

Mission Grove Neighborhood Alliance (MGNA)

Public Affairs Committee (PAC) After Public Meeting Memorandum

Date of Meeting: April 8, 2026

Prepared For: *MGNA Board of Directors and Community Stakeholders*

Subject: *City of Riverside – City Manager Presentation: Public Safety, Measure Z, and Funding Environment*

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I. Purpose and Context

On April 8, 2026, the Mission Grove Neighborhood Alliance (MGNA) hosted a public meeting featuring a formal slide presentation by the City of Riverside City Manager, along with other presentations from additional municipal representatives. The slide presentation addressed the City's current fiscal condition, public safety operations, infrastructure investments, and long-term economic development strategy.

This memorandum provides a structured summary of key information presented and offers analytical observations intended to inform MGNA leadership, community stakeholders, and the public. All observations are derived from the City's slide presentation content.

II. Overview of City Presentation

The City Manager's presentation conveyed a forward-looking narrative emphasizing:

- Continued economic growth and development activity
- Infrastructure investment and quality of life enhancements
- Public safety initiatives, particularly in policing and fire
- A balanced budget framework supported in part by Measure Z revenues

These themes collectively present a city positioned for continued expansion and regional competitiveness.

III. Public Safety: Operational Conditions and Emerging Risk Indicators

While the presentation highlighted positive developments in policing, the Fire Department portion provided a detailed operational assessment indicating increasing system demand and capacity strain.

Key data presented includes:

- Approximately 35% increase in fire service calls since 2015

- No corresponding increase in staffing, equipment or facilities over multiple years
- Current average response time of 7 minutes 38 seconds, exceeding the stated target of 6 minutes
- Identification of system overload conditions during periods of concurrent emergency incidents
- Critical Public Safety Consideration

The presentation further explained that emergency response time is directly correlated with survivability outcomes:

- Brain injury risk increases within 4–6 minutes without oxygen
- Fire conditions can transition to full structural involvement within minutes
- Each minute of delay in trauma response increases mortality risk

Based on these parameters, the currently reported response time exceeds widely recognized life-safety thresholds. This condition represents a material public safety concern, particularly when viewed in the context of increasing service demand and projected population growth.

IV. Fire Department Capacity and Future Demand

City-provided projections indicate that:

- Emergency call volume is expected to continue increasing through 2040
- High fire-risk areas within the city have expanded
- Current staffing levels remain below recommended operational benchmarks
- Without adjustments, the system may experience sustained overload conditions in future years

These findings reflect a condition in which service demand is growing faster than response capacity, with implications for both emergency reliability and community safety outcomes.

V. Measure Z: Funding Structure and Limitations

Measure Z, approved by voters in 2016 to support essential City services, including fire protection, was presented as a key component of the City's general funding structure.

The City Manager's presentation indicates that:

- Measure Z revenues are currently fully committed
- Near-term discretionary capacity is limited
- Identified Fire Department funding needs extend beyond currently available Measure Z resources

City projections further indicate that portions of future fire service requirements remain unfunded across multiple fiscal years, even under current budget assumptions.

VI. Federal Nexus & Funding Exposure

The presentation identified that the City operates within a broader fiscal environment that includes approximately \$220 million in grant funding within the current fiscal framework.

Funding of this scale typically reflects participation from multiple federal programs, which may include agencies such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the U.S. Department of Transportation, among others.

Federal assistance programs are generally structured around:

- Defined public purpose objectives
- Local implementation and administrative discretion
- Localized periodic reporting, certification, and audit requirements
- Integrated Funding Observation

When viewed collectively, the City's presentation reflects the coexistence of:

- Constrained local funding capacity (Measure Z fully allocated)
- Increasing demand in a critical public safety system (Fire Department)
- Substantial external funding participation (federal grants)

This intersection introduces a heightened level of fiscal and programmatic sensitivity, particularly with respect to the alignment between:

- Funding sources and intended purposes
- Resource allocation decisions and reporting
- Measurable service delivery outcomes

In environments where multiple funding streams converge, maintaining clear alignment between these elements is essential to sustaining both public accountability and program integrity.

VII. Governance and Auditing Considerations

The conditions reflected in the presentation highlight an important distinction in public sector oversight:

- "Letter of the Law" compliance, reflected in balanced budgets and adherence to formal requirements

- “Spirit of the Law” performance, reflected in the effectiveness of service delivery outcomes

The City’s presentation demonstrates that while formal fiscal compliance is maintained, operational indicators, particularly in fire response, reflect emerging capacity constraints.

This distinction underscores the importance of integrating:

- Compliance-based auditing
- Performance-based and risk-oriented evaluation to ensure that public resources are effectively aligned with essential service demands and required reporting.

VIII. Observational Summary

Based on the information presented, the following observations are offered:

- Riverside continues to experience economic growth and development expansion
- Fire Department data reflects increasing demand and measurable capacity strain
- Response times currently exceed critical survivability thresholds
- Measure Z funding is fully allocated and limited in flexibility
- The City operates within a multi-source funding environment, including substantial federal participation
- Alignment between funding structures and service outcomes remains an important area for continued evaluation

IX. Conclusion

The April 8, 2026, City Manager presentation provides a comprehensive overview of Riverside’s fiscal position and development trajectory, while also identifying areas where operational demand, particularly in emergency response, may be exceeding current capacity and funding structures.

The convergence of:

- Increasing public safety demand
- Constrained local funding mechanisms
- Substantial external funding participation

presents a policy relevant condition requiring continued attention to resource alignment, performance outcomes, and long-term service sustainability.

Forward-Looking Statement

Based on the information presented and the analytical considerations outlined in this memorandum, it is reasonable to anticipate that further review of funding structures, allocation practices, and performance outcomes may be warranted.

Such review may occur through both investigative analysis and public-facing reporting and additional evaluation within appropriate governmental, regulatory, or oversight frameworks, consistent with standard practices in public-sector financial and programmatic accountability.

End of Memorandum