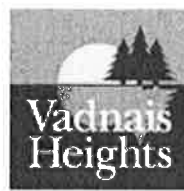


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City Administrator

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The City of Vadnais Heights  
800 East County Road E  
Vadnais Heights, MN 55127

## *Memorandum:*

TO: Mayor Fletcher and Council Members  
Citizens of Vadnais Heights

FROM: Kevin P. Watson, City Administrator

DATE: February 1, 2017

SUBJECT: Closest Unit Dispatching Agreement

As many are aware, there has been a mutual aid agreement in Ramsey County and it still exists. However, an additional option is being discussed amongst Ramsey County Fire Departments and Organizations. This option is to automatically dispatch the closest emergency response units regardless of jurisdictional boundaries for emergency events identified as confirmed fires, cardiac events, and trouble breathing incidents. Dispatching would monitor GPS units on the fire equipment to send the closest unit, which we currently do not have.

Currently we have Auto Aid and Mutual agreements with neighboring departments to assist on fire incidents and on other incidents when requested. Generally speaking, this new agreement is going to most directly affect calls related to cardiac arrests or trouble breathing incidents.

The City discussed this matter at a workshop on April 6, 2016. See the link below and on the webpage for the packet material. At that time, it was felt the Closest Unit Dispatching Agreement provided no more benefit to the citizens of Vadnais Heights than the current Auto Aid Agreements we have in place with our neighboring cities. We are happy to respond to auto and mutual aid calls in our neighboring communities and vice versa. It was also believed that given our geography we would likely provide more services than we would receive in return putting more costs on our taxpayers. We are already a net giver to the agreements currently in place. Below are some statistics related to calls for auto aid both given and received.

### **Auto Aid / Mutual Aid given and received**

Aid was received from Lake Johanna, Little Canada and White Bear Lake Fire Departments for five incidents in Vadnais Heights.

- All building fires
- 4 auto aid
- 1 mutual aid

Aid was given to White Bear Lake, Little Canada, North Oaks, Shoreview, and Maplewood Fire Departments for 19 incidents.

- Building fires, medical incidents, and motor vehicle accidents
- 8 auto aid
- 11 mutual aid

The City is still in the midst of a transition from paid on call firefighters that respond from their homes to duty crew firefighters that respond directly from the station. The transition is a slow process as the cost is significant

to pay for firefighters to be at the station 24hours per day. Currently we have firefighters staffed weekdays 8am-9pm, weekends and holidays 24hours. 24hours staffing will improve response time to emergencies.

**Response time staffed vs. un-staffed (1<sup>st</sup> Engine out of station)**

Staffed: 1 minutes 56 seconds  
 Un-staffed: 6 minutes 5 seconds

**Percentage of time staffed:**

Currently: 113 staffed hours a week (67%)  
 July 2017: 135 staffed hours a week (80%)  
 January 2018 (Proposed): 168 staffed hours a week (100%)

The Closest Unit Dispatching program is a good program if all cities/departments provided the same level of service. In Ramsey County, that is not the case as some departments only provide fire response. Some provide some, not all, medical services. Some provide full ambulance services. For example, Little Canada Fire is a paid on call system and only provides fire response and cardiac arrests. North Oaks and Gem Lake contract their fire response. Since the new proposal focuses on cardiac arrests, the potential for us to be called to those communities is significantly more. For the nine calls in Vadnais Heights in 2016, only two would have had a quicker response time than other departments. See below.

**Cardiac Arrest**

In 2016, there were nine cardiac arrest incidents in Vadnais Heights. Five occurred in the south stations response area and four occurred in the north stations response area.

The table below shows drive times to these addresses from both the Vadnais Heights South Station and Lake Johanna Station 120 (Hodgson & 96):

Problem	Address	City	Response Date	Drive Time	
				VH South	LJ 120
Cardiac Arrest	3920 McMenemy St	Vadnais Heights	1/15/2016 7:00	4 min	6 Min
Cardiac Arrest	4559 Bramblewood Ave	Vadnais Heights	4/10/2016 11:42	8 min	5 min
Cardiac Arrest	4206 Bridgewood Ter	Vadnais Heights	4/10/2016 18:07	6 min	8 min
Cardiac Arrest	875 Vadnais Dr	Vadnais Heights	6/9/2016 13:30	1 min	12 min
Cardiac Arrest	4559 Bramblewood Ave	Vadnais Heights	10/15/2016 15:04	8 min	5 min
Cardiac Arrest	3317 Greenbrier St	Vadnais Heights	10/17/2016 16:15	3 min	11 min
Cardiac Arrest	Highway 61 / Wb I694	Vadnais Heights	10/25/2016 8:55	5 min	11 min
Cardiac Arrest	3328 Arcade St	Vadnais Heights	11/24/2016 14:23	1 min	10 min
Cardiac Arrest	3323 Jansen Way	Vadnais Heights	12/1/2016 13:16	2 min	11 min

In addition, with the increasing number of assisted living facilities, it is expect the number of cardiac calls at those locations will only grow. Below are drive times via google maps to the new facilities around our community.

		DRIVE TIME TO LOCATION FROM			
		VADNAIS HTS SOUTH	LAKE JO #120 HODGSON/96	WBLFD #1 4701 HWY 61	LITTLE CANADA 35E/LITTLE C. RD
LOCATION	CITY				
5919 CENTERVILLE RD - WAVERLY GARDENS	NORTH OAKS	8 MINUTES	11 MINUTES	10 MINUTES	
4650 CENTERVILLE RD - WHITE BEAR HGTS	WHITE BEAR LAKE	6 MINUTES	6 MINUTES	7 MINUTES	
3300 RICE ST - CARDIGAN RIDGE	LITTLE CANADA	6 MINUTES	6 MINUTES		8 MINUTES

As currently proposed, the City Council has decided not to adopt the new program. For now, we believe the current auto-aid model meets our needs. If something changes, we would be happy to reconsider.

<http://mn-vadnaisheights.civicplus.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/910?fileID=657>

Should anyone wish to speak further about this issue, please contact myself or Fire Chief Ed Leier at the City.

Sincerely,

Kevin Watson  
City Administrator

Ed Leier  
Fire Chief