camps and kayak rentals establish annual fees paid to the City which are paid either through a minimum payment or a percentage of total concession revenue.

Currently, the surf camp and kayak concession contracts require that 10 percent of gross sales be paid to the City where the total annual revenues are above a minimum threshold. According to revenue audits conducted by the City Treasurer’s Office, between June 2008 and September 2013—a period of 64 months—the total gross revenues generated by the surf camp and kayak concessions was more than \$23.5 million and the amount of fees due to the City was more than \$2.4 million. **Exhibit 13** illustrates the amount of revenue generated by the surf camps and kayak concessions and the amount contractually owed to the City.

**Exhibit 13**

---

**Contract Revenues, June 2008-September 2013**

Surf Camp and Kayak Concessions	Agreement Subtotals
Total Gross Revenues (64-months)	\$23,539,532
Total Fee Due to City	\$2,456,170

Source: OCA generated, based on City of San Diego Treasury revenue audits.

---

We reviewed other municipalities that provide concession agreements at city beaches and found many coastal cities charge concessioners using municipal beaches more than 10 percent of gross revenues. **Exhibit 14** lists the percentage revenue paid to the municipalities. At least one other municipality’s contract administrative staff stated that a rate of 15 percent of gross revenue was a “standard rate.”

**Exhibit 14**

**Concession Agreements and Permits Terms, Other Coastal Cities**

Municipal Agency	Fees in % of Gross Revenue
City of Oceanside	12-15%
City of Long Beach*	15%
County of Los Angeles*	15%
City of Newport Beach **	20-45%
City of San Diego	10 %

\* 15 percent of gross revenue.

\*\* City of Newport sets up registration and handles the administration of the concessions.

Source: OCA generated, based on interviews and reviews of other municipalities’ contracts and permits.

The terms of the contracts and permits that municipalities listed above execute and grant are not completely analogous to the City’s concession program. For example, Oceanside’s concession contracts are with surf camps, fitness groups, and food operations. County of Los Angeles permits are for surf camps. However, San Diego is also unique in the provision of exclusive lifeguard support for the operation of the concession programs.

Increasing the percentage on gross revenue would bring the City’s concession contracts in line with other California cities. Additionally, the City could generate an additional \$115,077 to \$314,151 annually if the City changes contract terms to require percentage on gross revenue between 12 to 15 percent for both the surf camps and kayak rental businesses.

**Recommendation# 3** When preparing future RFPs for beach concession contracts, Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Services, in conjunction with the Real Estate Assets Department, should review the fee terms of the concession contracts to ensure that the City receives a percentage of annual concession revenue consistent with other municipalities’ contracts with concessionaires operating on public beaches. Additionally, when preparing the RFP, the departments should also review the level of operational support needed to ensure safe operations of concession activities. (Priority 3)

## Conclusion

The Fire-Rescue Department's Lifeguard Services Division (Lifeguard Services) could face a workforce skills gap due to potential retirements and projected operational expansion. Because lifeguard skills sets can take years to develop and internally certify, Lifeguard Services should develop a formalized workforce plan. This plan should include information and analysis that Lifeguard Services has already undertaken, and should be expanded to provide a road map that ensures its workforce possesses critical skills. The workforce plan should also incorporate a strategy to diversify the racial and gender make-up of the division.

Lifeguard Services provides a critical service to citizens and visitors and a revenue source that should be reviewed in the terms of the beach concession contracts. These contract terms should be evaluated to ensure that they are contracted at a reasonable market value.



## Other Pertinent Information

Many of the activities that Lifeguard Services performs are recorded through the incident slips that the lifeguards write up in response to providing services for the public. We reviewed the incident slips generated from Mission Beach and South Mission Beach in 2014 and found that more than half of Lifeguard Services' interactions or rescues were for beachgoers that resided outside San Diego County (County). The charts in **Exhibit 16** show recorded Lifeguard Services activities for the Mission Beach and South Mission Beach Lifeguard stations, and indicate that both water rescues and injury responses were provided to persons from outside of the County at a rate higher than for persons that reside in the County - with the exception of injuries and first aid at the South Mission Beach tower.

**Exhibit 16**

**Lifeguard Activities for Mission Beach, January to December 2014**

***Mission Beach – Water Rescues – January to December 2014***

Beachgoer Residence	Water Rescues	% of Total*
SD City	420	43%
SD County	32	3%
Visitors from outside SD County	535	54%

***Mission Beach – Injury and First Aid – January to December 2014***

Beachgoer Residence	Injuries	% of Total
SD City	214	37%
SD County	53	9%
Visitors from outside SD County	317	54%

***South Mission Beach – Water Rescues – January to December 2014***

Beachgoer Residence	Water Rescues	% of Total
SD City	103	40%
SD County	14	5%
Visitors from outside SD County	141	55%

***South Mission Beach – Injury and First Aid – January to December 2014***

Beachgoer Residence	Injuries	% of Total
SD City	132	57%
SD County	34	15%
Visitors from outside SD County	67	29%

\* These tallies and calculations exclude incidents in which the assisted individual's place of residence was unknown

Source: Lifeguard incident reports.

Our review shows that about half of the lifeguards' services at certain beaches are provided to tourists or people who reside outside of the City our County. This linkage between Lifeguard Services and tourism is a nexus that should be considered by City administration when formulating funding decisions that may affect Lifeguard Services.

# Recommendations

- Recommendation# 1** Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Services should develop a workforce plan that includes the following components:
- Involving management to develop a plan with measurable goals;
  - Identifying critical work functions required to maintain capacity and capabilities;
  - Identifying staffing requirements, including operational expansion plans;
  - Projecting workforce and identifying gaps;
  - Developing priorities and solutions to maintain needed capabilities and meet operational expansion goals; and
  - Periodically evaluating factors and goals that affect workforce planning. (Priority 3)
- Recommendation# 2** Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Services should, as part of the workforce plan's priorities and solutions, develop a recruiting plan that is tailored to increase ethnicity and gender diversity. The strategies to increase diversity of Lifeguard applicants and hires should include:
- Outreach to all communities;
  - Job advertisements in mediums like newspapers and job boards Lifeguard Services has not previously used, and that targets underrepresented groups;
  - Recruiting materials reflective of a diverse workforce;
  - Review of current hiring practices for the Lifeguard II position to evaluate options that do not exclude applicants that cannot afford to work seasonally and part-time for several years before they are able to obtain full-time employment; and
  - Establishment of a small diversity committee to periodically evaluate whether its diversification strategies are meeting its goals. (Priority 3)
- Recommendation# 3** When preparing future RFPs for beach concession contracts, Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Services, in conjunction with the Real Estate Assets Department, should review the fee terms of the concession contracts to ensure that the City receives a percentage of annual concession revenue consistent with other

**municipalities' contracts with concessionaires operating on public beaches. Additionally, when preparing the RFP, the departments should also review the level of operational support needed to ensure safe operations of concession activities.  
(Priority 3)**

# Appendix A: Audit Recommendation Priorities

## DEFINITIONS OF PRIORITY 1, 2, AND 3

### AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Office of the City Auditor maintains a priority classification scheme for audit recommendations based on the importance of each recommendation to the City, as described in the table below. While the City Auditor is responsible for providing a priority classification for recommendations, it is the City Administration’s responsibility to establish a target date to implement each recommendation taking into considerations its priority. The City Auditor requests that target dates be included in the Administration’s official response to the audit findings and recommendations.

Priority Class <sup>10</sup>	Description
1	Fraud or serious violations are being committed. Significant fiscal and/or equivalent non-fiscal losses are occurring. Costly and/or detrimental operational inefficiencies are taking place. A significant internal control weakness has been identified.
2	The potential for incurring significant fiscal and/or equivalent non-fiscal losses exists. The potential for costly and/or detrimental operational inefficiencies exists. The potential for strengthening or improving internal controls exists.
3	Operation or administrative process will be improved.

<sup>10</sup> The City Auditor is responsible for assigning audit recommendation priority class numbers. A recommendation which clearly fits the description for more than one priority class shall be assigned the higher number.

# Appendix B: Objectives, Scope and Methodology

**Objectives** In accordance with the City Auditor’s Fiscal Year 2015 Work Plan, we conducted an audit of the City of San Diego’s Fire-Rescue Department’s Lifeguard Services Division (Lifeguard Services). We concentrated our efforts on understanding their workforce planning strategies as well as seeking prospective new revenue and funding sources for Lifeguard Services. Specifically, our objectives were to:

1. Determine if Lifeguard Services has an adequate workforce plan and succession plan;
2. Identify needs and strategies to incorporate into its Five-Year Needs Assessment, including workforce diversification initiatives, and
3. Identify potential additional funding mechanisms to support Lifeguard Services’ Five Year Needs Assessment.

**Scope and Methodology** To determine whether Lifeguard Services has an adequate workforce plan and succession plan, we met with managers and staff from Lifeguard Services to learn about hiring processes, staffing protocols, training certifications and timeframes, and historical and anticipated attrition. We acquired historical data from 2004-2014 on promotions and attrition. We analyzed that information to identify trends such as length of time in each classification, length of service before separation, and how long it took lifeguards to achieve each rank.

In order to identify strategies to diversify the workforce, we interviewed Lifeguard Services’ leadership regarding their strategies to achieve increased diversification. We interviewed Junior Lifeguard Foundation leadership to discuss their operations and how it may impact future workforce diversification. We reviewed best practices for collecting data and conducting workforce analysis, including guides promulgated by the California Franchise Tax Board, the California State Auditor, and the Government Accountability Office. We also reviewed diversification strategies implemented by other public safety agencies.

To identify potential additional funding mechanisms per the last objective listed, we focused on three main areas.

First, we reviewed concession agreements between the City and kayak concessionaires and surf camp/schools, the inception of the permitting program, and the creation, staffing, and expansion of the Lifeguard Services' Ambassador Program. We reviewed concession contracts, and revenue audits of the contracts between the City and concessionaires. Additionally, we also conducted interviews with neighboring municipalities overseeing the operation of beach-front concessions, and reviewed the permitting and concession contracting procedures and fee payment structure.

Second, we assessed whether Lifeguard Services could apply for funds from the San Diego Tourism Marketing District. In performing this task, we analyzed calendar year 2014 incident slips collected by Lifeguard Services at Mission Beach and South Mission Beach to determine the amount of non-City of San Diego residents assisted by lifeguards. We reviewed studies to determine the number of non-City of San Diego visitors to Mission Beach and South Mission Beach and determine whether beaches were a primary attraction. We further reviewed studies produced by lifeguard agencies to determine whether advertising beaches to attract tourism related to a responsibility to fund lifeguard services to ensure safety.

Finally, we reviewed the funding application processes in place at the San Diego Tourism Marketing District to determine if Lifeguard Services would be a potentially viable candidate for funding.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

# Appendix C: Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Services Division, Classification Descriptions and Distinguishing Characteristics

## Existing Operational Positions (field work only)

Classification	Unique Qualifications/ Distinguishing Characteristics	Current Positions*
Lifeguard I	Seasonal, part-time, lifeguard position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency Response certificate,</li> <li>Completion of San Diego Lifeguard Academy's course "Intro to Open Water Lifeguarding."</li> <li>California Drivers License</li> </ul>	About 200**
Lifeguard II	Supervises staff and operations at lifeguard stations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CPR</li> <li>EMT</li> <li>Personal Water Craft certification</li> <li>SCUBA</li> <li>California Driver's License</li> <li>Main Tower certification</li> </ul>	57
Lifeguard III	Performs Lifeguard II duties and training functions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class B California Driver's License</li> <li>CPR</li> <li>EMT</li> <li>Level 3 boat operator</li> <li>Level 2 Boat operator</li> <li>Level 1 boat operator</li> <li>Boating Services Unit (BSU) Field Training Officer</li> <li>Personal Watercraft</li> <li>All terrain cycle instructor</li> <li>Cliff rescue vehicle operator</li> <li>SCUBA</li> </ul>	15
Sergeant	Serves as first-level supervisor over an assigned area of a district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two years' equivalent to Lifeguard II, performing an ocean lifeguard or boating safety patrol on a year round basis; OR one year experience ocean lifeguarding with the City of San Diego, AND one year of experience patrolling City of San Diego lakes and reservoirs by boats and motor vehicles to enforce security and safety regulations</li> <li>EMT</li> <li>Class B California Drivers License</li> </ul>	18



Performance Audit of the Fire-Rescue Department, Lifeguard Services Division

---

Lieutenant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervises subordinate lifeguards within an assigned lifeguard district or BSU; handles various special projects and administrative tasks.</li> <li>• One year as a Sergeant</li> <li>• Class B California Drivers License</li> </ul>	4
Safety Captain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directs and administers the operation of Lifeguard Services.</li> <li>• One year supervising an ocean lifeguard or boating safety patrol equivalent to Marine Safety Lieutenant; OR two years of experience supervising an ocean lifeguard or boating safety patrol enforcement function equivalent to Lifeguard Sergeant.</li> <li>• California Drivers License</li> </ul>	1

\* Staffing count was based on a position report created in November 2014.

\*\* This is about 200 staff to fill part time summer positions.

## Appendix D: Workforce Management Steps

### 1. Involve Top Management in Developing Plan.

This step includes reviewing the division's strategic plan, vision, and measurable goals and objectives, and timeframes for accomplishing them.

### 2. Identify Work Functions

This step includes the identification of work functions that must be performed in order to accomplish operational success. This should include expanded functions that Lifeguard Services has identified for future operations, such as River Rescue and Dive Team expansions identified in the Five-Year Needs Assessment.

### 3. Identify Staffing Requirements

To identify staffing requirements needed, includes identify future staffing requirements (based on operation expansion goals), both in number of staff and competencies and skills needed to meet operational goals.

### 4. Project Workforce Supply and Analyze Gaps

This step includes comparing current workforce and future staffing requirements using historical information and known retirement data.

## 5. Develop Priorities and Implement Solutions

Prioritizing the gaps should focus on:

A. Address the most critical needs first

- Identify critical skills needed for the position
- Identify small number of potential and interested candidates for the position

B. Continue to meet the department's strategic goals and outcomes

After critical needs are identified, ensure that services and outcome are not negatively impacted by identifying short-term ways to deal with priorities.

C. Develop a plan which identifies future workload limitations, as well as potential solutions

D. Ensure the department's limited resources address the most critical business needs

## 6. Evaluate/Update the Plan Periodically

### 7. Periodically assess what is working and what is not, and make adjustments as needed.

This would include addressing new workforce and organizational issues.

# Appendix E: Fire-Rescue Department's Lifeguard Services Division Long-Term Plan to Increase the Diversity of the Applicant Pool

The Fire-Rescue Department, including Lifeguard Services, strongly supports the City of San Diego's (City) Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Goals. The value of prioritizing people and the importance of promoting diversity as a strength is a stated goal within the City's Strategic Plan.

Lifeguard Services supports a workforce that reflects the diversity of the San Diego community. With this in mind, Lifeguard Services has a community education, outreach and recruitment plan designed to have a positive impact on the entire San Diego region. The goal is to advance drowning prevention programs and improve water safety. Additionally, Lifeguard Services seeks to inspire people from communities all over San Diego to become proficient swimmers and qualified applicants for lifeguard positions. One result of these ongoing efforts will be a more diverse workforce in terms of gender and ethnicity through a growing and increasingly diverse applicant pool. Here is a summary of Lifeguard Services' current community education, outreach and recruitment efforts:

## Waterproofing San Diego

San Diego Junior Lifeguards (SDJG) will continue its comprehensive four-phase aquatic outreach program. The goal continues to be "waterproofing" the youth of San Diego through aquatic education and drowning prevention. We have titled this effort the **"Waterproofing San Diego"** initiative. The program includes water safety presentations, swim lessons, an aquatic experience at the ocean or a local pool, and the opportunity to enroll in the SDJG program if the youth pass the required swim test.

In order to accomplish this goal, SDJG will continue to cultivate relationships with our strategic partners. These partners include: the San Diego Junior Lifeguard Foundation, the San Diego Parks & Recreation Department (Aquatics Division), the San Diego City Unified School District, and the San Diego area YMCAs. In addition to these partners, additional assistance may be sought from other San Diego area community groups and organizations.

Phase 1 is Water Safety Presentations/Aquatic Education. During the year, lifeguards will conduct water safety presentations to specific grades. Presentations include:

Elementary Schools [5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade] - Showing of a short story video that will educate the students on how to prepare and remain safe around the ocean environment. After the video, the presenter will provide a short aquatic safety lecture, allow for a question and answer period, and then provide written material to reinforce the information presented. At the conclusion of the presentation, information on "Learn to Swim" (Phase 2) programs in the area and contact information will be dispersed.

High School [9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Grade] - In collaboration with high school physical education departments, SDJG representatives will provide lectures and videos that focus on the aquatic activities described in the *Physical Education Standards for California Public Schools*.

Phase 2 is "Learn to Swim." During the year, students will attend swim lessons at a community partner pool. Upon finishing the swim lessons, students will complete the SDJG program swim test and tryout. Students that meet the swim test time requirement will be provided enrollment and scholarship information for the SDJG program. Funding for the swim lessons will be provided by the San Diego Junior Lifeguard Foundation (SDJGF) and our community partners.

Phase 3 is "Bridge to the Beach/Pool". Upon completion of swim lessons, students will experience a half day at a San Diego beach or a local community pool. During this time, they will participate in a safety lecture, swimming, board surfing, body boarding, snorkeling and paddling. Funding sources for the "Bridge to the Beach/Pool" activity would be the same as those listed above in Phase 2 ("Learn to Swim)."

Phase 4 is the San Diego Junior Lifeguard Program. Students that pass the swim test will be provided the opportunity to enroll in the SDJG program and be provided a scholarship (subject to meeting the financial requirements). Funding for the scholarships will be provided by the SDJG program, the Junior Guard Foundation, and our community partners.

#### Junior Lifeguard Program

The San Diego Junior Lifeguard Program (SDJG) offers San Diego youth an opportunity to learn and train with professional City of San Diego lifeguards. Junior Lifeguards gain a wide variety of skills and knowledge. The program's educational and physical activities include: ocean awareness and safety, water rescue techniques, familiarity with local beaches, maintaining mental and physical fitness, environmental awareness, healthy habits, first aid skills, open water swimming, surfing, paddling, snorkeling, and other skills to prepare them for life.

Mission Statement - San Diego Junior Lifeguards (JGs) is a team of lifeguard professionals who provide a fun and safe aquatic education to the youth of San Diego through developing confidence, mental and physical fitness, and respect for one another and the coastal environment. The program's motto is "*Skills for Life!*"

In 2014, approximately 1,200 youth (aged 9 - 17) participated in the SDJG during two four-week sessions. An additional 200-plus youth (aged 7-8) participated in the "Introduction to Ocean Awareness" (JGrommets) program during two one-week sessions.

SDJG provided approximately 100 scholarships for San Diego youth. This included 24 scholarships for the Jackie Robinson YMCA, 32 for the City of San Diego municipal pool located in City Heights, and 43 open application scholarships. Just over eight percent of SDJG participants are scholarship recipients.

Twenty-nine paid student interns (aged 16-17) were hired to be assistant instructors and provide general support for the SDJG. Each year, approximately five of these paid interns go on to be hired as Lifeguard I seasonal employees with the City of San Diego. This past year, two previous interns were hired as Lifeguard II full-time employees with the City of San Diego.

#### Lifeguard Division Outreach

During 2014, the San Diego Lifeguard Division, in partnership with the San Diego Junior Lifeguard Foundation and other community partners, continued its aquatic outreach efforts. Provided below is a list of some of the 2014 outreach accomplishments:

- Provided aquatic education lectures for over 10,000 youth and adults;
- Conducted the spring Community and Aquatic Safety Awareness Team (CASAT) program at the Jackie Robinson YMCA with SDPD;
- Provided 3,000 free swim lessons to underserved youth;
- Conducted over 15 "Bridge to Beach" activities for San Diego youth;
- Provided funding to open the Barrio Station pool for July and August;
- Supplied JG uniforms for the Jackie Robinson and City Heights scholarship JGs;
- Provided funding for the City Heights Parent/Tot swim program; and
- Provided funding for the Lincoln Adaptive PE program at MLK pool.

In 2015, outreach efforts will place an emphasis on the philosophy of “7 to 17.” This philosophy focuses on physically and aquatically preparing youth for the Junior Lifeguard program, scaffolding their education while in Junior Lifeguards, and preparing them to compete, should they choose, for a position as a seasonal oceanfront lifeguard.

**The “7 to 17” continuum:**

“7 to 17”					
Age:	Toddler to 7	Age 7 to 8	Age 9 to 11	Age 12 to 13	Age 14 to 17
Skill:	Learn to Swim	Introduction to Ocean Awareness	Develop Ocean Skills	Strengthen/Expand Ocean Skills	Learn Basic Ocean Lifeguarding Skills
Program:	Outreach	JGrommets	Level "C" JGs	Level "B" JGs	"A" JGs/Interns

Through the “7 to 17” philosophy, the program is hoping to increase the number of teenagers (aged 14 to 17) involved in the JG program to 25%, and thus increase the applicant pool for the seasonal lifeguard positions. With the implementation of CPR training and SCUBA discovery this past summer, and future activities such as cliff rescue familiarization, the JG program plans to reach the goal of 25% of all JGs being A’s by 2017.

Specifically planned 2015 outreach efforts that will focus on the “7 to 17” philosophy include:

- Providing five to six scholarships (each) to Jackie Robinson YMCA and City Heights for the “Introduction to Ocean Awareness” (JGrommets) program for 7 and 8 year olds.
- In partnership with the City of San Diego Parks & Recreation Department, continue the current Parent/Tot Program at City Heights and expand the program to the MLK and Colina del Sol pools.
- Establish the Parent/Tot Program at the Jackie Robinson YMCA.
- Start a “Bridge to Beach” activity for youth with autism.
- Provide free swim lessons for the sixth grade class of The Nativity School.
- Open the Barrio Station Pool for a longer period of time this coming summer.
- Continue to work with San Diego Unified School District to achieve our goal of “Waterproofing” San Diego youth.

**Recruitment**

The Lifeguard Division has a recruitment team consisting of several seasonal lifeguards and is led by the Junior Lifeguard Program Manager. The recruitment team activities include:

- Prior to the September tryout (the first tryout), a “trial tryout” is conducted where interested individuals can test their swimming ability on the actual test course. Because it is prior to the first tryout, it allows individuals needing improvement with their swimming skills additional time to prepare. Information about this trial tryout is disseminated through a blanket email to the Lifeguard Services Division. The email encourages all lifeguards to share this information with beach patrons, the public, friends, and family. Approximately 30 people attended this trial tryout last year.
- An email is sent to all the local community colleges’ aquatic programs with tryout and regional academy information. Last year this included Mesa, Miramar, Southwestern, Grossmont, and Palomar College.
- Last year, presentations were made at three local colleges - Mesa, Southwestern, and UCSD.
- The City of San Diego Unified School District sent out tryout fliers to all 16 high schools. The information was sent to athletic directors, career counselors, and aquatic coaches.

In 2015, recruitment efforts will begin earlier in the year. In addition to current recruitment activities, an emphasis will be placed on contacting more colleges, high schools, and aquatic programs during the spring (prior to the end of the school year) and to provide interested applicants with “Lifeguard Tryout” information sheets.

#### Miramar Regional Academy

Prior to 1997, the Lifeguard Services Division conducted tryouts and interviews of new lifeguard candidates. Those selected were hired and sent to an exclusive City training academy. Unfortunately, for those candidates not selected, there was no method or means to gain the required training. In 1997, regional lifeguard agencies partnered with Miramar Community College and developed the Open Water Lifeguard Training Series. This Miramar College program was modeled after similar programs developed for police and fire agencies. One of the classes offered is the Regional Lifeguard Academy. The City of San Diego now conducts tryouts and interviews of Lifeguard I candidates and those who are selected are paid to attend the Regional Academy. Those who are not selected are encouraged to attend the academy as an “open enrollee”. Open enrollees who successfully complete the academy can return to the City the following year, tryout and interview again. These candidates benefit from the training and are better prepared for the interview. Under this model, rather than excluding individuals who are not initially successful in the hiring process, candidates who wish to be lifeguards are now given the opportunity to participate in the same training and earn a necessary certificate. It is a more inclusive practice, and increases opportunity for the applicant pool.





THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 22, 2015

TO: Eduardo Luna, City Auditor

FROM: Javier Mainar, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: Management Response to Performance Audit of Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Division

---

Fire-Rescue management has reviewed the City Auditor's recommendations in the performance audit examining of the Fire-Rescue Department, Lifeguard Division and consulted with the Real Estate Assets Department involved in administering beach concession activities discussed in Recommendation #3. The consolidated management response to each of the audit recommendations is documented below.

**Recommendation #1:** Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Services should develop a workforce plan that includes the following components:

- Involving management to develop a plan with measurable goals;
- Identifying critical work functions required to maintain capacity and capabilities;
- Identifying staffing requirements including operational expansion plans;
- Projecting workforce and identify gaps;
- Developing priorities and solutions to maintain needed capabilities and meet operations expansion goals;
- Periodically evaluating factors and goals that affect workforce planning.

**Management Response: Agree**

Management agrees with the recommendation. Fire-Rescue, Lifeguard Division will develop a Workforce Plan which addresses the rubrics listed in Recommendation #1. Current staffing, operational and training plans will be reviewed, as well as the Five Year Needs Assessment. The Boating Safety Unit Succession Plan will be incorporated as part of the Workforce Plan. Job descriptions and requirements for Lifeguard II and Lifeguard III will be reviewed. Additionally, this plan will incorporate a recruiting element tailored to increase ethnicity and gender diversity as identified in Recommendation #2. This plan will be completed by November 30, 2015 and be implemented over the subsequent twelve months.

**Recommendation #2:** Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Services should, as part of the workforce plan's priorities and solutions, develop a recruiting plan that is tailored to increase ethnicity and gender diversity. The strategies to increase diversity of Lifeguard applicants and hires should include:

- Outreach to all communities;

Eduardo Luna, City Auditor

May 21, 2015

- Job advertisements in mediums like newspapers and job boards Lifeguard Services has not previously used, and that targets underrepresented groups;
- Recruiting materials reflective of a diverse workforce;
- Review of current hiring practices for the Lifeguard II position to evaluate options that do not exclude applicants that cannot afford to work seasonally and part-time for several years before they are able to obtain fulltime employment; and
- Establishment of a small diversity committee to periodically evaluate whether its diversification strategies are meeting its goals.

**Management Response: Agree**

Management agrees with the recommendation. Fire-Rescue, Lifeguard Division currently has an extensive list of community education, outreach and recruitment efforts being utilized. We will augment our existing recruitment plan with the points listed Recommendation #2 and include it in the Workforce Plan. The recruitment plan will be updated by November 30, 2015. Some new elements of the recruiting plan will be implemented by September 30, 2015, including: outreach to all communities; advertising in various media forums to promote a diverse applicant pool, and changing recruiting materials to be reflective of a diverse workforce.

**Recommendation #3:** When preparing future RFPs for beach concession contracts, Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Service, in conjunction with the Real Estate Assets Department, should review the fee terms of the concession contracts to ensure that the City receives a percentage of annual concession revenue consistent with other municipalities' contracts with concessionaires operating on public beaches. Additionally, when preparing the RFP, the departments should also review the level of operational support needed to ensure safe operations of concession activities.

**Management Response: Agree**

Management agrees with the recommendation. Fire-Rescue Lifeguard Division and Real Estate Assets Department will review fee terms with other municipalities who allow a similar beach concession activity when preparing future RFPs. Additionally, staff will evaluate the needed operational support for those concession activities. Staff will review the Kayak Concession fee terms in 2018 prior it either exercising the first one year extension or issuing a new RFP. Staff will review fee terms for Surf Camps in 2019. If a yet to be identified beach concession activity requires an RFP sooner, the review and evaluation as described above would occur.



Javier Mainar  
Fire Chief

JM/RW/rw

cc: Stacey LoMedico, Assistant Chief Operating Officer  
Cybele Thompson, Director of Real Estate Assets Department  
Rick Wurts, Lifeguard Chief