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## City Council

# Olympia Fire Department Basic Life Support Transport and CARES Programs Feasibility Study Overview and Basic Life Support Transport Provided by Private Ambulance Services in Olympia Availability and Response Briefing

**Agenda Date:** 9/13/2022  
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**Title**

Olympia Fire Department Basic Life Support Transport and CARES Programs Feasibility Study Overview and Basic Life Support Transport Provided by Private Ambulance Services in Olympia Availability and Response Briefing

**Recommended Action**

**Committee Recommendation:**

Not referred to a committee.

**City Manager Recommendation:**

Receive an overview of the Olympia Fire Department Basic Life Support Transport and CARES programs feasibility study and a briefing on Basic Life Support transport provided by private ambulance services in Olympia availability and response; providing results of the City's 60-day notices to make improvements to private ambulance services operating within Olympia.

**Report**

**Issue:**

Whether to receive an overview of the Olympia Fire Department Basic Life Support Transport and CARES programs feasibility study and a briefing on Basic Life Support transport provided by private ambulance services in Olympia availability and response; providing results of the City's 60-day notices to make improvements to private ambulance services operating within Olympia.

**Staff Contact:**

Mike Buchanan, Interim Deputy Chief, 360.753.8459

**Presenter(s):**

Todd Carson, Interim Fire Chief, Olympia Fire Department

Mike Buchanan, Interim Deputy Chief, Olympia Fire Department

Martin Chaw, Consultant, Financial Consulting Solutions Group (FCS Group)

**Background and Analysis:**

The Olympia City Council approved a resolution on June 21, 2022, finding that Basic Life Support (BLS) transport provided by private ambulance services in Olympia to be inadequate, provides that the study of the issue shall be published, and directs 60-day notices be issued by the City Manager to private ambulance services operating within Olympia to make improvements meeting the generally accepted medical standards and reasonable levels of service required.

The Olympia Fire Department will brief City Council on the results of BLS transport services provided by private ambulance services in Olympia during the 60-day notice window, and Martin Chaw, Consultant from FCS Group, will provide an overview of the Olympia Fire Department Basic Life Support Transport and CARES programs feasibility study.

The Olympia City Council received a presentation on May 24, 2022, regarding the Olympia Fire Department's concerns about private ambulance services transport availability degradation concurrent with an increase in total call volume, and its negative impact on BLS levels for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) resources to residents within the City of Olympia, but deferred the decision to June 21, 2022 to hear from emergency services partners regarding their concerns.

The Olympia Fire Department engaged in dialogue with our response partners, including both regional private ambulance stakeholders, American Medical Response (AMR) and Olympic Ambulance. The intent of these conversations was to ensure questions were answered and to also understand any perceived concerns of a City BLS Transport program.

On June 2, the Olympia Fire Department presented the BLS Transport Program proposal to the Thurston County Operations Committee. After answering several questions from the committee, a motion was called to vote for support the proposal, it passed unanimously. Finally, on June 14 -15, the Olympia Fire Department will present the BLS Transport Program proposal to both the City of Tumwater Public Safety Committee, and then to the Thurston County EMS Council. The Olympia Fire Department will be happy to share any concerns with the Olympia City Council that may arise as a result of these conversations.

The City engaged the professional services of FCS Group to study, analyze, and report among other issues, the adequacy of BLS transport services within the City. FCS Group prepared and presented its report to the Finance Committee on April 20, 2022.

The Finance Committee found that BLS transport services within the City were inadequate and recommended that FCS Group's report and analysis be presented to the full Council at a regularly scheduled business meeting.

**An internal BLS transport program would offer the following benefits to the City:**

- Improved overall service levels to the community
- Offset program costs
- Reduction in response times
- Increase in unit availability
- Reduction of service maintenance on larger response apparatus

- Potential to improve the current WSRB rating from 2 to 1 (a higher rating),
- possibly resulting in decreased insurance premium

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

The degradation in private ambulance services availability, along with an increase in total call volume for BLS transport services, has had a negative impact on service levels on the Olympia Fire Department's EMS services in the City of Olympia.

**Options:**

1. Receive an overview of the Olympia Fire Department Basic Life Support Transport and CARES programs feasibility study, and a briefing on BLS transport provided by private ambulance services in Olympia availability and response; providing results of the City's 60-day notices to make improvements to private ambulance services operating within Olympia.
2. Do not receive an overview of the Olympia Fire Department Basic Life Support Transport and CARES programs feasibility study or a briefing on BLS transport provided by private ambulance services in Olympia availability and response; providing results of the City's 60-day notices to make improvements to private ambulance services operating within Olympia.
3. Receive the overview and the briefing at another time.

**Financial Impact:**

Should the Olympia Fire Department move forward with implementing a new BLS Transport/CARES program, the estimated initial cost is \$4.1 million, and will include substantial insurance billing and State GEMT revenue to offset the expenditures realized in year two. Analysis completed by FCS Group shows that the programs should be able to fully recompense the initial \$4.1 million investment by year 2029 - 2031.

**Attachments:**

Olympia Fire Department Presentation  
FCS Group Presentation  
Final Report