

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE November 13, 2023

TO Honorable Members of the Public Safety Committee
Cara Mendelsohn (Chair), Kathy Stewart (Vice Chair), Tennell Atkins, Jesse Moreno,
Gay Donnell Willis

SUBJECT **Update Regarding DFR Blocker Apparatus Program to Protect Emergency Responders
at the Scene of Highway Accidents**

Dallas Fire-Rescue (DFR) places safety at the forefront of priorities. Among the most dangerous response components for first responders are incidents on freeways and highways. As you are aware, DFR implemented a Blocker Program beginning in 2019 to improve the safety of operations during emergency response to major thoroughfares throughout the city of Dallas. Please accept this memorandum as an update on the current status of the program as well as plans for expansion.

The original apparatus utilized as blockers were three out of service Fire Engines that were retrofitted with safety signage and arrow boards for traffic control and filled with sand for collision absorption. Of the original three, one unit is still in service (one was lost due to catastrophic collision damage and the other from mechanical failure).

To augment the original blocker, DFR recently purchased three attenuator type blocker vehicles. These were procured through a \$300,000 grant from the Texas Department of Transportation. Currently, these units are in the final stages of completion (markings, equipment, etc.). After procedures and personnel training are completed, these units are expected to be placed in service Monday, November 27th. DFR is currently pursuing a three-year maintenance contract for these units, and is expected to be submitted to Council for final approval in December.

Additionally, DFR is collaborating with the Dallas Police Department (DPD) to create a plan to utilize both department's existing Blocker vehicle resources in the most efficient manner possible and provide a wider range of response capabilities of the Blocker units.

Finally, DFR is currently partnering with the Police and Aviation Departments in the creation of a new pilot program to evaluate the possibility of utilizing wrecker company vendors to provide Blocker Vehicles for traffic management. This will allow expansion of the blocker program and increase safety for first responders and residents. A Request for Proposals (RFP) draft is in development with a target date for pilot program launch of mid-2024. The goal of this program is to provide Blocker services city-wide.

Should you have questions, or need additional information, please contact Fire Chief Dominique Artis at Dominique.artis@dallasfire.gov.

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Deputy City Manager

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