

MOTION

PUBLIC SAFETY

Responding to threats to public safety is arguably the most essential service that the City provides. Part of that role involves being able to quickly answer calls for help from residents, primarily those coming in through our 911 system. However, the City is experiencing ongoing challenges in our 911 system, resulting in some emergency and non-urgent calls not being answered within an acceptable timeframe.

In LA, both emergency and non-emergency calls are answered primarily through 911, housed in LAPD's Communications Division. Issues needing immediate attention, such as urgent medical issues, or violence and crimes in progress, are triaged to available 911 operators. Non-emergency calls, such as those reporting a burglary that already took place in a home, a car crash with no injuries, or mental health crises that pose no immediate threat, are answered when operators become available. 911 also serves as the primary dispatch mechanism for unarmed and alternative response teams, like CIRCLE and the Unarmed Model of Crisis Response (UMCR). This model means that calls for unarmed and alternative response are only answered when operators become available.

On average, emergency calls are taking longer to answer than state standards although there have been improvements in the last two years. State standards mandate that the city answer 90% of all 911 calls within 15 seconds. In 2024, 57.43% of emergency calls were answered in 15 seconds or less with non-emergency calls taking longer to answer. According to LAPD's data, the average wait time for non-emergency calls to be answered by 911 was 3 min and 40 seconds. However, wait times can be much longer during periods of high call volume. In one recent and widely-covered incident, a caller waited an hour on hold before they were able to report a burglary that had already taken place.

Long wait times are directly related to the shortage of trained 911 call operators, called Police Service Representatives (PSRs). Recent efforts (C.F. 23-0255) have made headway in addressing vacancies among PSRs. Improvements in marketing for vacancies, including using digital advertising, have doubled the number of applications, and the Department implemented improvements to aid in retention of current staff. In the 2024 calendar year, the LAPD Communications Division hired 144 new PSRs, of which 115 are currently in training. However, training takes a full year, and not all trainees end up ultimately remaining in the job. As a result, staffing shortages persist with 45 PSR vacancies remaining.

Addressing long wait times for 911 calls for all calls for service is extremely important: it can be destabilizing and traumatic when the city does not pick up the phone when you need help, whether in an emergency or for non-urgent issues. Several potential strategies could be considered. If staffing levels for PSRs improve such that emergency calls consistently meet the state-mandated response time of 15 seconds, the City could assign dedicated PSRs to exclusively handle these non-emergency calls. The City could also establish a

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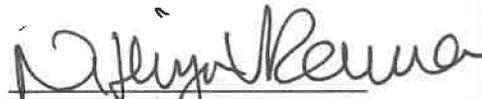
separate non-emergency call line, either within a City department or through contracting with an external entity, which could handle non-emergency calls, dispatch unarmed responders when appropriate, and provide support with police filings and handle administrative inquiries that don't require a physical response, alleviating the burden placed on PSRs and allowing them to focus on emergency 911 calls. Such a strategy would be most successful if combined with an education campaign for city residents about appropriate usage.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) and Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), in consultation with the Mayor's Office of Community Safety, to report back within 30 days with recommendations to improve 911 call times for both emergency and non-emergency calls for service.

This report should include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. The staffing outlook for LAPD's Communications Division, including the projected impact of incoming Police Service Representatives (PSRs), as well as a detailed timeline and pipeline analysis of PSRs currently in training, and expected attrition rates for existing staff.
2. An assessment of how the incoming PSRs are expected to impact emergency call response times and non-emergency hold times.
3. An assessment of the impacts of integrating technological interventions for non-emergency call-taking successfully utilized in other jurisdictions.
4. An evaluation of the feasibility of establishing dedicated non-emergency operators within the Communications Division to enhance service efficiency.
5. An evaluation of the feasibility of creating a separate line tasked with dispatching unarmed crisis response teams, filing reports, and providing non-emergency assistance — including recommendations on where such a line could be housed, either within the City or externally.
6. Recommendations for the kind of public education program required for effective rollout of any new efforts.

PRESENTED BY



NITHYA RAMAN
Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY



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