

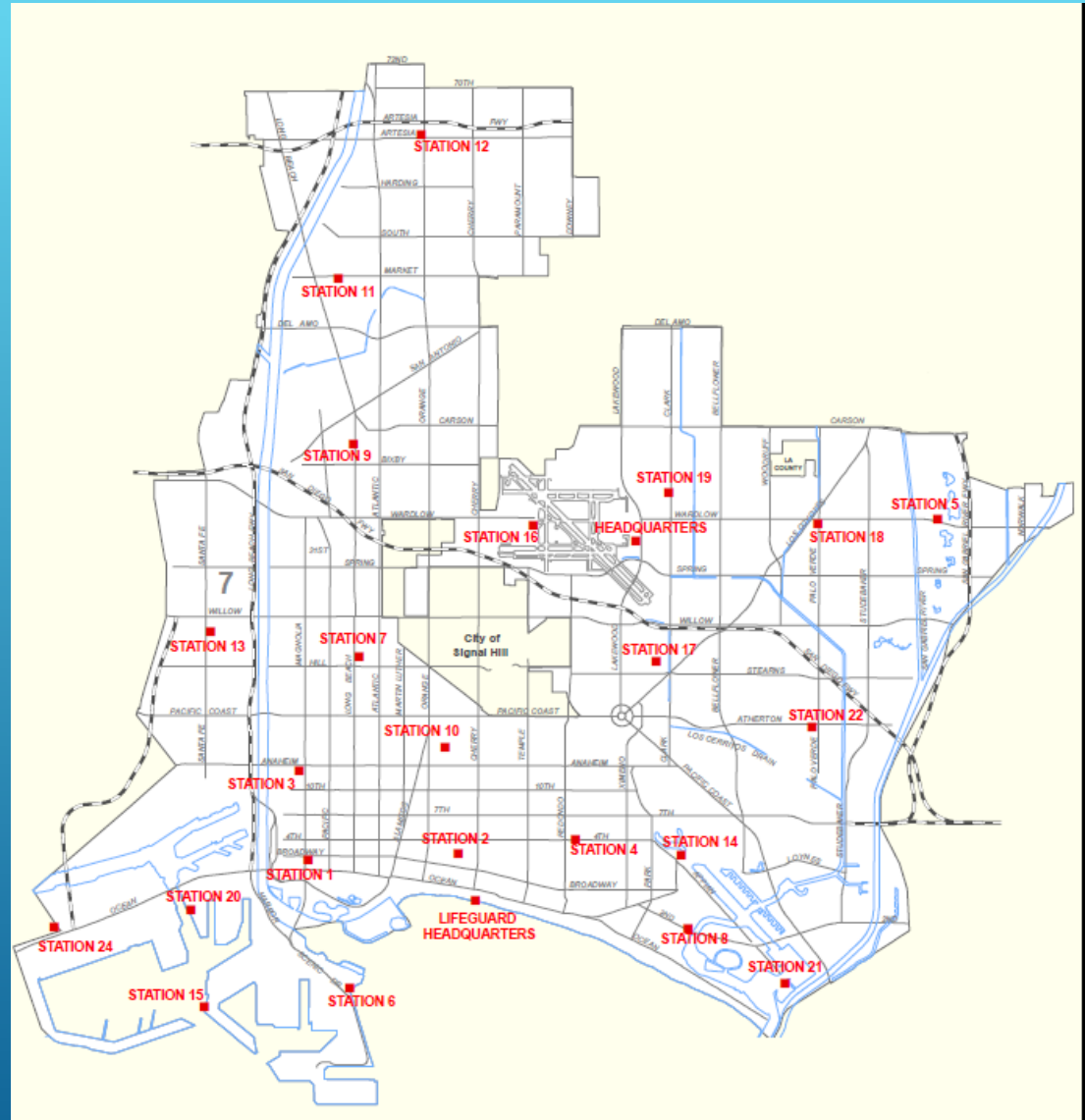


Homelessness Education And Response Team

Long Beach Fire Department

City of Long Beach:

- 52 Square Miles
- Population 470,000
- 7th largest city in California, 36th in the country.



More than Just Fighting Fires

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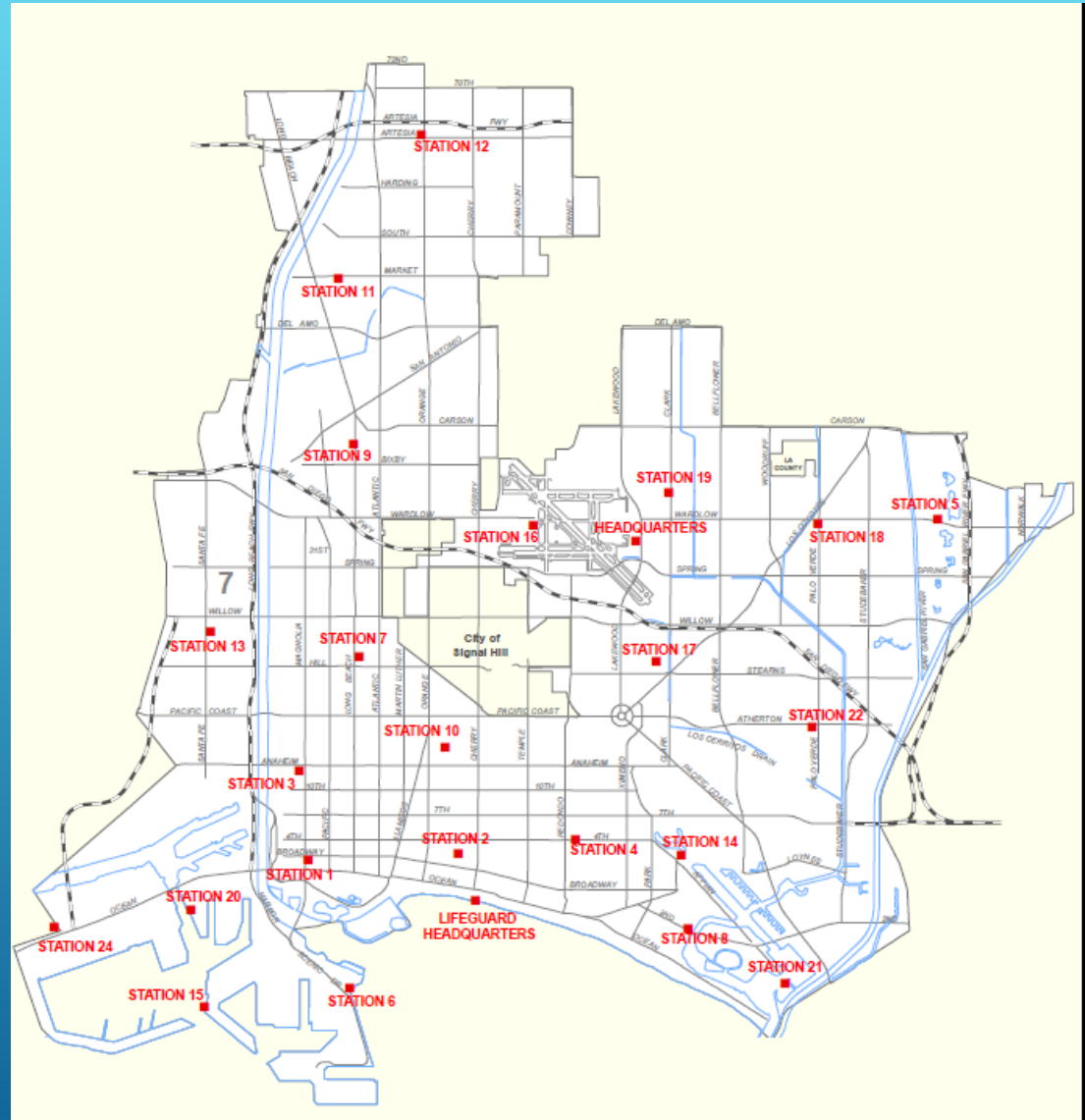
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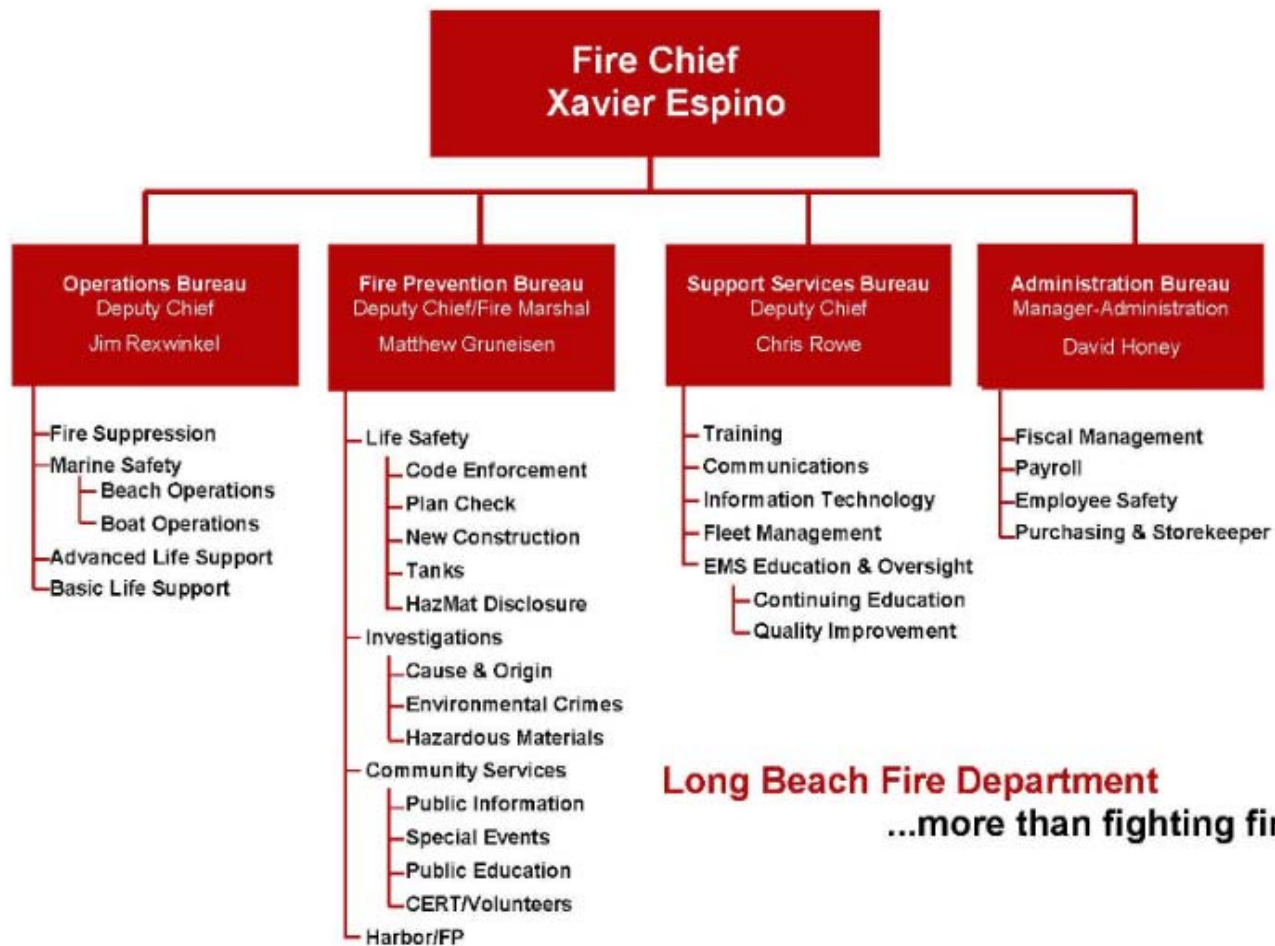
Fire Department:

- 23 Stations
- 450 Uniformed Personnel
- 124 On duty each day
- 18 Engines, 4 Trucks, 9 Rescues staffed with PM/FF, 2 Fireboats and 1 Rescue boat, 3 Airport Crash rigs,



More than Just Fighting Fires





Long Beach Fire Department
...more than fighting fires



More than Just Fighting Fires

The Long Beach Fire Department responds to over 3500* calls a year that likely involved a person with no medical complaint who was sleeping or resting in an open area.



More than Just Fighting Fires

*Based on call types (Unkn Problem, Alert). (Unkn Problem, Wireless). (Unkn Problem Passer By). (Unkn Problem 3rd Party). and (Unkn Life Status) from 8/1/17 to 8/1/18

The Long Beach Fire Department responds to over 3500* calls a year that likely involved a person with no medical complaint who was sleeping or resting in an open area.

- ▶ Based on the information given by the person calling 911, the Fire Department responds an Advanced Life Support (ALS) or a Basic Life Support (BLS) transport unit and/or a fire engine. Once on scene, the firefighters perform a quick check of the individual's well-being and then return to service, as the person typically refuses any medical service.



Many other medical 911 calls involved a person experiencing homelessness who had a non-emergent medical complaint that was related to difficulty accessing healthcare.



More than Just Fighting Fires

For Fiscal Year 2017, \$250,000 in one time funding was allocated to the Fire Department to come up with a “plan to respond to homelessness”



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More than Just Fighting Fires

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More than Just Fighting Fires

- ▶ November 30, 2016, the Homelessness Education and Response Team or HEART was placed into service.
- ▶ The team is comprised of two Firefighter/Paramedics from the Long Beach Fire Department
- ▶ Their Mission Statement: To reduce the number of Fire Department responses to individuals experiencing homelessness through:



More than Just Fighting Fires

- ▶ Rapid Response to 911 Calls for Service
- ▶ Collaboration with Continuum of Care Partners
- ▶ Educating Fire Service and Community Members about local resources and the issues surrounding homelessness.



More than Just Fighting Fires

- ▶ In its first two years of service, the HEART team had 3,417 contacts with persons experiencing homelessness
- ▶ 1,766 of those contacts originated as 911 calls to which Fire Department emergency apparatus were initially dispatched.
- ▶ In more than 96 percent of the 911 calls HEART responded to, they were the first unit to arrive at the scene. In 80% of those cases, HEART was able to cancel a responding fire engine, paramedic rescue, or both.



More than Just Fighting Fires

- ▶ 416 individuals, including 30 veterans, were connected with Continuum of Care Resources
- ▶ Of those connected with Continuum of Care, 138 were connected with in-patient psychiatric services and 17 were placed in permanent housing



More than Just Fighting Fires

The two firefighter/paramedics on the HEART team were well received because of their commitment to work as a part of the Continuum of Care within the City.

JUSTIN VERGA AND JOEL DAVIS FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT ARE THE EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH FOR SEPTEMBER!



Justin Verga joined Long Beach Fire Department in 2002 at the rank of Firefighter and has been a Firefighter/Paramedic for the past eight years. Joel Davis joined the Department in 2008 as a Firefighter and became a Firefighter/Paramedic in 2012.

In 2016 Justin and Joel were presented with the opportunity to implement a Homelessness Education and Response Team (HEART) unit. As Firefighter/Paramedics, they understand the impact of those experiencing homelessness have on the Emergency Medical System and the community. Justin and Joel assist those experiencing homelessness with getting connected to services in the City of Long Beach with the eventual goal of obtaining permanent housing. The HEART unit also is available to respond to 911 calls for service.



More than Just Fighting Fires

[HEART Video](#)

In 2018, LBFD responded to 8,326 calls where the Chief Complaint was coded as “Behavioral”



More than Just Fighting Fires

IN FY-18, THE TWO WERE CERTIFIED AS INSTRUCTORS IN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (MHFA)

- ▶ MHFA provides first responders with tools to help them de-escalate incidents and better understand mental illnesses.
- ▶ This training is now part of our required training for all new recruits.
- ▶ HEART team members worked to secure a 3 year, \$360,000 SAMHSA grant to provide MHFA training to the entire department.



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- ▶ In January 2019, The 8 hour Mental Health First Aid for Fire and EMS class was made mandatory training for all Fire Department employees.
- ▶ As of April 2019, over 200 employees have received the training
- ▶ We anticipate training the entire Fire Department by early 2020.



More than Just Fighting Fires

Mental Health First Aid USA is managed, operated, and disseminated by the [National Council for Behavioral Health](#). Mental Health First Aid is included on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP)

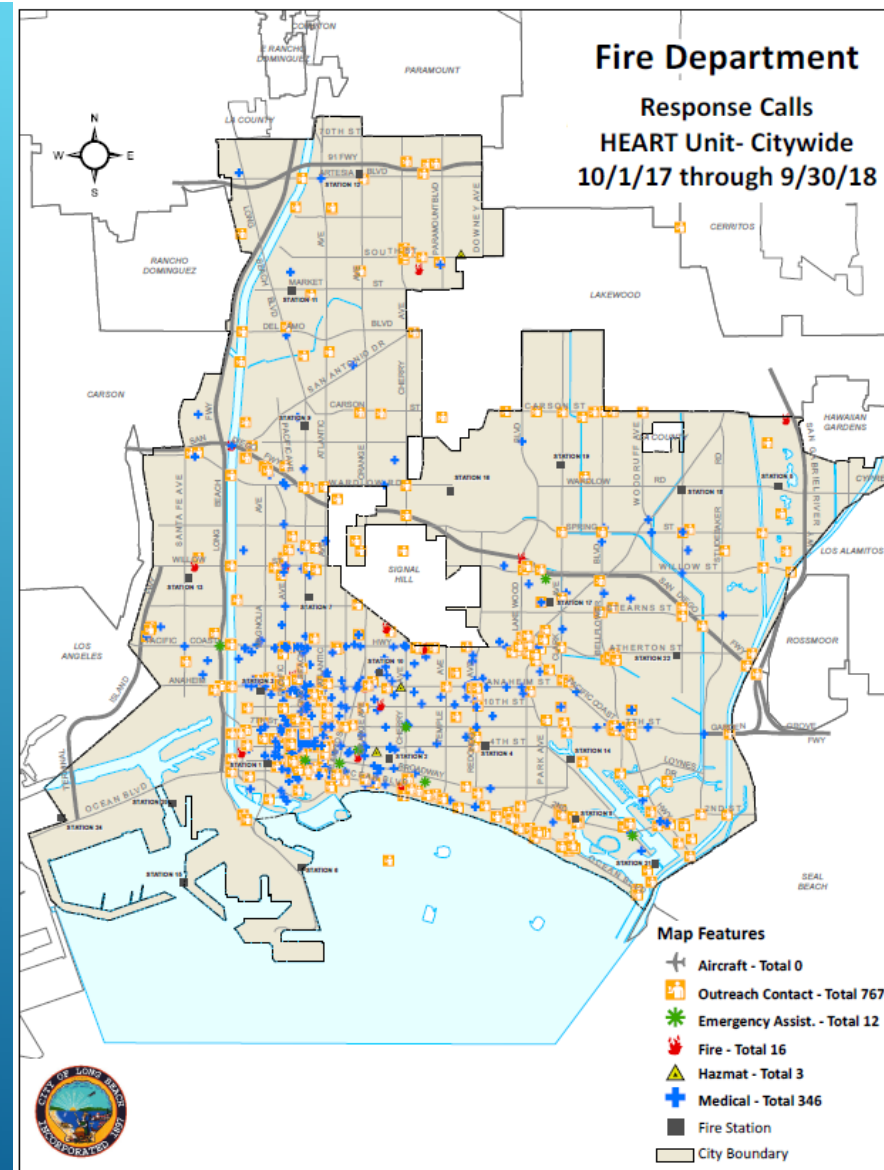
Long Beach Fire Department HEART Fiscal Year 2018 response Data

1,144 Total Incidents

767 Outreach Contacts
346 Medical responses

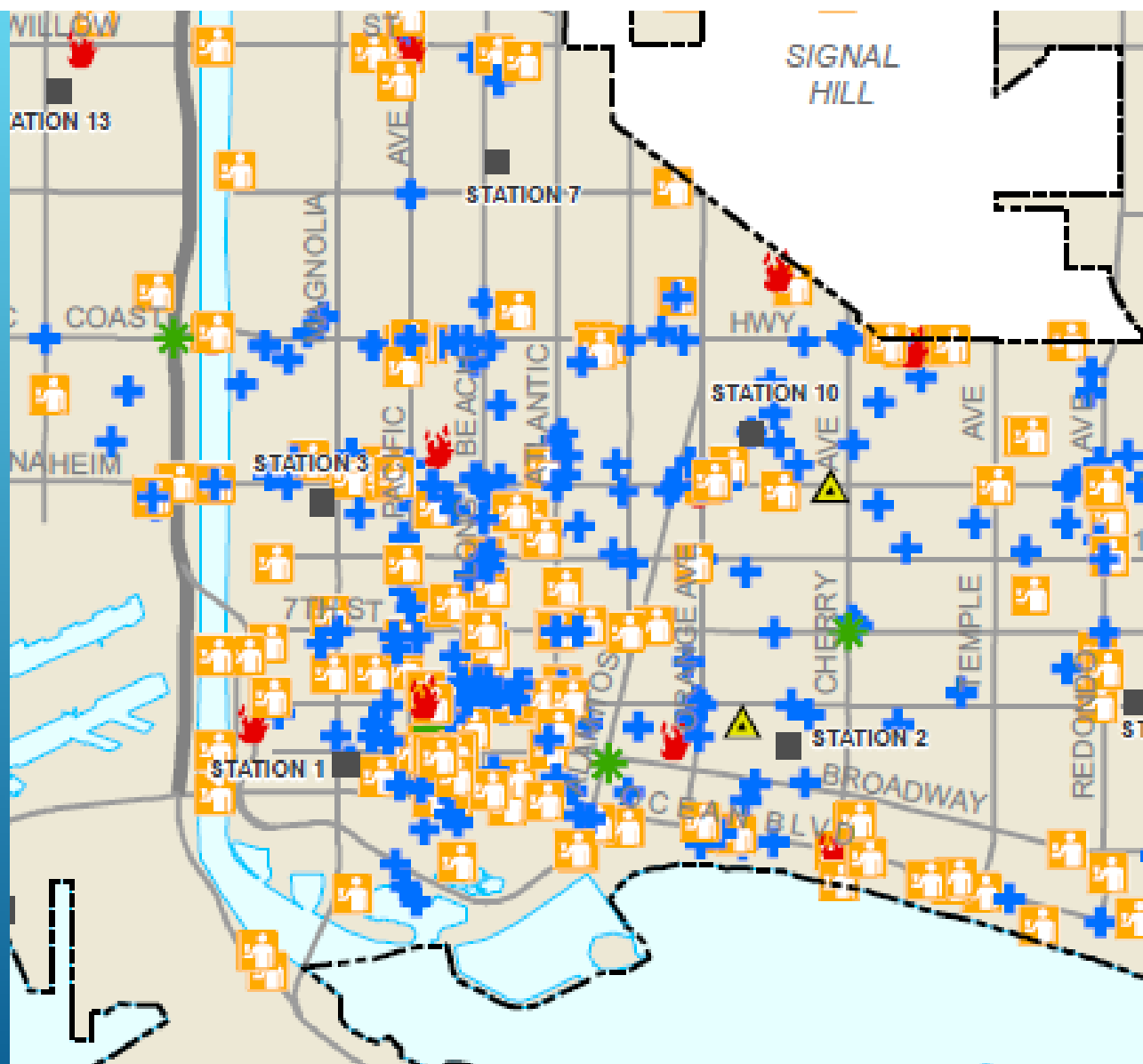


More than Just Fighting Fires



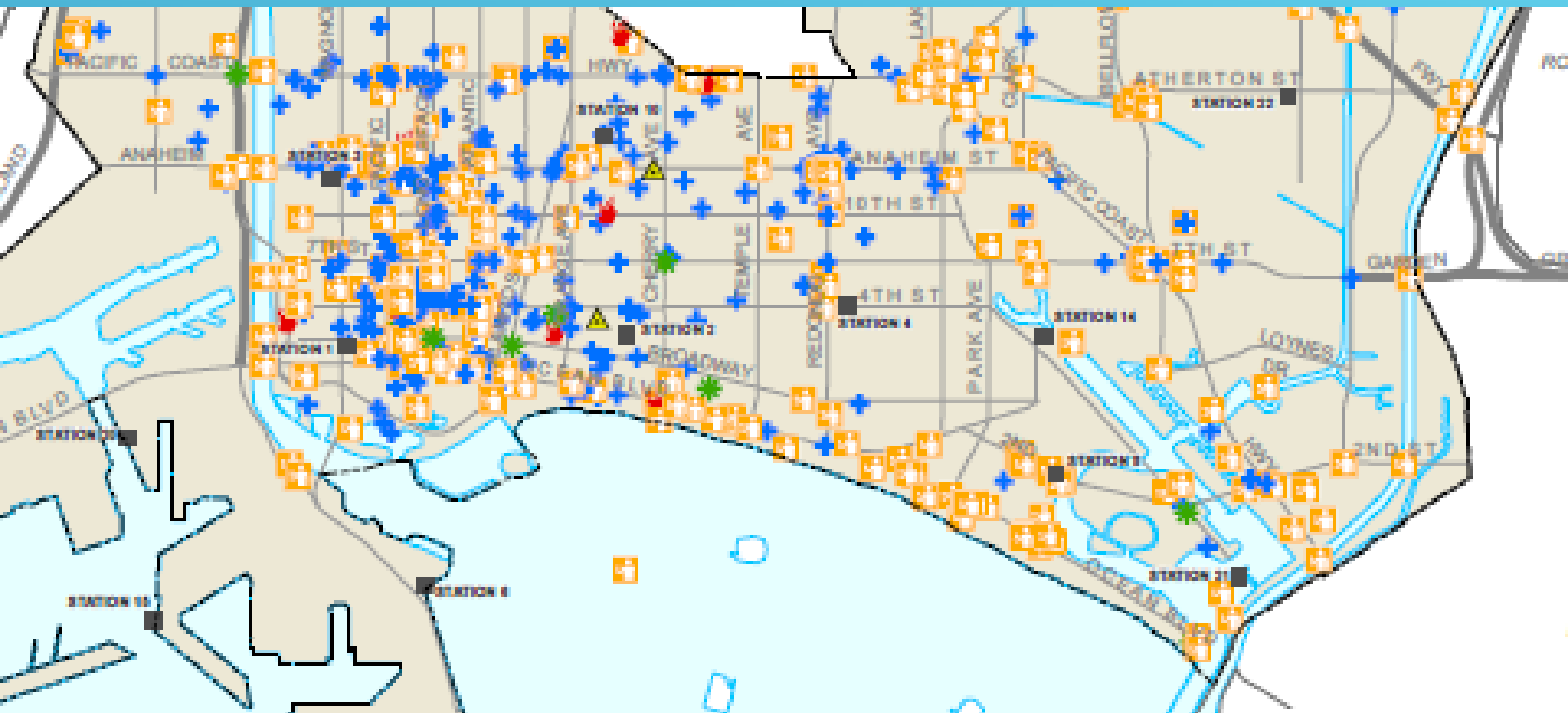
Long Beach Fire Department HEART Fiscal Year 2018 response Data

Most of the 911 calls intercepted by HEART are concentrated in the denser, downtown part of town.

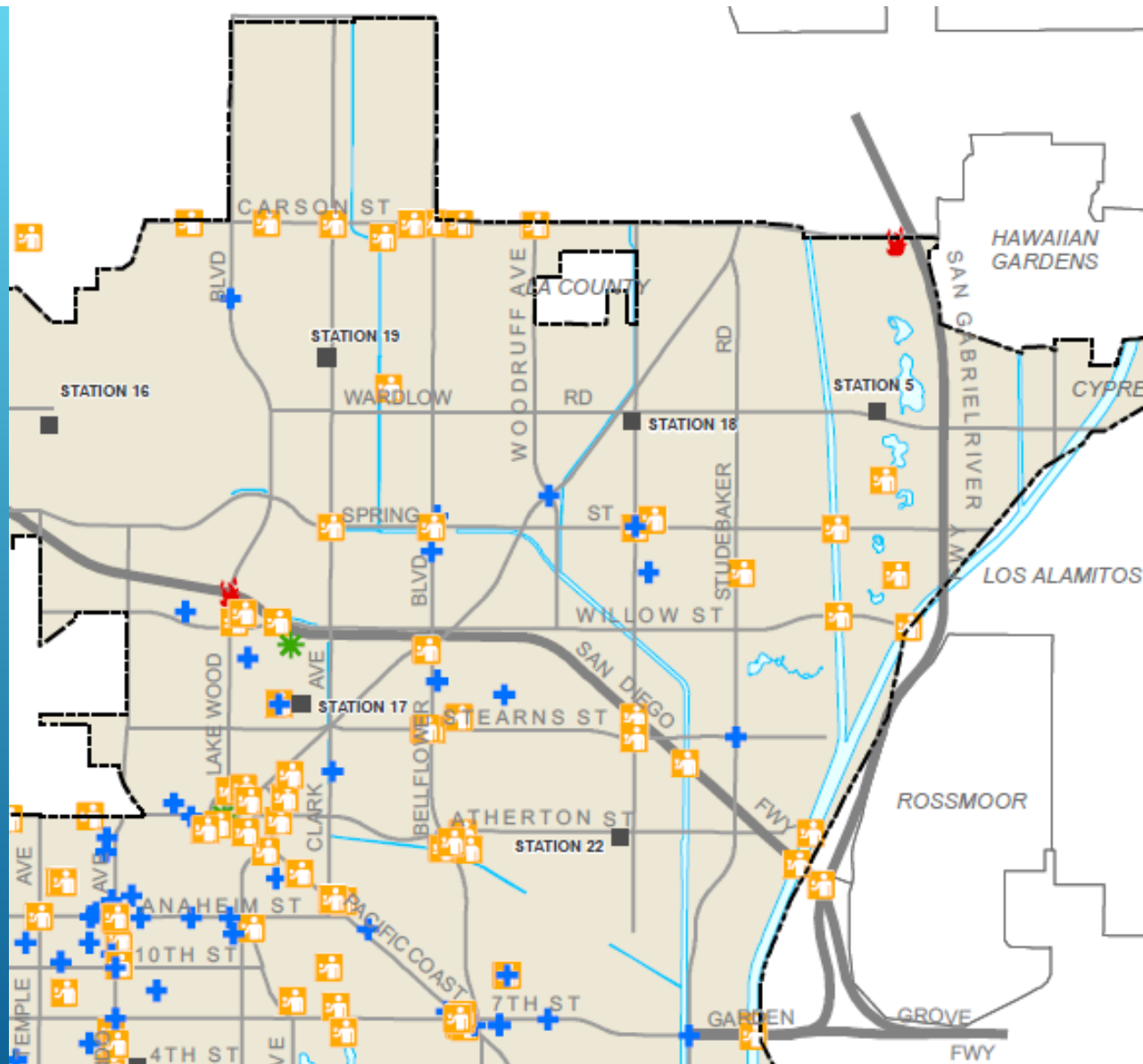


More than Just Fighting Fires

However, outreach follows a pattern along heavily traveled areas and waterways.



While intercepted 911 calls are less frequent in low density areas with a higher concentration of single family homes, outreach along riverbeds, in parks, and areas prone to encampments is effective.



More than Just Fighting Fires

In FY19, A second HEART team of two firefighter/paramedics was added. This gives the Fire Department better coverage during the week and allows teams to focus on one area together or provide better coverage to the entire City.



More than Just Fighting Fires

In late 2018, the Fire Department purchased a vehicle capable of carrying team members, their safety equipment, and ALS equipment allowing them to be designated as Paramedic unit capable of responding to calls when needed.



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ALS, BLS, and Firefighting Equipment,
Outreach Supplies



Clothing, Food, Water, Hygiene Supplies



A second HEART Vehicle will arrive in July 2019. Until then, the second team will operate out of a spare Battalion Chief vehicle with only BLS capabilities.



More than Just Fighting Fires

HEART TEAM MEMBERS ALSO ACT AS FORCE MULTIPLICATION FOR LARGE EVENTS

The Advanced Life Support (ALS) capable HEART teams provide not only Homelessness outreach, but also provide a direct benefit to the Emergency Response Capabilities of the Fire Department.



More than Just Fighting Fires

HEART TEAM MEMBERS ALSO ACT AS FORCE MULTIPLICATION FOR LARGE EVENTS

Having a firefighter/paramedic team with Advanced Life Support equipment allows Incident Commanders to assign them as an independent resource in the early, resource deficient phase of emergencies



More than Just Fighting Fires

Long Beach Fire Stations 1, 2, 3, 10, 7, and 13, respond to almost 60,000 unit calls per year.

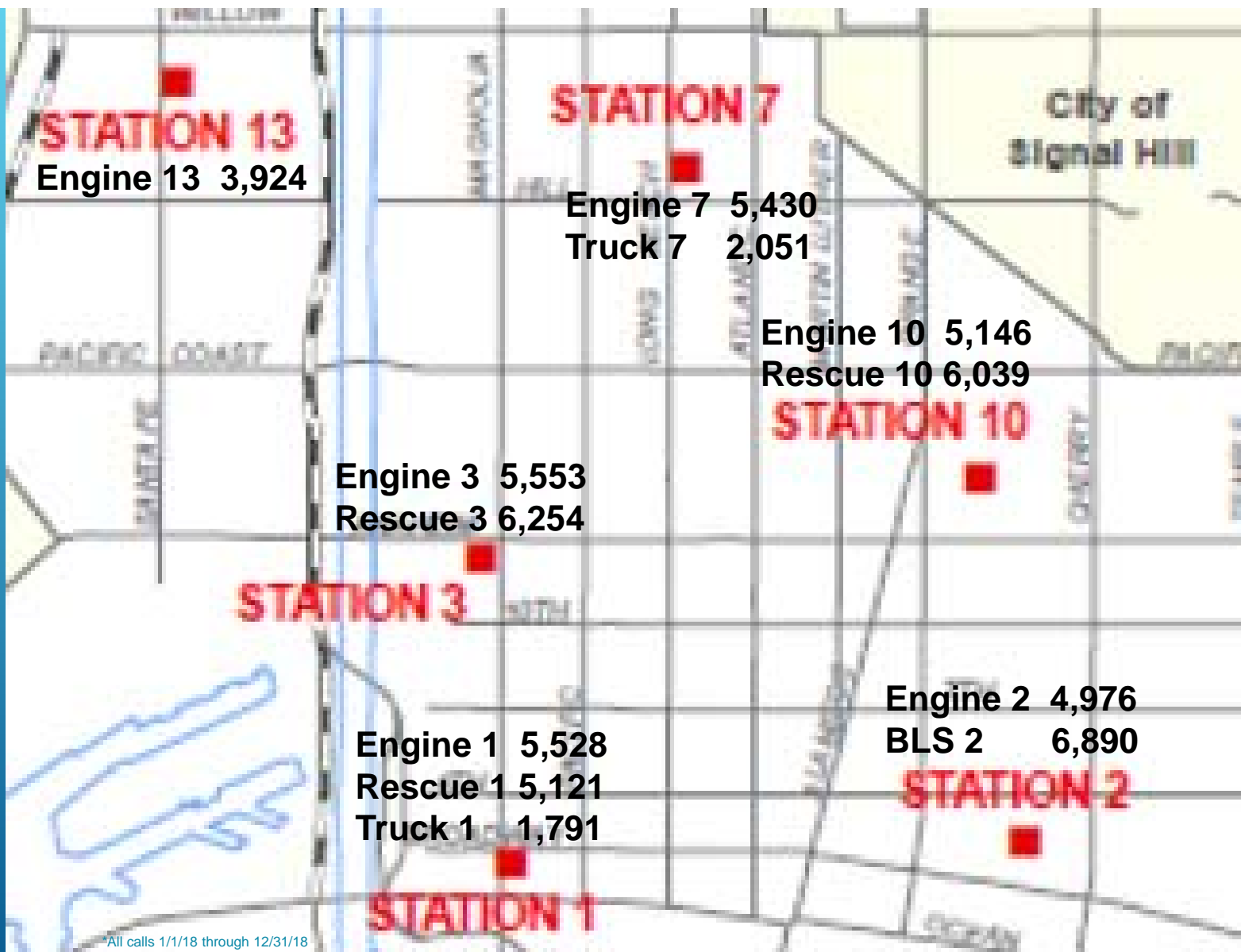


More than Just Fighting Fires

As Fire Department Units Approach
4,000 Calls Per Year, These Units
Become Less Effective and are More
Likely to be Out of Service on Calls



Each of these stations fit the criteria for “Extremely Heavy Workloads”



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All calls 1/1/18 through 12/31/18

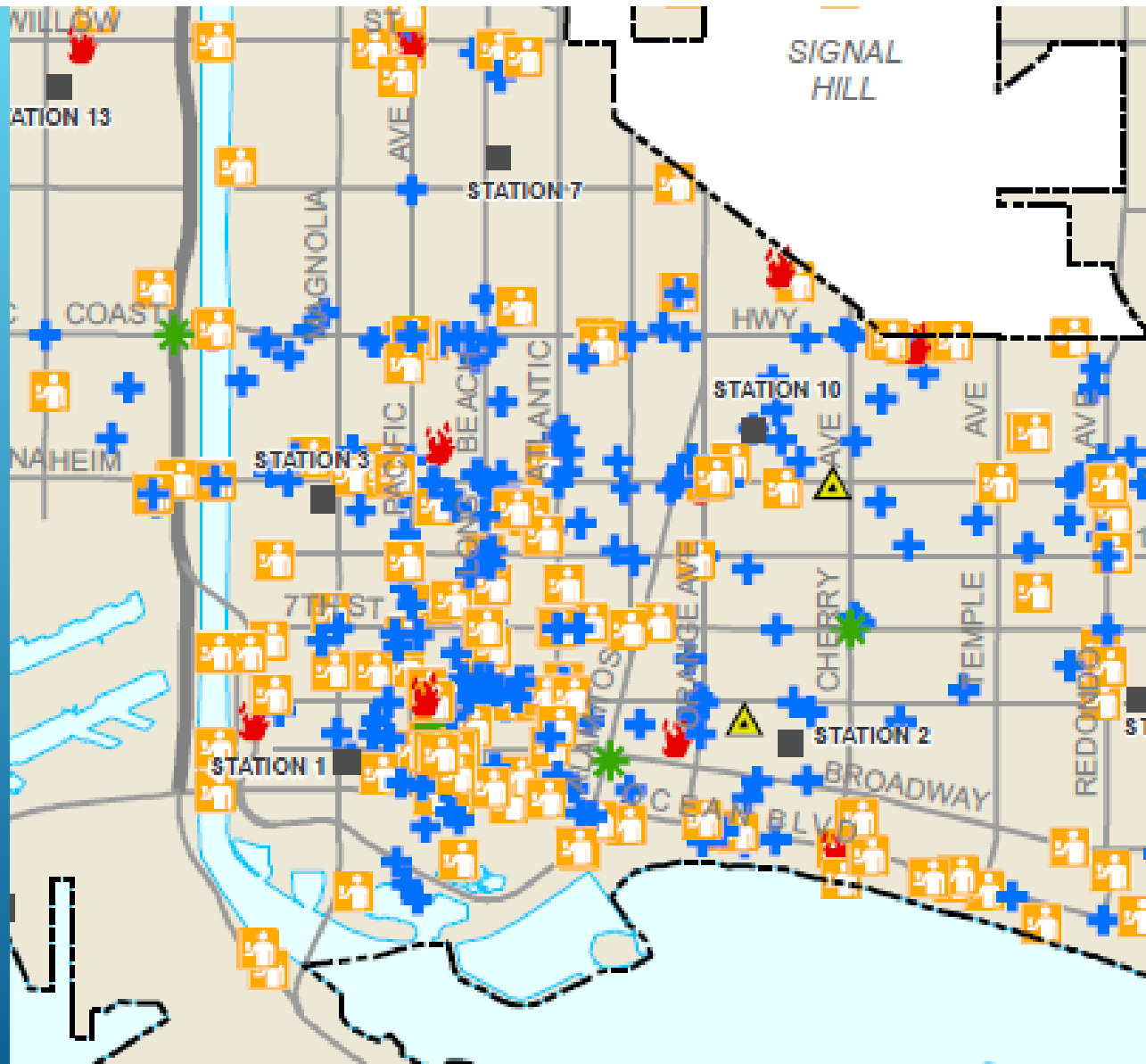
The HEART team utilizes their field experience to triage calls away from front line Emergency units. This prevents units being out of service for higher priority calls



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When the HEART teams cancel the fire engine responding to a call, that fire engine is made available for more urgent responses.



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The HEART team refers clients to the Homeless Services Division so they can find permanent housing for some of the chronically unsheltered homeless who may generate dozens of calls for service.



More than Just Fighting Fires



The HEART team provides a valuable community service while providing additional emergency response capability in times of need.



Thank You

James Rexwinkel, Deputy Chief-Operations,
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(562) 570-2500

