

Monday, July 20, 2020

City of Walla Walla Workshop - College Place Council - Potential Quorum

4:00 P.M.

City Council Workshop - Electronic Attendance

Meeting may be viewed at: <https://www.wallawallawa.gov/government/city-council>

Or you may call this number to listen: 253-215-8782 ID# 881 1396 5975#

1. Opening Items.

Subject :	1.01 Council Reference Materials
Meeting :	Jul 20, 2020 - City of Walla Walla Workshop - College Place Council - Potential Quorum
Category :	1. Opening Items.
Access :	Private
Type :	Information
Subject :	1.02 Call To Order
Meeting :	Jul 20, 2020 - City of Walla Walla Workshop - College Place Council - Potential Quorum
Category :	1. Opening Items.
Access :	Public
Type :	Procedural

2. Workshop Topics.

Subject :	2.01 Regional Fire Authority study - Presentation by Walla Walla Fire Chief Bob Yancey
Meeting :	Jul 20, 2020 - City of Walla Walla Workshop - College Place Council - Potential Quorum
Category :	2. Workshop Topics.
Access :	Public
Type :	Discussion, Information

Public Content

The City of Walla Walla, College Place, and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 participated in a feasibility study for consideration of jointly providing fire and EMS service. We contracted with Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) to collect data and information and propose recommendations. The project manager for our study will be here to give a report on the process, information, and any recommendations in the report. He will also answer any questions the elected officials may have.

File Attachments

[3754_Walla Walla Final Presentation 3-16-2020.pdf \(3.334 KB\)](#)

[3754_Walla Walla Cooperative Services Study \(FINAL\).pdf \(14.965 KB\)](#)



Cooperative Services Feasibility Study

John A. Stouffer

West Region Manager/Project Manager



Emergency Services Consulting International

Introduction

Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) was retained by the City of Walla Walla Fire Department, College Place Fire Department, and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 to conduct a *Cooperative Services Feasibility* study to evaluate various options for potentially consolidating the three fire service organizations.



ESCI Approach to Our Studies

- Unbiased; no pre-conceptions
- Our responsibility is not to tell you what we think you want to hear, but to tell you what is in the best interests of your:
 - Communities
 - Fire agencies
 - Fire agency employees & volunteers
- This does not mean that we do not take into consideration your ideas, concerns, & suggestions
- Our recommendations are based on science, national standards, best practices, and our experience & education



**Walla Walla Project
STUDY AREA**

- Fire Station
- Station w/BLS Medic
- Station w/ALS Medic
- Hospital
- College Place Boundary
- Walla Walla Boundary
- Fire District #4 Boundary

Map Details:

- Legend:**
 - Fire Station
 - Station w/BLS Medic
 - Station w/ALS Medic
 - Hospital
 - College Place Boundary
 - Walla Walla Boundary
 - Fire District #4 Boundary
- Map Labels:**
 - College Place
 - Walla Walla
 - Station 11-1
 - Station 11-2
 - Station 42
 - Station 43
 - Station 44
 - Station 45
 - Airport Station
 - PSMMC
 - CPFD
 - W Highway 12
 - Walla Walla County
 - Fire District #4
- Scale:** 0 to 5 Miles
- Compass:** North arrow pointing up.

Report Contents

Section I: Evaluation of Current Conditions

- Overview of the Communities
- Organizations & System Overview
- Management Components
- Staffing & Personnel
- Financial Analysis
- Capital Facilities & Apparatus
- Service-Delivery & Performance
- Support Programs

Section II: Future Opportunities

- Alternatives for Implementing Cooperative Efforts
- Options for Future Cooperative Services
- Recommended Strategies for Consolidation
- Financial Analysis of Consolidation
- General Findings & Recommendations
- RFA Planning & Implementation
- Conclusion

Section III: Appendices

7 Appendices

232 pages/156 Figures

Why consider consolidation?

The primary motivation for a potential consolidation is *not* to save a substantial amount of money...

Rather, the real intent is to improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of providing fire protection, EMS, and other emergency services to the communities.



Data Sources & Analyses

- Acquiring historical incident data is a critical component when evaluating service-delivery and performance
 - Analyzing historical service-demand and performance is a significant and important component of these types of studies
- In this study, acquiring good data was a challenge and was acquired from six different sources
 - We have made recommendations for improvements accordingly



Historical Service-Demand

ESCI looked at service-demand (call volumes) in detail for each agency and from a combined perspective.

Combined Historical Service-Demand of the Fire Jurisdictions (2017–2018)

Fire Agency	2017	2018	Total	% of Total ^A
Walla Walla Fire Department	7,687	6,744	14,431	77%
College Place Fire Department	1,342	1,376	2,718	14%
Walla Walla County Fire District #4	857	859	1,716	9%
Annual Totals:	9,886	8,979	18,865	

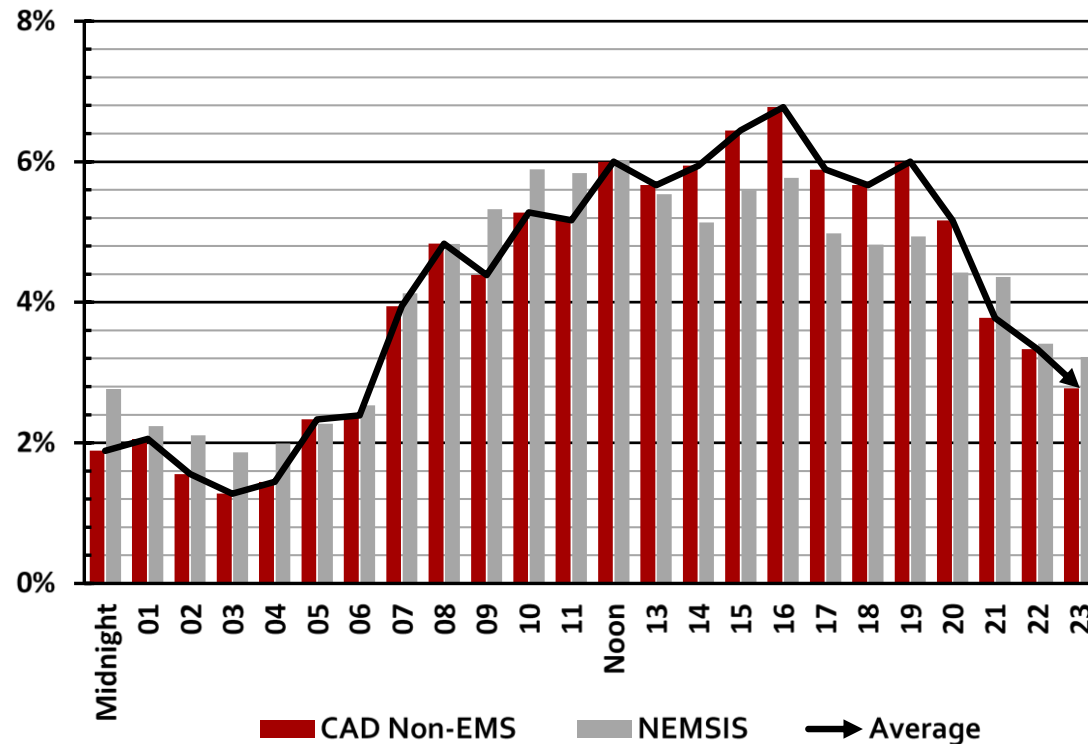
^ARepresents the percentage of the combined totals of 2017 and 2018.



Temporal Analyses

Looks at service-demand by month, day-of-week, & hour-of-day...

WWFD Service-Demand by Hour-of-the-Day (2017–2018)

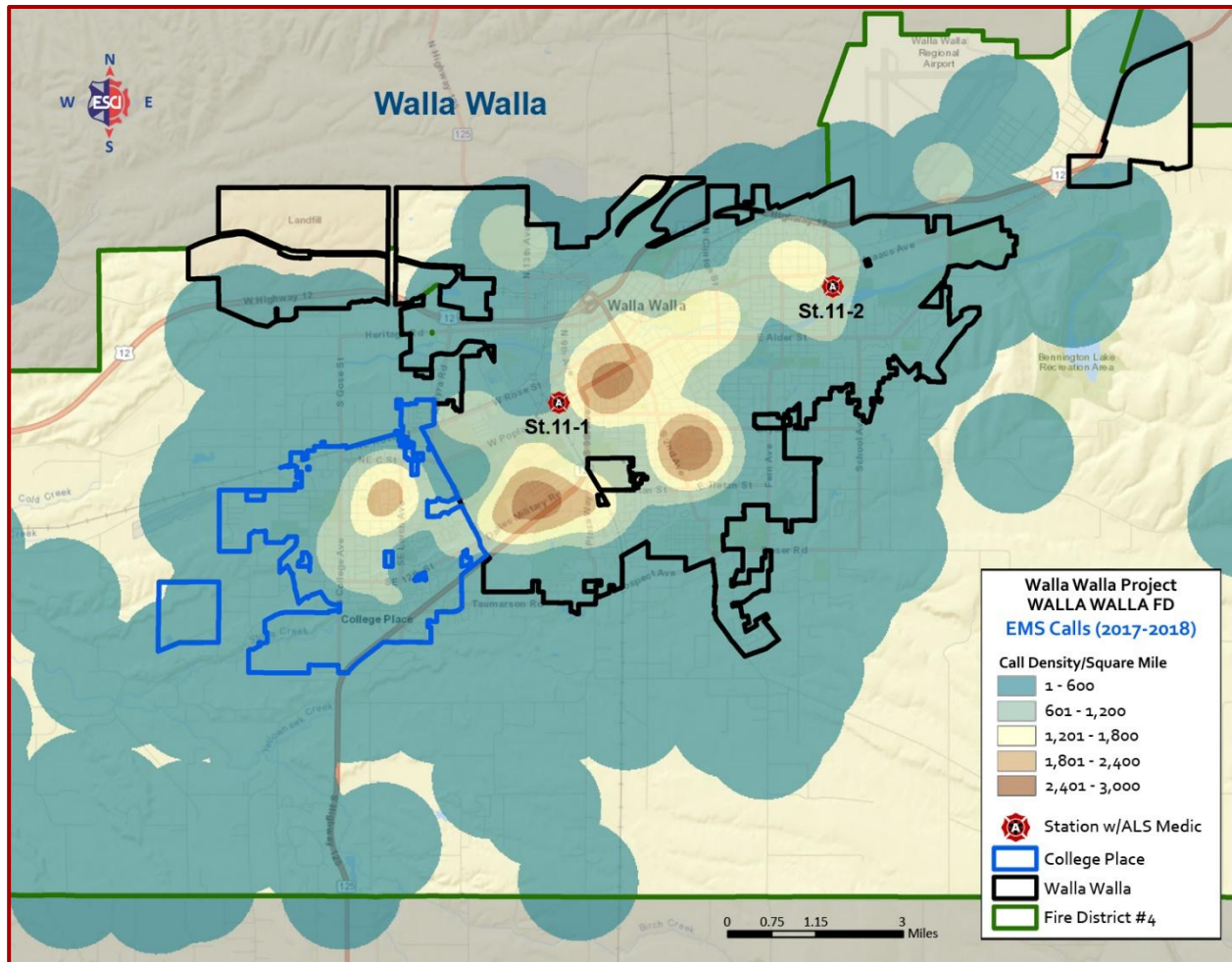


WWFD results consistent with the other two



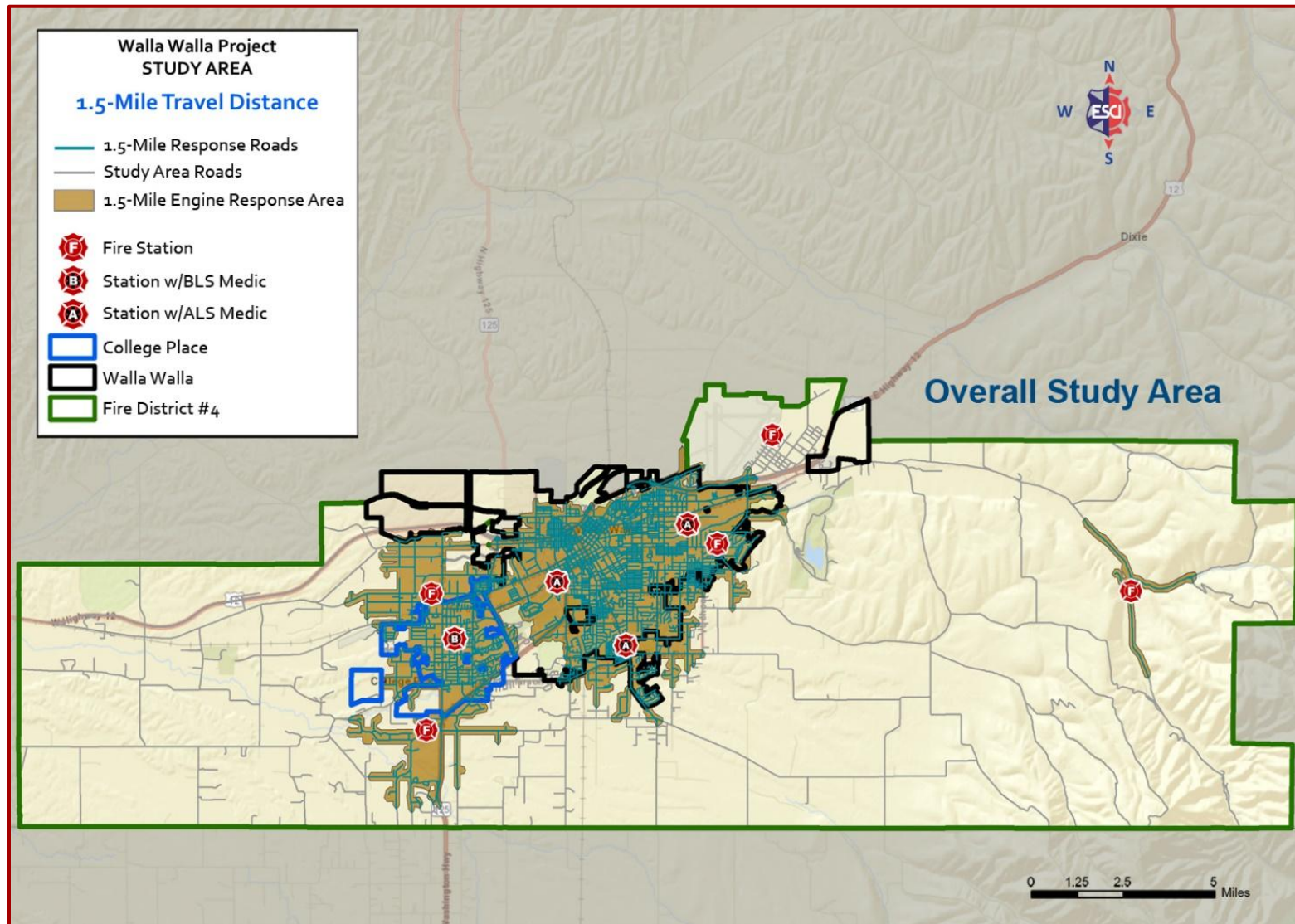
Geographic Incident Densities

Looked at incident densities in each jurisdiction by EMS, fires, & other incident-types...

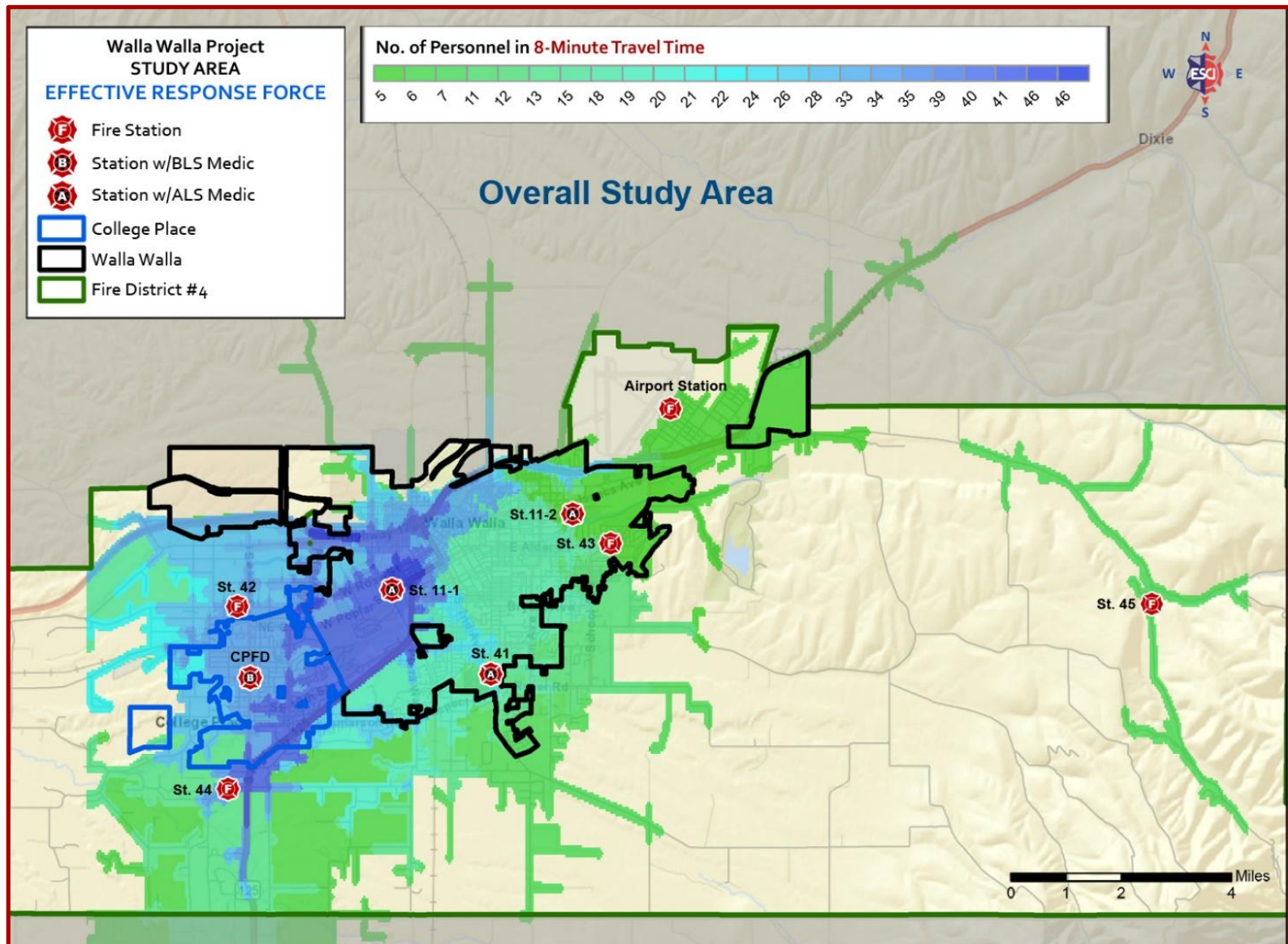


WSRB Engine Company Criteria

Overall Study Area—WSRB 1.5-Mile Engine Company Criteria



Effective Response Force (ERF): 8-Minute Travel



Combined Call Concurrency

- Concurrent incidents and the time individual units are committed to an incident can impact a jurisdiction's ability to muster enough resources to respond to additional emergencies.
- A higher number of calls occurring simultaneously can impact available resources and lead to extended response-times from more distant resources.
- When resources are dispatched to a distant location, the service area of that resource is then left without personnel and apparatus to respond within its usual response zone.

Concurrent Incidents of the Combined Fire Departments (2017–2018)

Number of Incidents	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFPD ₄	Combined
One Incident	38%	91%	78%	41%
Two Incidents	40%	9%	18%	33%
Three Incidents	16%	1%	3%	16%
Four or More Incidents	5%	<1%	<1%	10%



Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)

- 16%–24%: Ideal Range
- 25%: System Stress
- 26%–29%: Evaluation Range
- 30%: “Line in the Sand”

Walla Walla Unit Hour Utilization (2017–2018)

Unit	No. Incidents	Total Time	Average Time	UHU
Engine 3911	1,147	649:45:24	0:33:59	3.7%
Engine 3912	1,090	630:28:11	0:34:42	3.6%
Ladder 3911	290	136:35:25	0:28:16	0.8%
Medic 3921	6,356	3946:58:53	0:37:16	22.5%
Medic 3922	4,283	3049:26:26	0:42:43	17.4%
Medic 3923	332	260:04:28	0:47:00	1.5%
Medic 3924	154	329:55:34	2:08:33	1.9%
Medic 3925	109	644:50:04	5:54:57	3.7%
Medic 3926 ¹	10	32:58:32	3:17:51	0.5%

¹Taken out of service October 1, 2017.



Unit Hour Utilization (UHU) *continued...*

College Place Unit Hour Utilization (2017–2018)

Unit	No. Incidents	Total Time	Average Time	UHU
Fire Chief 301	28	46:36:22	1:39:52	0.3%
Duty Officer 301	831	337:45:26	0:24:23	1.9%
Engine 3011	1,281	716:19:43	0:33:33	4.1%
Engine 3012	85	38:41:30	0:27:19	0.2%
Engine 3041 ¹	8	107:13:53	13:24:14	0.6%
Engine 3051	9	45:16:29	5:01:50	0.3%
Engine 3061	22	146:08:13	6:38:33	0.8%
Engine 3062 ²	13	15:32:29	1:11:44	0.1%
Rescue 3041	2,078	577:49:28	0:16:41	3.3%
Tender 3021	22	340:14:11	15:27:55	1.9%

¹Placed in-service June 1, 2018. ²In-service during 2017 only.



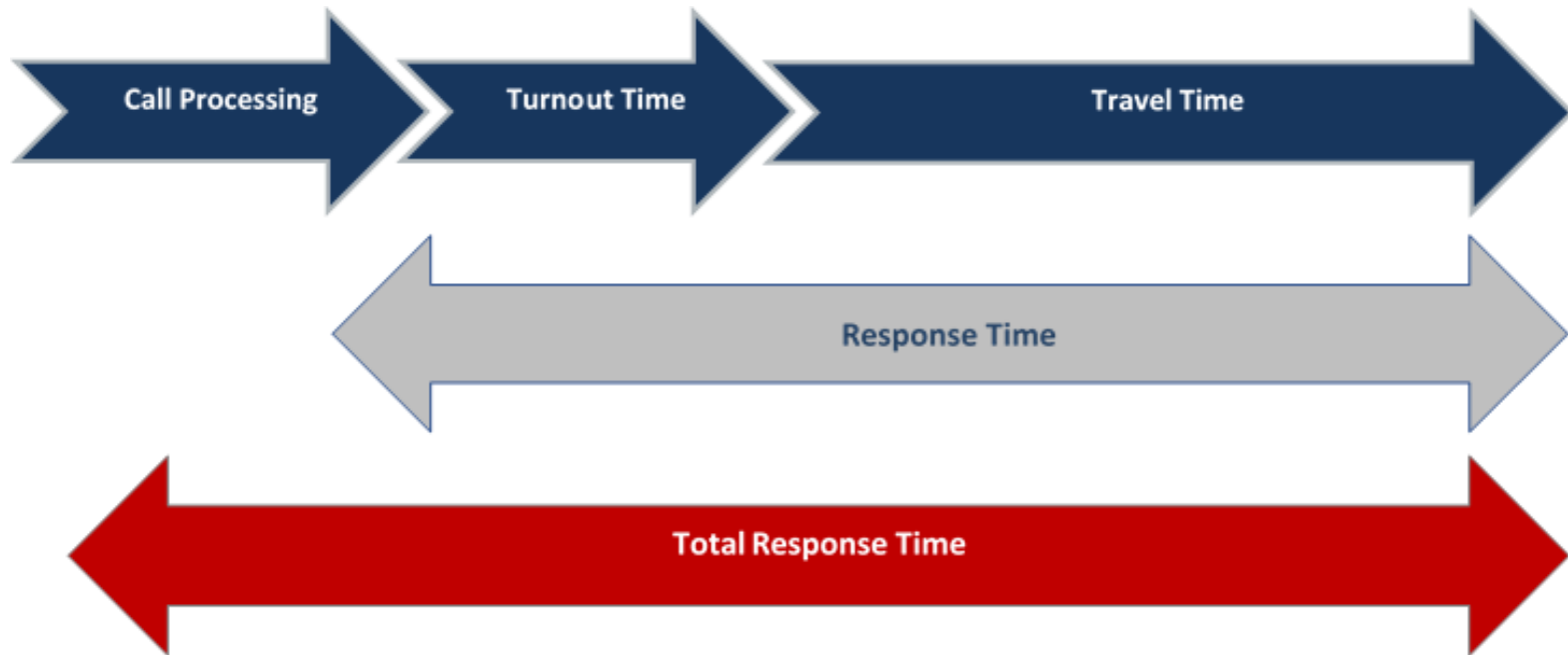
Unit Hour Utilization (UHU) *continued...*

District #4 Unit Hour Utilization (2017–2018)

Unit	No. Incidents	Total Time	Average Time	UHU
Ambulance 3421	1,078	667:32:30	0:37:09	3.8%
Duty Officer 342	91	73:28:30	0:48:27	0.4%
Chief 341	39	21:42:58	0:33:25	0.1%
Duty Officer 341	542	398:37:56	0:44:08	2.3%
Engine 3411	364	184:45:12	0:30:27	1.1%
Engine 3412	352	195:37:07	0:33:21	1.1%
Engine 3413	118	83:26:42	0:42:26	0.5%
Engine 3414	263	185:44:32	0:42:22	1.1%
Engine 3415	49	252:35:13	5:09:17	1.4%
Engine 3416	49	173:37:45	3:32:36	1.0%
Engine 3441 ¹	62	122:39:46	1:58:42	2.4%
Engine 3451	45	170:33:56	3:47:25	1.0%
Engine 3452	78	125:20:27	1:36:25	0.7%
Engine 3453	36	53:25:39	1:29:03	0.3%
Engine 3454	65	93:33:15	1:26:21	0.5%
Engine 3455	27	30:41:24	1:08:12	0.2%
Engine 3456	50	1218:43:59	24:22:29	7.0%
Rescue 3441	139	215:23:05	1:32:58	1.2%
Tender 3422	55	120:52:52	2:11:52	0.7%
Tender 3423	42	703:44:56	16:45:21	4.0%
Tender 3431	56	162:11:32	2:53:47	0.9%
Tender 3433	15	31:27:08	2:05:49	0.2%
Tender 3435	13	24:28:34	1:52:58	0.1%

¹Placed in-service June 1, 2018.

Response Time Measurements



Response-Time Performance

TURNOUT TIMES

Figure 1: CPFD Turnout-Times at 90% (2017–2018)

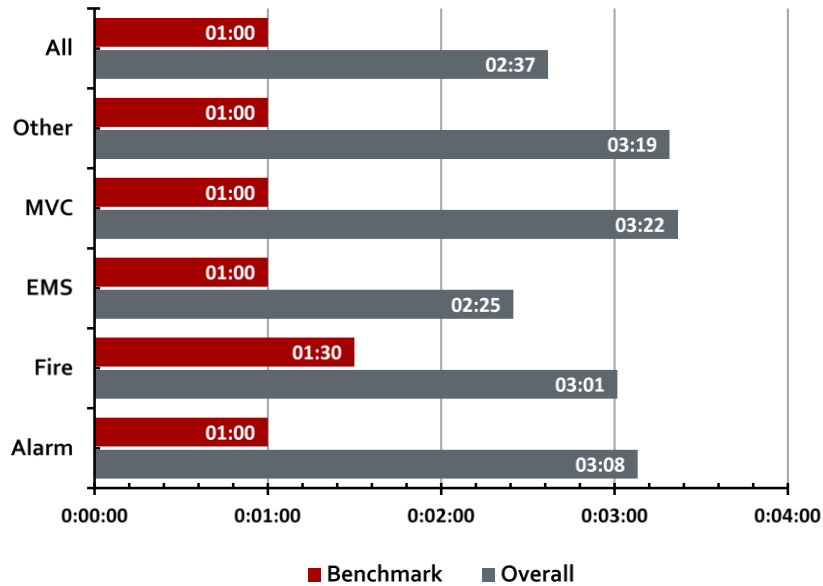


Figure 1: WWFD Turnout-Times at 90% (2017–2018)

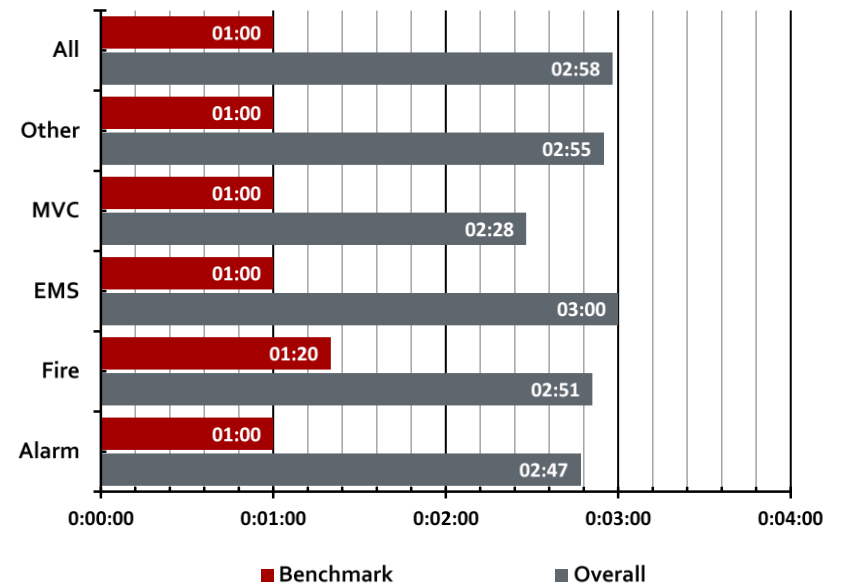
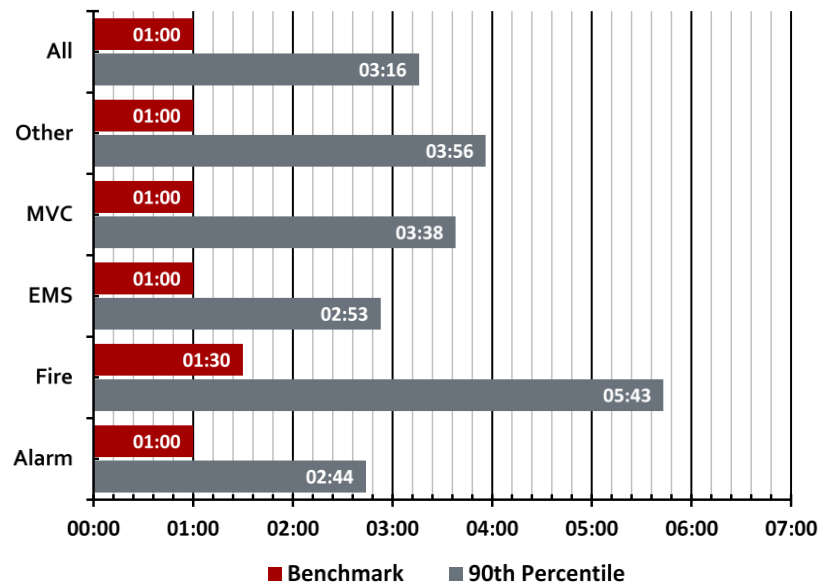
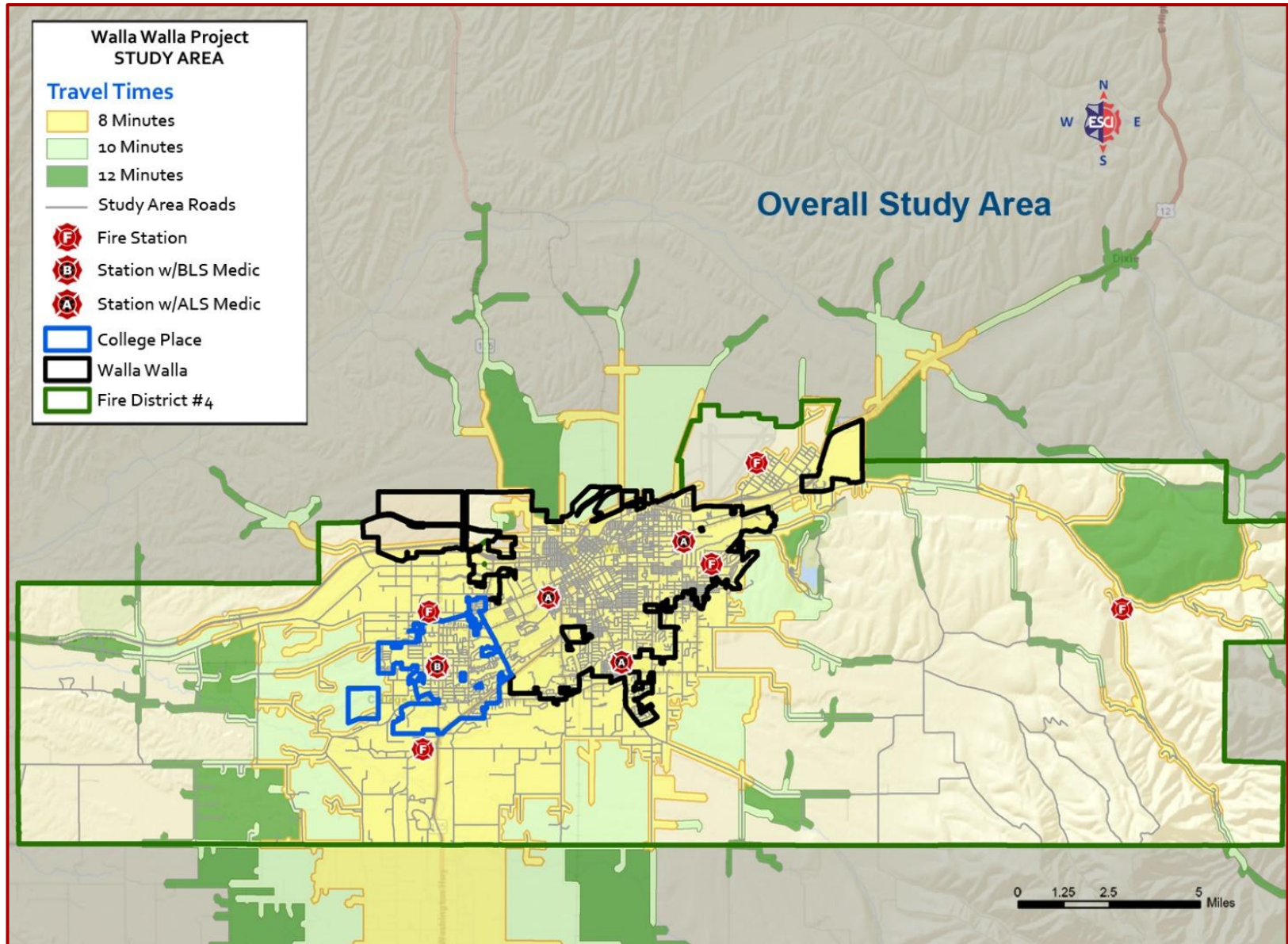


Figure 1: District #4 Turnout-Times at 90% (2017–2018)



Study Area Travel Times



Response-Time Performance

RESPONSE TIMES

Figure 1: CPFD Response Times at 90% (2017–2018)

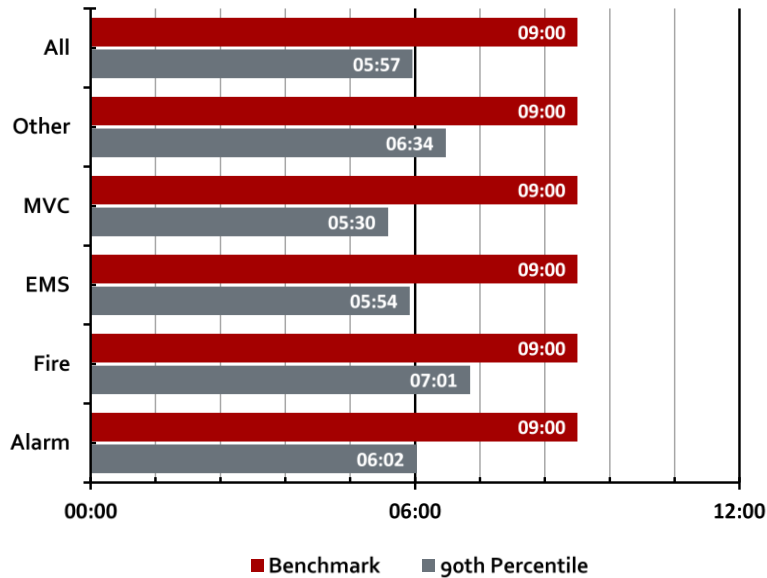


Figure 1: WWFD Response Times at 90% (2017–2018)

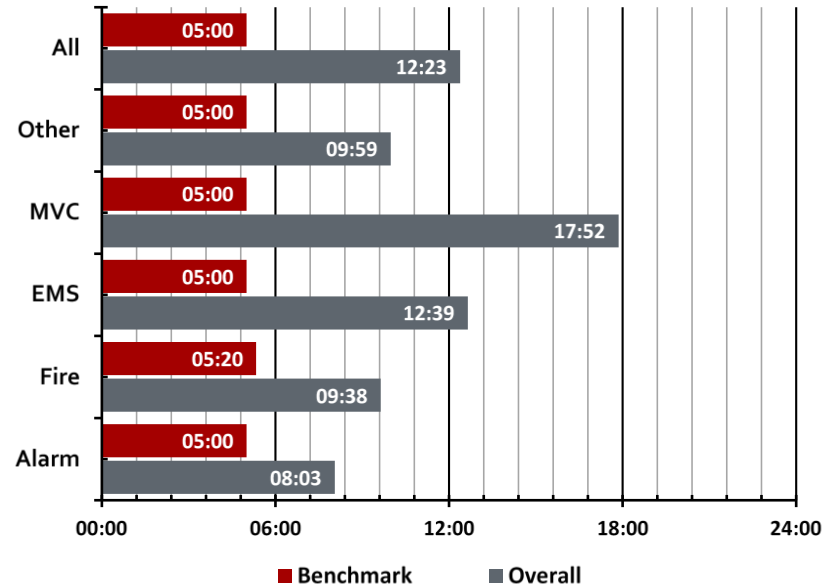
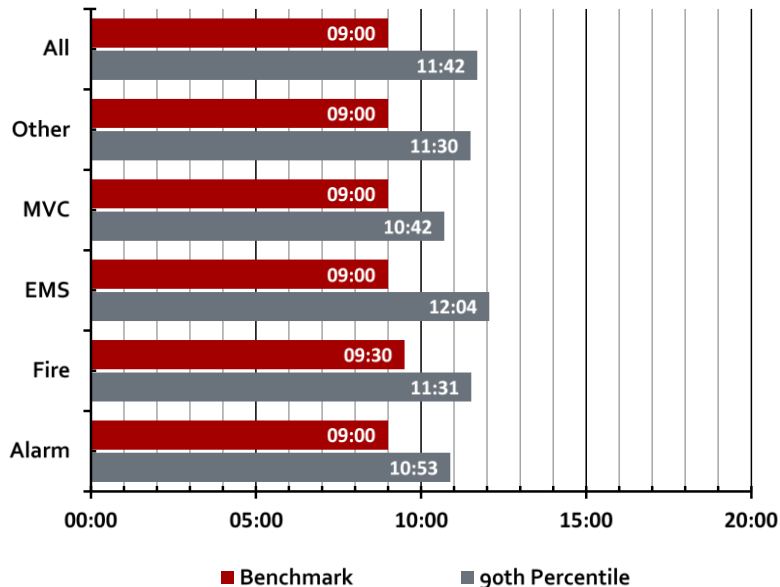


Figure 1: District #4 Response Times at 90% (2017–2018)



NFPA 1720 Standard

- Urban: 9 minutes at 90%
- Suburban: 10 minutes at 80%
- Rural: 14 minutes at 80%

EMS Transport Analyses

Medical Incidents & Transports (2017–2018)

Description	WWFD ¹	CPFD ²	WWCFD ₄ ²
EMS Incidents	11,489	2,051	1,131
EMS Incidents with Transport Timestamp	8,987	108	396

¹NEMSIS data. ²CAD data with NFIRS 300 codes.

EMS-Related Time Performance at 90% (2017–2018)

Jurisdiction	With Patient	Time On-Scene	Transport Time	Hospital Turnaround
Walla Walla FD ¹	03:08	24:36	11:47	25:05
College Place FD ²	N/A	33:47	14:01	19:51
Fire District #4 ²	N/A	31:57	15:31	20:44

¹NEMSIS Data. ²CAD Data with NFIRS 300 Codes.



**Walla Walla County
Cooperative Services Feasibility Study**

**Future Opportunities
for Cooperative Efforts**



Alternatives for Cooperative Efforts

- Maintain Status Quo (Autonomy)
- Interlocal Cooperation Agreements (Contract for services)
 - Administrative Collaboration
 - Functional Collaboration
 - Operational Collaboration
- Merger
- “Municipal” Fire District
- Annexation
- Regional Fire Protection Service Authority
(Regional Fire Authority)



Interlocal Cooperation Agreements

- *Administrative* Collaboration (Consolidation)
 - Two or more agencies maintain separate legal status (IGA)
 - Example may be combining administrative services under one Fire Chief
 - Clerical, HR, finance, other functions
- *Functional* Collaboration (Consolidation)
 - Maintain separate legal status (IGA)
 - Certain functions combined into a common resource
 - Training and CME, prevention activities, purchasing, fleet maintenance



Interlocal Cooperation Agreements *cont.*

- *Operational* (Full Service) Collaboration
 - Maintain separate legal status (IGA)
 - The next step towards potential full consolidation
 - All operations are consolidated under a single organization serving all jurisdictions



Alternatives *continued...*

- Merger
 - Complete consolidation of participating *fire districts*
 - Washington State regulations prevent cities from merging with a fire district (districts can annex cities)
 - Included here as an option if, in the future, another fire district becomes interested in merging
- “Municipal” Fire District
 - State law allows “Cities & Towns—Fire Protection District Formation”
 - Cities can form a fire district and divests itself of all responsibility and governance of fire protection and EMS
 - Reduces certain city property taxing authority & other revenue sources



Alternatives *continued...*

- Annexation
 - Cities can be annexed into a fire district for fire protection & EMS
 - Fire district boundaries expand (no change in city boundaries)
 - In Walla Walla County, District #4 would need to annex and expand its boundaries to include College Place and Walla Walla
 - City's taxing capacity would be impacted
- City Annexes into Fire District (Example only):
 - City Maximum Tax—\$3.60
 - Less Fire District Levy—\$1.00
 - *Resulting City Tax Capacity—\$2.60*



Alternatives *continued...*

- Regional Fire Authority
 - New entity whereby participating fire agencies fall within this structure
 - Requires a new tax base, operational plan, and legal framework
 - If considered, first legal step would be to form a *Planning Committee*
 - Planning Committee comprised of three elected officials from each of the participating agencies (nine in this case)
 - Requires approval of the governing bodies and ultimately the electorate
- RFA Funding Mechanisms
 - Fire levies
 - EMS levies
 - Excess levies
 - Ambulance utility fees
 - Benefit charges
 - Bonds for capital purchases

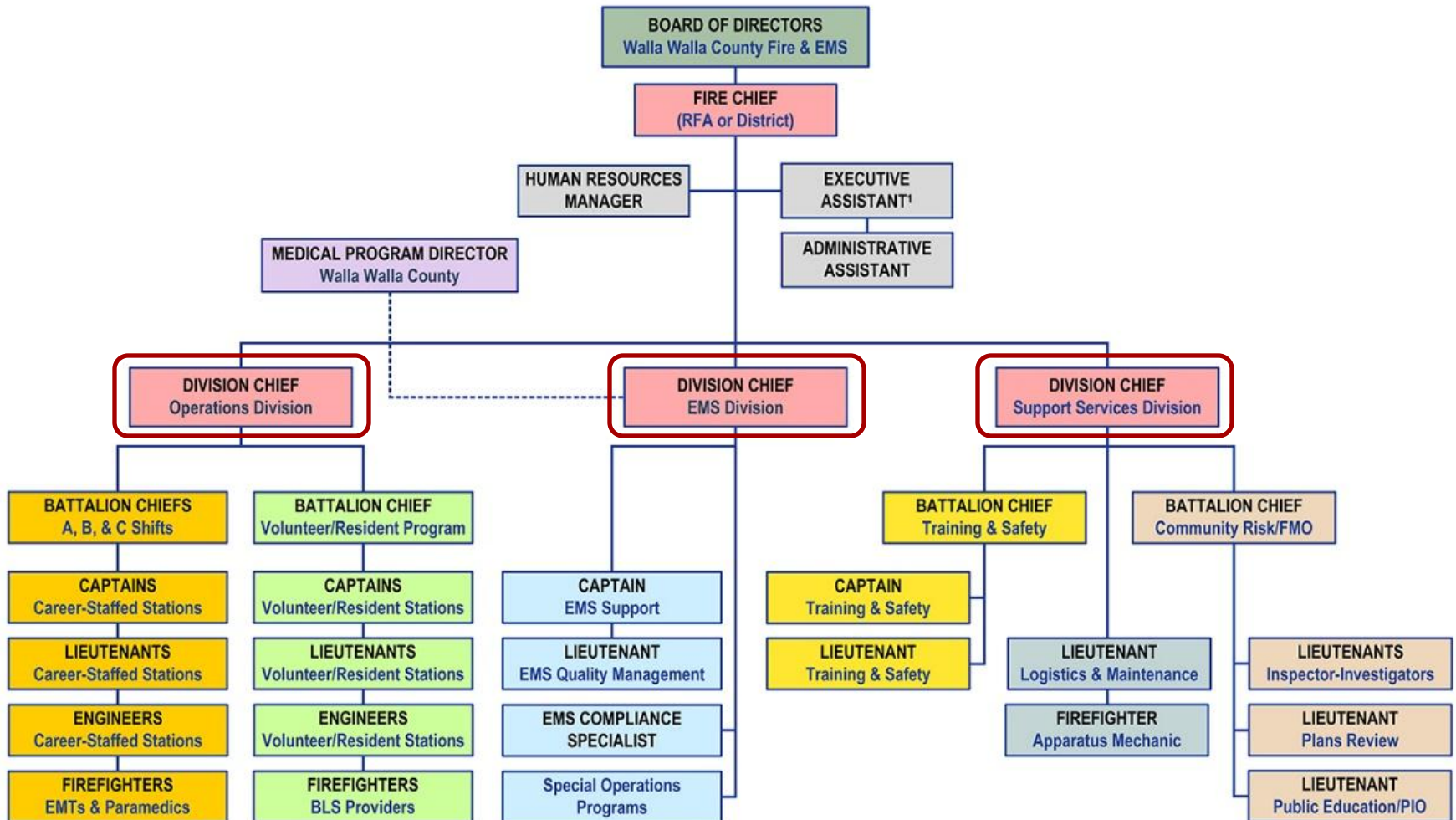


Options for Future Cooperative Services

- Strategy A: Maintain Status Quo
 - No substantial improvement; *not* recommended
- Strategy B: Annexation
 - Represents the least complicated consolidation process
 - Current fire district property tax rate and other revenue sources inadequate
 - Fire District #4 employees currently pay Social Security, while the two city departments do not
- ESCI Recommends:
Strategy C: Regional Fire Authority



Recommended New Organizational Structure



¹Also serves as District Secretary

Organizational Leadership

- ESCI recommends that the elected and appointed officials of the three jurisdictions consider employing a Fire Chief from outside.
- Should one of the current Fire Chiefs be appointed to lead the RFA, experience has shown that this could produce resentment and conflict among the personnel from the other two departments.
- Can result in a perception—whether real or imagined—that the Fire Chief from one of the current agencies would mold the RFA into a replica of his previous fire department.
- ESCI must state ***emphatically*** that this recommendation does ***not*** reflect negatively on the leadership, skills, knowledge, and capabilities of any of the current Fire Chiefs
 - Each has managed their respective departments effectively.
 - ESCI strongly recommends that the three Fire Chiefs be appointed to command positions in the RFA without loss of wages and benefits.



Volunteers in a Consolidated Department

- Both College Place and Fire District #4 rely heavily on volunteer firefighters (and volunteers serving in other roles) for emergency operations.
- There is ***no doubt*** these individuals have contributed to providing fire protection, EMS, and other emergency services to their respective communities.
- ESCI strongly recommends providing the volunteers with the necessary support, training, and experience to enable them to successfully continue service in a consolidated department.



Stations, Operations, & Deployment

- Fire District #4's Station 41 may be the best location for new headquarters
- Discontinue use of Station 43 due to its low historical call-volumes and proximity to Walla Walla Station 11-2 (renumbered to Station 47)

Proposed Apparatus Assignments & Operational Staffing

Renumbered Fire Stations	Engine ^A	Transport Medic	Tender	Wildland	Minimum Staffing
Station 41 (Headquarters)	2	1 (ALS)	1	2	2/[C]
Station 42	1	0	1	1	[V]
Station 43	—	—	—	—	—
Station 44	1	0	1	0	[V]
Station 45	1	0	1	1	[V]
Station 46 (WWFD 11-1)	1	1 (ALS)	0	0	6 [F]
Station 47 (WWFD 11-2) ^C	1	1 (ALS)	0	0	5 [F]
Station 48 (CPFD Station)	1	1 (ALS)	1	1	2/[C]
Station 49 (Airport)	0	0	0	0	0 ^B
Totals:	8	4	5	5	11^C

[C] = Combination career and volunteer. [V] = Volunteer staffed only. [F] = Full-time career staff only

^AType 1 engines. ^BStaffed when commercial flights arrive and depart. ^CTruck located here also. ^DCareer staff total.

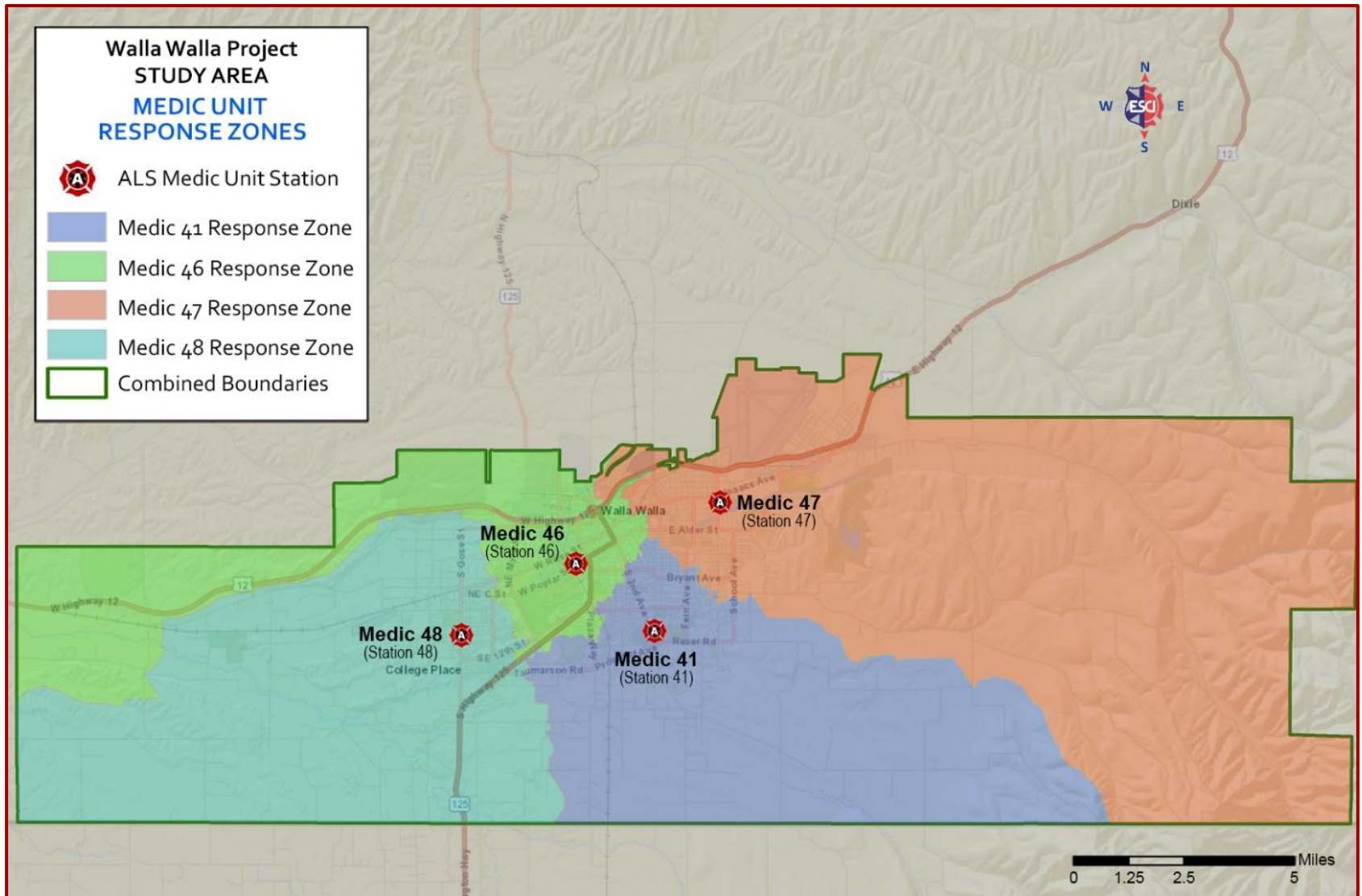
Proposed Staffing Configuration

Proposed Staffing Configurations by Renumbered Stations & Apparatus

Station #41		Station #42		Station #43		Station #44	
Engine	Medic	Engine/Tender/Wildland		None		Engine/Tender/Wildland	
Officer	EMT-P	Volunteer Staff		<i>Consider discontinuing deployment of personnel & apparatus</i>		Volunteer Staff	
Engineer	EMT-B						
Firefighter	—						
Station #45		Station #46		Station #47		Station #48	
Engine/Tender/Wildland		Engine	Medic	Engine	Medic	Engine	Medic
Volunteer Staff		Officer	EMT-P	Officer	EMT-P	Officer	EMT-P
		Engineer	EMT-B	Engineer	EMT-B	Engineer	EMT-B
		Firefighter	—	Firefighter	—	Firefighter	—

- As EMS service-demand increases in the future, and funding allows it, consider the addition of a peak-demand BLS ambulance or ALS Medic Unit.

Proposed ALS Medic Unit Response Zones



ANNEXATION: Estimated Revenue & Expenses

Description	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recurring Revenue Sources					
District #4 Property Tax ^A	\$5,702,587	\$5,839,340	\$5,977,054	\$6,115,780	\$6,255,368
EMS Levy Revenue	\$1,994,110	\$2,042,673	\$2,094,052	\$2,141,303	\$2,198,634
Ambulance Fees	\$1,502,734	\$1,508,017	\$1,513,406	\$1,518,903	\$1,524,510
All Other Revenue Sources	\$1,610,271	\$1,639,551	\$1,669,203	\$1,699,245	\$1,729,699
Total Revenue:	\$10,809,702	\$11,029,581	\$11,253,714	\$11,475,232	\$11,708,212
Recurring Expenses					
Salaries & Benefits	\$10,000,893	\$10,298,192	\$10,604,947	\$10,921,482	\$11,248,132
Volunteer Stipends	\$430,507	\$441,270	\$452,302	\$463,609	\$475,199
Supplies and Services	\$1,090,674	\$1,117,941	\$1,145,889	\$1,174,537	\$1,203,900
Capital & Other Expenses	\$918,021	\$938,366	\$943,197	\$965,016	\$969,757
Total Expenses:	\$12,440,096	\$12,795,769	\$13,146,335	\$13,524,644	\$13,896,988
Net Income (Deficit):	(\$1,630,394)	(\$1,766,188)	(\$1,892,620)	(\$2,049,412)	(\$2,188,776)

^ARate of \$1.2268 per \$1,000 assessed value.



Financial Analysis of an RFA

RFA Revenue Projections (2021–2025)

Revenue Source	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	% Change
Regular Property Tax	7,290,832	7,466,605	7,643,279	7,820,959	7,999,486	9.7%
EMS Property Tax	1,994,110	2,042,673	2,094,052	2,141,303	2,198,634	10.3%
Excess/Special Levy	228,210	233,712	239,242	244,803	250,391	9.7%
Other Taxes	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ambulance Fees	1,502,734	1,508,017	1,513,406	1,518,903	1,524,510	1.4%
Other Revenue	1,610,271	1,639,551	1,669,203	1,699,245	1,729,699	7.4%
Subtotal Revenue:	\$12,626,156	\$12,890,558	\$13,159,181	\$13,425,214	\$13,702,722	8.5%
Annual % Increase:	—	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	—

Forecasted Annual Expenses of an RFA (2021–2025)

Expenses	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Salaries & Benefits	\$10,000,893	\$10,298,192	\$10,604,947	\$10,921,482	\$11,248,132
Volunteer Stipends	\$430,507	\$441,270	\$452,302	\$463,609	\$475,199
Supplies & Services	\$1,090,674	\$1,117,941	\$1,145,889	\$1,174,537	\$1,203,900
Capital & Other Expenses	\$918,021	\$938,366	\$943,197	\$965,016	\$969,757
Estimated Total Expenses:	\$12,440,096	\$12,795,769	\$13,146,335	\$13,524,644	\$13,896,988

Financial Analysis of an RFA *continued...*

Forecasted Revenues & Expenses of an RFA (2021–2025)

Expenses	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Revenue	\$12,626,156	\$12,890,558	\$13,159,181	\$13,425,214	\$13,702,722
Total Expenses	\$12,440,096	\$12,795,769	\$13,146,335	\$13,524,644	\$13,896,988
Net Income (Deficit):	\$186,060	\$94,789	\$12,847	(\$99,430)	(\$194,266)

- Includes planned capital purchases, including an engine for WWFD, and two engines and an ambulance for District #4
- However, there may be adequate existing apparatus among the three fire agencies that would negate the need for these capital expenditures.
- The declining net revenues from 2023–2025 are due to expenses increasing faster than property tax revenues.

General Findings & Recommendations

- Communications & Data Collection
- Training
- Life-Safety & Prevention
- Technical Rescue & Special Operations
- Dispatch & Performance
- Firefighter Physical Examinations
- Firefighter Reserve Program
- Community Paramedicine Program



Planning & Implementation

- Basic Procedural Steps of Consolidation
- Recommendations During the Initial Collaboration
 - Cost-Sharing Options
- Planning Groups & Committees
- Meet, Refine, & Address the Challenges
- Appendices
 - NFPA 1710 & 1720 Performance Standards
 - Factors to Consider in a Consolidation
 - Sample Agreement for Interim Revenue Collection
 - Consolidation Checklist





Walla Walla County Cooperative Services Feasibility Study

QUESTIONS?



Cooperative Services Feasibility Study



**Walla Walla Fire Department
College Place Fire Department
Walla Walla County Fire District #4**

January 2020



**Emergency Services
Consulting International**

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	5
Introduction.....	6
SECTION I: EVALUATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS	7
Overview of the Communities.....	8
Walla Walla County.....	8
Organizations & System Overview	10
College Place Fire Department.....	10
Walla Walla Fire Department	11
Walla Walla County Fire District #4.....	12
Study Area	13
Other Emergency Services System Components	13
Management Components	16
Mission, Vision, & Values.....	16
Critical Issues	17
Internal & External Communications.....	17
Regulatory Documents & Recordkeeping	19
Documentation & Compliance Testing.....	20
Staffing & Personnel.....	22
Personnel Policies & Processes.....	22
Hiring, Testing, & Safety	23
Labor Agreements	26
Administrative Support Staffing	27
Emergency Operations Staffing	29
Current Wages & Benefits	32
Staff Survey Results	35
Financial Analysis	38
College Place Fire Department Finances	38
Walla Walla Fire Department Finances.....	42
Walla Walla County Fire District #4 Finances	50
Relative Strengths & Weaknesses of the Fire Agencies	54
Capital Facilities & Apparatus	56
Fire Stations & Other Facilities	56
Fire Apparatus & Ambulance Fleets	68
Capital Facilities & Equipment Replacement Planning	73
Capital Medical Equipment Inventory	74

Historical Service Delivery & Performance	76
Data Sources	76
Service-Demand Analysis	78
Distribution Analysis	106
Concentration Analysis	118
Reliability Analysis	120
Response Performance	125
Emergency Medical Transport Analysis	136
Support Programs	139
Dispatch & Emergency Communications	139
Training & Continuing Education	141
Life-Safety & Prevention Programs	145
Technical Rescue & Special Operations	152
SECTION II: FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATIVE EFFORTS	155
Alternatives for Implementing Cooperative Efforts	156
Status Quo (Autonomy)	156
Interlocal Agreements/Contract for Services	157
Merger	160
“Municipal” Fire District	161
Annexation	163
Regional Fire Protection Service Authority	165
Options for Future Cooperative Services	168
Strategy A: Maintain the Status Quo	168
Strategy B: Annexation	169
Strategy C: Regional Fire Authority	171
Discussion of Other Strategies	175
Recommended Strategies for Consolidation	176
Recommended Strategies	176
Recommended Organizational Structure	177
Organizational Leadership	179
Volunteers in a Consolidated Fire Department	179
Status of the Fire Stations	179
Operations & Deployment	180
Expanded Fire District Boundaries	181
Administrative Support Services	183
Financial Analysis of Consolidation	185
Proposed Employee Wages & Benefits	185
Financial Analysis of an Annexation	189
Financial Analysis of a Regional Fire Authority	190

General Findings & Recommendations	195
Recommendations on Communications & Data Collection	195
Training Recommendations	195
Life-Safety & Prevention Recommendations	196
Technical Rescue & Special Operations Recommendations	196
Dispatch & Performance Recommendations	197
Recommendations on Firefighter Physical Examinations	197
Firefighter Reserve Program	198
Community Paramedicine Program	198
RFA Planning & Implementation	199
Basic Procedural Steps of Consolidation	199
Recommendations During the Initial Collaboration	204
Planning Groups & Committees	206
Meet, Refine, & Address the Challenges	208
Conclusion	209
SECTION III: APPENDICES	210
Appendix A: NFPA 1710 Response-Time Performance Standards	211
Appendix B: NFPA 1720 Response-Time Performance Standards	213
Appendix C: Factors to Consider in a Consolidation	215
Appendix D: Sample Agreement for Interim Revenue Collection	220
Appendix E: Consolidation Checklist	223
Appendix F: Table of Figures	225
Appendix G: References	230

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Our sincere appreciation is extended to each of you...



City of College Place

David Winter
Fire Chief

Mike Rizzitiello
City Administrator

Patrick Evensen
Training Officer

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Fire Marshal/IAFF Local 4203



City of Walla Walla

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Walla Walla District #4

Rocky Eastman
Fire Chief

Larry Hector
Fire Commissioner

Bill Box
Training Lt./IAFF Local 4514

John Golden
Captain

...and each of the volunteer and career firefighters and support staff who daily serve the citizens and visitors of Walla Walla, College Place, and Walla Walla County with honor and distinction.

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in early May 2019, Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) was retained by the City of Walla Walla Fire Department (WWFD), College Place Fire Department (CPFD), and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 (WWCFD4 or Fire District #4) to conduct a Cooperative Services Feasibility study to evaluate various options for potentially consolidating the three fire service organizations.

What follows is a result of ESCI's comprehensive analysis of each of the organizations, followed by recommendations for moving forward. ESCI has approached this project from an independent and unbiased perspective, without any preconceived concepts. Each of the proposed recommendations in this report was intended to reflect what ESCI's believes would be in the best interests of each community, the three fire departments, and the employees and volunteers of those departments.

Although potential cost-savings were considered wherever possible during this study, ESCI's primary strategy was to determine options that would improve overall service throughout the two cities and fire district, as well as achieve cost-effective administrative and operational efficiency.

Recognizing that WWCFD4 is a fire district rather than a municipal organization, this report may use the term "fire department" to refer to any or all the agencies participating in this study, unless otherwise specified. In addition, the term "Walla Walla County" will refer to all areas within the County boundaries and/or County government.

Section I: EVALUATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITIES

The following section provides a general overview of the demography and other features of Walla Walla County and the incorporated communities served by each of the fire departments participating in this study.

Walla Walla County

Each of the fire-service organizations in this study is located within and provides emergency services to Walla Walla County. The County is in the southeast corner of Washington State, whose southern boundary borders the State of Oregon. Walla Walla County is comprised of approximately 1,299 square miles, of which 1,270 is land, with 29 square miles consisting of water.¹ The U.S. Census Bureau estimated a 2018 population of 60,922 persons.²



In Walla Walla County, there are four incorporated communities with the following 2017 population estimates (2018 unavailable) and areas:³

- Walla Walla—32,585 (13.67 square miles)
- College Place—9,041 (2.99 square miles)
- Waitsburg—1,186 (1.19 square miles)
- Prescott—345 (0.4 square miles)

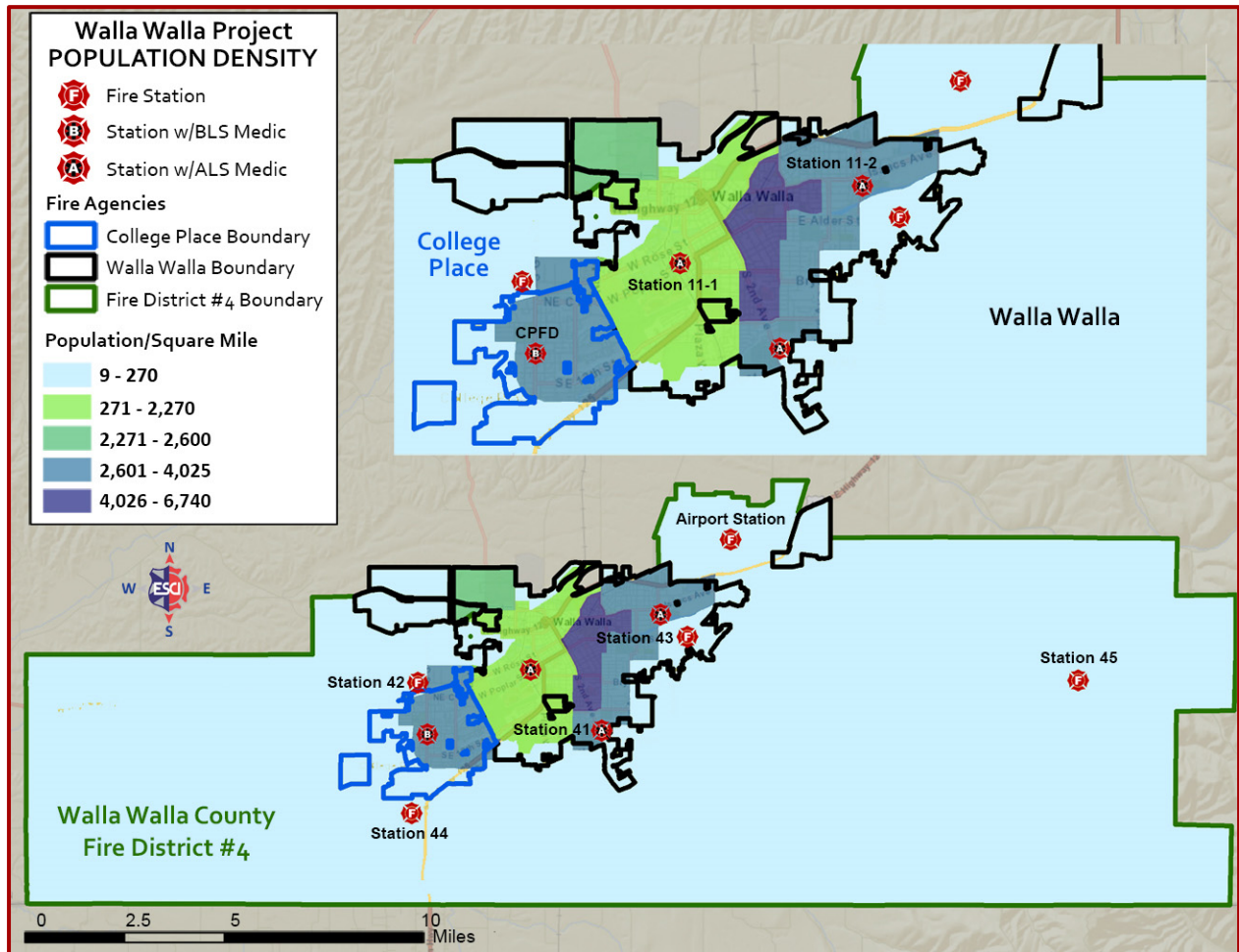
Walla Walla County Fire District #4 provides service to a 2018 population of approximately 9,193 persons.⁴ The median age of all of Walla Walla County's population is 42 years. Persons at risk for sudden illness or injury tend to be older and younger. Approximately 39% of the County's residents are age 62 and older, with nearly 10% age nine or younger.⁵

As of 2017, the U.S. Census Bureau indicated a total of 24,354 housing units, of which about 92% were occupied. Owner-occupied homes had a median value of \$196,000, with 3% built during 2010 or later. Nearly 72% are single units with either an attached or detached garage.

The following figure is a GIS illustration of the 2010 population densities of each of the fire agencies participating in this study.

Figure 1: Walla Walla County Population Density (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



The 2017 median household income was \$52,630, with a mean of \$70,261.⁶ It was estimated that approximately 14% of the County's residents had incomes below the poverty level as of 2017. According to the Census Bureau's *American FactFinder*, it was estimated that 91% of Walla Walla County residents had some form of private or public health insurance during 2017.

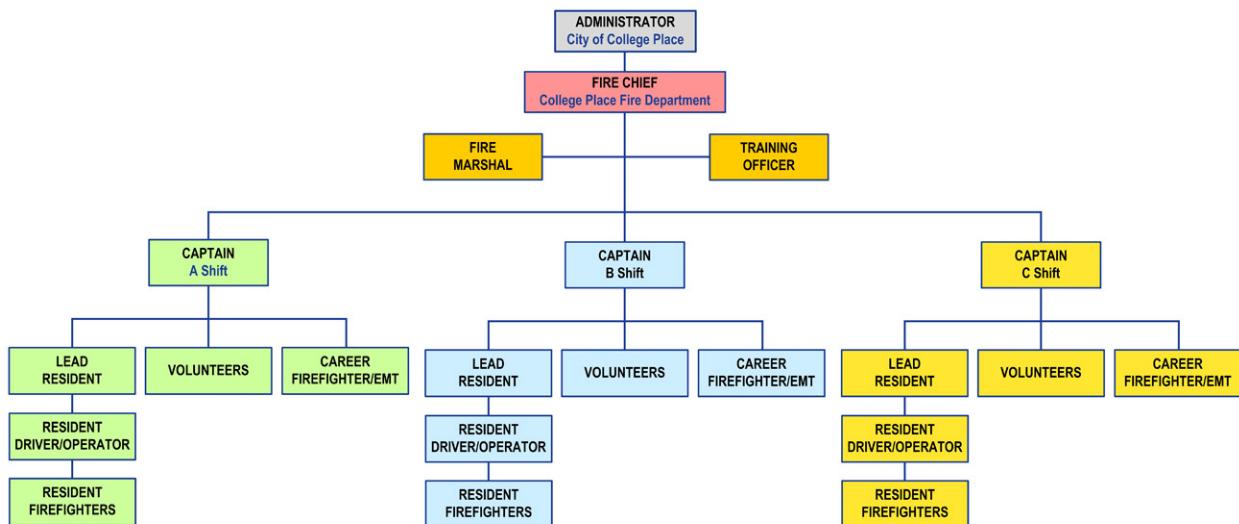
ORGANIZATIONS & SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The following section is a general overview of each of the three fire departments participating in this study.

College Place Fire Department

College Place is an incorporated community with a strong mayoral form of government and seven elected Council members. The Fire Chief answers to the City Administrator, who is responsible for managing the City departments. Uniformed management and administrative support staff consist of the Fire Chief, Training Officer, Fire Marshal, and uniformed administrative support positions. The following figure is an illustration of CPFD's current organizational structure.

Figure 2: Current College Place Fire Department Organizational Chart (2019)



The College Place Fire Department is a combination department and, in addition to the three career administrative positions, maintains 35 personnel assigned primarily to emergency operations. The highest-ranking officers in operations are Captains. The preceding figure shows currently filled positions. However, in the future, CPFD intends on hiring an Administrative Assistant and three Firefighter/EMTs.

General Operations

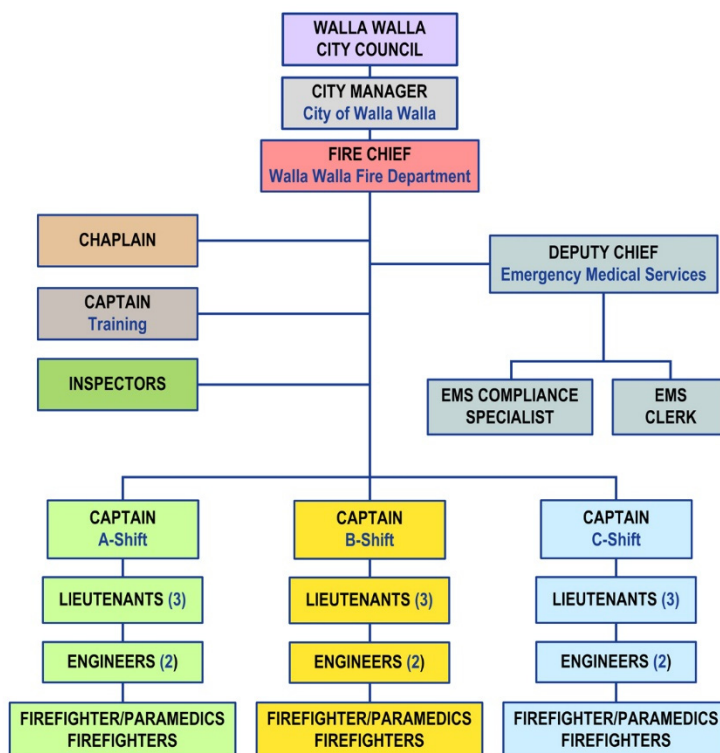
CPFD operates from one fire station and provides the following: traditional fire protection services and EMS; fire inspections and code enforcement; public education and prevention programs; fire and arson investigations; and Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance service. The station is staffed with career personnel during the weekdays, and volunteers at night and on the weekends.

In 2017, the *Washington Surveying & Rating Bureau (WSRB)* assigned the City of College Place a community *Protection Class (PC)* grade of 4 (with a score of 1 the best score). The grading was based on four major areas: Water Supply, Fire Safety Control, Emergency Communications, and the fire department.

Walla Walla Fire Department

Walla Walla is an incorporated city governed by an elected seven-member City Council. From among the Council members, a Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tem are elected for two-year terms. The Fire Chief is directly responsible to the City Manager. Uniformed management and administrative support staff consist of the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Training Captain, and no non-uniformed administrative support positions. The following figure is an illustration of WWFD's current organizational structure.

Figure 3: Current Walla Walla Fire Department Organizational Chart (2019)



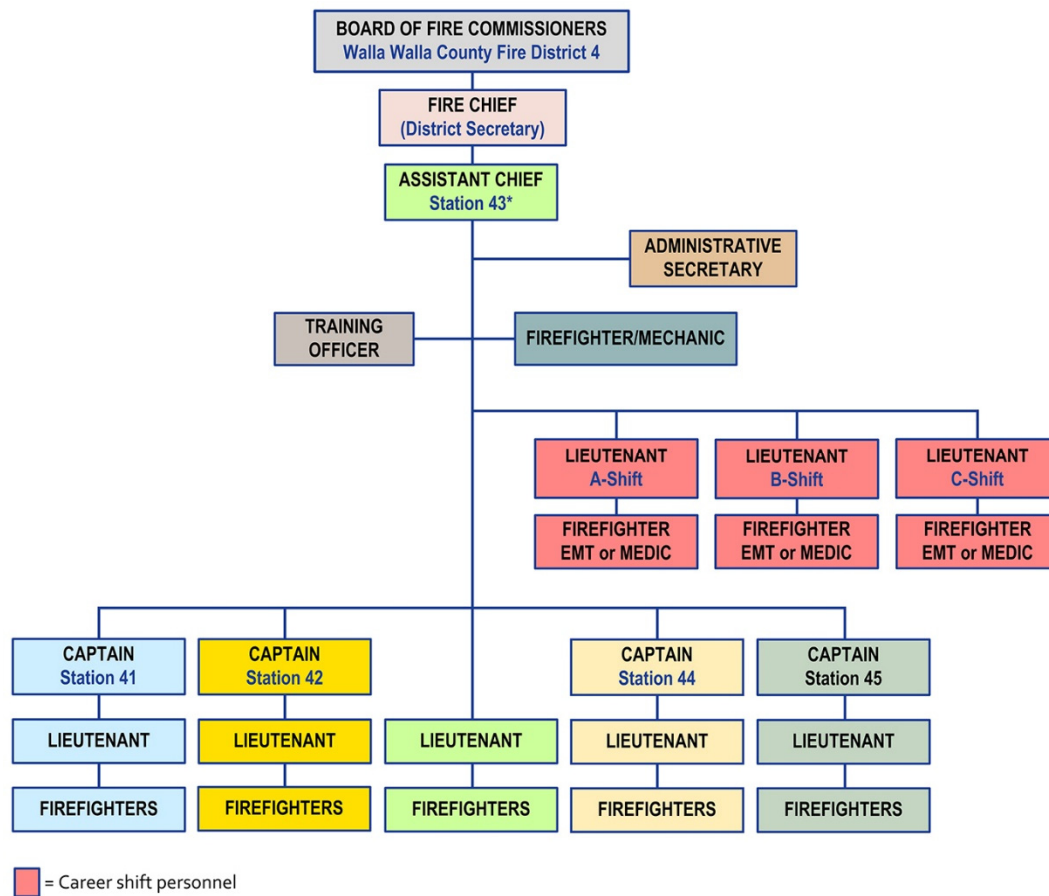
General Operations

The Walla Walla Fire Department operates from two fully staffed fire stations providing traditional fire protection services and EMS; fire inspections and code enforcement; public education and prevention programs; fire and arson investigations; Confined Space Rescue; Swift Water Rescue, high- and low-angle rope rescue; and Advanced Life Support (ALS) and BLS ground emergency medical transport (GEMT) to Walla Walla as well as College Place when needed. In 2014, the WSRB gave the City of Walla Walla a Community Protection Class grade of 4.

Walla Walla County Fire District #4

WWCFD₄ is a fire protection district overseen by an elected three-member Board of Fire Commissioners. The Fire Chief answers to the Board, who has the authority to hire and terminate employees and currently has a span of control ratio of 5:1. The District is comprised of approximately 125 square miles with an estimated population of just over 9,000 residents.

Figure 4: Current Fire District #4 Organizational Chart (2019)



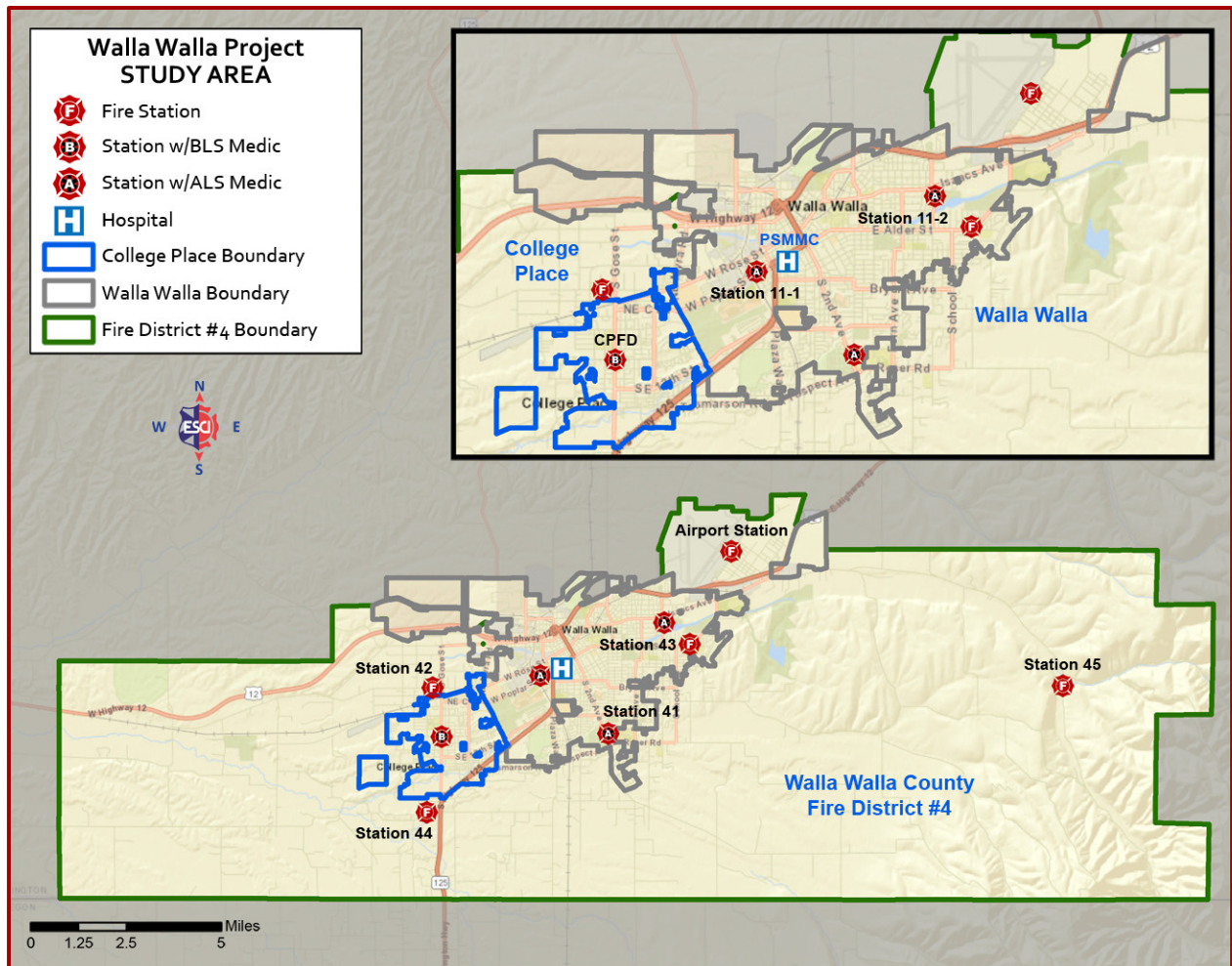
General Operations

Fire District #4 operates from five primary fire stations. Station 41 is the only full-time staffed station. In addition, the District staffs the fire station owned by and located at the Walla Walla Regional Airport. The airport fire station houses ARFF apparatus and is only staffed for short periods when commercial flights are landing or taking off. The District provides traditional fire protection services and EMS; hazardous material response; public education and prevention programs; fire and arson investigation; technician-level rescue and extrication; aircraft rescue and firefighting; and ALS and BLS ground emergency medical transport. WSRB has given Fire District #4 a Community Protection Class grade of 6/7.

Study Area

The following figure is a GIS illustration showing the study area for this project. This includes the city boundaries of College Place and Walla Walla, as well as the boundaries of Fire District #4.

Figure 5: Walla Walla Project Study Area



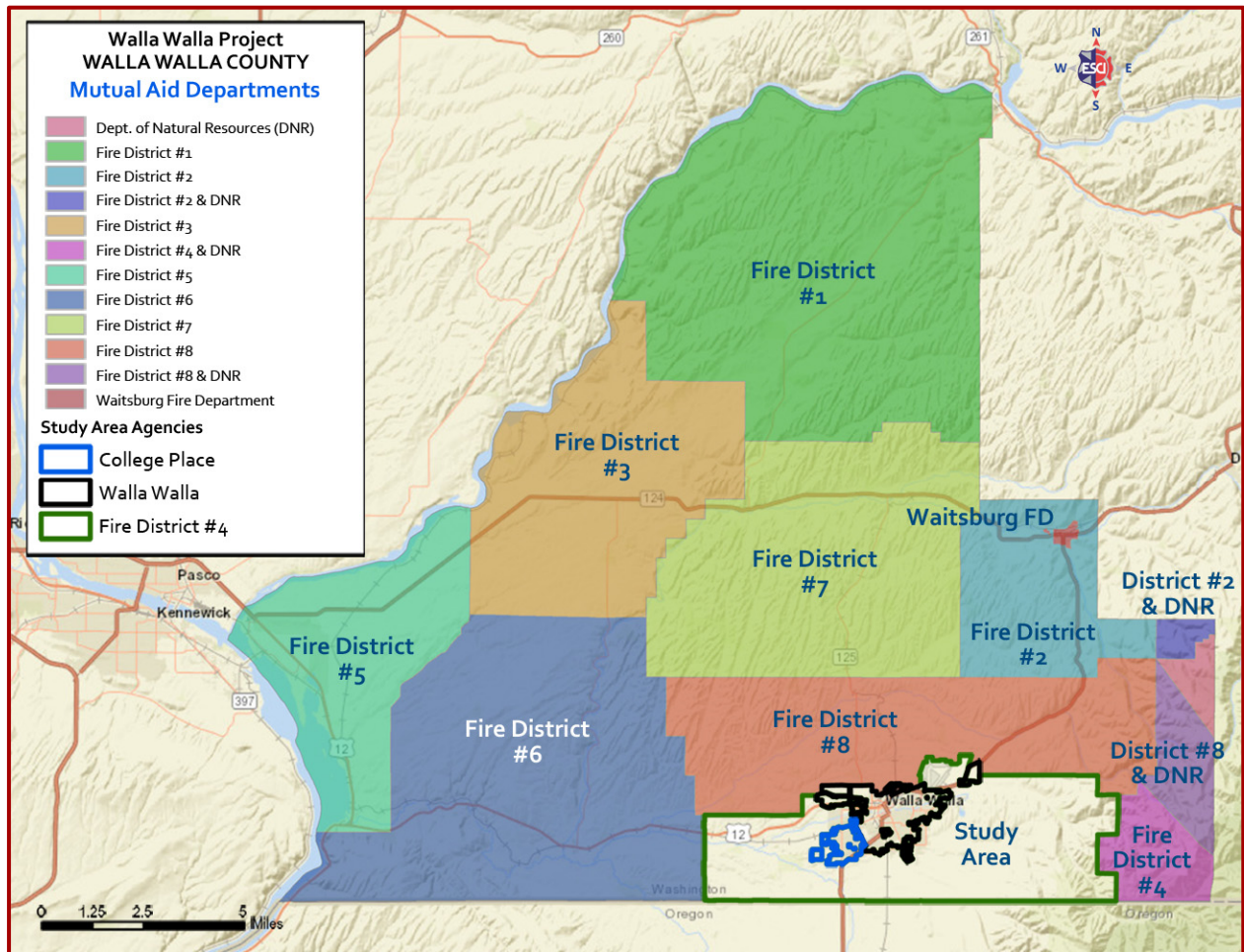
Other Emergency Services System Components

In most communities, fire departments are an integral part of an emergency services system. To be most effective, various components must be in place and functioning adequately. The following section addresses some of these important elements.

Mutual Aid Fire Departments

The College Place Fire Department, Walla Walla Fire Department, and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 provide and receive mutual aid to each other. In addition, various Walla Walla County fire districts and departments are available for mutual aid assistance, along with Columbia County Fire District #3 (Dayton). The following image illustrates most of the mutual aid agencies.

Figure 6: Mutual Aid Fire Districts & Agencies in Walla Walla County



Medical Oversight & Control

All EMS provider agencies in Walla Walla County function under the oversight of a single Medical Program Director (MPD). All EMS providers in the County function under a single set of protocols. Dr. Lewis D. Neace, DO, is board-certified as an Emergency Physician and appointed MPD by the *Washington State Department of Health, EMS & Trauma System*. The duties and responsibilities of MPDs in Washington State are defined in RCW 18.71.212 and WAC 246-976-920.

EMS & Trauma Care Councils

The *South-Central Region EMS & Trauma Care Council* is comprised of five county councils, including the *Walla Walla County EMS & Trauma Care Council*. The Regional Council works with local councils on injury prevention, EMS system planning, and other EMS and trauma-related programs.

Hospitals & Clinical Facilities

Following the closure of Walla Walla General Hospital (WWGH) in 2017, *Providence St. Mary Medical Center* (PSMMC) became the only hospital in the County. PSMMC is a designated Level III Trauma Center with cardiac catheterization capabilities.

The hospital's Emergency Department is staffed 24-hours daily with Registered Nurses, Board-Certified Emergency Physicians, and other specialty staff.

Air Medical Service

The *Life Flight Network*® operates rotor-wing and fixed-wing aircraft bases throughout the Pacific Northwest. The nearest helicopter base is in Pendleton, Oregon, approximately 39 miles from Walla Walla. The second closest rotor-wing aircraft base is in Richland, Washington, at approximately 60 miles. Most of their helicopters have a range of about 175 miles.

Life Flight provides critical-care treatment through both scene responses and interfacility air transport. Helicopter medical crews consist of a minimum of one Flight Nurse and one Flight Paramedic—both of whom receive advanced training beyond their basic education, as well as completion of the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Air Medical Curriculum*.

MANAGEMENT COMPONENTS

Effectively managing a fire department is a complex task, often impacted by financial constraints, political pressures, and demanding community expectations. Today's fire department must address these complexities by ensuring an efficient and flexible organizational structure, adequacy of response, maintenance of competencies, a qualified workforce, and financial sustainability.

The development of baseline management components in fire-service organizations enables them to move forward in an organized and efficient manner. In the absence of foundational management elements, organizations can flounder—lost in ineffective leadership and divergent views of purpose and vision. This is especially true when organizations are attempting to more formally consolidate.

A well-organized and efficiently administered organization has appropriate documentation; policies and procedures; and ways to effectively address internal and external issues. Processes must also be established to address the flow of information and communication within each fire agency, as well as with their respective constituents. In order to identify potential opportunities and barriers in consolidating departments, ESCI examined each department and the fire district's current efforts in organizational planning and management.

Mission, Vision, & Values

The management of a fire department needs to be grounded in the acceptance and adoption of a strong mission statement along with an organizational vision and values. These fundamental foundation blocks are necessary to ensure everyone in the organization and community understands why the organization exists; the level of services provided; the vision for the department over the next three to five years; and the goals and objectives to get there. A successful strategic planning process enables organizational improvements related to the creation and maintenance of policies and procedures; enhancement of internal and external communications practices; improved operational deployment; recordkeeping; and sustainable financial practices.

To be most effective, mission, vision, and value statements must be part of a "living" process, consciously evolving as the department changes and grows. This is often accomplished through a strategic planning process. The following figure compares the status of strategic planning among the three agencies.

Figure 7: Mission, Vision, & Strategic Planning Efforts of the Study Departments

Department Mission & Goals	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Mission statement adopted	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vision established/communicated	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strategic plan adopted	City-wide only	Yes	Yes

The WWFD does not have a stand-alone strategic plan. Rather, the department's priorities are represented in the City's overall strategic plan. WWCFD4's strategic planning effort is obsolete, having last been completed in 2005.

If consolidation is pursued by the fire agencies, a visioning and strategic planning process should be considered a critical first step in building a common vision, goals and—most importantly—momentum, in order to enable significant change.

Regardless of the outcome of potential consolidation, creating or updating a strategic plan should be a high priority for each department, empowering employees to move together in a positive direction and enabling efficient change for improving the organization and service to the community. WWFD should consider developing a specific strategic plan for their organization.

Critical Issues

As a part of this study, each department was asked to list the top four critical issues facing their organization. ESCI evaluated the responses, looking for commonality that could lead to more cohesive planning in the future. The next figure summarizes the issues facing each organization.

Figure 8: Critical Issues Identified by the Fire Chiefs

Issue No.	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD4
1	EMS funding	Increase in paid staff	Utilizing resources more effectively
2	Vehicle replacement funding	Retaining volunteers	Succession planning
3	DC & Prevention staffing	Succession planning	Adding mid-level management positions
4	EMS delivery model	N/A ¹	N/A ¹

¹Department did not identify a fourth critical issue

Staffing deficits and succession planning appear to be the most common themes among the three agencies. Interestingly, ESCI noted that none of the agencies listed potential consolidation or integration as critical issues to be addressed.

Internal & External Communications

In today's "hyper-speed" world of communications, the public expects strategic, frequent, responsive, and transparent communication from government agencies. Likewise, employees expect the same when disseminating internal messages. Without it, public and employee confidence in the organization can be severely damaged, and informal communication channels may be created to spread false and misleading information throughout the community and organization. Each department uses the basic tools to communicate internally and externally. The following figure compares the various internal and external communication tools used by each organization.

Figure 9: Communications Methods Used by Departments

Communication Method	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Regularly scheduled staff meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agency Intranet	No	Not used	No
Written memos	Yes	Rarely	Rarely
Internal newsletters	No	No	Yes
All-hands meetings	Yes	No	Yes
Community newsletter	No	No	Yes
Department website	yes	Yes	Yes
Social media accounts	Yes	Yes	No
Community surveys	Citywide	Not recently	No

Specific to internal communications, ESCI noted that all three fire agencies hold regular meetings with administrative and operational staff. Each distributes meeting minutes differently. Information is disseminated to employees through Shift Captains, company officers, and/or postings on bulletin boards. Only WWCFD₄ publishes an external newsletter.

WWFD and CPFD have active Facebook® social media accounts, with over 1,600 followers in both combined. None of the fire agencies use Twitter® for social media. WWFD and CPFD appear to maintain an active presence on Facebook® and frequently post safety and general public-interest information. WWFD firefighters maintain a Twitter® account, with approximately 350 followers.

Internal/External Communications Discussion

Many emergency response agencies are using interactive social media tools. These tools are now entrenched in the fabric of the American social structure, with the potential to harness (or unleash) tremendous community support, concern, and action.

To be most effective in using social media channels to communicate department activities, a pragmatic and strategic approach is necessary. Many departments allowed their social media presence to develop organically—often by experimentation. This frequently results in multiple social media accounts, conflicting or missing information, inconsistent messaging, and an occasional posting of inappropriate material.

Establishing clear expectations of how department members should conduct themselves on social media—on and off the job—is critical to ensuring the community holds the department and its members in high regard. Over the past few years, public employees and their agencies have been criticized for inappropriate social media posts. Examples include, but are not limited to: sharing of confidential patient information; derogatory racial slurs; discriminatory or slanderous statements; or crude and inappropriate jokes. In many cases, employees have received significant discipline—including termination—with the fire department's reputation needlessly damaged.

To address these issues, many departments have adopted and enforce social media policies prohibiting public statements by employees that:

- Are defamatory, obscene, discriminatory, slanderous, or unlawful; and/or
- Tends to compromise administration of agency discipline; and/or
- Damage or impugn the reputation and/or efficiency of the Department or member.

Obviously, an employee's *First Amendment* rights must be taken into consideration when drafting a social media policy. However, many available examples of policies exist that legally balance First Amendment rights with fire department requirements and responsibilities.

WWFD is the only department in this study that currently solicits feedback through community surveys, albeit through a City-wide survey. WWCFD₄ is the only department that distributes an internal newsletter. However, many agencies use internal e-mail and attachments to communicate with their employees.

Community newsletters, media coverage, social media, and websites are the means most commonly employed by EMS organizations, law enforcement agencies, and fire departments to communicate with the public. Life-safety messages and upcoming political or fiscal issues can be addressed in detail and distributed via newsletters, and can be effective in gaining citizen support—especially if a functional consolidation effort is pursued. Depending on the number and types of issues that invariably surface during significant organizational change, consistent community engagement and dialogue will be critical to gaining and maintaining support for this effort.

Regulatory Documents & Recordkeeping

Government agencies depend on written policies, standard operating guidelines (SOG), and reports as components of effective management and legal compliance. Each of the departments in this study uses these methods in different ways toward achieving its mission. The following figure summarizes the various policies and how they are utilized.

Figure 10: Regulatory Documents

Regulatory Documents	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Rules available for review	Yes	Yes	Yes
SOGs available for review	Yes	Yes	Yes
SOGs regularly updated	N/A	No	No
SOGs used in training evolutions	Yes	Yes	Yes
Department policies available for review	Yes	Yes	Yes
Internally reviewed for consistency	Needs updating	No	No
Internally reviewed for legal mandates	Needs updating	No	No
Training on policies provided	Yes	Yes	Yes

All three departments have baseline department policies and rules and SOGs related to their various administrative and operational tasks and evolutions. Each noted the need to review and update their current policies to ensure they are contemporary and meet legal requirements. Some departments now outsource policy maintenance through online vendors, such as the *Lexipol Knowledge Management System®* (KMS). Regardless of the approach used, review and updating of policies and procedures is critical to ensuring efficient, legally compliant, and safe operation of the department.

Documentation & Compliance Testing

Proper recordkeeping and secure record archiving are essential to meet legal, regulatory, and business best-practices for government agencies. Secure document archiving can also assist in addressing legal and/or other administrative actions confronting a fire department. Each department's recordkeeping is summarized in the next figure.

Figure 11: Reporting & Recordkeeping by the Fire Agencies

Report Type	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Electronic reports	Yes	Yes	Yes
Software used–Fire	ESO®	ESO®	ESO®
Software used–EMS	ESO®	ESO®	ESO®
Periodic Reports to Elected Officials			
Financial reports	Yes	City Finance	Yes
Management reports	Yes	No	Yes
Operational reports	No	Yes	Yes
Annual report produced	No	No	Yes
Required Records Maintained & By Whom			
Incident reports	Yes	Yes	Yes
Patient care reports	Yes	Yes	Yes
Exposure records	Yes	Yes	Yes
SCBA testing	Internal	No	Internal
Hose testing	Internal	Internal	Contracted
Ladder testing	Internal	Internal	Internal
Pump testing	Internal	Contracted	Internal
Atmospheric monitors	Internal	Internal	Internal
Vehicle maintenance records	Fire Chief	Fleet Manager	WWCFD ₄ Mechanic

ESCI noted that WWCFD₄ is the only department that issues an annual comprehensive report on department activities. Annual analysis and reporting of activities can be extremely useful in educating the public, elected officials, and employees about the department's capabilities, effectiveness, and performance.

Fire station and records security among the three departments is primarily accomplished through a combination of door-key locks, door-card key locks, locked file cabinets (for hard copy document storage), and password-protected computer systems. All three departments back up vital computer records. However, WWCFD₄ does not store these files off-site. Storage and security of records appear to be adequate and appropriately maintained.

STAFFING & PERSONNEL

Managing personnel to achieve maximum efficiency, professionalism, and personal satisfaction is an art as much as a science. Consistency, fairness, safety, and opportunities for personal and professional growth are key values in a healthy management culture. These values are even more important when the organization relies on the participation and support of a “volunteer” workforce. Volunteer personnel may leave if they do not feel valued and/or experience personal satisfaction from their participation. The same can be applied to career personnel.

Several national organizations recommend standards to address staffing issues. The *Occupational Health & Safety Administration* (OSHA) *Respiratory Protection Standard* and *National Fire Protection Association* (NFPA) Standard 1710 (or 1720, whichever is applicable) are frequently cited as authoritative documents.^{7,8,9} In addition, the *Center for Public Safety Excellence* (CPSE) publishes benchmarks on the number of personnel recommended on the emergency scene for various levels of risk.

An appropriate balance of administration and support staff, compared to operational resources and service levels, is an important consideration to achieving organizational success. It is important to remember that key administrative and logistical support positions are critical in maintaining an efficient and effective fire department. Comparing these positions across the three fire departments in this study may reveal opportunities for sharing and/or combining positions to improve overall efficiencies.

ESCI evaluated the job descriptions, work schedules, compensation packages, and use of personnel to identify areas of excellence, areas for improved efficiency in personnel management, and opportunities to share resources.

Personnel Policies & Processes

Each of the three departments was surveyed to determine the administrative components used in managing their employees. All departments have contemporary personnel policy manuals, provide training on these policies to new employees, and archive copies of outdated policies. All three departments maintain and securely archive personnel records, including injury and accident reports and medical/exposure records.

Ensuring the health and safety of employees should be a high priority in any business or government organization. In order to prevent illness and injuries, many fire-service organizations offer proactive health and wellness programs designed to promote and support healthy lifestyles. Many of these programs also support mental health, which can be very important for those working in emergency services. The following figure summarizes the survey results.

Figure 12: Comparison of Health, Safety, & Counseling Services by Agency

Survey Components	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Medical Standards	Yes	Yes	Yes
Medical Exam Frequency	Biannual	None	Age-dependent
Safety Committee	Yes	Yes	Yes
Critical Incident Debriefing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Employee Assistance Program	Third-party	Third-party	No
Intervention Program	Yes	Yes	Policy only

Health & Safety Discussion

In today's fire service, ensuring the physical ability and medical fitness to perform strenuous fireground tasks has become increasingly important. Research shows that firefighters are at increased risk for cardiovascular compromise and certain types of cancer. Furthermore, increased attention is now being given to ensuring mental health as a result of exposure to dire situations that can elicit strong negative reactions. Each of the departments utilizes Critical Incident Debriefing teams to help mitigate short- and long-term mental health issues resulting from exposure to traumatic incidents.

NFPA 1582: *Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments* outlines the components and frequency of medical assessments to determine and monitor a firefighter's medical condition to safely perform in high stress, physically taxing situations. The standard identifies that physical examinations be conducted annually. None of the three departments conduct physical examinations annually, nor do they include all the components as recommended in the standard.

Hiring, Testing, & Safety

Recruiting, selecting, and retaining firefighters takes a considerable investment of time, effort, and money to ensure high-quality individuals are employed within the organization. While becoming a firefighter is one of the most sought-after careers in the nation, selecting candidates that fit best within the department and its culture, requires deliberate and comprehensive evaluation. The following figure summarizes the hiring process components used by the three departments.

Figure 13: Comparison of Hiring-Process Components by Agency

Hiring Process Components	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Recruitment Program	Yes	Yes	Yes
Qualifications check	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reference check	Yes	Yes	Yes
Background check	Yes	Yes	Yes
Physical standards established	Yes	Yes	Yes
Knowledge testing	Yes	Yes	Career only
Interview	Yes	Yes	Yes
Medical exam required	Yes	Yes	Yes
Psychological exam required	Yes	No	Career only

WWFD Hiring Process

The WWFD career firefighter hiring process is commissioned and administered by the City's Civil Service Commission, which creates an annual eligibility list of qualified firefighter candidates. WWFD previously contracted with Public Safety Testing® (PST) to maintain a continuous list of eligible candidates who have been vetted and successfully completed a written exam. The department discontinued using PST in 2018, and began administering an internal written exam comprised of 100 questions from the *International Fire Service Training Association*® (IFSTA) rotating bank of questions. Candidates must have at least one year of paid or volunteer firefighter experience within the past five years. All candidates who pass the written exam with a score of at least 70% proceed to take the physical agility assessment. The physical agility assessment consists of the following components, which must be completed in six minutes or less:

- 2 ½" hose carry up four stories
- 2 ½" hose-roll pull
- Sledge hammer sled
- 1 ¾" hose drag—75 feet
- Simulated rescue pull—drag 125 lbs. railroad tie, 200 feet

The candidates with the top 15 written scores are invited to participate in an oral interview process, after which the written test and oral interview scores are compiled. The written score is weighed at 30% of the total score and the oral interview score is weighed at 70%. Candidates selected for conditional hire then undergo further assessment, including a psychological assessment and comprehensive medical examination.

CPFD Hiring Process

The career firefighter hiring process for CPFD is also administered by the City's Civil Service Commission, which creates an annual eligibility list of qualified firefighter candidates. The written exam consists of a vendor-supplied video test, comprised of several components that assess human relations, mechanical, math, and reading aptitude. Candidates who pass the written exam with a score of at least 70% are invited to the physical agility assessment. This assessment consists of the following components;

- Weighted dummy-drag
- Sledge-hammer sled
- Charged hose-line pull
- Stair climb
- Hose hoist

All stations must be successfully completed in under 4 minutes. Candidates who pass the written and physical agility assessments are then invited to participate in an oral interview panel. The written and oral scores are then combined and used to rank the candidates. Candidates selected for conditional hire then undergo further assessment, including drug testing, background check, and comprehensive medical examination.

WWCFD4 Hiring Process

WWCFD4 uses a similar hiring process as WWFD for career firefighter positions, except for the administration of the written exam and the specific ALS written and skills assessment process for Firefighter/Paramedics. During the latest testing process for the firefighter/paramedic hiring list, the written exam was created and administered by PST. Candidates who pass the written exam move on to the physical agility assessment. The physical agility stations are the same. However, the assessment is scored based on how fast the candidate completes each of the stations. Candidates who complete the course in 2 minutes, 20 seconds and under, receive a 100% score. The longer it takes to complete the course, the lower the score. The minimum passing time is 5 minutes, 40 seconds, which equals a 50% score. The testing component weighting for a total score is as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| • Written Exam | 10% |
| • Written Medical Exam | 10% |
| • EMS Skills Assessment | 20% |
| • Firefighting Skills Assessment | 20% |
| • Physical Agility Assessment | 20% |
| • Oral Interview | 20% |

Firefighter/Paramedic candidates also must pass an EMS and firefighter skills and scenario assessment, along with an oral interview panel. As a fire district, WWCFD4 does not have a Civil Service Commission that oversees the hiring process.

The selection process for volunteer firefighter and single-role EMS candidates is different. Candidates are interviewed for suitability, and then must pass a criminal background and driving record check, and complete the physical agility assessment, and successfully complete a medical examination performed by a nurse practitioner.

Hiring Process Discussion

While each of the departments uses the same general process for identifying qualified candidates, the individual components vary substantially. One department uses a video administered written exam, while the other two departments use a standard written exam format. Each department administers a similar physical agility assessment, with varying completion time requirements. One department includes the completion time scores and uses it when determining final ranking scores. Finally, two out of the three department hiring processes are administered and monitored by Civil Service Commissions.

Over the past few years, the hiring practices in fire departments across the country have been challenged by allegations of bias and discrimination. For example, the new-hire testing practices of both the New York City Fire Department and Los Angeles Fire Department were questioned, resulting in the suspension of the hiring process and revocation of some conditional job offers. Outside experts were brought in to analyze historical hiring outcomes, as well as existing hiring administrative procedures, and subsequently make recommendations for improvement.¹⁰ As a result, significant changes were made, at great expense, to ensure a fair and impartial hiring process.

Regarding physical agility testing for entry-level firefighters, past legal challenges alleging discrimination and unfair administration in testing led to the creation of the Candidate Physical Agility Test (CPAT). The City of Chicago faced this reality in 2011, when several female firefighter and paramedic candidates filed a federal lawsuit, claiming the department's in-house-created physical agility testing process was discriminatory against women.¹¹ The lawsuits were settled after the City spent millions in settlements and legal fees, and the City now requires a current CPAT card to apply for the department.

The CPAT program, created jointly by the *IAFF* and *IAFC* in the late 1990s, has been scientifically and legally vetted and is now considered the standard in fairly assessing a candidate's physical abilities to perform basic fireground tasks. With that said, licensing and administering the CPAT program is expensive and requires significant administrative investment. As a result, many departments now require candidates to complete a CPAT assessment within a year or less as a prerequisite to apply. In Washington State, two private testing vendors—*Public Safety Testing*® and *National Testing Network*® regularly conduct CPAT practice sessions and tests, including quarterly practice sessions and tests in Spokane.

Labor Agreements

Three unions represent career operations personnel from the three agencies. The *International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 404* represents WWFD operations staff. *IAFF Local 4203* represents the CPFD operations staff, and *IAFF Local 4514* represents WWCDFD operations staff. All three locals are in the Seventh District of the IAFF. The following figure summarizes the duration of the current labor agreements.

Figure 14: Current Labor Agreement Periods by Agency

Department	Agreement Period
Walla Walla Fire Department	2016–2018
College Place Fire Department	2018–2020
Walla Walla Fire Protection District #4	2018–2020

While the WWFD agreement has expired, it will still be in force as contract negotiations are continued.

Union Agreement Discussion

The success of any form of consolidation will hinge, in large part, on Union participation, compromise, and agreement. The variation in work schedules, benefits, and other conditions currently outlined in the bargaining unit agreements of the three local union affiliates will need to be carefully addressed and homogenized for an effective and efficient consolidation. This can take the form of one affiliate absorbing the membership and obligations of other affiliates, commonly called a “merger,” or by legally dissolving the current IAFF affiliates and forming an entirely new bargaining unit—commonly called an “amalgamation.”

Merger or amalgamation of local union affiliates is encouraged by the IAFF where it makes sense. In 2012, the IAFF Legal Department published a manual to guide union leaders in merger/amalgamation efforts. The manual reviews the applicable sections in the IAFF *Constitution & Bylaws*, and defines the reporting requirements, legal requirements, and specific duties of merged and amalgamated affiliates. The manual states the following:

The Executive Board recommends that when the consolidation, unification, or merger of two or more counties, cities, or townships is anticipated, all locals involved should merge as soon as possible. If a merger of locals is not immediately possible, a joint committee should be established to work with the department administration to negotiate the benefits for all members. Every effort should be made to conclude the bargaining prior to the merger.

Given the number of significant labor implications related to a potential new consolidated fire agency—including internal union governance issues—Locals 4203, 4514, and 404 may benefit from the participation of the IAFF District Vice President and other legal resources available through the IAFF national organization. Also, given the complexity and variation of wages and benefits between the affiliates, if consolidation is actively pursued, they should engage in internal planning as soon as practical to reach agreement on how the affiliates will be organized in the new organization.

Administrative Support Staffing

Each of the departments has varying levels of administrative support positions—due primarily to their size. Typically, city fire departments rely on other city departments for administrative support services (e.g., information technology, human resources, finance, etc.)—which are not typically available to fire districts.

The following figure illustrates the various positions in both uniformed and non-uniformed administrative support positions.

Figure 15: Uniformed & Non-Uniformed Administrative & Support Staff Positions by Agency

Staff Positions	WWFD (FTE)	CPFD (FTE)	WWCFD4 (FTE)
Fire Chief	1	1	1
Assistant Chief	0	0	0
Deputy Chief	1	0	0
Fire Marshal	0	1	0
Administrative Captain	1	0	0
Training Lieutenant	0	0	1 ^A
Fire Inspectors/Plan Reviewers	2	0	0
Firefighter/Mechanic	0	0	1 ^A
Administrative Secretary	0	0	1
EMS Compliance Specialist	1	0	0
EMS Clerk	1	0	0
Total Administrative/Support Positions:	7	2	4
% of Admin Staff to Total FD Personnel:	14%	4%	7%

^AServes in both an administrative or support & operational role.

Administrative Staffing Discussion

The ratios between administrative positions and the total number of positions in each department do not appear excessive. Analyzing these ratios facilitates an understanding of the relative number of resources committed to this important function. An appropriate balance of administrative to operational personnel is critical to the success of the department's mission and responsibilities. Failure to provide adequate staffing in this area can result in a lack of coordination, poor recordkeeping, ineffective communications, and a myriad of additional symptoms indicative of a department that is struggling to function effectively. ESCI assumes most, if not all, administrative support services—such as legal, Human Resources, Information Technology, etc.—are provided by other City departments, and are outsourced in WWCFD₄.

ESCI notes two additional potential negative aspects to the lean number of administrative personnel in each department. First, a lack of “bench depth” was apparent. That is, an absence of functional redundancies can result in the crippling of normal operations if an administrative employee becomes unavailable for an extended period. Second, allowing limited staff to work at maximum capacity may result in focusing on myopic short-term tasks, and ultimately diminish the ability to strategize and/or perform

long-term planning. This includes situations where administrative personnel are also expected to routinely respond to emergency incidents along with their regular administrative duties.

However, the relatively low-level of administrative support below the Fire Chief position may streamline a consolidation effort, as many of the positions in each department may be required in a new larger organization.

Emergency Operations Staffing

ESCI evaluated the type and number of operations staff positions. The following figure summarizes the number of Operations positions in each department.

Figure 16: Operations Staff Positions by Fire Agency

Operations Positions	WWFD (FTE)	CPFD (FTE)	WWCFD4 (FTE)	TOTALS
Career Positions				
Captain	3	0	0	3
Lieutenant	9	0	3	12
Engineer	6	0	0	6
Firefighter/Paramedic	17	0	2	19
Firefighter/EMT	7	3	2	12
Firefighters—Part-Time	0	0	1 ^B	1
Other Operations Positions	0	0	2 ^C	2
Subtotals:	42	3	10	55
Volunteer Positions				
Operations Assistant Chief	0	0	1	1
Captain	0	3	4	7
Lieutenant	0	0	4	4
Firefighter/Paramedic	0	0	1	1
Engineer	0	4	0	4
Firefighter/EMT	0	23	40	63
Lead Resident/ Lieutenant	0	3 ^A	0	3
Resident Firefighter	0	9	9	18
Subtotals:	0	42	59	101
Total Operations Positions:	42	45	70	156
Operations Officers to Firefighters:	29%	13%	17%	

^AConsidered Lieutenant positions at CPFD

^BIncludes one part-time Firefighter/Paramedic

^CIncludes two, part-time single-role Paramedics

Position & Rank Totals

Among the three agencies, three civilian positions provide administrative support. The following figure lists the combined totals of uniformed career and volunteer personnel by specific rank.

Figure 17: Combined Total Uniformed Career & Volunteer Personnel by Rank

Rank & Position	Career (FTE)	Volunteer
Fire Chief	3	0
Operations Assistant Chief	0	1
Deputy Chief	1	0
Fire Marshal	1	0
Administrative Captain	1	0
Captain	3	7
Training Lieutenant	1	0
Lieutenant	12	4
Engineer	6	4
Firefighter/Paramedic	17	1
Firefighter/EMT	12	63
Firefighter/Mechanic	1	0
Fire Inspectors/Plan Reviewers	2	0
Lead Resident/Lieutenant	0	3
Resident Firefighters	0	18
Part-Time Operations Positions	3	0
Totals:	63	101

In addition to the career personnel, a total of three non-uniformed, paid full-time staff provide administrative support functions.

Operations Staffing Discussion

WWFD is a career-staffed department, while CPFD and WWCFD₄ are combination fire departments, primarily staffed with volunteers. Besides a small number of full-time firefighters, WWCFD₄ employs one full-time Firefighter/Mechanic, three part-time employees, one Firefighter/Paramedic, two single-role Paramedics, and nine resident firefighters. In contrast, CPFD has three full-time firefighters and 12 resident firefighters.

Two national consensus standards must be considered when designing and implementing a consolidated organization. These are: NFPA 1710: *Standard for Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, EMS Operations, and Special Operations*, and NFPA 1720: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*.

The 2020 edition of NFPA 1710 defines “career” departments as those that station and deploy full-time equivalent employees in a ratio of 50% or greater on initial full alarm assignments. This calculation includes the cumulative use of part-time employees as well. The 2020 edition of NFPA 1720 defines the term “combination” as a fire department comprised of less than 85% volunteers. “Volunteer” fire departments are comprised of 85% or more volunteers and that the authority having jurisdiction determines the applicability of the standard. Currently, NFPA 1710 would apply to WWFD, and NFPA 1720 would apply to WWCFD₄ and CFPD, as they are substantially staffed by volunteers. WWCFD₄ could be considered a combination department, as 15% of their firefighters are full-time employees.

If consolidation occurs, it is likely that NFPA 1720 would be the most applicable standard, as there likely would be continued use of volunteers in the new organization. However, as noted previously, the applicability of either standard is ultimately up to the new authority having jurisdiction.

Operations Staffing Calculations

ESCI calculated the theoretical number of employees required to meet the various average leave hours used by employees in 2018 in WWFD, and compared the results to the current number of operations employees assigned to 24-hour staffed units. This calculation was not done for WWCFD₄ or CFPD due to the limited number of career employees required to be on shift each day.

This calculation, comparing the average available scheduled weekly work hours per employee, subtracted the average various leave types—based on 2018 historical leave use data—and calculated sick and vacation SRF. ESCI then multiplied the number of personnel needed to cover a single position at 24-hours per day with the relief factor, to determine the number of employees required to meet daily minimum staffing. The following figure summarizes the results of these calculations.

Figure 18: Theoretical Relief Factor Calculation (2018)

Relief Factor	WWFD
Sick Leave	1.21
Vacation Leave	1.16
Total Relief Factor:¹	1.25

¹Includes holiday leave, personal leave, FMLA, bereavement, short-term disability, etc.

The total leave factors were multiplied by the number of personnel needed to cover one 24-hour position. The following figure compares the theoretical number of positions needed with the current number of employees assigned to the work schedules.

Figure 19: WWFD Calculated Operational Staff Shortage/Overage

Department	No. Positions Required 24/7	Total No. Operations Staff	Theoretical No. of Staff Required	Shortage or Overage
Walla Walla FD	11	42	46	-4

Staffing Calculation Discussion

As shown previously, WWFD is theoretically “short-staffed” as it relates to the total number of personnel needed to cover scheduled and unscheduled leaves. Reconciling the results of this staffing resource analysis with current staffing levels and resource allocation strategies in WWFD should be approached carefully.

In ESCI’s experience, the theoretical analysis does not necessarily incorporate or consider an organization’s inherent flexibility and resources, which can potentially be leveraged to reduce workload and personnel costs. Nor does it take into consideration the ongoing costs of providing the various benefits (upwards of 40% of the total salary cost) to full-time employees. The impact of full-time employee benefit expenses must be considered when analyzing the cost of adding full-time employees versus using overtime or part-time employees who do not receive benefits.

Current Wages & Benefits

Depending on the depth and breadth of future consolidation efforts, the wages and benefits paid to the full-time and part-time employees of the three departments will need to be taken into consideration. ESCI analyzed the average wages of the various administrative and operational positions between the departments, and the various benefit packages, in order to identify significant similarities and differences that would need to be incorporated into future consolidation planning efforts.

In evaluating the salary tables provided by each department and/or listed in the three bargaining unit agreements, ESCI noted a variation in position titles and associated wages between departments. The following figure summarizes the various top step salaries by position for each department.

Figure 20: Comparison of Monthly Pay by Agency & Position

Staff Positions	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Fire Chief	\$12,635	\$7,909	\$10,521
Deputy Chief	\$11,413	N/A	N/A
Captain	\$7,695	N/A	N/A
Administrative Captain	\$7,695	N/A	N/A
Fire Inspector/Plan Reviewer	\$6,156	N/A	N/A
Board Secretary/Admin. Assistant	\$4,180	N/A	\$4,043
EMS Billing Specialist	\$4,617	N/A	N/A
Training Lieutenant	N/A	N/A	\$6,257
Lieutenant	\$7,233	N/A	\$6,257
Engineer/Paramedic	\$7,018	N/A	N/A
Engineer/EMT	\$6,464	N/A	N/A
Firefighter/EMT	\$6,156	\$5,382	\$5,688
Firefighter/Mechanic	N/A	N/A	\$6,257
Firefighter/Paramedic	\$7,018	N/A	\$5,973
Part-Time Firefighter/Paramedic	N/A	N/A	\$22.50/Hr.

As noted in the preceding figure, the only common full-time employee positions across the three departments were Fire Chief and Firefighter/EMT. WWFD has the most operations position classifications, as the only totally career department. WWCFD₄ is the only department utilizing part-time employees.

The following figure summarizes the salary comparisons between the lowest and highest average monthly full-time salaries between the career departments, where applicable.

Figure 21: Average Monthly Staff Salary Comparisons (2018)

Comparable Position	Lowest Pay/Month	Highest Pay/Month	Percent Difference
Fire Chief	\$7,909	\$12,635	59%
Secretary/Administrative Assistant	\$4,043	\$4,180	3.4%
Lieutenant	\$6,257	\$7,233	15.6%
Firefighter/Paramedics	\$5,973	\$7,018	17.5%
Firefighter/EMT	\$5,382	\$6,156	14.4%

None of the salaries of the Operations positions listed in the preceding figure include regularly scheduled *Fair Labor Standards Act* (FLSA) overtime pay. The wage disparity is greatest at the Fire Chief position, followed by the Firefighter/Paramedic position. WWFD has the highest pay levels, and CPFD has the lowest across all comparable positions. Next, ESCI analyzed the various benefits provided by each of the career departments, which is summarized in the following figure.

Figure 22: Employee Benefits Provided to Career Personnel

Benefits Provided	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Uniform Allowance	No	No	\$250 every 2 years
Educational Incentives	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Security	Not for uniformed	No	Yes
Workers Compensation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pension	Yes	Yes	Yes
Deferred Compensation	3% match	2% match	No
Medical	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dental	Yes	Yes	Yes
Short-term Disability	Yes	No	Yes
Vision	Yes	Yes	Yes
Life Insurance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survivor Income Benefit	No	No	No
Additional Life Insurance	Uniformed only	Employee purchase	Employee purchase

Analysis of the benefits packages among the three departments revealed that all provide educational incentive pay, medical, dental, vision, and life insurance packages for their employees. Additional life insurance is available for purchase by the employee as well. Retirement pension plans are provided by the *Washington Law Enforcement & Firefighters Plan 2 Retirement System* (LEOFF₂).

WWFD also awards a variety of specialty pays for firefighters who are trained and maintain certifications in the following specialties: EMT-B, EMT-IV, SWAT Medic, Technical Rescue Technician, SCBA Technician, and Fire Inspector certification. These pay-rates range from 1% to 3% of either base salary or top-step firefighter pay. In addition, a firefighter assigned as a Fire Inspector receives a 10% premium pay, based on top-step firefighter pay.

WWFD also pays paramedic longevity pay based on the following top-step paramedic salary: 14 years—0.5%, 16 years—1%, 18 years—1.5%. WWCFD₄ awards 1% of top step firefighter longevity pay for every five years of service between 10 and 30 years. The results found in the following list represents each agency's estimated costs of benefits as a percentage of employee salaries.

- College Place Fire Department—41%
- Walla Walla Fire Department—43%
- Walla Walla County Fire District #4—35%

Combined, the three fire agencies have an average of nearly 40% as the estimated cost of the total employee benefits.

Volunteer Compensation

CPFD and WWCFD₄ rely on a comparatively large contingent of volunteers to deliver reliable emergency services. While these responders are not technically “employees,” they do receive various forms of compensation for their department activities as a means of motivating and rewarding them for their participation. This compensation is based on their level of participation, where points are awarded for training/drill attendance, responses to incidents, and/or other department sanctioned activities.

WWCFD₄ compensates volunteers by issuing “units” for participation in training activities, sanctioned department events, emergency responses, and standbys. One unit equals \$15. Volunteers earn 5 units for participation over 4 hours, and 10 units for participation over 12 hours. In addition, volunteers who work resident standby shifts on weeknights, weekends, and holiday shifts are paid \$25 to \$50 per shift. Volunteer officers also receive a monthly stipend depending on rank. Stipends range from \$700 per month for an Assistant Chief, down to \$100 per month for a Lead Resident.

CPFD also compensates volunteers by issuing “points” for similar training, department events, and emergency responses. For example, a fire or EMS response equals one point, participating in a drill equals two points, and staffing a station on weekends or weeknights equals two to four points. Each month, the City Council budgets a monthly volunteer reimbursement amount for the department. This amount is then divided by the total number of points earned by the volunteer group, which results in a point dollar-value, which is then paid out accordingly to the volunteers.

The volunteer stipend calculation methods used by CPFD and WWCFD₄ are similar, and should be easy to homogenize in a new consolidated organization. Consideration should be given to establishing an annual budget for volunteer compensation that results in predictable and consistent compensation rates throughout the year.

Staff Survey Results

At the beginning of this study, ESCI created web-based survey to be distributed to the employees and volunteers of each of the fire agencies involved in this study, along with any appointed or elected officials affiliated with the respective organizations. The survey was designed to be confidential, and neither ESCI nor any of the agencies was aware of the respondents’ names.

A total of 81 respondents completed the survey. From the comments received in the survey results, it was evident that many of the respondents had inaccurate assumptions and misconceptions about what would occur in the event of some type of consolidation. This was particularly true among the volunteers who responded. The following figures represent some of the survey results (with the complete results along with comments will be found in Appendix A).

Figure 23: Agency Affiliations of the Survey Respondents

Organization	Responses	Percent Total ¹
College Place Fire Department	20	25%
Walla Walla County District #4	31	39%
Walla Walla Fire Department	29	36%

¹Rounded to the nearest integer.

The next figure lists the various positions held by the respondents. In this figure, the respondents have been grouped into career, volunteer, non-uniformed support positions, and “other” (which includes appointed or elected officials).

Figure 24: Job Positions of the Survey Respondents

Position	Responses	Percent Total ¹
Volunteer Personnel	37	47%
Career Personnel	35	43%
Non-Uniformed Support Staff	2	2%
Elected/Appointed Officials & Others	6	7%

¹Rounded to the nearest integer.

The majority (80%) of those completing the survey were assigned to emergency operations within their respective fire agencies.

The next figure illustrates the results of the respondents’ opinions concerning whether they were potentially in favor of or against a potential consolidation. The answers to the question included a caveat: “...depending on how it is configured and how it impacts my job.” There were 78 responses to this question.

Figure 25: Respondent Opinions on a Possible Consolidation

Respondent Opinion	Responses (78)	Percent Total ¹
Favor Consolidation	50	63%
Against Consolidation	12	15%
No Opinion	5	6%
Comments Only ²	11	14%

¹Rounded to the nearest integer

²Represents respondents who did not select any of the choices, but made comments only.

As shown in the preceding figure, most of the respondents (63%) were in support of a potential consolidation, depending upon how it would be configured and affect their positions within the organization. Those that made only comments tended to be primarily negative. Yet, many of the comments entailed misconceptions about what would occur in some type of consolidation. Most of the comments against consolidation came from those who listed themselves as a volunteer.

There were 39 written responses added to this question. Of those, 18 tended to be supportive of some type of consolidation—but most included detailed caveats before they would fully support it. A common theme found in the comments was regarding the relationship of the Walla Walla Fire Department career staff with volunteer firefighters. Most of these suggested a lack of respect for the volunteers by career personnel.

Additionally, the volunteers expressed many concerns that their current roles would be minimized in a new consolidated organization. In reviewing the survey comments, it was clear that many of the respondents had misconceptions about what would occur in the event of a consolidation.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

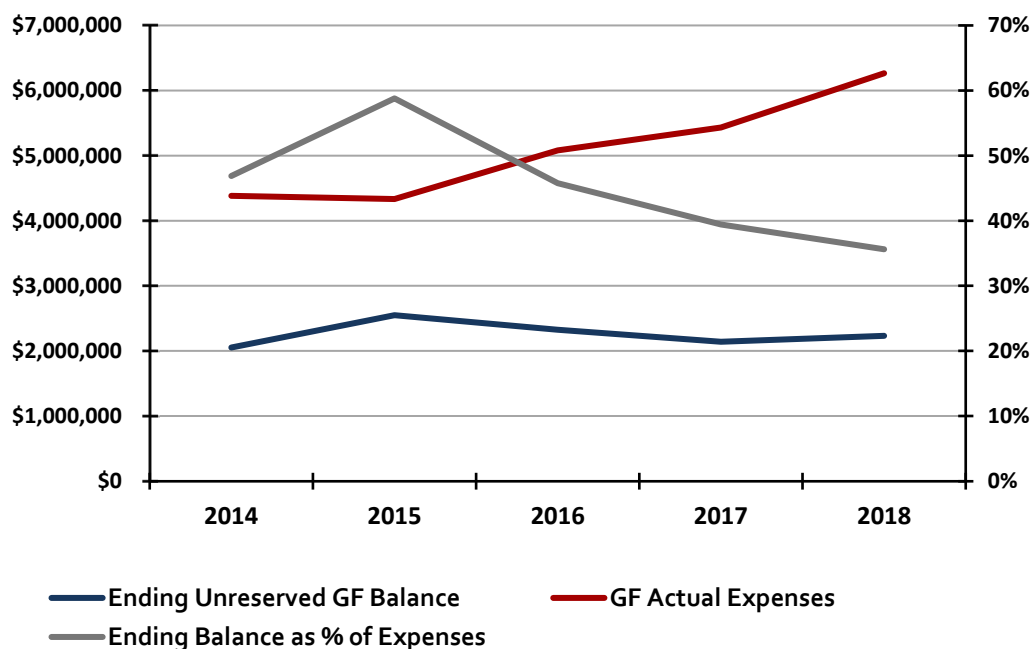
Currently, there is only a modest level of interconnectedness among the fire agencies—primarily through mutual aid agreements. They also all share boundaries within Walla Walla County, and receive a proportionate share of the revenue from the Walla Walla County EMS Levy. As a rule of thumb, interagency partnerships in areas such as training or maintenance indicates a potential for cost-savings. Combining disjointed functions can enable streamlined administration and remove some duplication of services.

College Place Fire Department Finances

The College Place Fire Department is the smallest of the three departments, with a 2018 combined budget of \$1.1 million versus that of WWCFD₄ at \$1.9 million and WWFD at \$7.9 million. CPFD works largely with a volunteer force. CPFD began offering Basic Life Support ambulance service on November 1, 2018.

In 2018, \$686,804 of CPFD's total budget of \$1,133,014 was funded through General Fund sources (as opposed to department fees, charges, grants and other sources). If the City were to allocate \$686,804 to property tax revenues, it would represent \$1.11 out of the City's \$2.25 levy—about 49.5%. Said differently, were CPFD to operate as an independent fire district, it would need a \$1.11 regular levy and not require additional funding beyond its present fees, charges, and other sources. In addition, CPFD has an outstanding bond of \$314,131 for an engine (the associated levy is \$0.81).

Figure 26: CPFD General Fund Cash Reserves (2014–2018)



As a good initial assessment of the City's health, ESCI noted a General Fund balance that is neither steadily growing nor declining (shown in the next figure). Since expenses are steadily increasing, the fund balance is decreasing as a percentage of expenses. While it may be acceptable to see an occasional decline in General Fund balance, a healthy financial situation will generally only show such drops due to one-time issues such as a major capital expenditure or a temporary funding issue. In this instance, the trends may indicate a difficult financial situation. The 2018 General Fund balance is 36% of expenses, which is generally considered adequate (a 25% reserve is commonly considered to be the minimum).

College Place Fire Department Budgetary Review

CPFD's fire protection and ambulance transport service operate under the City's General Fund. Additionally, the City manages its fleet through an Equipment Rental & Replacement (ER&R) Fund, and manages its engine debt through an LTGO Bond Fund. For the purposes of this study ESCI focused on the General Fund activity.

The major source of revenue is intergovernmental fire service and mobilization reimbursements. Fees from BLS transports are budgeted at \$157,000 in 2020, or about 27% of total revenues. Since no City taxes are directly attributable to the fire department, ESCI did not include tax revenue in its calculations. Revenues have more than doubled during 2014–2019 (118.5%).

Salaries and benefits comprised 50.5% of the CPFD's expenses in 2018, because it depends primarily on volunteer labor. These line-items have increased by 52.8% during 2014–2019, or an average of 8.8% per year. Other major expenses include services (such as dispatch and utility costs) and interfund fees (primarily payments to the ER&R fund), which comprised most of the remaining expenses. Service expenses had an average annual growth of 6.2%. Overall expenses have increased on average by 17.5% per year, and 105.2% over the 2014–2019 period. Much of the expenditure growth appeared to be related to a focus on funding equipment needs beginning in 2015. When assessing growth since 2015, it averages 8.0% annually and 47.9% in total.

When comparing a city fire department to a fire district, it is important to consider overhead costs, which are generally not included in most city fire department budgets. Overhead refers to finance, legal, human resources, and other administrative expenses. To calculate a rough estimate of what this might be, ESCI took the percentage of 2018 expenditures for overhead-type departments from total General Fund expenditures (9.5%) and subsequently applied this to the total 2018 fire department expenditures (\$1,133,014). The resulting estimate is \$108,072 in overhead expenses, which were not reflected in the following figure.

Figure 27: CPFD Financial History (2014–2019)

Ambulance Fund	2014 Actual	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Budget
Revenues						
Taxes	—	—	—	—	—	—
Intergov. Revenues	—	—	—	—	—	—
Goods & Services Charges	—	—	—	—	—	96,103
Miscellaneous/Other	259,325	296,472	331,190	397,748	446,209	470,406
Total Sources:	\$259,325	\$296,472	\$331,190	\$397,748	\$446,209	\$566,509
Expenses						
Salaries & Wages	234,520	272,058	268,489	298,486	344,132	416,927
Benefits	74,947	90,958	89,964	104,251	113,700	139,697
Supplies	25,689	23,025	22,862	19,977	28,994	20,850
Services	124,116	126,097	142,709	125,297	201,972	170,426
Capital	67,438	219,868	267,894	31,378	226,445	98,500
Inter-Fund Transfers/Other	780	—	—	209,088	217,771	236,127
Total Expenditures:	\$527,491	\$732,006	\$791,918	\$788,477	\$1,133,014	\$1,082,527
Net Operating Rev. (Deficit):	(200,727)	(215,666)	(192,835)	(359,351)	(460,360)	(417,518)
Net Revenue (Deficit):	(268,165)	(435,534)	(460,729)	(390,729)	(686,804)	(516,018)
Need for Property Tax:^A	0.50	0.81	0.84	0.67	1.11	0.77
Percent of Actual Levy:	21.9%	34.7%	35.6%	28.8%	49.5%	35.5%

^AEquivalent need for property tax support (millage rate).

College Place Fire Department Forecasts

The forecasts in the following figure are set conservatively and based on past actual data. For revenues, a linear growth model was used to project intergovernmental fire protection and mobilization reimbursements. For BLS ambulance transport revenues, ESCI annualized 2019 data through the June 2020 accepted budget estimate and inflated it annually at 2.5%. There was no history of CPFD receiving GEMT funds, which could potentially add more revenue.

On the expense side, salaries are assumed to increase at 4% annually, and benefits increase at 7% annually. Additionally, \$100,000 was added beginning in 2020 to account for one FTE hired in 2019. For both services and supplies, ESCI took a 4-year average of expenses then increased them at 2.5% annually. For transfers to the ER&R Fund, ESCI continued past vehicle replacement charges at the 2020 budgeted amount. For capital expenses, ESCI used projections from the Capital Facilities Plan in the 2020 budget. Of note, are a water tender in 2020, a fire engine in 2021, and a command trailer in 2022.

ESCI forecasts show continuations of existing trends, with expenses climbing faster than associated revenues, resulting in a net operating deficit that may grow at 6.0% annually.

Figure 28: College Place Fire Department Forecasts (2019–2024)

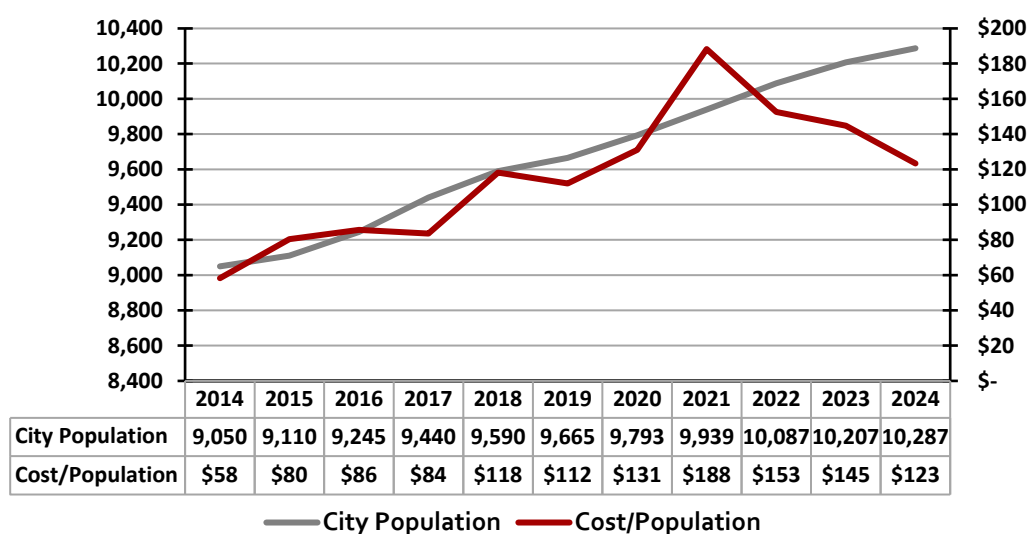
Combined Funds	2019 Budget	2020 Projected	2021 Projected	2022 Projected	2023 Projected	2024 Projected
Revenues						
Taxes	—	—	—	—	—	—
Intergov. Revenues	—	—	—	—	—	—
Goods & Services Charges	96,103	157,000	160,140	163,343	166,610	169,942
Miscellaneous/Other	470,406	419,409	437,701	455,993	474,285	492,577
Total Sources:	\$566,509	\$576,409	\$597,841	\$619,336	\$640,894	\$662,518
Expenses						
Salaries & Wages	416,927	533,604	554,948	577,146	600,232	624,241
Benefits	139,697	149,476	159,939	171,135	183,114	195,932
Supplies	20,850	23,738	24,332	24,940	25,563	26,202
Services	170,426	162,877	166,949	171,123	175,401	179,786
Capital	98,500	234,744	785,642	415,726	313,744	63,194
Inter-Fund Transf./Other	236,127	179,127	179,127	179,127	179,127	179,127
Total Expenditures:	\$1,082,527	\$1,283,566	\$1,870,937	\$1,539,197	\$1,477,181	\$1,268,483
Net Operating Rev. (Deficit):	(417,518)	(472,413)	(487,454)	(504,135)	(522,543)	(542,770)
Net Revenue (Deficit):	(516,018)	(707,157)	(1,273,096)	(919,861)	(836,287)	(605,964)
Need for Property Tax:^A	\$0.77	\$1.05	\$1.81	\$1.26	\$1.10	\$0.77
Percent of Actual Levy:	35.5%	47.4%	83.1%	58.5%	51.9%	36.7%

^AEquivalent need for property tax support (millage rate).

Population growth is a primary driver of service-demand and associated expenses. A flat line for cost/population would indicate that, while expenses are increasing, unit-costs of service-delivery remain the same. Conversely, sloped lines indicate an increasing or decreasing cost of service-delivery. As can be seen in the next figure, the cost-per-person increased from \$58 in 2014 to \$112 in 2019, and ESCI expects this to continue to increase and hit \$188 in 2021, before decreasing to \$123 in 2024.

Capital expenditures have a big impact on this figure, and the peak in 2021 followed by a decrease can be explained by the capital expenditure forecasts. Without the capital projections, the cost-per-person would have likely ranged from \$51 in 2014 and subsequently increased steadily to \$117 by 2024.

Figure 29: College Place Fire Department Expenses by Population



Walla Walla Fire Department Finances

The Walla Walla Fire Department is by far the largest of the three departments, with a budget four times larger than that of Fire District #4 and seven times larger than that of College Place. As the urban center of the County, most resources and activities are concentrated in the City of Walla Walla.

In 2018, \$4,196,810 of WWFD's total budget of \$7,947,110 was funded through General Fund sources (as opposed to fire department fees, charges, grants and other sources). If the City were to allocate this amount to property-tax revenues, it would represent \$1.72 out of the City's \$2.62 levy—about 65.7%. Were WWFD an independent fire district with a \$1.50 regular levy, it would be reliant on additional tax revenue, such as a \$0.22 excess levy. In addition, WWFD has an outstanding bond of \$1,545,000 for a fire station that matures in 2023 (the associated levy is \$0.63) and debt of \$410,00 for an engine that will expire in 2024.

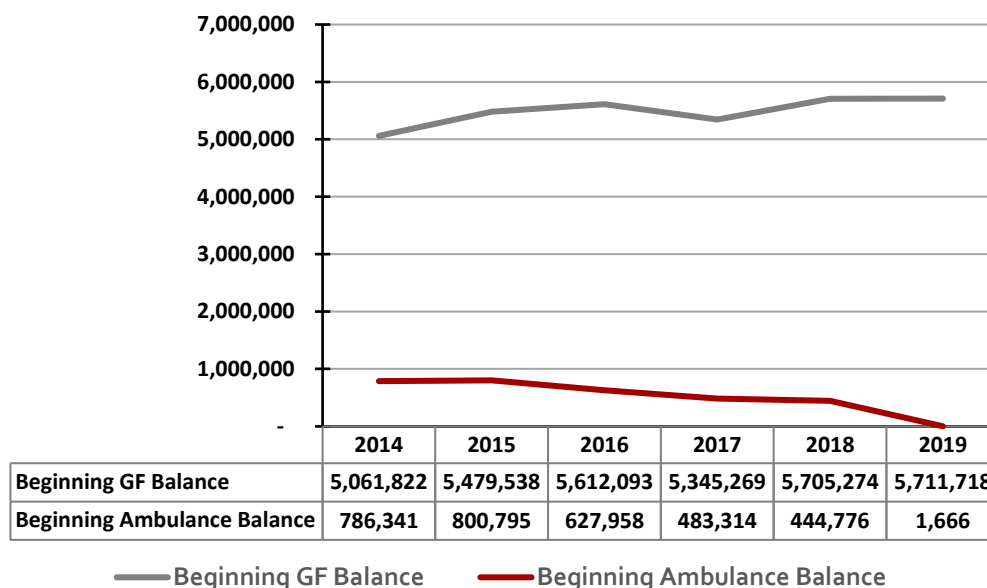
The City also has as a fire pension trust fund and a fire medical benefits trust fund. Both are used to report resources held in trust for retirees and beneficiaries covered by the *Public Safety Employees' LEOFF1 Pension Plan*. Both funds would remain with the City in all scenarios and are mentioned only as an acknowledgment.

As a good initial assessment of the City's health, a growing General Fund balance should be noted (as shown in the next figure). While it may be acceptable to see an occasional decline in General Fund balance, a healthy financial situation will generally only show such drops due to one-time issues such as a major capital expenditure or temporary funding issue.

The health of the General Fund is in sharp contrast to the health of the Ambulance Fund. As shown in the next figure, the Ambulance Fund balance has steadily declined over the past 5 years due to GASB 75—a change in accounting requirements—the fund showed a negative net position at the end of 2018 of (\$2,465,293). The Ambulance Fund accepted interfund loans in 2016, 2017, and 2018. These are all indications of a financially unhealthy and struggling enterprise.

The positive news for the Ambulance Fund is that the City began receiving *Ground Emergency Medical Transportation* (GEMT) program payments in 2019. GEMT is a federal Medicaid program that attempts to fully reimburse agencies for their Medicaid-eligible transports, and is particularly well-funded. These payments (\$480,000 in 2019) should help stabilize the fund. ESCI also notes that the base rates for ambulance transports were last increased in 2011, leaving open the possibility of significantly improving revenues via a future increase.

Figure 30: WWFD General Fund & Ambulance Fund Beginning Balances



WWFD Budgetary Review

The WWFD functions under the City's General Fund, while its ambulance service is run under the Ambulance Fund. Additionally, the City manages its fleet through the Vehicle Maintenance & Replacement Funds, and manages its fire station debt through a Fire Station UTGO Bond Fund. For the purposes of this study, ESCI focused only on the General and Ambulance Funds.

The major sources of revenue include the countywide EMS Levy, ambulance fees, and GEMT funds. Other significant revenues include fire-service contracts, fire planning review fees, and state mobilization payments.

In the next figure, the intergovernmental revenue consists primarily of contractual fees for service to other government agencies. The Charges for Service are primarily from state mobilization revenue and fire planning review fees. Tax revenue was left blank, since no City taxes are directly attributable to the fire department. Average revenue growth was 15.9% per year, and 95.4% over all for 2014–2019.

As usual, salaries and benefits make up the bulk of the fire department's expenses (90% in 2018). These line-items together have averaged 4.1% growth annually and 24.4% overall from 2014–2019. While not a large part of the budget, supply purchases have increased sharply over the 2014–2019 period—rising 276.5%, or from 1.2% of the total budget in 2014 to 3.5% of the total budget in 2019. Overall, expenses have increased 5.1% per year on average and 30.5% over the 2014–2019 period. While the net General Fund cost has climbed in terms of dollars, the deficit has decreased as a percent of expenditures from 94.7% to 92.1%.

When comparing a city fire department to a fire district, it is necessary to keep in mind overhead costs, which are generally not included in city fire department budgets. Overhead refers to finance, legal, human resources, and other administrative expenses that are accounted for in other departments. Perhaps the simplest way to calculate overhead is to apply the overhead from the Ambulance Fund (\$283,710 or 8.3% of expenditures in 2018) to the General Fund fire budget. This \$384,241, is not reflected in the following figure, which only reflects actual values.

Figure 31: WWFD General Fund Financial History (2014–2019)

General Fund	2014 Actual	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Budget
Revenues						
Taxes	—	—	—	—	—	—
Intergovernmental Revenues	142,440	122,230	190,670	149,960	151,360	157,920
Goods & Services Charges	44,940	87,910	47,900	183,190	252,380	208,200
Miscellaneous/Other	40	160	1,800	260	300	160
Total Sources:	\$187,420	\$210,300	\$240,370	\$333,410	\$404,040	\$366,280
Expenses						
Salaries & Wages	2,523,690	2,658,720	2,937,160	3,098,600	3,220,660	3,114,270
Benefits	775,100	814,710	881,360	862,230	922,510	987,990
Supplies	42,940	73,550	97,810	103,900	72,520	161,660
Services	59,700	63,660	117,310	89,030	86,370	105,470
Capital	24,290	23,830	425,120	34,800	73,540	79,200
Inter-Fund Transfers/Other	136,260	173,230	191,900	184,800	228,440	201,010
Total Expenditures:	\$3,561,980	\$3,807,700	\$4,650,660	\$4,373,360	\$4,604,040	\$4,649,600

In the next figure, the intergovernmental revenue consists primarily of payments from Walla Walla County's EMS Levy, in addition to the GEMT payments during 2018 and 2019. The Charges for Service are primarily ambulance service and transportation fees. Tax revenue was left blank since no City taxes are directly attributable to ambulance service. Revenues have been decreasing, on average, 1.0% per year, or 5.9% over the past six years. The EMS Levy portion of revenues has increased, on average, 3.3% per year, and with the addition of GEMT revenue, the intergovernmental revenue line has increased by 55.4% from 2014–2019. This strong growth has been offset by a 7.1% annual average decrease in Charges for Goods and Services (42.4% over the period).

In addition to the 2019 budgeted amounts in the next figure, WWFD received \$549,502 in retroactive payments for the 2017 and 2018 GEMT program. This should help give the fund a healthier cash balance while the City decides how best to stabilize it going forward.

According to City staff, the decrease in revenues can be attributed to a 50% decrease in out-of-town transfers (due to workforce challenges more than a change in the market), and to District #4 and the College Place Fire Department implementing ambulance transport services within their respective service-areas in 2017 and 2018.

On the expenditure side, salaries and benefits make up 69.4% of total expenses, which is much lower than in the General Fund. If the overhead transfers (discussed previously) are discounted, the percentage goes up to 75.2%. The rest of the difference is due primarily to higher professional services and drug supplies. Salaries (particularly overtime expenses) have decreased on average by 0.5% each year (2.9% over the 6-year period), which fits with the decreases in out-of-town transfers and ambulance transport services. Conversely, services have increased substantially—11.8% annually on average and 71.0% over the study period. ESCI notes that this decreased by 11.5% in the 2019 budget, potentially breaking that trend.

Figure 32: WWFD Ambulance Fund Financial History (2014–2019)

Ambulance Fund	2014 Actual	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Budget
Revenues						
Taxes	—	—	—	—	—	—
Intergovernmental Revenues	1,275,340	1,337,630	1,400,190	1,431,600	1,787,160	1,981,260
Goods & Services Charges	2,131,990	1,687,320	1,749,420	1,628,790	1,358,940	1,228,180
Miscellaneous/Other	6,840	3,490	53,260	301,810	200,160	2,000
Total Sources:	\$3,414,170	\$3,028,440	\$3,202,870	\$3,362,200	\$3,346,260	\$3,211,440
Expenses						
Salaries & Wages	1,758,180	1,816,800	1,743,390	1,750,360	1,653,900	1,707,720
Benefits	610,750	779,630	609,850	637,400	654,240	674,260
Supplies	124,690	166,220	130,570	164,780	161,870	156,420
Services	80,370	202,530	92,980	105,480	155,260	137,400
Capital	65,500	216,670	88,780	-	50,500	62,730
Inter-Fund Transfers/Other	766,900	760,970	698,550	681,840	667,300	694,570
Total Expenditures:	\$3,406,390	\$3,942,820	\$3,364,120	\$3,339,860	\$3,343,070	\$3,433,100

Considering WWFD in its entirety, revenues have averaged a 0.1% annual decrease, with a total decrease of 0.7%—while expenditures have increased 2.7% on average, with a total increase of 16.0%. Expenditure growth has been driven by growth in salaries and benefits (averaging 2.4% annually and 14.4% over the period), which make up 80.2% of the 2019 budget. These expenditure increases, combined against a decrease in revenue, resulted in a net deficit growing from \$3,336,780 in 2014 to \$4,504,980 in 2019.

From the perspective of the property tax levy (assuming for the moment that this is how the deficit is covered), this equates to an increase from a \$1.68 millage rate to a \$1.71 millage rate. The millage rate increase is not as strong as the increase in deficit because property levies have increased, on average, 4.1% over the study period—exceeding the rate of expenditure increases.

Figure 33: WWFD Financial History (2014–2019)

Combined Funds	2014 Actual	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Budget
Revenues						
Taxes	—	—	—	—	—	—
Intergovernmental Revenues	1,417,780	1,459,860	1,590,860	1,581,560	1,938,520	2,139,180
Goods & Services Charges	2,176,930	1,775,230	1,797,320	1,811,980	1,611,320	1,436,380
Miscellaneous/Other	6,880	3,650	55,060	302,070	200,460	2,160
Total Sources:	\$3,601,590	\$3,238,740	\$3,443,240	\$3,695,610	\$3,750,300	\$3,577,720
Expenses						
Salaries & Wages	4,281,870	4,475,520	4,680,550	4,848,960	4,874,560	4,821,990
Benefits	1,385,850	1,594,340	1,491,210	1,499,630	1,576,750	1,662,250
Supplies	167,630	239,770	228,380	268,680	234,390	318,080
Services	140,070	266,190	210,290	194,510	241,630	242,870
Capital	89,790	240,500	513,900	34,800	124,040	141,930
Inter-Fund Transfers/Other	903,160	934,200	890,450	866,640	895,740	895,580
Total Expenditures:	\$6,968,370	\$7,750,520	\$8,014,780	\$7,713,220	\$7,947,110	\$8,082,700
Net:	\$3,366,780	\$4,511,780	\$4,571,540	\$4,017,610	\$4,196,810	\$4,504,980
Need for Property Tax:^A	1.68	2.15	2.09	1.72	1.72	1.71
Percent of Actual Levy:	65.6%	82.9%	79.6%	67.8%	65.7%	70.4%

^AEquivalent need for property tax support (millage rate).

Department Forecasts

The forecasts in the next figure were determined conservatively based on actual past data. For revenues, a linear growth-model was used to project contracted service-revenues and EMS Levy revenues. GEMT revenues were held at \$480,000 (2019 budget), while ambulance charges were maintained at 2019 figures because of uncertainty about these two revenue sources.

On the expense side, salaries were assumed to increase at 3%, and benefits at 5% annually. For both services and supplies, ESCI took a 4-year average of expenses, then increased them at 2.5% annually. For capital items, ESCI continued previous vehicle replacement charges with a 2.5% growth rate, and added in major items from the Fire CIP Plan. Of note are two 2018 capital items. ESCI took the \$450,000 engine replacement that was scheduled for 2018 and inserted it into 2022, and then took the \$1,000,000 Drill Tower that was scheduled for 2018 and inserted it into 2024.

ESCI forecasts show continuations of existing trends, with expenses that climbed more rapidly than associated revenues—resulting in a net deficit that may grow at 9.0% annually. Without the forecasted capital expenditures, the deficit would grow by 4.5% annually. ESCI feels the GEMT program may be subject to unexpected cancelation according to the winds of federal politics, and the amount of revenue may vary each year according to various factors.

Figure 34: Walla Walla Fire Department Forecasts (2019–2024)

General Fund	2019 Budget	2020 Projected	2021 Projected	2022 Projected	2023 Projected	2024 Projected
Revenues						
Taxes	—	—	—	—	—	—
Intergovernmental Revenues	157,920	164,838	168,383	171,928	175,473	179,019
Goods & Services Charges	208,200	210,000	210,000	210,000	210,000	210,000
Miscellaneous/Other	160	200	200	200	200	200
Total Sources:	\$366,280	\$375,038	\$378,583	\$382,128	\$385,673	\$389,219
Expenses						
Salaries & Wages	3,114,270	3,207,698	3,303,929	3,403,047	3,505,138	3,610,292
Benefits	987,990	1,037,390	1,089,259	1,143,722	1,200,908	1,260,953
Supplies	161,660	108,973	111,697	114,489	117,351	120,285
Services	105,470	99,545	102,034	104,584	107,199	109,879
Capital	79,200	174,373	150,607	501,872	53,169	1,054,498
Inter-Fund Transfers/Other	201,010	202,769	206,470	210,250	214,112	218,057
Total Expenditures:	\$4,649,600	\$4,830,748	\$4,963,995	\$5,477,965	\$5,197,878	\$6,373,965
Ambulance Fund						
Revenues						
Intergovernmental Revenues	1,981,260	2,048,491	2,088,571	2,129,999	2,174,242	2,214,359
Charges for Goods & Services	1,228,180	1,228,575	1,228,575	1,228,575	1,228,575	1,228,575
Miscellaneous/Other	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,001	2,002	2,003
Total Sources:	\$3,211,440	\$3,279,066	\$3,319,146	\$3,360,575	\$3,404,819	\$3,444,937
Expenses						
Salaries & Wages	1,707,720	1,758,952	1,811,720	1,866,072	1,922,054	1,979,716
Benefits	674,260	707,973	743,372	780,540	819,567	860,546
Supplies	156,420	160,000	164,000	168,100	172,303	176,610
Services	137,400	132,713	136,031	139,432	142,918	146,491
Capital	62,730	62,730	62,730	62,730	62,730	57,783
Inter-Fund Transfers/Other	694,570	702,601	716,870	731,496	746,487	761,853
Total Expenditures:	\$3,433,100	\$3,524,969	\$3,634,723	\$3,748,370	\$3,866,058	\$3,982,998

The next figure represents the Walla Walla Fire Department's forecasted combined funds for 2019–2024.

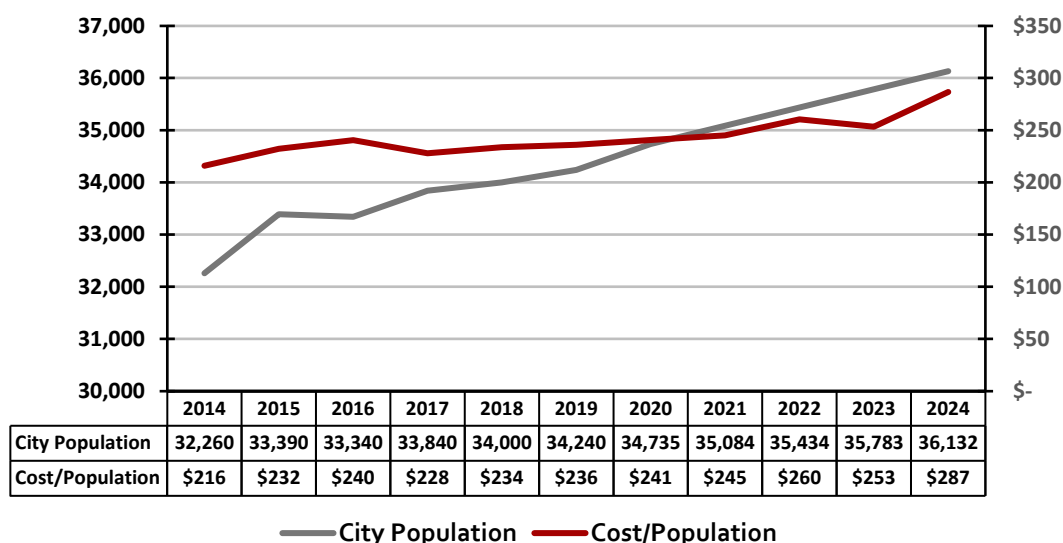
Figure 35: Walla Walla Fire Department Combined Funds Forecasts (2019–2024)

Combined Funds	2019 Budget	2020 Projected	2021 Projected	2022 Projected	2023 Projected	2024 Projected
Revenues						
Intergovern. Revenues	2,139,180	2,213,329	2,256,954	2,301,927	2,349,716	2,393,377
Goods & Services	1,436,380	1,438,575	1,438,575	1,438,575	1,438,575	1,438,575
Miscellaneous/Other	2,160	2,200	2,200	2,201	2,202	2,203
Total Sources:	\$3,577,720	\$3,654,104	\$3,697,729	\$3,742,703	\$3,790,493	\$3,834,155
Expenses						
Salaries & Wages	4,821,990	4,966,650	5,115,649	5,269,119	5,427,192	5,590,008
Benefits	1,662,250	1,745,363	1,832,631	1,924,262	2,020,475	2,121,499
Supplies	318,080	268,973	275,697	282,589	289,654	296,895
Services	242,870	232,258	238,065	244,016	250,117	256,370
Capital	141,930	237,103	213,337	564,602	115,899	1,112,281
Inter-Fund Transf./Other	895,580	905,370	923,340	941,746	960,599	979,910
Total Expenditures:	\$8,082,700	\$8,355,716	\$8,598,718	\$9,226,335	\$9,063,936	\$10,356,963
Net:	\$4,504,980	\$4,701,612	\$4,900,989	\$5,483,632	\$5,273,443	\$6,522,808
Need for Property Tax:^A	1.71	1.73	1.73	1.85	1.71	2.03
Percent of Actual Levy:	70.4%	71.8%	73.1%	80.0%	75.2%	91.0%

^AEquivalent need for property tax support (millage rate).

Population growth is a strong driver of fire and EMS service-demand and expenses, so it makes sense to compare expenses with the population served. As can be seen in the next figure, the cost-per-person increased from \$216 in 2014 to \$236 in 2019; and ESCI expects it to continue to increase, hitting \$287 in 2024. This growth makes intuitive sense—ESCI's projections of 3.0% salary growth exceed the 1.1% average population growth.

It is worth noting that capital projections strongly influence this. Without the capital projections, the cost-per-person would be \$259 in 2024. It should also be noted that WWFD serves a much larger population than just the City of Walla Walla because of its ambulance service and expanded service area and contracted fire protection. Thus, the actual cost-per-person for the total population would be significantly smaller.

Figure 36: Walla Walla Fire Department Expenses by Population (2014–2024)

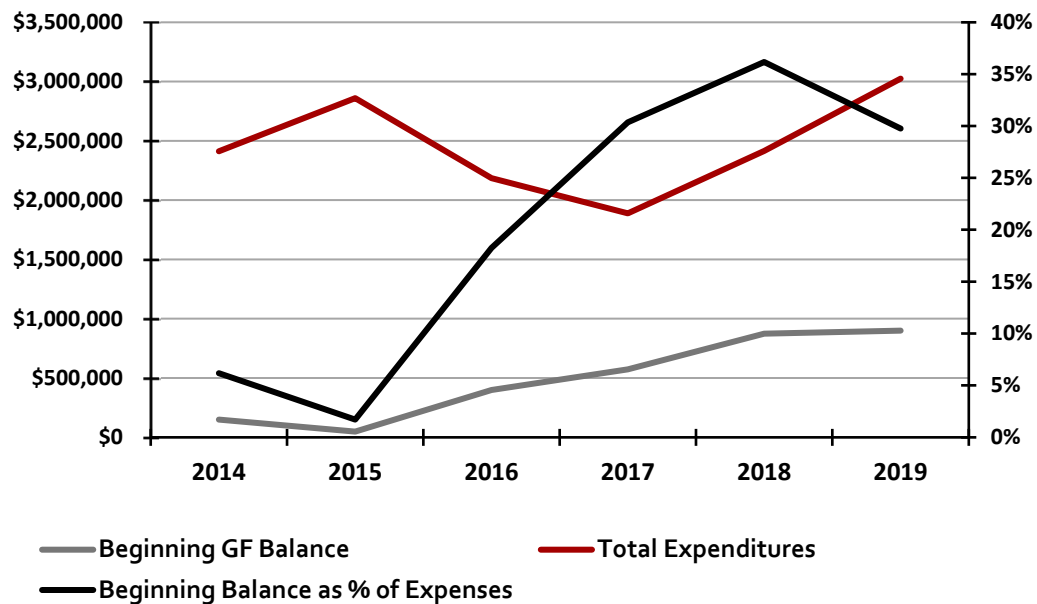
Walla Walla County Fire District #4 Finances

Geographically, Walla Walla County Fire District #4 is the largest of the three fire agencies. In budgetary terms, it is relatively small—closer to CPFD’s budget of \$1.1 million than WWFD’s at \$7.9 million. Like CPFD, WWCFD₄ maintains a largely volunteer force. The District offers both ALS and BLS ambulance services, as well as aircraft rescue and fire suppression services at the Walla Walla Regional Airport.

Unlike city departments—where how much property tax funding must be estimated to determine the amount necessary to fund a municipal fire department—a fire district is primarily funded with property tax. In 2018, WWCFD₄ levied \$1,456,849 in regular property taxes—representing a levy rate of \$1.23 per one-thousand dollars of assessed value. The District does not have an excess levy.

As a good initial assessment of the District’s health, ESCI notes a General Fund balance that has increased significantly over the past 5 years (see the following figure). While holding expenses down for several years, the District was able to increase the fund balance, which is necessary from the standpoints of cash flow and stability. While it may be acceptable to see an occasional decline in General Fund balance, a healthy financial situation will generally only show such drops due to one-time issues such as a major capital expenditure or a temporary funding issue. In this instance, the trends may indicate a concerted effort to stabilize the District’s financial situation. The 2019 beginning General Fund balance was 29.8% of expenses, which is generally considered adequate (a 25% reserve is commonly considered to be the minimum).

In addition to the General Fund balance, the District actively manages a reserve fund, which had balances totaling approximately \$4.1 at the beginning of 2019. Of that total, \$2.5 million is intended for apparatus replacement and \$1.5 million for facility replacements. These reserves, along with the General Fund reserves, help establish a strong financial foundation for the District.

Figure 37: Fire District #4 General Fund Cash Reserves (2014–2024)

Fire District #4 Budgetary Review

WWCFD₄ operates under the General Fund. Additionally, the District operates a debt service and a reserve fund (which separately tracks reserves for vehicles, the training facility, ambulance service, facility replacement, emergency operations, radio infrastructure, turnout clothing replacement, and radio and pager replacement). For the purposes of this study, ESCI focused primarily on the General Fund activity.

At 72.6% of the total revenue, property taxes accounted for most of the funding in 2018 (including payments from Walla Walla County's EMS Levy, which accounted for 14.6% of total revenues). Another 24.8% of revenues came from charges for goods and services—primarily from a contract with the City of Walla Walla (annexation ramp-down agreement), a contract for ARFF services at the Walla Walla Regional Airport, and for Washington State fire protection mobilization. Revenues grew 6.6% annually on average during 2014–2019, with property taxes growing an average of 3.3% annually. All told, revenues were up 32.9% over this period. A significant part of this growth (12.3%) came from the GEMT program payments, which began in 2019.

Salaries and benefits made up 59% of the District's operating expenses in 2018. Like College Place, this is because the District depends primarily on volunteer labor. These line-items have increased by 19.7% during 2014–2019, or an average of 3.9% per year. While supplies only made up 10.1% of expenses in 2018, those line-items have seen the largest growth at an average of 11% per year and 55.0% overall. These numbers do not include capital expenditures, which are highly variable, and largely funded through WWCFD₄'s reserve fund. Since this is a fire district, all overhead figures are included.

Figure 38: Fire District #4 Financial History (2014–2019)

Combined Funds	2014 Actual	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Budget
Revenues						
Taxes	1,599,251	1,700,775	1,749,298	1,780,192	1,833,130	1,861,000
Intergovern. Revenues	16,256	1,341	1,290	23,179	24,224	103,700
Goods & Services Charges	177,600	347,933	406,899	342,960	626,320	433,500
Miscellaneous/Other	181,946	789,925	120,149	42,363	41,577	226,150
Total Sources:	\$1,975,053	\$2,839,974	\$2,277,636	\$2,188,695	\$2,525,252	\$2,624,350
Expenses						
Salaries & Wages	943,455	1,058,249	828,113	902,596	998,497	1,116,000
Benefits	294,733	320,335	251,282	295,153	346,359	366,500
Supplies	86,156	118,272	119,415	97,509	164,177	133,500
Services	243,945	233,563	207,732	228,477	230,851	233,550
Capital	45,591	265,030	736,375	266,397	136,368	690,300
Inter-Fund Transf./Other	797,865	863,895	42,477	98,389	538,324	484,500
Total Expenditures:	\$2,411,744	\$2,859,345	\$2,185,393	\$1,888,521	\$2,414,576	\$3,024,350
Total Operating:	\$2,366,153	\$2,594,314	\$1,449,018	\$1,622,124	\$2,278,208	\$2,334,050
Net Revenue (Deficit):	(\$391,100)	\$245,660	\$828,618	\$566,571	\$247,044	\$290,300

Fire District #4 Forecasts

The forecasts in the next figure are set conservatively and based on actual past data. Revenues were forecast as follows:

- For tax revenues, ESCI assumed a 1% growth on each previous year's levy plus new construction, which was in turn forecast using a linear growth model.
- In the case of fire protection charges—which are highly variable (except ARFF)—an average of previous years was used.
- The ARFF was conservatively forecasted with a 5% growth rate, while its average growth was 7.3%.
- EMS Levy payments were forecast using a linear growth model.
- Ambulance transport fees, from which ESCI had limited history and data, were forecasted with a simple 2% growth.
- GEMT payments were held steady at the 2019 budgeted amount because of uncertainty about the future of this program. ESCI feels the program may be subject to unexpected cancellation according to the winds of federal politics, and the amount of revenue may vary each year according to various factors.

On the expense side, salaries are assumed to increase at 4% annually and benefits at 5% annually (historical averages were 3.7% and 4.9%, respectively). Services and supplies are increased from the 2019 budget at 2.5% annually. For capital expenses and operating transfers into the Reserve Fund, ESCI used the WWCFD4's 2014–2034 Apparatus Replacement Funding plan.

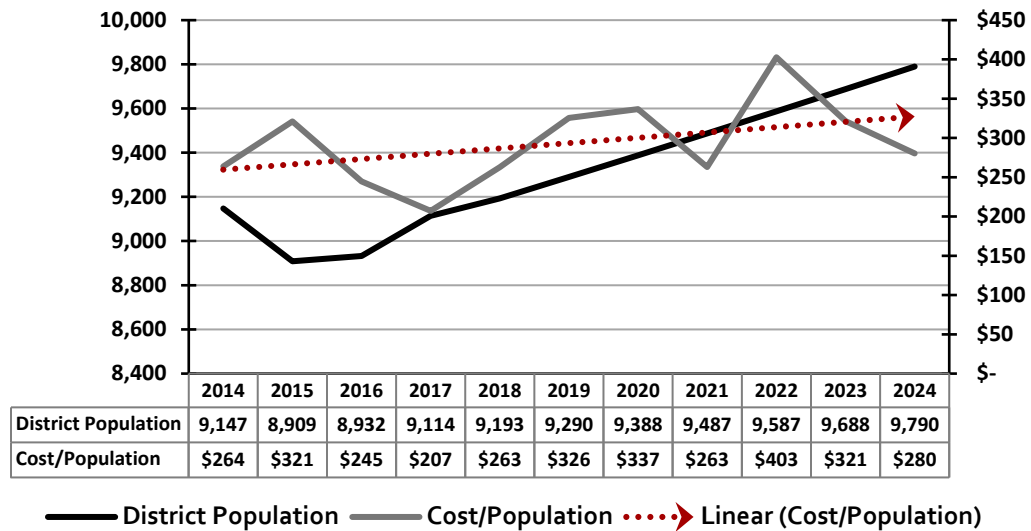
ESCI forecasts show continuations of existing trends, with expenses increasing faster than associated revenues. This results in a slowly eroding operating surplus that eventually becomes a small deficit in 2024.

Figure 39: Fire District #4 Financial Forecasts (2019–2024)

Combined Funds	2019 Budget	2020 Projected	2021 Projected	2022 Projected	2023 Projected	2024 Projected
Revenues						
Taxes	1,861,000	1,905,152	1,940,745	1,976,519	2,012,475	2,048,616
Intergov. Revenues	103,700	81,200	81,200	81,200	81,200	81,200
Goods & Services Charges	433,500	464,870	473,998	483,521	493,457	503,826
Miscellaneous/Other	226,150	38,723	38,723	38,723	38,723	38,723
Total Sources:	\$2,624,350	\$2,489,945	\$2,534,666	\$2,579,963	\$2,625,855	\$2,672,365
Expenses						
Salaries & Wages	1,116,000	1,160,640	1,207,066	1,255,348	1,305,562	1,357,785
Benefits	366,500	384,825	404,066	424,270	445,483	467,757
Supplies	133,500	136,838	140,258	143,765	147,359	151,043
Services	233,550	239,389	245,373	251,508	257,796	264,240
Capital ^A	690,300	811,862	63,882	1,331,607	497,448	21,082
Inter-Fund Transf./Other	484,500	427,468	432,979	454,029	459,652	482,356
Total Expenditures:	\$3,024,350	\$3,161,022	\$2,493,624	\$3,860,527	\$3,113,300	\$2,744,263
Total Operating:	\$1,861,000	\$1,905,152	\$1,940,745	\$1,976,519	\$2,012,475	\$2,048,616
Total Revenue:	\$2,334,050	\$2,349,160	\$2,429,742	\$2,528,920	\$2,615,852	\$2,723,182
Net Revenue (Deficit):	\$290,300	\$140,786	\$104,924	\$51,044	\$10,003	(\$50,816)

^AAll Capital expenses are funded via the Reserve Fund, where the 2019 beginning balance is \$4,100,050.

A flat line for cost per population would indicate that, while expenses are going up, unit-costs of service-delivery remain the same. Conversely, sloped lines indicate an increasing or decreasing cost of service-delivery. As can be seen in the next figure, the cost-per-person varies considerably. Despite the variability, the trend is sloped upward. Capital expenditures have a significant impact on the results in the figure, and the capital expenditure forecasts can explain the peak in 2022, followed by a decrease. Without the capital projections, the cost-per-person would decrease from \$259 in 2014 to \$251 in 2019—followed by a modest-but-steady increase thereafter and hitting \$278 in 2024.

Figure 40: College Place Fire Department Costs per Population

Relative Strengths & Weaknesses of the Fire Agencies

Both financially and structurally, the three fire agencies are difficult to compare. Two are cities and one a rural fire district—each with a different staffing mix. Because WWFD is a full-time career department, it has a budget that is much larger than that of both WWCFD₄ and CPFD. Both cities have relatively small service-areas compared to WWCFD₄. The two cities are experiencing modest population growth, while WWCFD₄'s population is slowly increasing. Finally, each fire agency provides a different mix of services, resulting in varying levels of expense and revenue opportunities.

One way to fairly compare the fire agencies is to normalize their finances by dividing them against factors that influence their revenues and expenses. The following figure attempts to achieve this. The results shown should be approached with healthy caution, as each comparison is flawed. At best, the figure can be taken to give broad and general impressions of how the fire agencies compare.

Figure 41: Revenue & Expenditure Comparisons of the Fire Agencies

Comparison Measures	Combined Agencies	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Revenues				
Assessed Value Per Capita	\$85,479.64	\$76,951.14	\$69,265.77	\$133,781.79
Non-Tax Revenue Per Capita	\$92.26	\$104.49	\$58.61	\$82.17
2019 Levy Rate (EMS Levy is \$0.4698)	\$2.0559	\$2.4278	\$2.1727	\$1.2047
Expenses				
Expenses per Capita	\$216.09	\$232.10	\$117.23	\$259.91
Expenses per Incident	\$1,280.18	\$1,178.40	\$823.41	\$2,810.92
Expenses per Square Mile	\$81,142.88	\$581,354.06	\$378,934.40	\$19,316.61
Expenses per \$1,000 AV	\$0.37	\$0.31	\$0.54	\$0.49

Generally, the higher the assessed value per capita, the more easily property-tax revenue can cover expenses. WWCFD₄ has a much higher AV per capita than the other two departments. Because of this, any combination with WWCFD₄ will tend to help its partner agencies cover their costs with property taxes. With that, WWFD's expenses per \$1,000 AV are significantly smaller than the other two agencies. This means they would represent a smaller burden on property-tax revenues than the other two departments.

From the perspective of raising revenues through non-tax sources (largely contract revenues), WWFD is in a much stronger position—mostly due to its status as the primary ALS provider in the study area. The non-tax revenue per capita comparison measure is imperfect because each fire agency provides a different set of services, and charges differently for those services.

From the perspective of costs per capita and per incident, CPFD appears to bring some lower expenses to the table. However, like the non-tax revenue per capita measure, this may be somewhat misleading. Since CPFD does not provide ALS services, its expenses per capita should be lower and should not be compared directly.

CAPITAL FACILITIES & APPARATUS

Three basic resources are required to successfully carry out the mission of a fire department: trained personnel, firefighting equipment, and fire stations. No matter how competent or numerous the firefighters, if appropriate capital equipment is not available for use by responders, it would be impossible for any of the fire departments in this study to deliver services effectively. The most essential capital assets for use in emergency operations are facilities and apparatus (response vehicles). Of course, each fire department's financing ability will determine the level of capital equipment it can acquire and make available for use by emergency personnel. This section of the report is an assessment of the respective capital facilities, vehicles, and apparatus of CFPD, WWFD, and WWCFD.

Fire Stations & Other Facilities

Fire stations play an integral role in the delivery of emergency services for several reasons. To a large degree, a station's location will dictate response times to emergencies. A poorly located station can mean the difference between confining a fire to a single room and losing the structure. Fire stations also need to be designed to adequately house equipment and apparatus, as well as meet the needs of the organization and its personnel. It is important to research needs based on service-demand, response times, types of emergencies, and projected growth prior to making a station placement commitment.

Consideration should be given to a fire station's ability to support each department's mission as it exists today, and into the future. The activities that take place within a fire station should be closely examined to ensure the structure is adequate in both size and function. Examples of these functions may include the following:

- The housing and cleaning of apparatus and equipment; including decontamination and disposal of biohazards
- Residential living space and sleeping quarters for on-duty personnel (all genders)
- Kitchen facilities, appliances, and storage
- Bathrooms and showers (all genders)
- Administrative and management offices; computer stations and office facilities for personnel
- Training, classroom, and library areas
- Firefighter fitness area
- Public meeting space

In gathering information from the three fire departments, ESCI asked the departments to rate the condition of each of their fire stations using the criteria in the following figure.

Figure 42: Criteria Utilized to Determine Fire Station Condition

Excellent	Like new condition. No visible structural defects. The facility is clean and well maintained. Interior layout is conducive to function with no unnecessary impediments to the apparatus bays or offices. No significant defect history. Design and construction match the building's purposes. Age is typically less than 10 years.
Good	The exterior has a good appearance with minor or no defects. Clean lines, good workflow design, and only minor wear of the building interior. Roof and apparatus apron are in good working order, absent any significant full-thickness cracks or crumbling of apron surface or visible roof patches or leaks. Design and construction match building's purposes. Age is typically less than 20 years.
Fair	The building appears structurally sound with weathered appearance and minor to moderate non-structural defects. The interior condition shows normal wear and tear, but flows effectively to the apparatus bay or offices. Mechanical systems are in working order. Building design and construction may not match the building's purposes well. Showing increasing age-related maintenance, but with no critical defects. Age is typically 30 years or more.
Poor	The building appears to be cosmetically weathered and worn, potentially with structural defects, although not imminently dangerous or unsafe. Large, multiple full-thickness cracks and crumbling of concrete on apron may exist. The roof has evidence of leaking and/or multiple repairs. The interior is poorly maintained or showing signs of advanced deterioration, with moderate to significant non-structural defects. Problematic age-related maintenance and/or major defects are evident. May not be well suited to its intended purpose. Age is typically greater than 40 years.

ESCI toured each of the stations operated by the three fire departments involved in this study, and combined with the information each provided, produced the observations listed in the following figures.

College Place Fire Station

The following figure describes CPFD's single fire station.

Figure 43: College Place Fire Department Station 12-1

Address/Physical Location:		629 S College Ave, College Place, WA 99324					
		General Description: College Place Fire Station 12-1 is the Departments only station, housing administrative staff, career personnel, volunteer accommodations, and multiple resident volunteers.					
Structure							
Construction Type		II-N					
Date of Construction		2001					
Seismic Protection		2B					
Auxiliary Power		Natural gas generator					
General Condition		Good					
Number of Apparatus Bays		4	Drive-through bays	0	Back-in bays		
Special Considerations (ADA, etc.)		2 story, living quarters above, ADA, elevator not in use.					
Square Footage		18,200					
Facilities Available							
Separate Rooms/Dormitory/Other		0	Bedrooms	8	Beds	16	Beds in dormitory
Maximum Station Staffing Capability		16					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes (2)					
Individual Lockers/Storage Assigned		Yes					
Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes					
Washer/Dryer		Yes					
Safety & Security							
Sprinklers & Smoke Detection		Yes/Yes					
Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal		Yes					
Security		Yes					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes, not automatic					

Walla Walla Fire Department Stations

The following figure describes the two fire stations operated by the Walla Walla Fire Department.

Figure 44: Walla Walla Fire Department Station 11-1

Address/Physical Location:		200 S. 12th Avenue, Walla Walla, WA 99362				
		General Description: WWFD's Station 11-1 is an older facility that houses some of the fire department's administrative offices (Fire Chief) along with its emergency operations personnel, apparatus, and ambulances.				
Structure						
Construction Type		Type II				
Date of Construction		1975				
Seismic Protection		No				
Auxiliary Power		Yes				
General Condition		Fair				
Number of Apparatus Bays		0	Drive-through bays	6	Back-in bays	
Special Considerations (ADA, etc.)		Some				
Square Footage		13,862				
Facilities Available						
Separate Rooms/Dormitory/Other		7	Bedrooms	8	Beds	1-2 Beds in dormitory
Maximum Station Staffing Capability		8				
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes				
Kitchen Facilities		Yes				
Individual Lockers/Storage Assigned		Yes				
Shower Facilities		Yes				
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes				
Washer/Dryer		Yes				
Safety & Security						
Sprinklers & Smoke Detection		Yes/Yes				
Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal		Yes				
Security		Gated parking lot and locked exterior doors				
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes				

Figure 45: Walla Walla Fire Department Station 11-2

Address/Physical Location:		170 North Wilbur Avenue, Walla Walla, WA 99362					
		General Description: WWFD Station 11-2 is a relatively new fire station that houses administrative support and prevention staff, as well as fire apparatus and personnel and the Deputy Chief. WWFD's only ladder truck is located at this station. The facility is well-designed for the operations personnel, as well as other administrative staff. The station has a small classroom.					
Structure							
Construction Type		Type V					
Date of Construction		2006					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Yes					
General Condition		Good					
Number of Apparatus Bays		2	Drive-through bays		1	Back-in bays	
Special Considerations (ADA, etc.)		Yes					
Square Footage		14,000					
Facilities Available							
Separate Rooms/Dormitory/Other		6	Bedrooms	11	Beds	2	Beds in dormitory
Maximum Station Staffing Capability		11					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers/Storage Assigned		Yes					
Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes					
Washer/Dryer		Yes					
Safety & Security							
Sprinklers & Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal		Yes					
Security		Gated parking lot and locked exterior doors					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Walla Walla County Fire District #4 Stations & Facilities

The following figure describes the five WWCFD4 fire stations and includes a sixth station at the Walla Walla Regional Airport.

Figure 46: District #4 Station 41

Address/Physical Location:		2251 S. Howard Street, Walla Walla WA 99362						
		General Description:						
		Station 41 serves as the headquarters facility for the District. It is a large, modern facility that includes a large classroom, and the administrative offices. Both career and volunteer personnel and apparatus are deployed from this station. In addition, this location includes a state-of-the-art maintenance facility. A large three-bay storage facility is located behind the station.						
Structure								
Construction Type		V						
Date of Construction		1996						
Seismic Protection		Not reported						
Auxiliary Power		Natural gas generator for essential portions of the station						
General Condition		Good to Excellent						
Number of Apparatus Bays		4	Drive-through bays		6	Back-in bays		
Special Considerations (ADA, etc.)		Not reported						
Square Footage		16,477						
Facilities Available								
Separate Rooms/Dormitory/Other		6	Bedrooms		7	Beds	N/A	Beds in dormitory
Maximum Station Staffing Capability		7						
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes						
Kitchen Facilities		Yes						
Individual Lockers/Storage Assigned		Yes						
Shower Facilities		Yes						
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes						
Washer/Dryer		Yes						
Safety & Security								
Sprinklers		Yes						
Smoke Detection		No						
Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal		Yes						
Security		Locked exterior doors						
Apparatus Exhaust System		No						

Figure 47: Fire District #4 Station 42

Address/Physical Location:	675 Wallula Ave., Walla Walla WA 99362					
	General Description: Concrete block remodeled building with a small meeting area and kitchen.					
Structure						
Construction Type	III					
Date of Construction	1954, with a two-bay addition in 1996					
Seismic Protection	Not reported					
Auxiliary Power	No					
General Condition	Fair to good					
Number of Apparatus Bays	0	Drive-through bays	4	Back-in bays		
Special Considerations (ADA, etc.)	Not reported					
Square Footage	3,824					
Facilities Available						
Separate Rooms/Dormitory/Other	0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	0	Beds in dormitory
Maximum Station Staffing Capability	No sleeping facilities					
Exercise/Workout Facilities	No					
Kitchen Facilities	Yes					
Individual Lockers/Storage Assigned	No					
Shower Facilities	No					
Training/Meeting Rooms	Yes					
Washer/Dryer	No					
Safety & Security						
Sprinklers	No					
Smoke Detection	No					
Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal	No					
Security	No					
Apparatus Exhaust System	No					

Figure 48: Fire District #4 Station 43

Address/Physical Location:	1945 E. Alder Street., Walla Walla WA 99362					
	General Description: Concrete block remodeled building with a small meeting area and kitchen.					
Structure						
Construction Type	III					
Date of Construction	1956 with two bay addition sometime in late 1980's					
Seismic Protection	Not reported					
Auxiliary Power	No					
General Condition	Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays	0	Drive-through bays	4	Back-in bays		
Special Considerations (ADA, etc.)	Not reported					
Square Footage	2,940					
Facilities Available						
Separate Rooms/Dormitory/Other	0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	0	Beds in dormitory
Maximum Station Staffing Capability	No sleeping facilities					
Exercise/Workout Facilities	No					
Kitchen Facilities	Yes					
Individual Lockers/Storage Assigned	No					
Shower Facilities	No					
Training/Meeting Rooms	Yes					
Washer/Dryer	No					
Safety & Security						
Sprinklers	No					
Smoke Detection	No					
Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal	No					
Security	No					
Apparatus Exhaust System	No					

Figure 49: Fire District #4 Station 44

Address/Physical Location:	2327 Old Milton Highway, Walla Walla WA 99362						
	General Description: Concrete block remodeled building with a small meeting area and kitchen.						
Structure							
Construction Type	III						
Date of Construction	1966						
Seismic Protection	Not reported						
Auxiliary Power	No						
General Condition	Fair						
Number of Apparatus Bays	0	Drive-through bays	2	Back-in bays			
Special Considerations (ADA, etc.)	Not reported						
Square Footage	2,070						
Facilities Available							
Separate Rooms/Dormitory/Other	0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	0	Beds in dormitory	
Maximum Station Staffing Capability	No sleeping facilities						
Exercise/Workout Facilities	No						
Kitchen Facilities	Yes						
Individual Lockers/Storage Assigned	No						
Shower Facilities	No						
Training/Meeting Rooms	Yes						
Washer/Dryer	No						
Safety & Security							
Sprinklers	No						
Smoke Detection	No						
Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal	No						
Security	No						
Apparatus Exhaust System	No						

Figure 50: Fire District #4 Station 45

Address/Physical Location:	6549 Mill Creek Road, Walla Walla WA 99362
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**General Description:**

Metal-clad building with a small meeting area and kitchen. A separate four-bay storage building is also located on the site.

Structure

Construction Type	II		
Date of Construction	1980, with an additional building built in 2012		
Seismic Protection	Not reported		
Auxiliary Power	1980 portion yes, portable generator		
General Condition	Good		
Number of Apparatus Bays	0	Drive-through bays	2 Back-in bays
Special Considerations (ADA, etc.)	Not reported		
Square Footage	5,680		

Facilities Available

Separate Rooms/Dormitory/Other	0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	0	Beds in dormitory
Maximum Station Staffing Capability	No sleeping facilities					
Exercise/Workout Facilities	No					
Kitchen Facilities	Yes					
Individual Lockers/Storage Assigned	No					
Shower Facilities	No					
Training/Meeting Rooms	Yes					
Washer/Dryer	No					

Safety & Security

Sprinklers	No
Smoke Detection	No
Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal	No
Security	No
Apparatus Exhaust System	No

Figure 51: Fire District #4 Airport Fire Station

Address/Physical Location:	199 Douglas, Walla Walla, WA 99362 (Walla Walla Regional Airport)
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**General Description:**

Metal-clad, two-bay ARFF station, with office, watch room, and living quarters for up to three firefighters.

Structure

Construction Type	II			
Date of Construction	Unknown			
Seismic Protection	Not reported			
Auxiliary Power	Generator			
General Condition	Fair			
Number of Apparatus Bays	1	Drive-through bays	1	Back-in bays
Special Considerations (ADA, etc.)	Not reported			
Square Footage	3,600			

Facilities Available

Separate Rooms/Dormitory/Other	0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	1	Bed in dormitory
Maximum Station Staffing Capability	1					
Exercise/Workout Facilities	No					
Kitchen Facilities	Yes					
Individual Lockers/Storage Assigned	Yes					
Shower Facilities	Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms	Yes					
Washer/Dryer	No					

Safety & Security

Sprinklers	No
Smoke Detection	No
Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal	No
Security	No
Apparatus Exhaust System	No

Collective Summary of the Fire Stations

The following figure is collective summary of the fire stations owned and operated by each of the fire departments participating in this study. It is intended to show the combined facilities capacity of the three fire agencies.

Figure 52: Collective Summary of Fire Stations in the Study Area

Fire Department	No. of Stations	Staffing Capacity	Apparatus Bays	Total Square Footage
College Place FD	1	16	4	18,200
Walla Walla FD	2	19	9	27,862
Fire District #4	5	7	22	30,991
Subtotals:	8	42	35	77,053
Airport Fire Station	1	1	2	3,600
Totals:	9	43	37	80,653

Excluding the Airport Fire Station, and as shown in the preceding figure, the combined agencies operate a total of eight fire stations with a total staffing capacity of 42 personnel and capable of housing approximately 31 apparatus. These stations comprise approximately 77,053 square feet. The Airport Fire Station was excluded from these figures, as the apparatus are not equipped for structural firefighting or EMS responses beyond the airport area.

Operational Staffing by Fire Station

The following figure represents the minimum daily staffing at each fire station in the study area. This includes stations staffed with career, resident, and volunteer firefighters.

Figure 53: Minimum Available Staffing by Fire Station (2019)

Fire Station	Career Personnel	Resident Personnel	Volunteer Personnel	TOTAL PERSONNEL
College Place Station 12-1	1	3	3	7
District #4 Station 41	2	1	4	7
District #4 Station 42	0	0	7	7
District #4 Station 43	0	0	8	8
District #4 Station 44	0	0	6	6
District #4 Station 45	0	0	7	7
District #4 Airport Station	<i>Staffed only during incoming & outgoing commercial flights</i>			
Walla Walla Station 11-1	6	0	0	6
Walla Walla Station 11-2	5	0	0	5

Operational Staffing Assumptions

The preceding figure makes several assumptions regarding Volunteer and Resident staffing. Recognizing that the availability of operational personnel varies among the fire agencies based on several factors, the staffing calculations assume an adequate number of Volunteers and Residents would be assembled to staff each of the engines and water tenders at all stations. Therefore, the number of operational staff in the preceding figure represents “best case” scenarios. In some cases, career personnel may cross-staff other apparatus, and are not always assigned to one unit.

Fire Apparatus & Ambulance Fleets

Fire apparatus and medic units (ambulances) are unique and expensive pieces of equipment customized to operate for a specific community and defined mission. Other than its firefighters, officers, and support staff, the next most important resources in a fire department are likely the emergency apparatus and vehicles.

Apparatus must be sufficiently reliable to transport firefighters and equipment rapidly and safely to an incident scene. Such vehicles must be properly equipped and function appropriately, to ensure that the delivery of emergency services is not compromised. For this reason, they are very expensive and offer little flexibility in use and reassignment to other missions.

Modern medic units are complex and sophisticated vehicles which not only must be sufficiently maintained to ensure firefighters and EMS providers arrive in a timely manner, but also must be in a condition to ensure patients are transported safely to the hospital or clinical facility.

College Place Fire Department Fleet

The following figure lists the frontline apparatus maintained by the College Place Fire Department.

Figure 54: College Place Fire Department Frontline Apparatus (2019)

Unit Designation	Type	Manufacturer	Year	Condition	Features
Engine 3011	Type 1	Rosenbauer	2016	Good	1000 gal., 1500 gpm
Engine 3041	Type 4	S&S Equipment	2001	Good	800 gal., 100 gpm
Ambulance 3021	Ambulance	Road Rescue	2001	Good	Spreader/cutter
Water Tender 3021	Type 2	Mountain High	1995	Fair	3500 gallons

CPFD also retains a Type 1 Engine (2001), Type 6 Engine (1985), and Wheeled Coach ambulance (2004) in reserve. Fleet management for CPFD is provided through the City of College Place Public Works Department, Fleet Management division.

Walla Walla Fire Department Fleet

The following figure lists the frontline apparatus maintained by the Walla Walla Fire Department.

Figure 55: Walla Walla Fire Department Frontline Apparatus (2019)

Unit Designation	Type	Manufacturer	Year	Condition	Features
Engine 3911	Type 1	Pierce	2018	New	750 gal., 1500 gpm
Engine 3912	Type 1	Pierce	2001	Fair	750 gal., 1500 gpm
Ladder 3911	Aerial Type 1	Rosenbauer	2011	Good	109-ft., 1500 gpm
Engine 3951	Type 5	Chevy (built in-house)	2005	Good	400 gal. tank
Medic 3921	Type I	Braun Northwest	2016	Good	Holmatro Tool
Medic 3922	Type I	Braun Northwest	2014	Fair	Holmatro Tool
Battalion Chief 391	Command	Ford	2016	Good	—

The average mileage between the two Type 1 engines was 33,168. The ladder truck had 22,274 miles, with the two frontline medic units averaging 73,406 miles. In addition to its frontline apparatus, WWFD maintains three *Braun Northwest*® reserve ambulances—all considered in good condition averaging 104,974 miles. WWFD operates the only ladder truck among the three departments.

The Department also maintains a fleet of staff vehicles and other utility vehicles. They also have an assortment of trailers with generators and lights, mass casualty incidents, technical rescues, fire investigation, and support for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Apparatus maintenance is provided by the City of Walla Walla Fleet Service Department.

Walla Walla County Fire District #4 Fleet

The following figure lists the frontline apparatus maintained by Walla Walla County Fire District #4.

Figure 56: Fire District #4 Frontline Engine Inventory (2019)

Unit Designation	Type	Manufacturer	Year	Condition	Features
Engine 3411	Type 1	Rosenbauer	2016	Good	1000 gal, 1500 gpm
Engine 3412	Type 1	Rosenbauer	2005	Good	1000 gal, 1500 gpm
Engine 3413	Type 1	Central States	2000	Good	1000 gal, 1500 gpm
Engine 3414	Type 1	Central States	1997	Good	1000 gal, 1500 gpm
Engine 3415	Type 1	Boise Mobile	2012	Good	750 gal., 1250 gpm
Engine 3441	Type 4	Mallory	2018	Good	850 gal., 350 gpm
Engine 3451	Type 5	General Fire	2001	Fair	425 gal., 700 gpm
Engine 3452	Type 5	General Fire	2009	Good	400 gal., 500 gpm
Engine 3453	Type 5	General Fire	2003	Good	425 gal., 700 gpm
Engine 3454	Type 5	General Fire	2009	Good	400 gal., 500 gpm
Engine 3455	Type 5	General Fire	2003	Good	425 gal., 700 gpm
Engine 3457	Type 5	In-House	2019	Good	425 gal., 300 gpm

Figure 57: Fire District #4 Other Frontline Apparatus Inventory (2019)

Unit Designation	Type	Manufacturer	Year	Condition	Features
Water Tender 3431	Tender	General Fire	2006	Good	2000 gal., 500 gpm
Water Tender 3422	Tender	Rosenbauer	2009	Good	2500 gal., 500 gpm
Water Tender 3423	Tender	Rosenbauer	2009	Good	2500 gal., 500 gpm
Water Tender 3433	Tender	General Fire	1997	Good	2000 gal., 350 gpm
Water Tender 3435	Tender	General Fire	1997	Good	2000 gal., 350 gpm
Ambulance 3421	Ambulance	Braun Northwest	2016	Good	—
Rescue 3441	Rescue	Braun Northwest	2003	Good	—
ARFF 341	ARFF	Oshkosh	2017	Good	—

Fire District #4 has a large fleet with nearly all apparatus considered in good condition. The average mileage among the Type 1 engines was 15,951. For Wildland apparatus, the average was 9,510; Water Tenders 11,951; and the ambulance and rescue combined, 37,444 miles.

The District maintains one reserve Type 1 engine and one Type 5 engine in reserve. In addition, WWCFD₄ maintains a quantity of staff and command vehicles, a John Deere® bulldozer, two all-terrain vehicles (ATV), a semi-truck and trailer, and a cargo trailer.

Collective Summary of the Fire Department Fleets

The following figure lists the collective fleet inventories of each of the three fire departments participating in this study. The “Other or Reserve” column lists reserve apparatus and vehicles, in addition to any special or support apparatus, watercraft, trailers, or vehicles. Wildland apparatus ranged from Type 2 to Type 5.

Figure 58: Collective Inventory of the Fire Department Frontline Fleets

Fire Department	Engine	Aerial	Medic	Tender	Wildland	Others ^A
College Place FD	1	0	1	1	1	3
Walla Walla FD	2	1	2	0	1	16
Fire District #4	6	0	2 ^B	5	3	14
Totals:	9	1	5	6	5	33

^AIncludes reserve apparatus and other specialty vehicles, trailers, & apparatus. ^BIncludes a transport-capable rescue.

The next figure lists the collective frontline apparatus type and minimum staffing by each fire station. Staffing among the agencies includes career personnel assigned to 24-hour shifts daily, all-volunteer staffing, and a combination of career staff during the day shift with volunteers at night.

Figure 59: Collective Frontline Apparatus & Minimum Staffing by Fire Station

Fire Station	Engine ^A	Medic	Tender	Wildland	Minimum Staffing
College Place Fire Department					
Fire Station 12-1	1	1	1	1	2/[C]
Walla Walla Fire Department					
Fire Station 11-1	1	1	0	0	6
Fire Station 11-2	1	1	0	0	5
Walla Walla County Fire District #4					
Fire Station 41	2	1	1	2	2/[C]
Fire Station 42	1	0	1	1	[V]
Fire Station 43	1	0	1	1	[V]
Fire Station 44	1	0	1	0	[V]
Fire Station 45	1	0	1	1	[V]
Airport Station	0	0	0	0	0 ^B
Totals:	9	4	6	6	11^C

[C] = Combination career and/or volunteer. [V] = Volunteer staffed only.

^AType 1 engines. ^BStaffed when commercial flights arrive and depart. ^CCareer staffed 24-hours daily.

Future Apparatus Serviceability

An important consideration when evaluating the feasibility of consolidating fire departments into a combined organization, are the costs associated with the future replacement of major equipment. Apparatus service-lives can be readily predicted based on factors including vehicle type, call volume, age, and maintenance considerations.

NFPA 1901: *Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus* recommends that fire apparatus 15 years of age or older be placed into reserve status, and apparatus 25 years or older should be replaced.¹² This is a general guideline, and the standard recommends using the following objective criteria in evaluating fire apparatus lifespan:

- Vehicle road mileage.
- Engine operating hours.
- The quality of the preventative maintenance program.
- The quality of the driver-training program.
- Whether the fire apparatus was used within its design parameters.
- Whether the fire apparatus was manufactured on a custom or commercial chassis.
- The quality of workmanship by the original manufacturer.
- The quality of the components used in the manufacturing process.
- The availability of replacement parts.

Current Ages of Frontline Apparatus

In the following figure, ESCI calculated the average age of frontline apparatus, in order to offer a point of reference when considering future vehicle replacement costs that may be incurred. The figure includes the quantity and average age of each type of apparatus.

Figure 60: Average Age of the Combined Primary Frontline Apparatus (2019)

Department	No. of Engines	Average Engine Age	No. of Medics	Average Medic Age	No. of Wildland	Average Wildland Age
College Place FD	1	3	1	18	1	18
Walla Walla FD	2	9.5	2	4	1	14
Fire District #4	5	11.6	2	9.5	7	10
Totals/Averages:	8	8 years	5	10.5 years	9	14 years

The average age of District #4's Water Tenders was 15.4 years. It is important to note that age is *not* the only factor for evaluating serviceability and replacement. Vehicle mileage and pump hours on engines must also be considered. A two-year-old engine with 250,000 miles may need replacement sooner than a 10-year-old one with 2,500 miles.

Capital Facilities & Equipment Replacement Planning

Apparatus Maintenance & Replacement Planning

Clearly, no piece of mechanical equipment or vehicle can be expected to last indefinitely. As apparatus age, repairs tend to become more frequent and more complex. Parts may become more difficult to obtain, and downtime for repair and maintenance increases. Given that fire protection, EMS, and other emergencies are so critical to a community, downtime is one of the most frequently identified reasons for apparatus replacement. ESCI notes a prudent fire apparatus replacement schedule for all three departments.

Because of the expense of fire apparatus, most communities develop replacement plans. To enable such planning, fire departments often turn to the accepted practice of establishing a life-cycle for apparatus that results in an anticipated replacement date for each vehicle. The reality is that it may be best to establish a life-cycle for planning purposes—such as the development of replacement funding for various types of apparatus—yet apply a different method (such as a maintenance and performance review) for determining the actual replacement date, thereby achieving greater cost-effectiveness when possible.

Those within each of the fire departments responsible for managing and maintaining the fleet should be concerned about aging apparatus and vehicles, and ensure that a funded replacement schedule is in place. As frontline units age, fleet costs will naturally be higher and more downtime associated with necessary repairs and routine maintenance. The following figure is one example that can be used for determining the condition of fire apparatus and vehicles.

Figure 61: Example Criteria & Method for Determining Apparatus Replacement

Components	Points Assignment Criteria	
Age:	One point for every year of chronological age, based on in-service date.	
Miles/Hours:	One point for every 10,000 miles or 1,000 hours	
Service:	1, 3, or 5 points are assigned based on service-type received (for instance, a pumper would be given a 5 since it is classified as severe duty service).	
Condition:	Takes into consideration body condition, rust interior condition, accident history, anticipated repairs, etc. The better the condition, the lower the assignment of points.	
Reliability:	Points are assigned as 1, 3, or 5, depending on the frequency a vehicle is in for repair. For example, a 5 would be assigned to a vehicle in the shop 2 or more times per month on average, while a 1 is assigned to a vehicle in the shop on average of once every three months or less.	
Point Ranges	Condition Rating	Condition Description
Under 18 points	Condition I	Excellent
18–22 points	Condition II	Good
23–27 points	Condition III	Consider Replacement
28 points or higher	Condition IV	Immediate Replacement

College Place Fire Department

CPFD maintains a capital facilities improvement plan for a period of six years annually. Apparatus and capital equipment replacement plans are updated annually based on the life of each.

Walla Walla Fire Department

WWFD and the City have a comprehensive capital facilities improvement strategy within the citywide Capital Facilities Plan (CFP). The CFP was begun in 2018 and extends through 2023. There is no current replacement plan for fire apparatus, although funding has been identified for replacement of staff vehicles and EMS units. WWFD does not maintain a capital equipment replacement plan.

Walla Walla County Fire District #4

Fire District #4 does not currently maintain a capital facilities improvement or replacement plan. Funds are set aside annually for apparatus, and the replacement plan is updated each year. The period of the plan is 20 years or more. A capital equipment replacement plan is updated annually and based on the life of the items to be replaced.

Capital Medical Equipment Inventory

Since calls for EMS represent the highest demand for service in the three fire departments, and each provides ambulance transport service, ESCI elected to list the inventories of capital medical equipment. Acquiring cardiac monitor/defibrillators is a substantial financial investment, and a critical piece of equipment for use in emergency medical calls. The following figure lists the fire department's inventory of cardiac monitor/defibrillators and Automated External Defibrillators (AED).

Figure 62: Combined Inventories of Cardiac Monitors & AEDs (2019)

Model	Manufacturer	Qty.	12-Lead	SpO ₂	etCO ₂	CO	BP	Temp
College Place Fire Department								
M Series	Zoll®	1	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Powerheart G3	Cardiac Science	4	No	No	No	No	No	No
Walla Walla Fire Department								
X Series	Zoll®	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Lifepak 12	Physio-Control®	3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
AED Plus	Zoll®	3	No	No	No	No	No	No
Walla Walla County Fire District #4								
X Series	Zoll®	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
FR2 AED	Philips®	8	No	No	No	No	No	No
FRX AED	Philips®	12	No	No	No	No	No	No

In the event of consolidation, it will be important that the cardiac monitor/defibrillators deployed to frontline medic units and apparatus be standardized among the departments, including standard features and capabilities of each device. Among the three departments, Zoll® is the predominate manufacturer, with the X Series models being the most common. At 20 units, WWCFD₄ maintains the most AEDs, consisting of two different models manufactured by Philips Medical.®

Another significant capital expense for fire departments providing patient-transport, regardless of the level of service provided, are ambulance cots (also referred to as "stretchers"). The following figure lists the ambulance cots and stair chairs utilized by each department. As shown, the PowerPro XT and MX Pro (Stryker Corporation®) are the ambulance cots used most frequently among the study participants.

Figure 63: Combined Inventories of Ambulance Cots & Patient Movement Equipment

Model	Manufacturer	Qty.	Description
College Place Fire Department			
PowerPro XT	Stryker®	1	Ambulance cot
MX Pro	Stryker®	1	Ambulance cot
MS-90042	Medsource Labs	1	Stair chair
Walla Walla Fire Department			
PowerPro XT	Stryker®	5	Ambulance cot
MX Pro	Stryker®	4	Ambulance cot
Stair-PRO	Stryker®	3	Stair chair
Walla Walla County Fire District #4			
PowerPro XT	Stryker®	1	Ambulance cot
MX Pro	Stryker®	1	Ambulance cot
Stair-PRO	Stryker®	1	Ambulance cot

In the event of a consolidation, it will be important for the departments to standardize the ambulance cots utilized in each of the medic units. This is necessary not only for patient safety, but also for the safety of the firefighters assigned to those units.

Heavy extrication tools can also be a substantial capital expense. CPFD utilizes AMKUS Rescue Systems® and TNT Rescue Systems® hydraulic tools. Fire District #4 has several sets of Hurst Jaws of Life® hydraulic tools with cutters, rams, and spreaders, along with other tools used for rescue and extrication. WWFD has Holmatro® extrication tools with spreaders, cutters, and rams, in addition to other rescue and extrication tools.

HISTORICAL SERVICE DELIVERY & PERFORMANCE

The following section entails a review of the service-delivery and performance for the Walla Walla Fire Department, College Place Fire Department, and the Walla Walla County Fire District #4. Both current and historical service-demand were reviewed by incident type and temporal variation for the entire study area. GIS software is used to provide a geographic display of demand, performance, and projected response-time performance.

The operational components of service-delivery and performance have been analyzed from multiple perspectives, which includes service-demand, distribution, resource concentration, reliability, and response-performance. In order to provide the highest level of service to the citizens and visitors of Walla Walla, College Place, and surrounding unincorporated communities, the collective of these components must be effective and efficient. This is achieved with efficient notifications of incidents and rapid responses from strategically located facilities—and through appropriate apparatus staffed with an adequate number of properly training personnel. This section will provide a current analysis of service-delivery and response performance among the three participating fire agencies.

Data Sources

The data used for the various analyses in this section were acquired from the *National Fire Incident Reporting System* (NFIRS) data provided by the three fire agencies. Additionally, the Walla Walla Police Department *Public Safety Communications Division* provided Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) records for all three fire departments. In addition, the Walla Walla Fire Department provided EMS records from a Records Management System separate from its NFIRS software. A summary of the data provided for each department and associated limitations are described below.

Walla Walla Fire Department

The WWFD initially provided NFIRS data for the years 2014–2018. Datasets were acquired from two platforms: *FIREHOUSE Software*® (FH) and *ESO Fire Incidents*.™ Data from January 2014 to March 13, 2017, was acquired from FH (7,183 of which included duplicate records when multiple units responded to an incident), while March 14, 2017 through December 31, 2018, was retrieved from ESO (3,377 of which included duplicate records when multiple units responded to an incident). Some of the fields available on the FH platform—for example, emergency or non-emergency response mode—were not available. As reported, 7,167 NFIRS records were obtained.

According to WWFD staff, all EMS incidents were documented on their EMS reporting software using the *National Emergency Medical Services Information System* (NEMSIS) standards. This included responses in which only an engine responded to an EMS call. Engine-only responses to EMS calls were not included in the NFIRS reporting system. If an engine responded with a medic unit on an EMS call, then that data was reported in WWFD's NFIRS software. Since not all EMS-related incidents were reported in NFIRS, EMS reports were also provided for the years 2017–2018. A total of 11,571 EMS records were provided and analyzed.

The CAD data provided for WWFD contained 17,597 records for the time period 2017–2018, which included duplicate records when multiple units responded to an incident. Of these, 249 did not have incident numbers and, therefore, were excluded from the analysis. This resulted in 17,348 CAD records (with duplicates) for analysis.

In order to attempt to define the most accurate number of EMS incidents, EMS-related incidents were removed from the CAD data. This produced 3,463 non-EMS duplicate records. After determining the best times, duplicate records were removed. The result was 1,808 single incident records. From the 11,571 records found in the NEMSIS data, 11,489 single records were used for analysis.

College Place Fire Department

CPFD provided NFIRS data for the years 2014–2018. With duplicates, 8,852 records were provided. As shown in the next figure, 6,456 NFIRS records were obtained.

CAD data provided for CPFD contained 4,747 records for the period 2017–2018. This included duplicate records. After a comprehensive review, the duplicate records were removed, and 2,735 single records retained for analyses.

Walla Walla County Fire District #4

District #4 provided NFIRS data for the period 2014–2018. With duplicates, 9,950 records were provided. As shown in the following figure, 4,007 NFIRS records were acquired.

The CAD data provided for District #4 contained 4,626 records for the period 2017–2018, which included duplicate records. After analysis for best times, the duplicate records were removed, and 1,694 single records remained to use for analyses. ESCI utilized the dataset that was most appropriate for each analysis or component.

Figure 64: Summary of Data Sources Used

Record Type	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
NFIRS (Duplicates) 2014–2018	10,560	8,852	9,950
NFIRS (Single Incidents) 2014–2018 ¹	7,167	6,456	4,007
CAD Records (Duplicates) 2017–2018	3,463 ²	4,747	4,626
CAD Records (Single) 2017–2018	1,808 ²	2,735	1,694
NEMSIS (Duplicates) 2017–2018	11,571	—	—
NEMSIS (Single) 2017–2018	11,489	—	—

¹Taken from ESCI Table 5 Service Delivery.

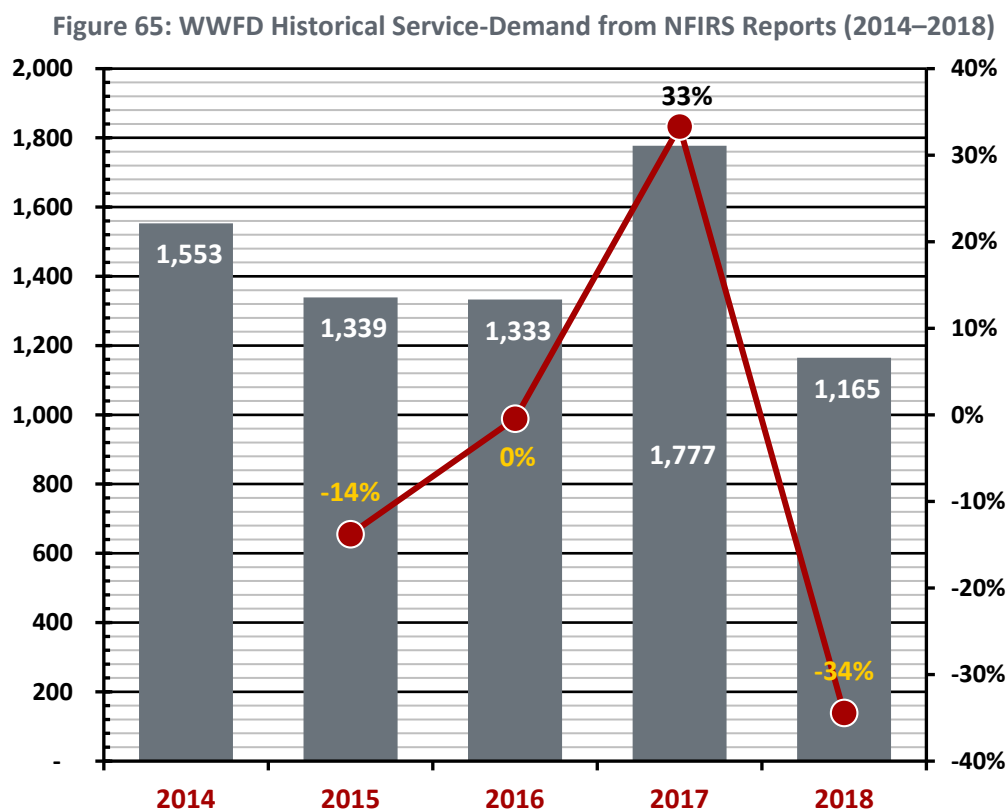
²Non-EMS only.

Service-Demand Analysis

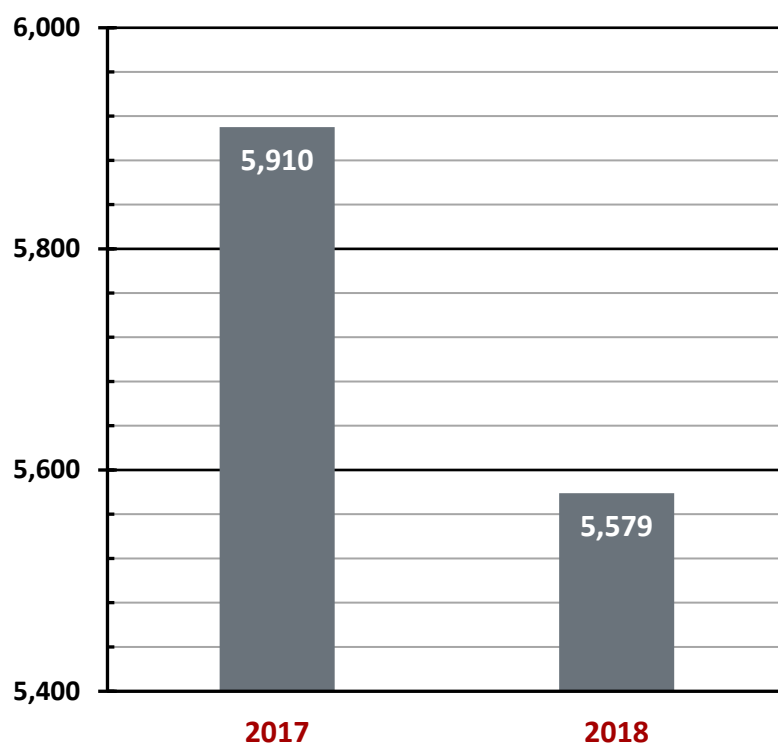
The following figures display historical WWFD, CPFD, and WWCFD⁴ service-demand for the previous five calendar years and a breakdown by NFIRS incident category. The only exception is with WWFD's EMS service-demand that is not reported in NFIRS. These incidents were evaluated for 2017 and 2018, utilizing NEMSIS records. It is likely that many EMS incidents—specifically those in which an engine responds with the medic unit—could have been counted in both record management systems.

Walla Walla Fire Department

The following figure displays historical WWFD service-demand for the previous five calendar years based on incidents reported in the NFIRS reporting system.

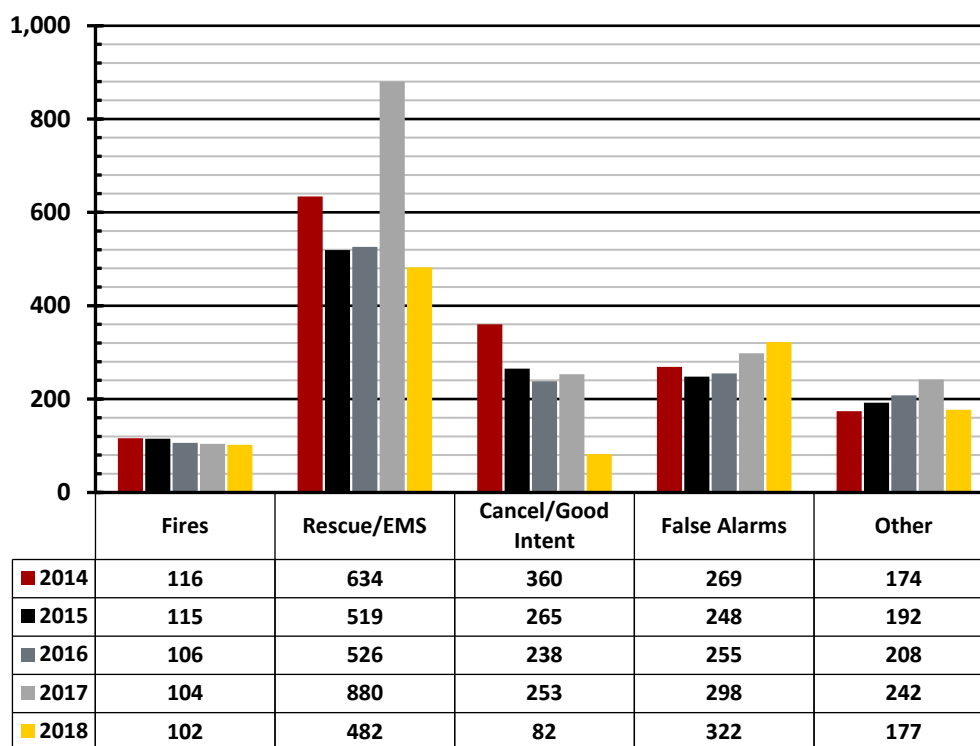


Service-demand for WWFD has fluctuated over the past five years. 2017 showed the highest increase in service-demand, with a 33% increase that totaled 1,777 incidents. Demand significantly decreased for non-EMS incidents in 2018, a trend also seen with EMS incidents as illustrated in the next figure. One reason for these reductions is that a change in deployment to medical incidents became effective in 2018.

Figure 66: WWFD EMS Service-Demand from NEMSIS Reports (2017–2018)

As indicated, WWFD's EMS service-demand decreased from 2017–2018, which were the only available years of data. EMS service-demand decreased by 5.6% during this period.

This fluctuating trend in WWFD service-demand is relatively consistent across all NFIRS incident types, as illustrated in the next figure.

Figure 67: WWFD Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type (2014–2018)

Except for incidents coded as fire alarms, all NFIRS incident types decreased in 2018 from the previous year. “False Alarms,” which increased 20% from 2014 to 2018, include manual and automatic fire alarms in which no fire problem was identified. “Fires” include all types of fires including structure, wildland, vehicle, etc. The category titled “Other” includes NFIRS codes such as overpressure rupture (no fire), hazardous condition (no fire), service call, severe weather, and special incidents. The overall increase in this category is tied to a 30% increase in calls coded as “service call” from 2014–2018. Again, the Rescue/EMS category includes only those incidents reported to NFIRS. The next figure also illustrates the variance of incident types as a percentage of the total service-demand for WWFD.

Figure 68: WWFD Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type Percentages (2014–2018)

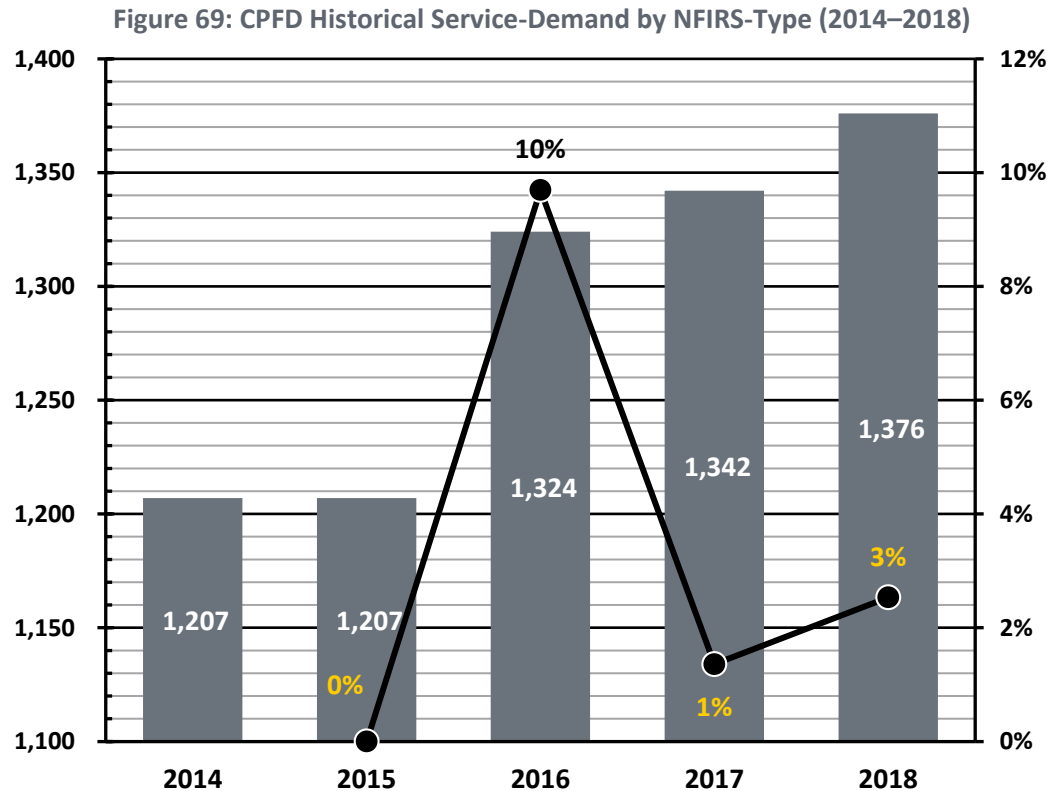
NFIRS Type	% Total
EMS & Rescue Incidents	42%
False Alarms	19%
Cancelled & Good Intent Calls	17%
Fires	8%
Other Incidents	14%

Note: Does not include EMS calls reported in NEMSIS.

Based on the NFIRS records, over the past five years, the incident-type percentages varied from a low of 8% for incidents typed as Fire, to a high of 42% for Rescue/EMS calls. Again, this does not represent all incidents to which the Department responded. Clearly, the data indicates that Rescue/EMS incidents comprise the highest percentage of service-demand which is typical of most communities.

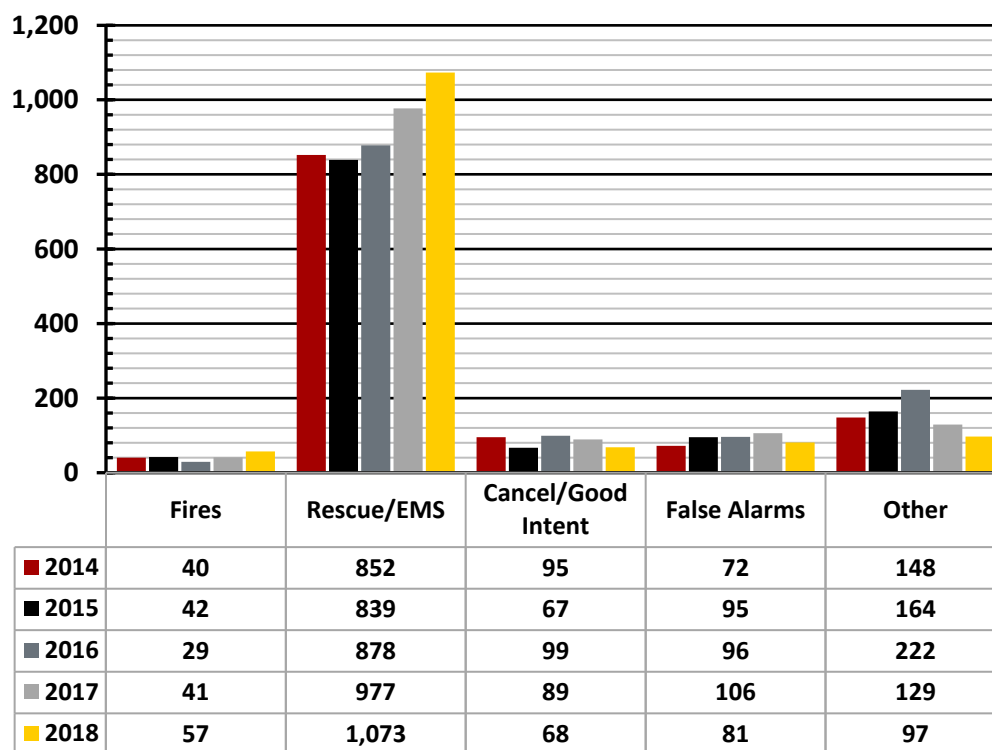
College Place Fire Department

The next figure displays historical CPFD service-demand for the previous five calendar years.



Overall, service-demand increased by 14% in the time period displayed in the preceding figure. This represents an average annual increase of 3%.

The next figure illustrates the overall service-demand of the College Place Fire Department by examining annual service-demand by NFIRS incident-type and frequency.

Figure 70: CPFD Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type (2014–2018)

Over the past five years, incidents coded as “fires” showed the highest percentage increase at 43%. “Fires” include all types of fires such as structure, wildland, vehicle, etc. “Rescue/EMS” incidents account for the highest percentage of total service-demand and increased by 26% during the period illustrated. The category titled “Other” includes NFIRS codes such as Overpressure Rupture (no fire), Hazardous Condition (no fire), Service Call, Severe Weather, and Special Incidents.

The next figure illustrates the incident types as a percentage of the total service-demand for the College Place Fire Department.

Figure 71: CPFD Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type Percentages (2014–2018)

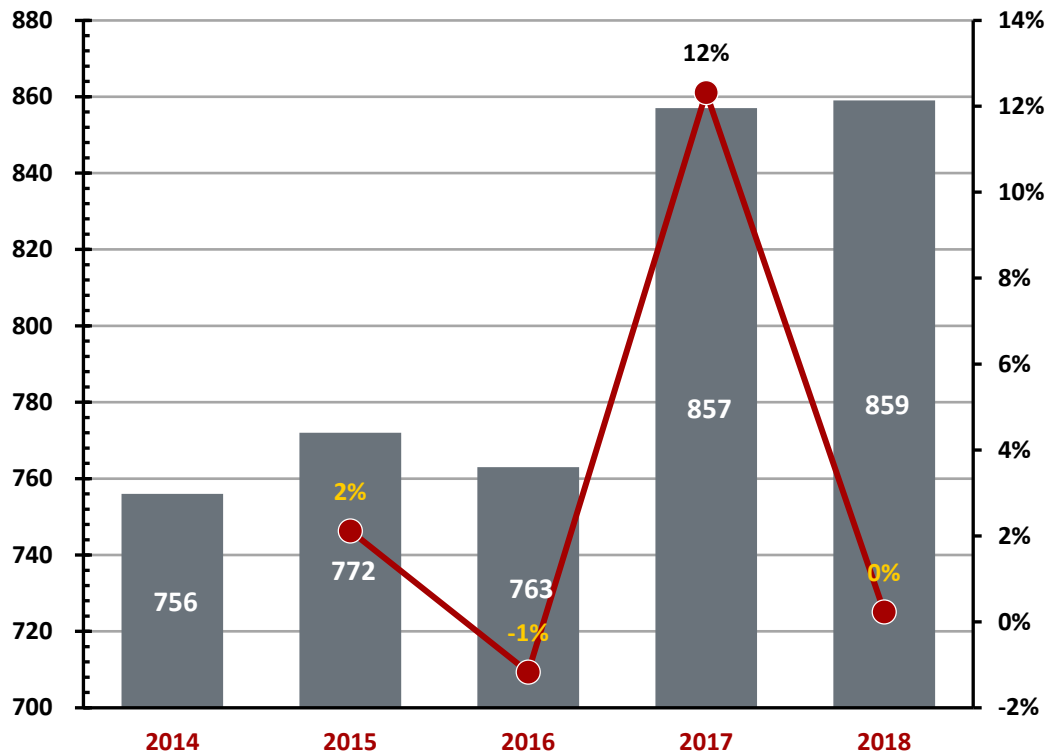
NFIRS Type	% Total
EMS & Rescue Incidents	72%
False Alarms	7%
Canceled & Good Intent Calls	6%
Fires	3%
Other Incidents	12%

During the preceding five years, the incident-type percentages varied from a low of 3% for incidents typed as “Fire,” to a high of 72% for “Rescue/EMS.” Clearly, the data indicated that Rescue/EMS incidents comprised the highest percentage of service-demand during the study period.

Walla Walla County Fire District #4

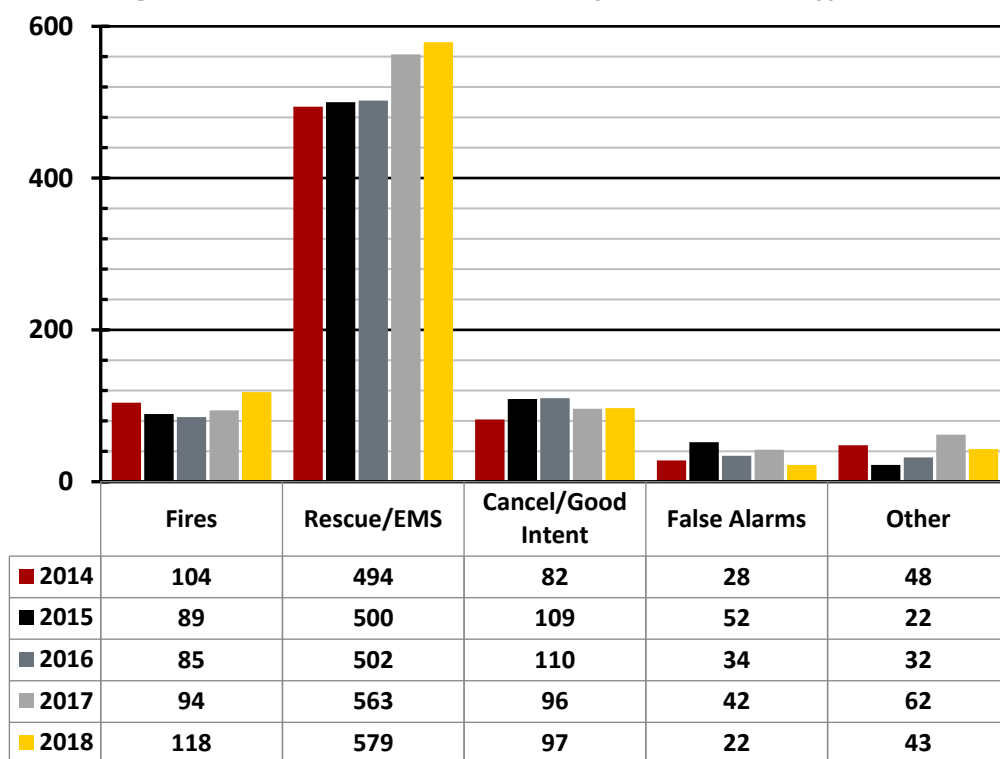
The next figure displays historical District #4 service-demand for the previous five calendar years.

Figure 72: WWCFD4 Historical Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type (2014–2018)



Overall, service-demand increased by nearly 14% during the study period. This represented an annual average increase of 3%.

The next figure illustrates the overall service-demand of District #4 by examining annual service-demand by NFIRS incident-type and frequency.

Figure 73: District #4 Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type (2014–2018)

Over the preceding five-year period, incidents coded as “Cancel/Good Intent” showed the highest percentage increase at 18%. “Rescue/EMS” incidents accounted for the highest percentage of total service-demand and increased by 17% during the study period. The category titled “Other” included NFIRS codes such as Overpressure Rupture (no fire), Hazardous Condition (no fire), Service Call, Severe Weather, and Special Incidents.

The next figure illustrates the variance of incident types as a percentage of the total service-demand for District #4.

Figure 74: District #4 Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type Percentages (2014–2018)

NFIRS Type	% Total
EMS & Rescue Incidents	66%
False Alarms	5%
Cancelled & Good Intent Calls	12%
Fires	12%
Other Incidents	5%

During the preceding five years, the incident-type percentages varied from a low of 5% for incidents typed as “Fire & False Alarms,” to a high of 66% for “Rescue/EMS.” As expected, the data indicated that Rescue/EMS incidents comprised the highest percentage of service-demand during the study period.

Combined Service-Demand of the Fire Departments

The next figure displays the combined service-demand for the Walla Walla project study area, and the percentage of overall call-volumes for each fire agency.

Figure 75: Combined Historical Service-Demand of the Fire Jurisdictions (2017–2018)

Fire Agency	2017	2018	Total	% of Total ^A
Walla Walla Fire Department	7,687	6,744	14,431	77%
College Place Fire Department	1,342	1,376	2,718	14%
Walla Walla County Fire District #4	857	859	1,716	9%
Annual Totals:	9,886	8,979	18,865	

^ARepresents the percentage of the combined totals of 2017 and 2018.

During the preceding 24 months, the Walla Walla Fire Department accounted for a substantial majority of the total service-demand within the study area—with 77% of the combined call volume. The College Place Fire Department responded to 14% of the total incidents, while Walla Walla County Fire District #4 accounted for 9% of the total.

Service-Demand by Fire Station

An important aspect when analyzing fire department service-demand is to evaluate call volumes by individual fire stations. This is valuable when determining staffing and apparatus deployment options. Unfortunately, the data provided to ESCI did not allow a service-demand analysis by fire station.

Service-Demand Discussion

Results from the historical service-demand analyses show a fluctuation of call volumes when reviewed by individual fire agencies and NFIRS incident-types. Overall, the combined service-demand increased throughout the study area. This is typical of what ESCI has found with many fire and EMS organizations throughout the United States.

As expected, of the three participating organizations, the Walla Walla Fire Department accounted for the highest percentage of service-demand over the preceding two-year period. This was followed by the College Place Fire Department, which had the next highest call volume.

Although consisting primarily of a rural population density and rather large geographic response area, Walla Walla County Fire District #4 had the least number of calls (9%) among the three fire agencies.

Typical of most communities, EMS-related incidents accounted for the highest percentage of service-demand by NFIRS incident-type within the study area. While other incident-types indicated increasing service-demand, the data clearly demonstrated that EMS-related incidents would play an important factor in future service-demand throughout the combined service areas of the three jurisdictions.

Temporal Variation

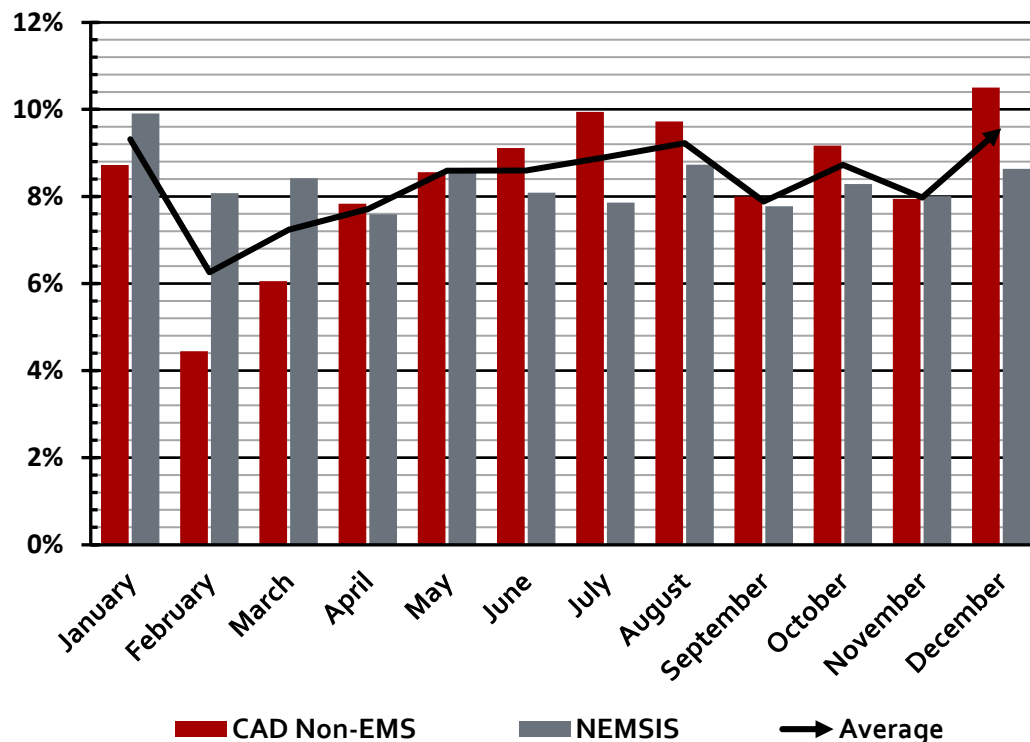
Demand for services can often occur in cyclical patterns. A temporal variation analysis is helpful to determine if specific trends exist during various time measurements where staffing can be modified to better fit the demand. To determine if these patterns exist, the following figures are presented and each is discussed.

The following figures display historical WWFD, CPFD, and WWC4 service-demand for the previous two calendar years, broken down by month, day-of-week, and hour-of-the-day.

Walla Walla Fire Department

The next figure illustrates service-demand for both EMS and Fire/Non-EMS incidents by month of the year based on CAD data for WWFD.

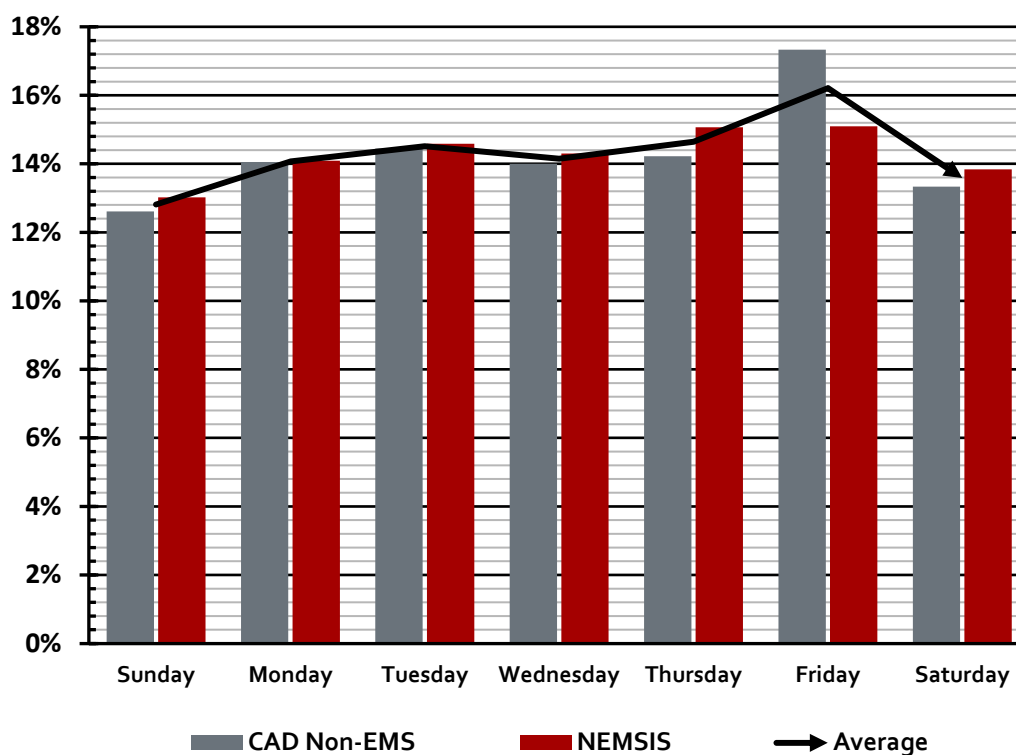
Figure 76: WWFD Service-Demand by Month (2017–2018)



The busiest month for WWFD is typically December. Over the course of the preceding two-year period, December on average accounted for 9.57% of the service-demand. February was the slowest month, accounting for 6.26% of the total service-demand. The range between the busiest month and the slowest month was 3.31%.

The next figure continues the temporal analysis with an examination of service-demand by day-of-the-week for both EMS and Fire/Non-EMS incidents.

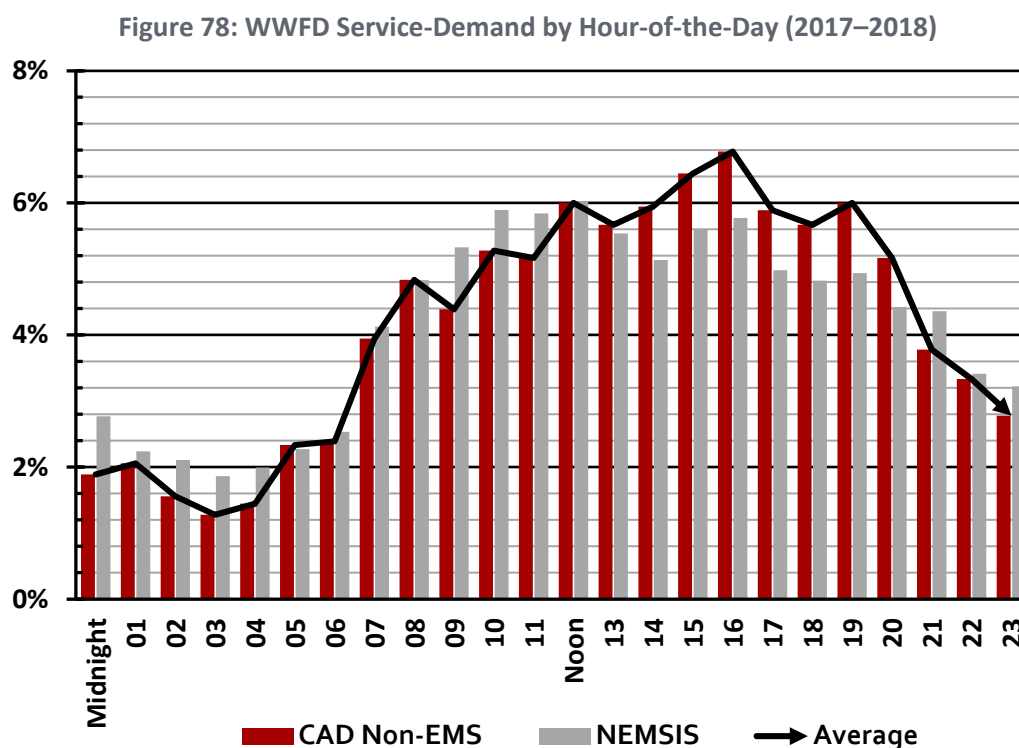
Figure 77: WWFD Service-Demand by Day-of-Week (2017–2018)



Demand by day-of-week remained relatively consistent for WWFD. Typically, the most noticeable variation occurs during the weekends when service-demand decreases. This is expected as more activity occurs during the weekdays, such as an increase in the transient population tied to the retail and commercial labor force. In general, more activity occurs during the weekdays.

As expected, Saturdays and Sundays exhibited the lowest percentage of service-demand in WWFD's service area. During the preceding 24 months, Sunday's accounted for nearly 13% of the calls, making it the slowest day on average. Fridays accounted for an average of just over 16% of service-demand, making it the busiest day of the week. The range between the busiest day and the slowest day was nearly 3.5%.

The final temporal analysis of service-demand examines demand summarized by hour-of-day for both EMS and Fire/Non-EMS incidents and is illustrated in the next figure.



Analysis of service-demand regarding specific times of the day revolves largely around the activities of the general population, with workload increasing during the daytime hours, and decreasing during late evening and early morning hours. Incident activity was at its highest between 0800 and 1900 hours (8 am and 7 pm). Over 62% of WWFD's calls for service occurred between these hours, which would be expected.

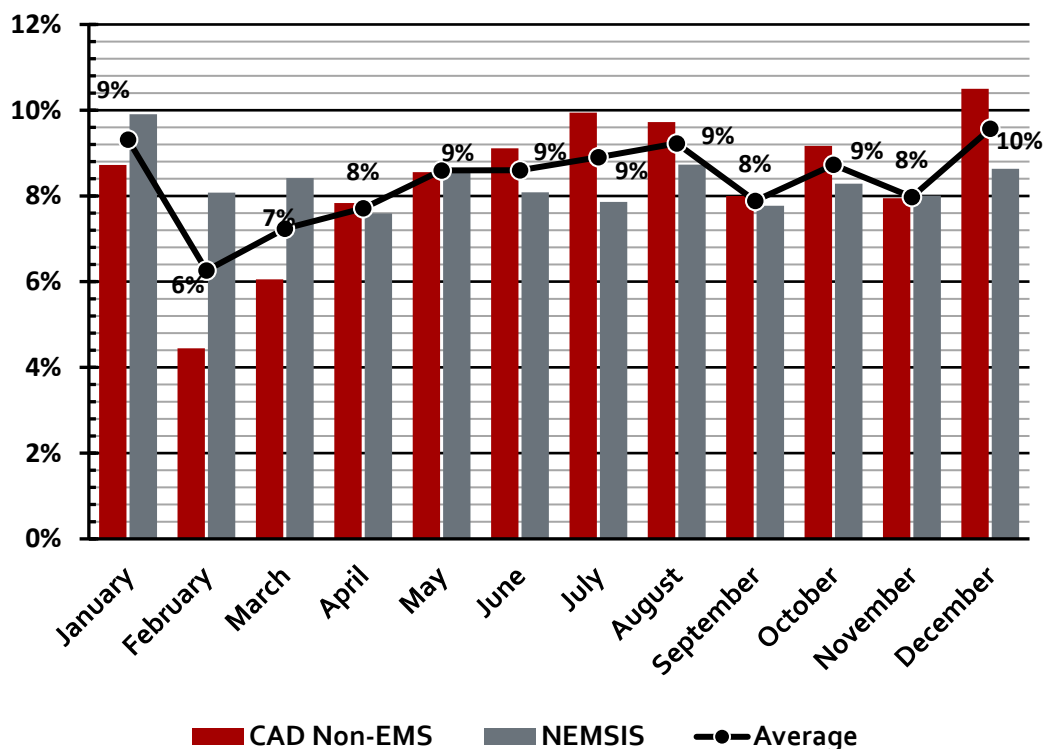
The highest incident activity occurred during 1600 hours, with nearly 7% of the total activity per day. The slowest hour for activity occurred during 0300 hours, which accounted for less than 2% of activity during the 24-month study period. The range between the busiest and slowest was about 5.5%.

Of note, is that while demand was lower in the early morning hours, residential fatal fires tend to occur most frequently late at night or in the early morning. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, from 2014 to 2016, residential fatal fires were highest between 0100 to 0200 hours and 0400 to 0500 hours. The 8-hour peak period (2300 to 0700 hours) accounted for 48% of residential fatal fires.¹³

College Place Fire Department

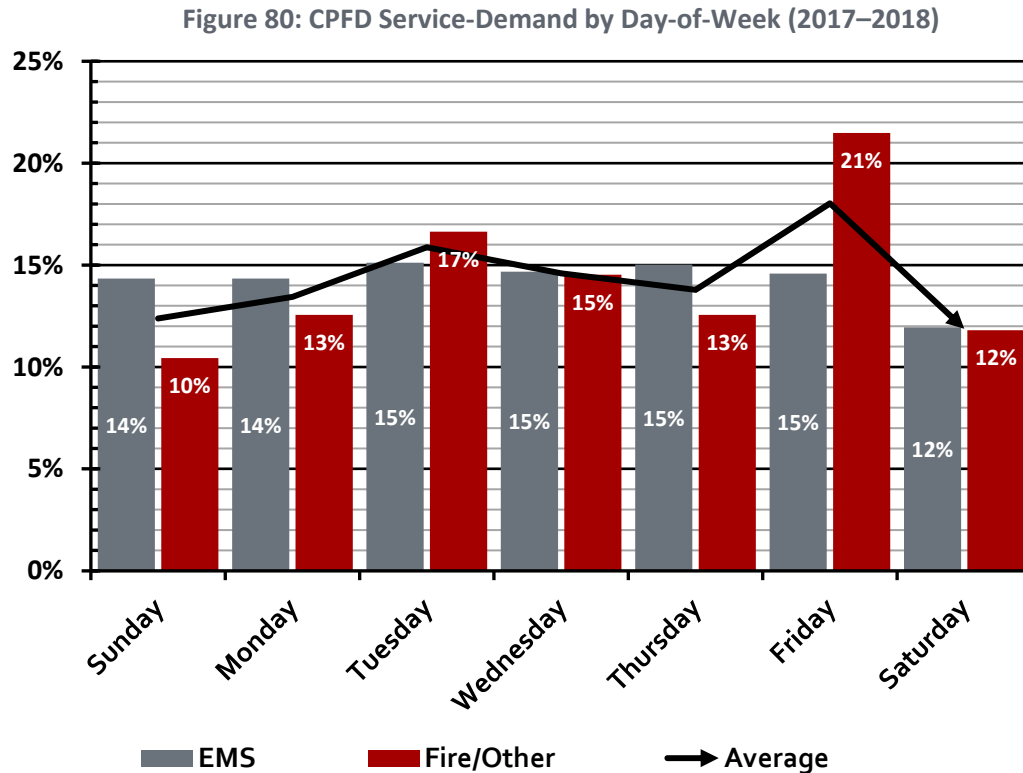
The next figure illustrates service-demand for EMS and Fire/Other incidents by month, based on available CAD data for the College Place Fire Department.

Figure 79: CPFD Service-Demand by Month (2017–2018)



The busiest month for CPFD was December. Over the course of the preceding 24-month study period, December on average accounted for just over 10% of the service-demand. February was the slowest month accounting for nearly 6.5% of the total calls. The range between the busiest month and the slowest month was nearly 4%.

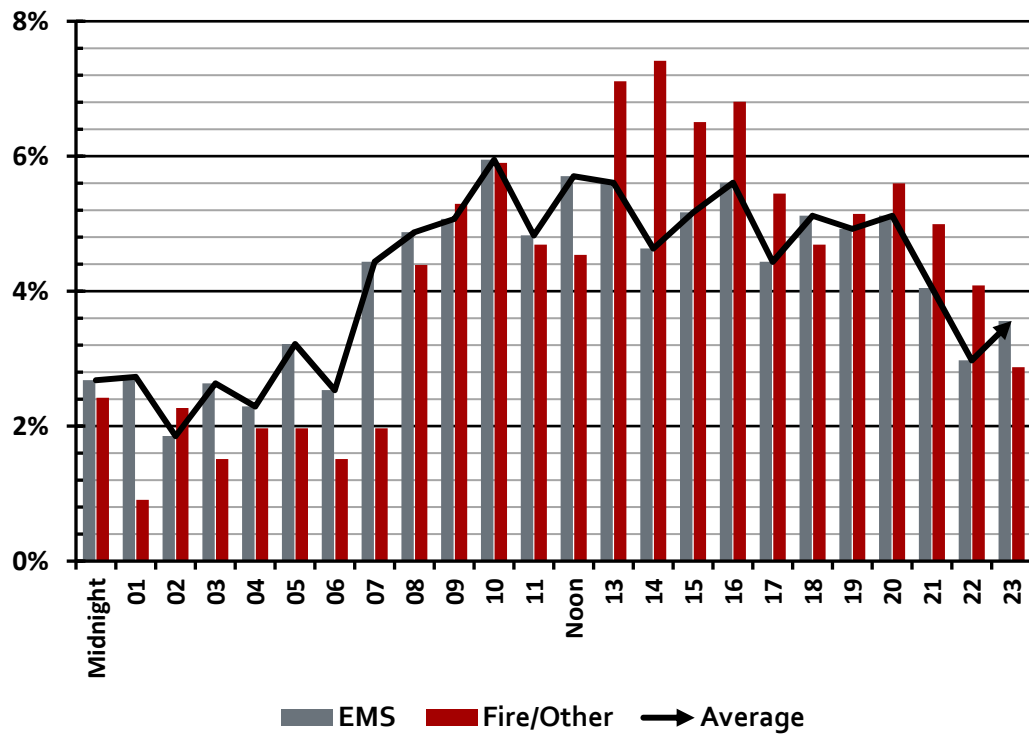
The next figure continues the temporal analysis with an examination of service-demand by day-of-week for EMS and Fire/Other incidents.



Service-demand by day-of-week remained relatively consistent, with the notable exception of Fridays. Saturdays and Sundays exhibited the lowest percentage of calls in CPFD's service area. During the preceding 24-month study period, Saturday's accounted for nearly 12% of the calls, which made it the slowest day on average. Fridays accounted for an average of just over 18% of the calls for CPFD, which made it the busiest day of the week. The range between the busiest and the slowest day was just over 6%.

The final temporal analysis of service-demand examines demand summarized by hour-of-day for EMS and Fire/Other incidents and is illustrated in the next figure.

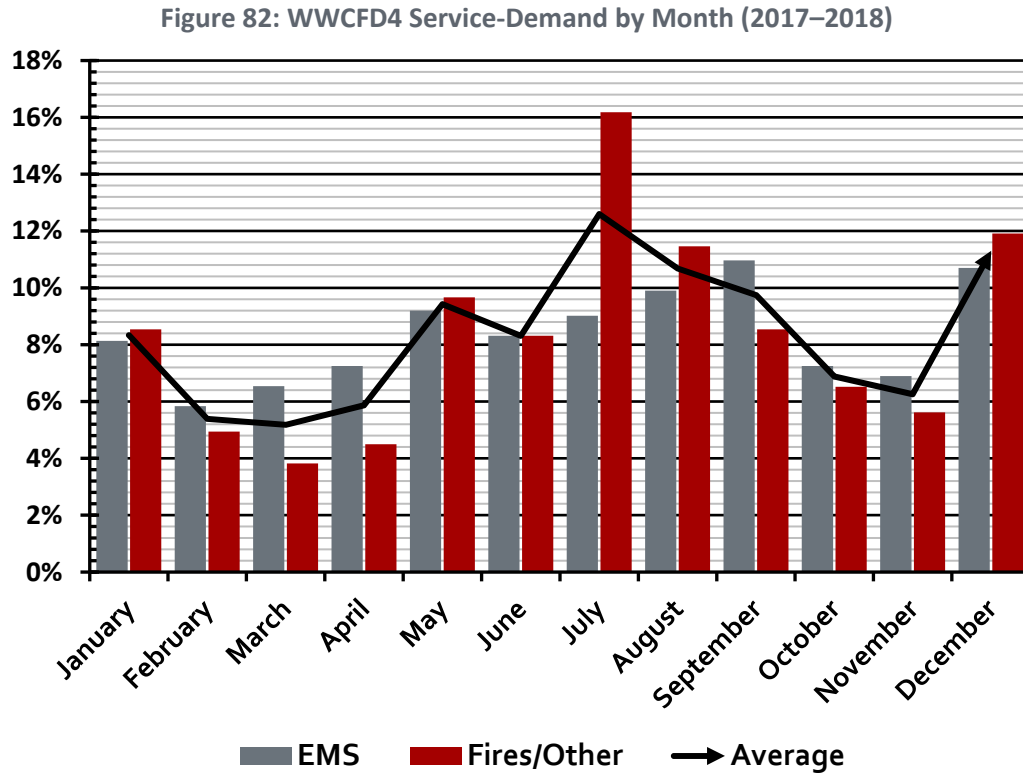
Figure 81: CPFD Service-Demand by Hour-of-Day (2017–2018)



As illustrated in the preceding figure, incident activity was at its highest between 0800 and 1800 hours. About 57% of CPFD's calls for service occurred during this period. The highest incident activity occurred during 1000 hours, with nearly 6% of the daily activity. The slowest hour occurred during 0200 hours, which accounted for nearly 2% of the daily call volume. The range between the busiest and slowest hours was just over 4%.

Walla Walla County Fire District #4

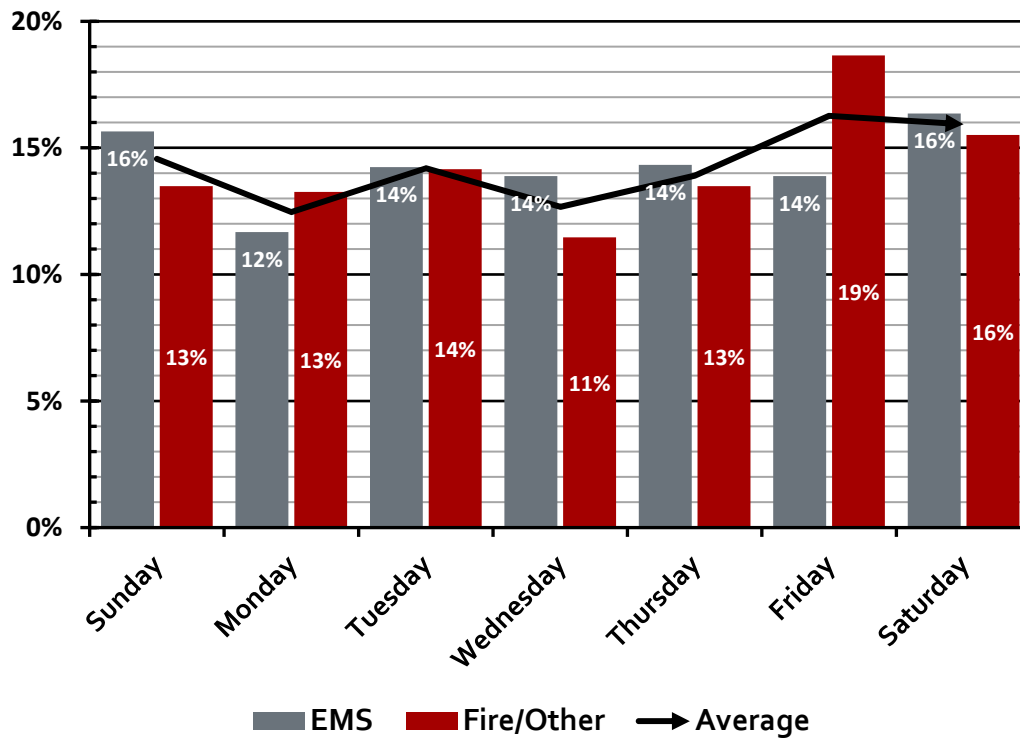
The next figure illustrates service-demand for EMS and Fire/Other incidents by month, based on CAD data for District #4.



The busiest month for District #4 was typically during the month of July. Over the course of the preceding 24-month study period, on average July accounted for nearly 13% of service-demand. March was the slowest month accounting for slightly over 5% of the call volume. The range between the busiest and slowest months was nearly 7.5%.

The next figure continues the temporal analysis with an examination of service-demand by day-of-week for EMS, fire, and other incidents.

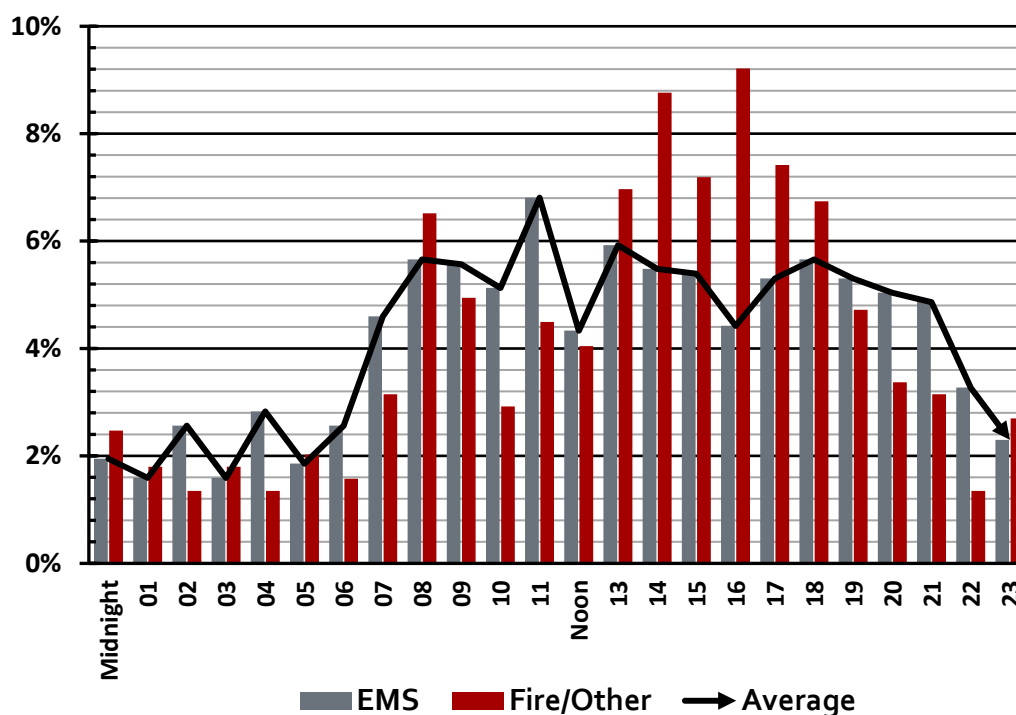
Figure 83: WWCFD4 Service-Demand by Day-of-Week (2017–2018)



The demand by day-of-week remained relatively consistent. During the preceding 24-month study period, Mondays accounted for about 12.5% of the calls, which made it the slowest day on average for service-demand. Fridays accounted for an average of just over 16% of District #4's call volume, which made it the busiest day of the week. The range between the busiest and slowest days was nearly 4%.

The final temporal analysis of service-demand examines demand summarized by hour-of-day for EMS and Fire/Other incidents and is illustrated in the next figure.

Figure 84: WWCFD4 Service-Demand by Hour-of-Day (2017–2018)



As illustrated in the preceding figure, incident activity was at its highest between 0800 and 1800 hours. Just over 54% of District #4's calls for service occurred between these hours. The highest incident activity occurred during 1100 hours, representing nearly 7% of the total activity per day. The slowest hour was during 0300 hours, which accounted for less than 2% of the activity. The range between the busiest and slowest hours was just over 5%.

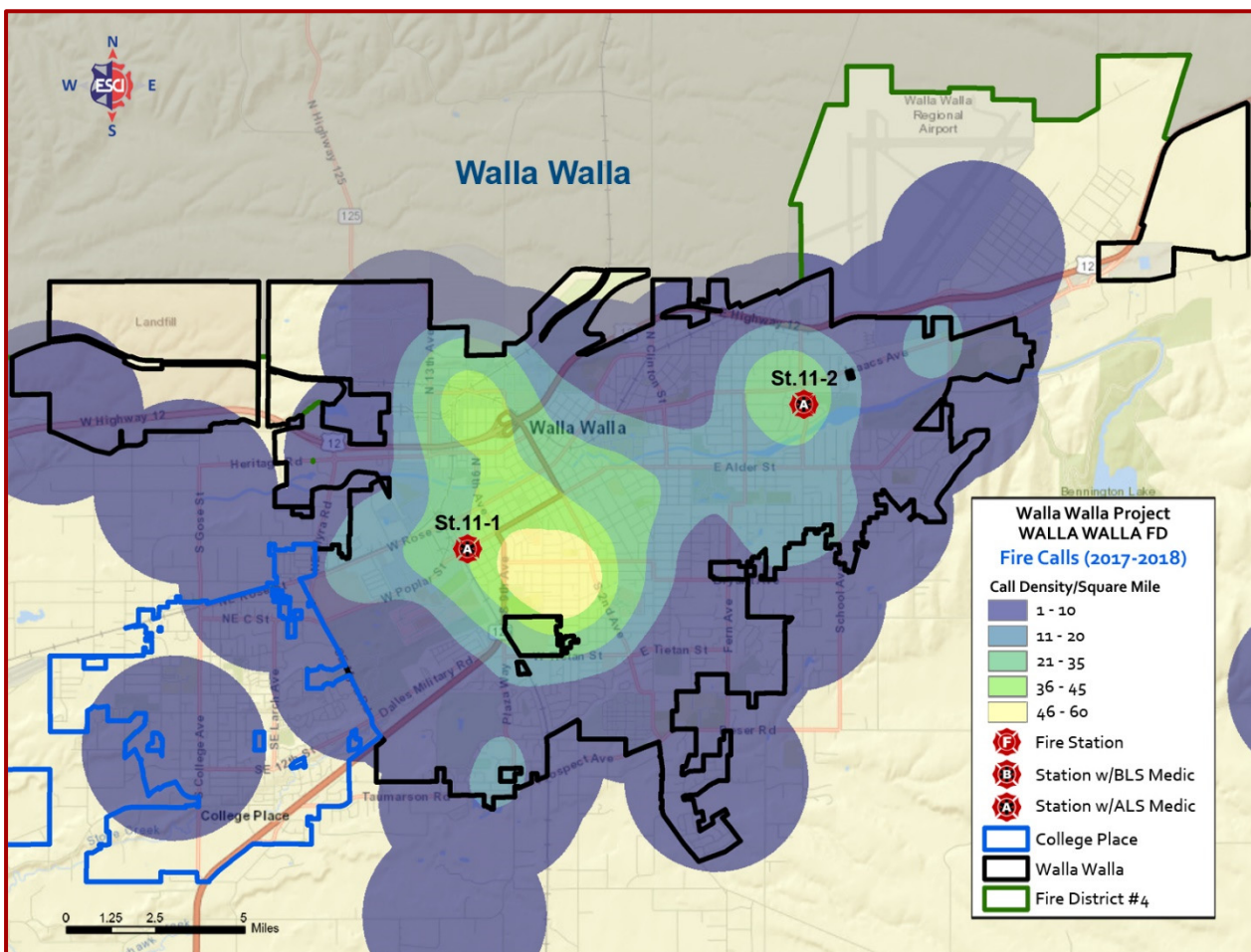
Geographic Service-Demand Analysis

In addition to the temporal analysis, it is useful to examine the geographic distribution of service-demand. Utilizing the data provided by each of the fire agencies and GIS software, historic incident locations were plotted to illustrate geographical calls for service by location during January 2017–December 2018, throughout each jurisdiction. The following figures show incident density analyses which determine "Hot Spots," or areas experiencing the highest levels of service-demand.

Walla Walla Fire Department

The next figure illustrates incidents categorized as “Fires” in the NFIRS data, summarized as incidents per square mile for WWFD.

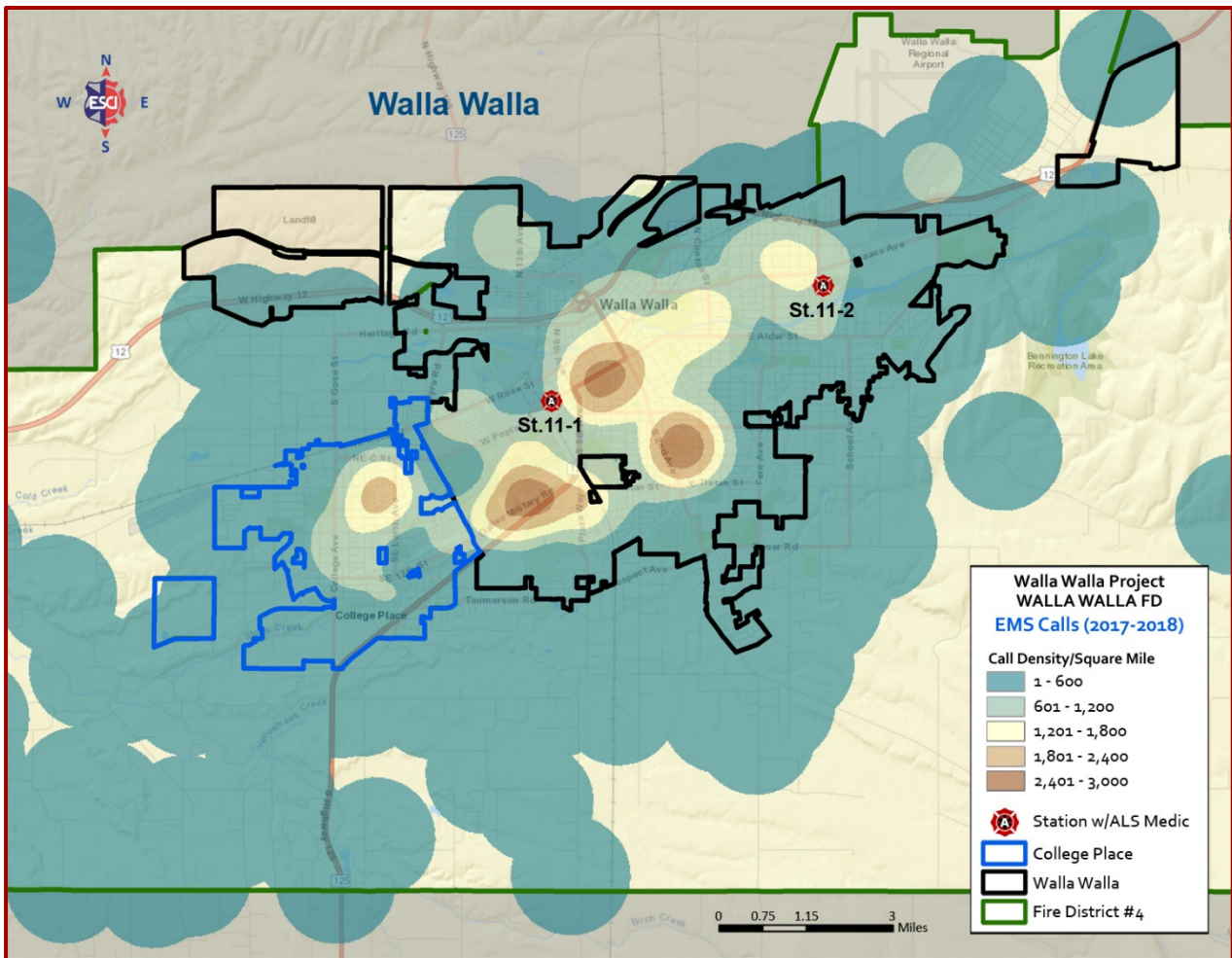
Figure 85: WWFD Fire Incident Density (2017–2018)



Fire incidents were distributed widely throughout the Walla Walla Fire Department's service area, with a higher incident density centrally located around both fire stations, with density decreasing towards the outer areas. The main area of substantial density tended to be between South Ninth Avenue and South Second Avenue.

The next figure illustrates the distribution of EMS incidents, summarized as incidents per square mile for the Walla Walla Fire Department.

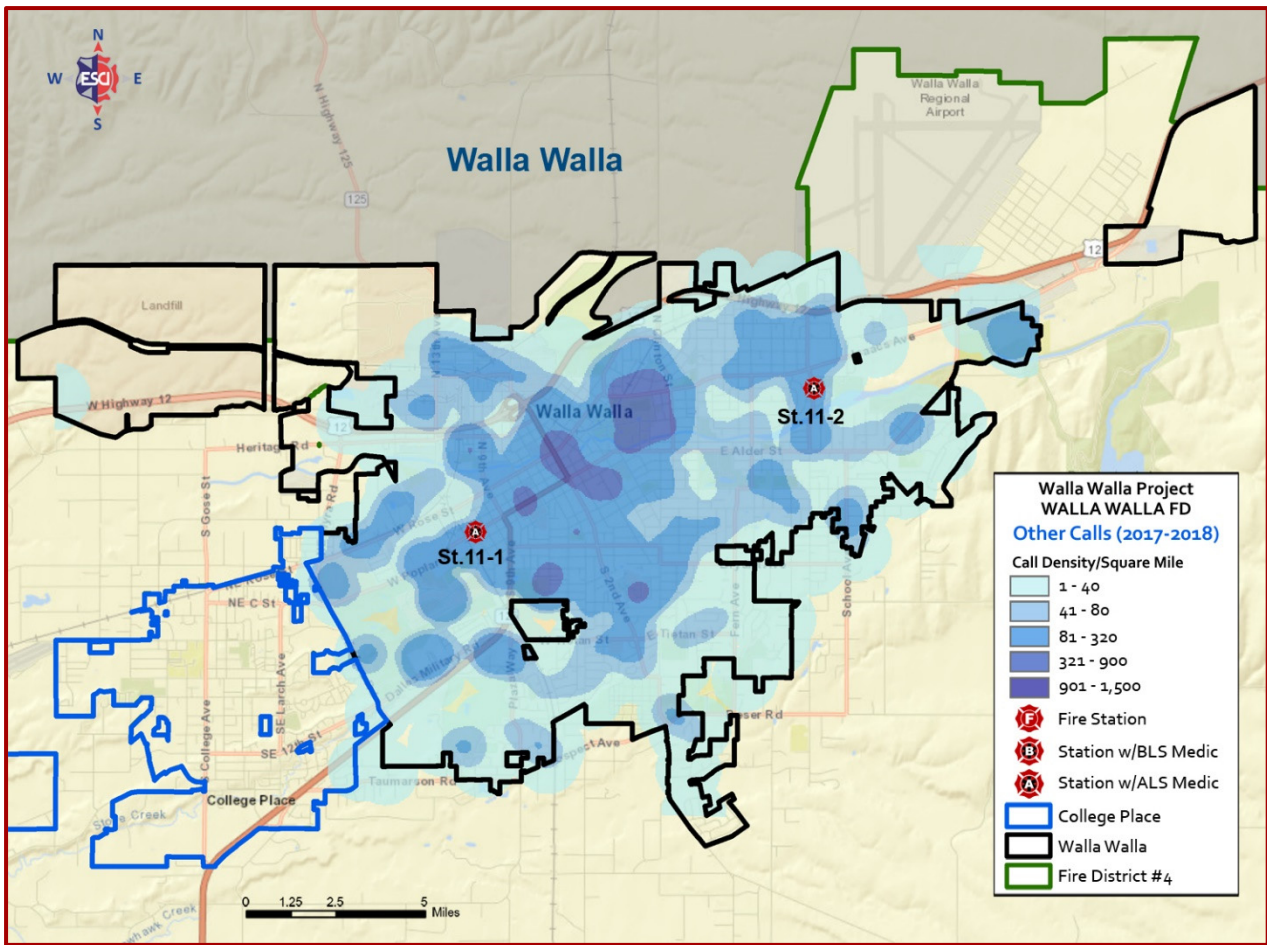
Figure 86: WWFD EMS Incident Density (2017–2018)



Walla Walla Fire Department's EMS service-demand followed a similar pattern as fire-related incidents. A noted exception was an additional area of increased incident-density geographically located around the *Wainwright Memorial Veterans Administration Medical Center* in the western region.

The next figure illustrates incidents categorized as "Other" in the NFIRS data summarized as incidents per square mile for the Walla Walla Fire Department.

Figure 87: WWFD Other-Types Incident Density (2017–2018)

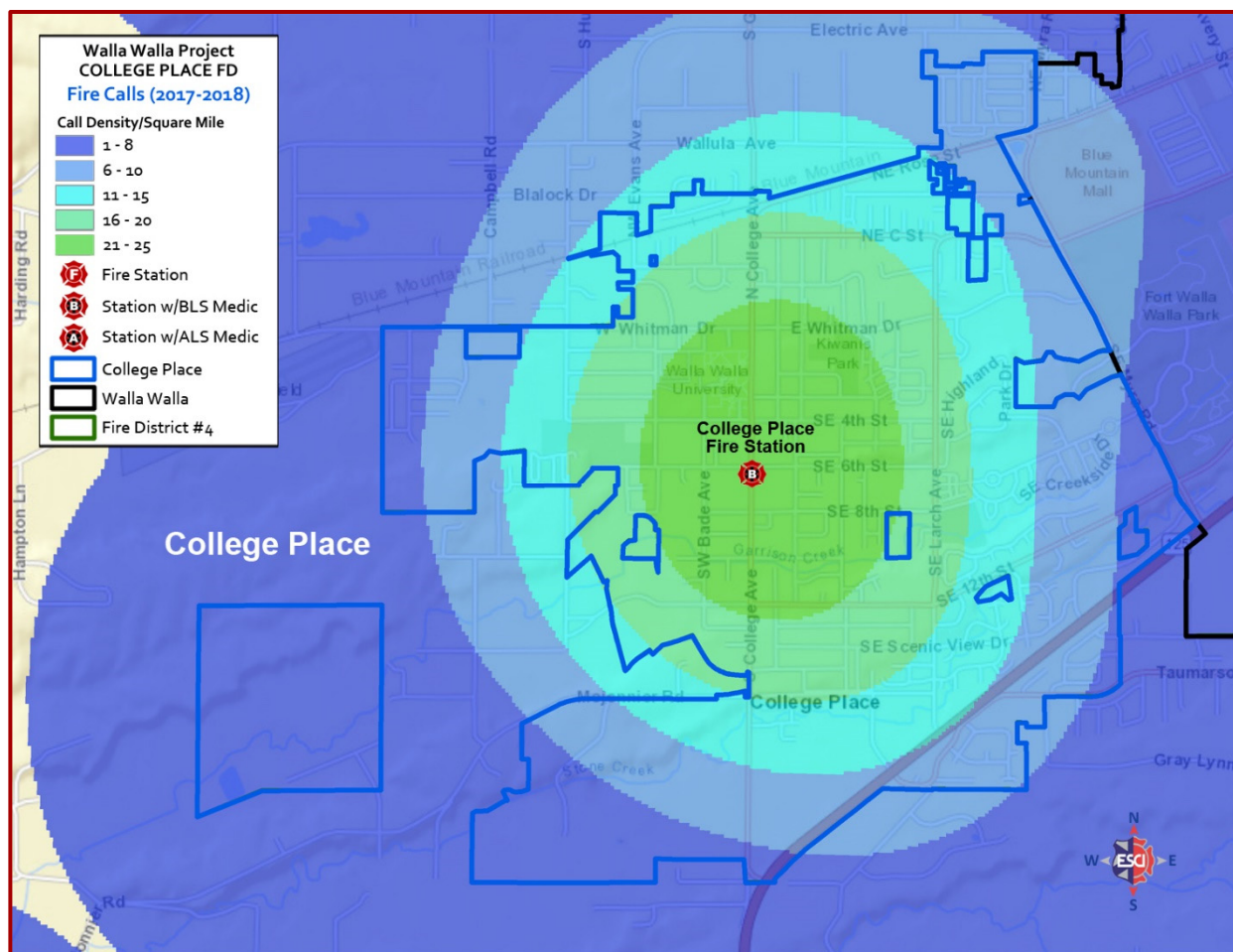


The Walla Walla Fire Department's service-demand for incidents coded as "Other" also followed a similar pattern as fire and EMS incidents. Several pockets of higher incident-density were noted in the central region of the service area, near West and East Poplar Streets.

College Place Fire Department

The following figure illustrates incidents categorized as “Fires” in the NFIRS data, summarized as incidents per square mile for the College Place Fire Department.

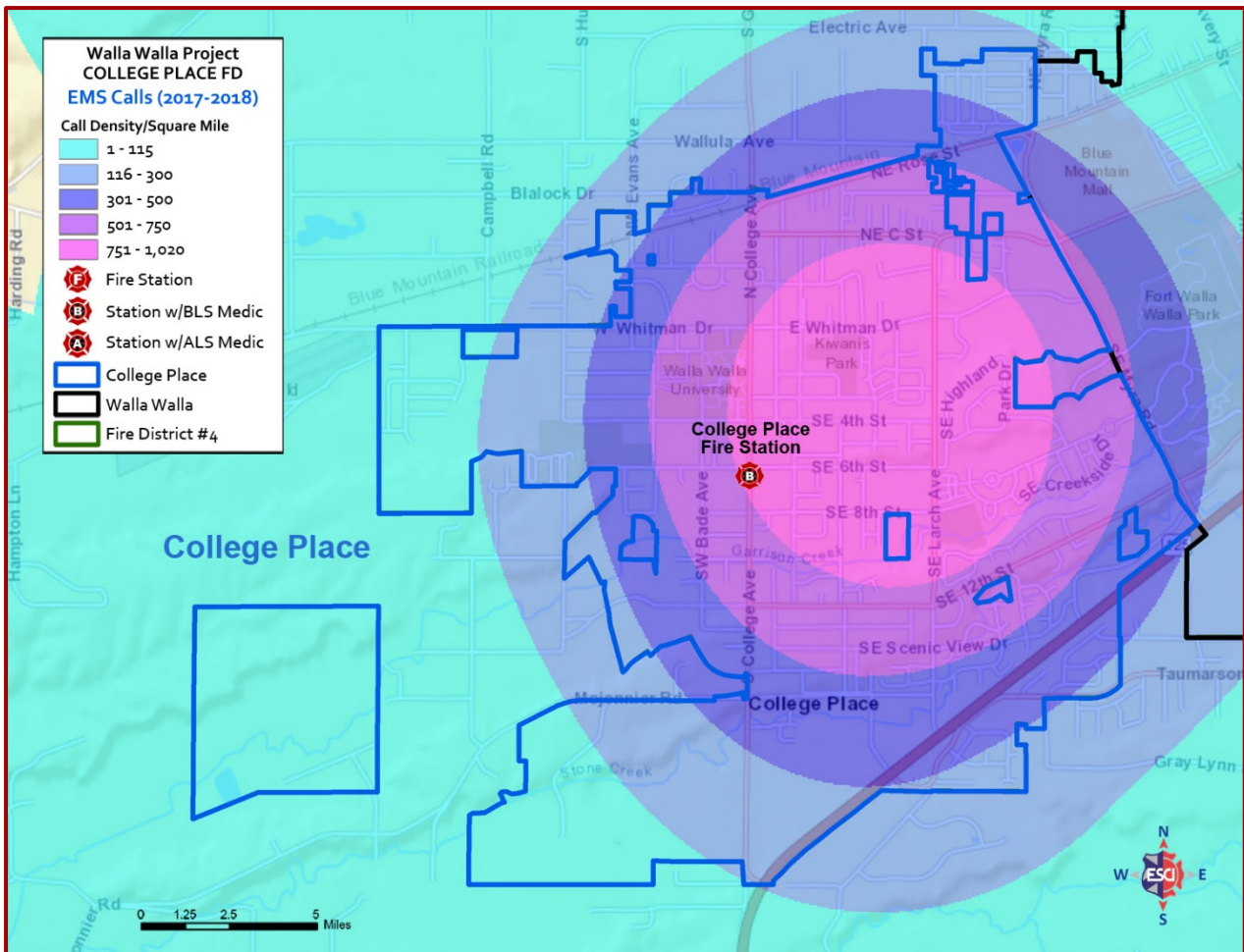
Figure 88: CPFD Fire Incident Density (2017–2018)



Fire calls were distributed widely throughout the College Place Fire Department service area, with a higher density located in the central region, which decreased towards the outer regions. The main area of increased density was centrally located around CPFD’s fire station.

The next figure illustrates the distribution of EMS incidents, summarized as incidents per square mile for the College Place Fire Department.

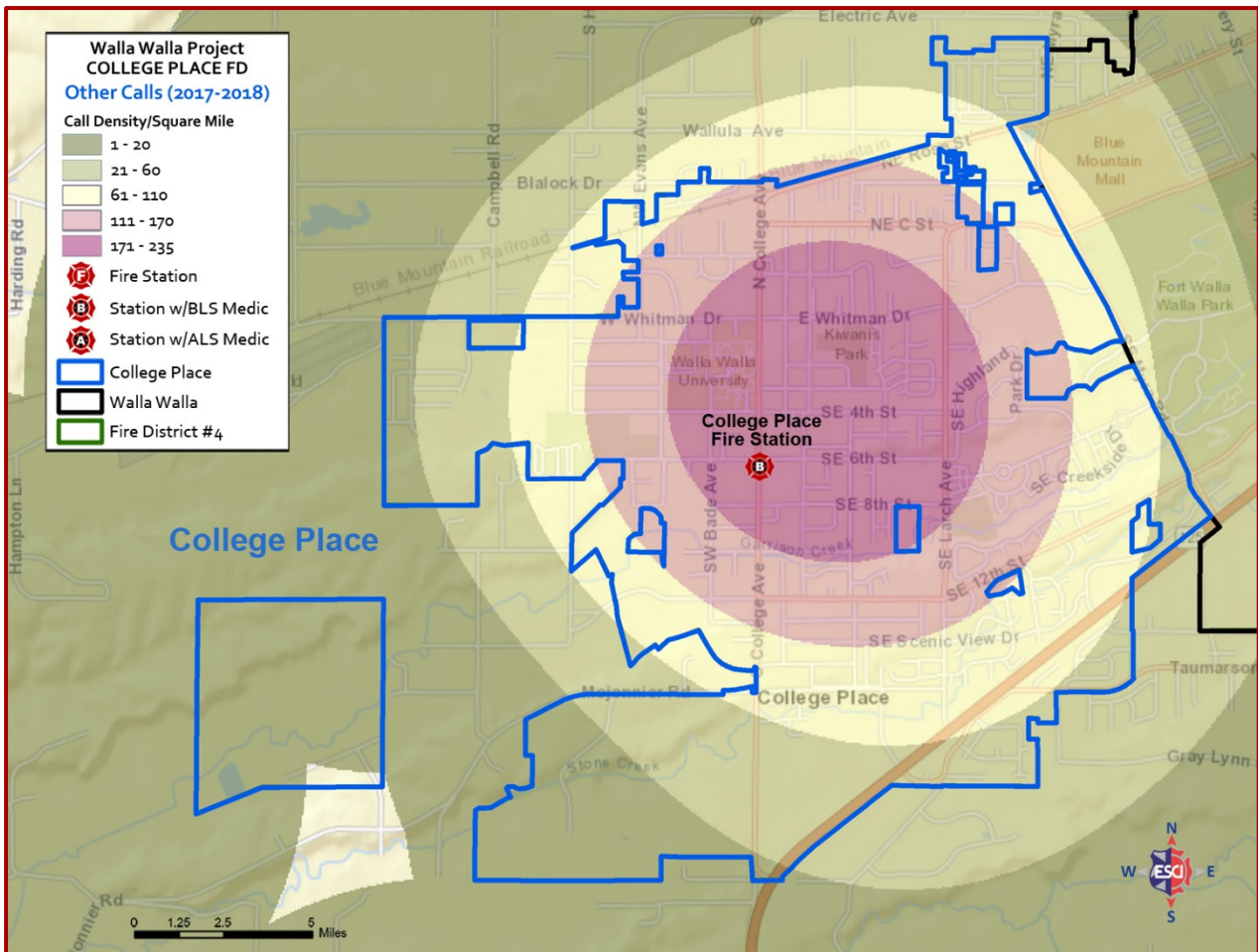
Figure 89: CPFD EMS Incident Density (2017–2018)



Consistent with the historic service-demand of fire-related incidents, EMS calls were distributed widely throughout the College Place Fire Department service area. The highest EMS incident densities occurred in the central region, with call volume decreasing towards the outer regions. The main area of increased density was located to the east of the College Place Fire Station around College Avenue between Northeast C Street and Southeast 12th Street.

The next figure illustrates incidents categorized as "Other" in the NFIRS data, summarized as incidents per square mile for CPFD.

Figure 90: CPFD Other-Types Incident Density (2017–2018)

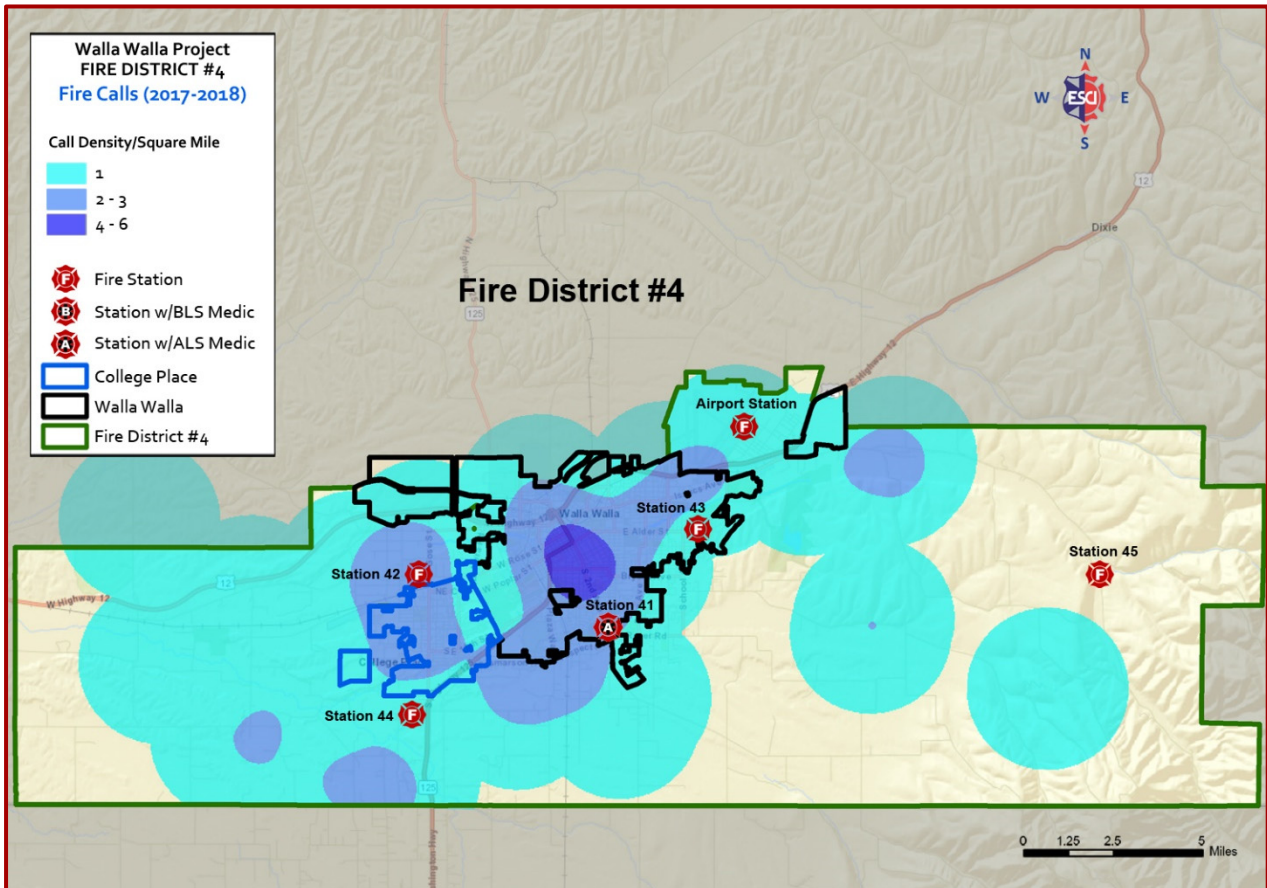


Calls coded as “Other” were also widely distributed throughout the College Place Fire Department service area. Higher densities occurred in the central region and declined towards the outer areas. The main primary area of increased density was centrally located around College Avenue, between Northeast C Street and Southeast 12th Street.

Walla Walla County Fire District #4

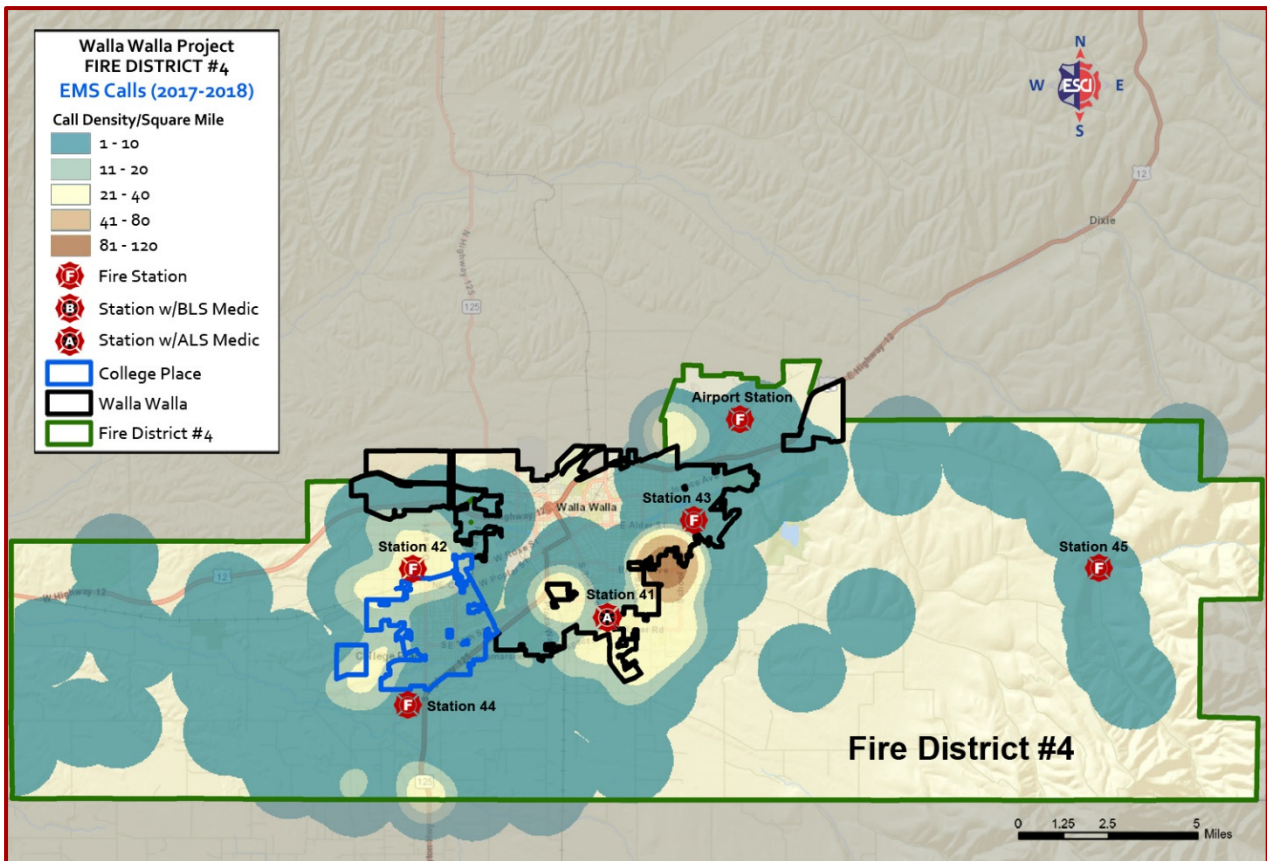
The next figure illustrates incidents categorized as “Fires” in the NFIRS data, summarized as incidents per square mile for District #4.

Figure 91: WWCFD4 Fire Incident Density (2017–2018)



Fire-related service-demand was relatively low and calls were widely distributed throughout Walla Walla County Fire District #4's service area. There were no noticeable areas of increased density.

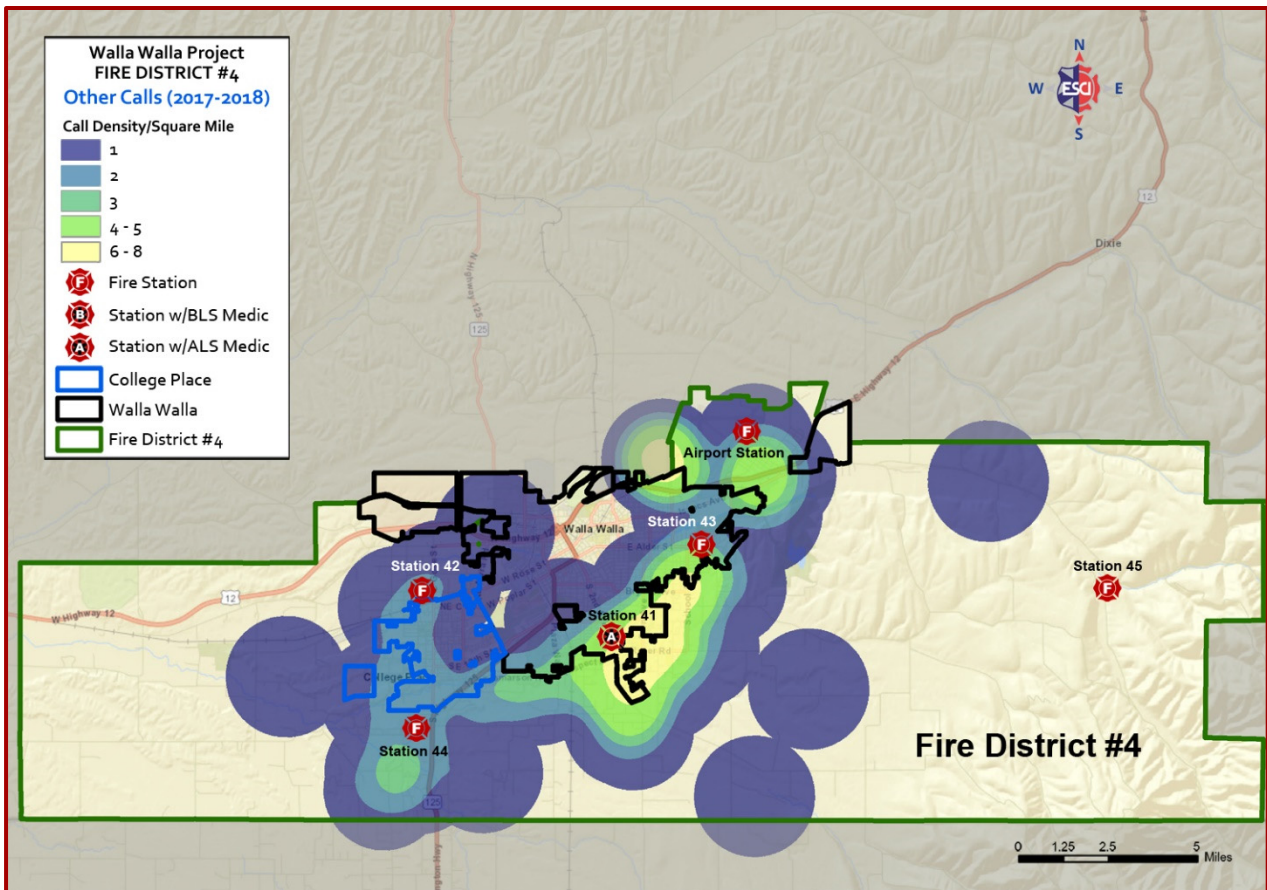
The next figure illustrates the distribution of EMS incidents, summarized as incidents per square mile for District #4.

Figure 92: WWCFD4 EMS Incident Density (2017–2018)

As seen with fire-related calls, EMS incidents were widely distributed throughout District #4's service area. A notable area of increased density was geographically located in the central region of the fire district, bordering the Walla Walla Fire Department's service area, and between Fire District #4's Station 41 and Station 43.

The next figure illustrates incidents categorized as "Other" in the NFIRS data, summarized as incidents per square mile for District #4.

Figure 93: WWCFD4 Other-Types Incident Density (2017–2018)

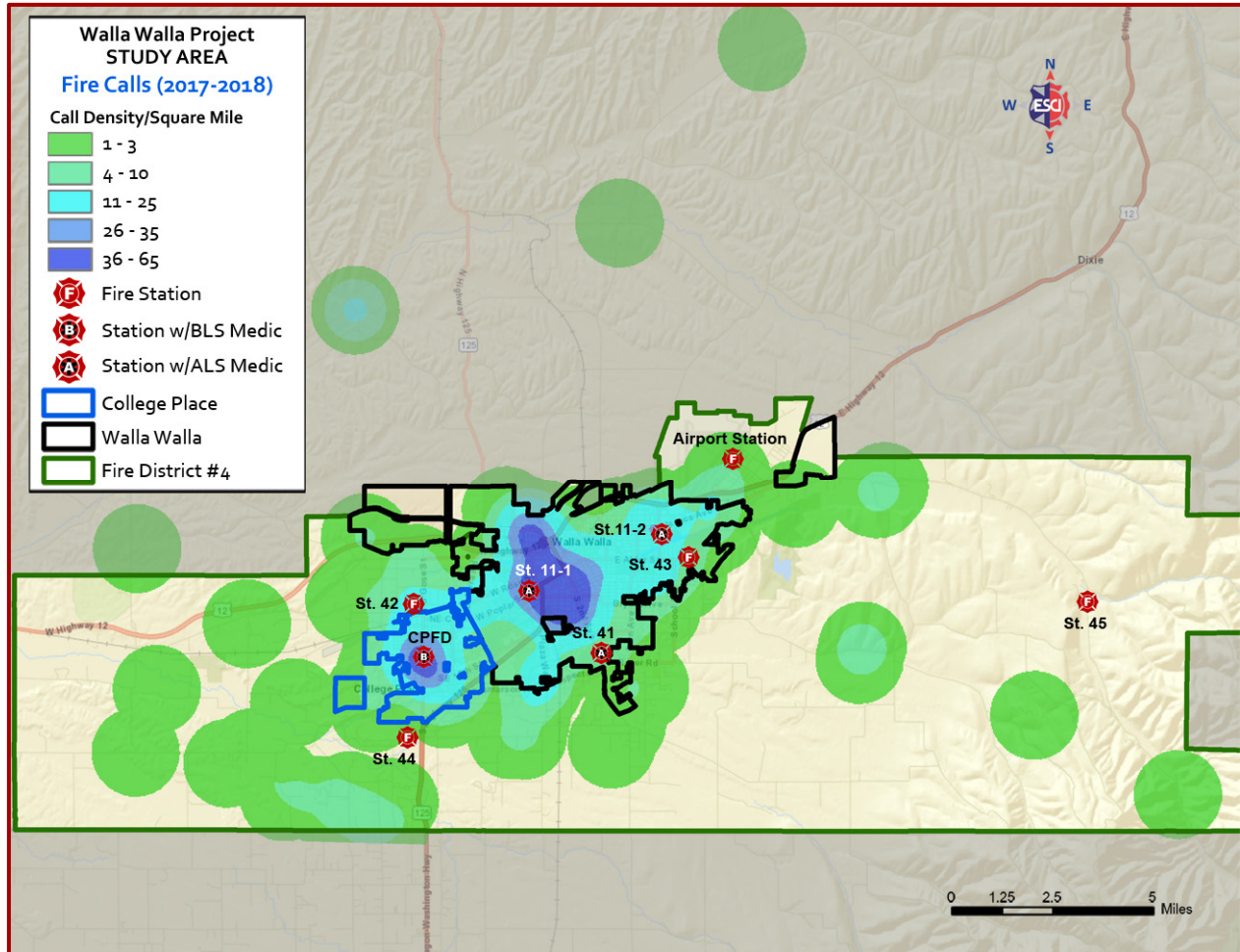


As with the other incident-types, calls coded as “Other” were widely distributed throughout District #4’s service area. The most notable area of increased density was again geographically located in the central region of the District, bordering the Walla Fire Department’s service area, and between District #4’s Station 41 and Station 43.

Walla Walla Project Overall Area Service-Demand

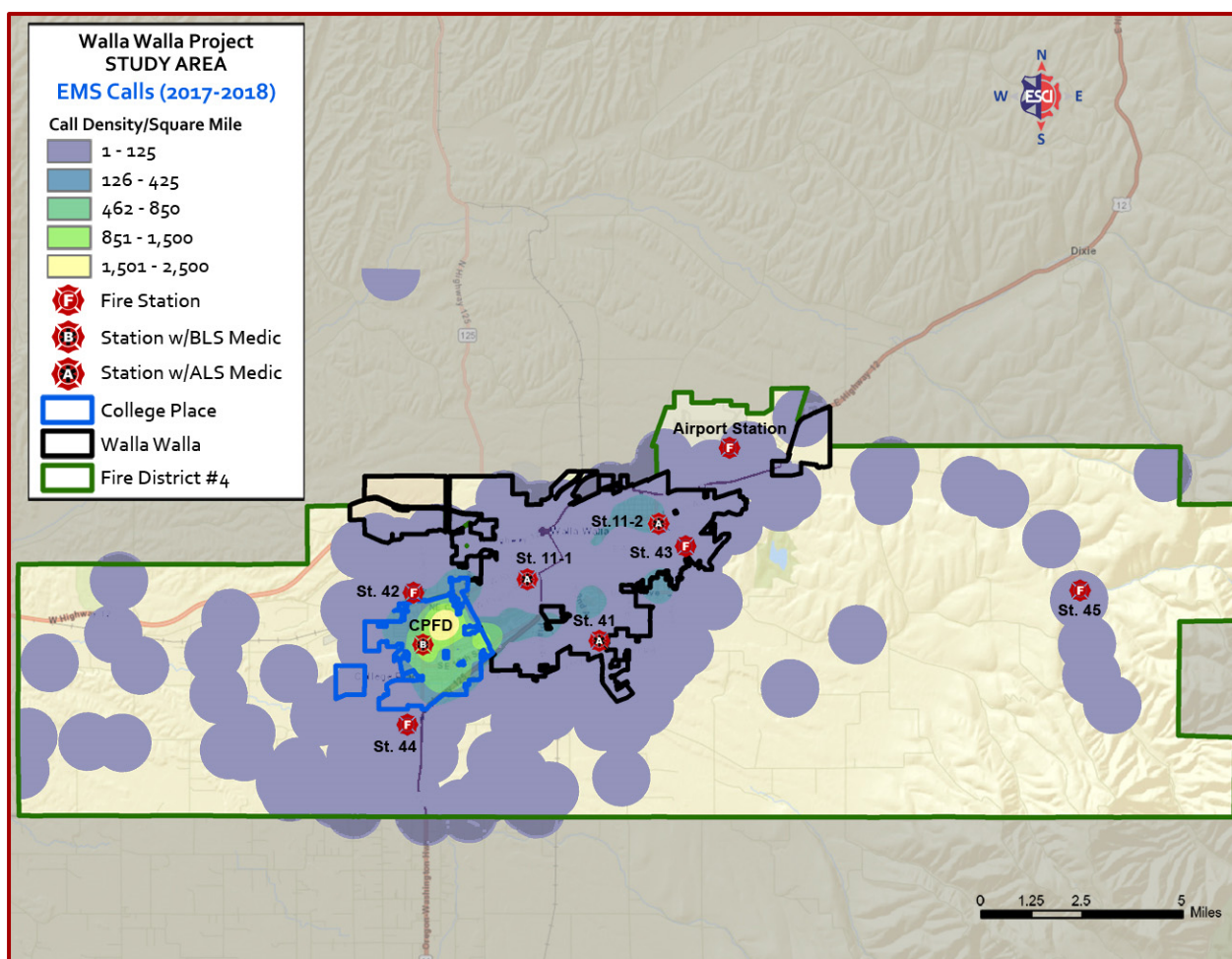
The next figure illustrates incidents categorized as “Fires” in the NFIRS data, summarized as incidents per square mile in the Walla Walla Project study area.

Figure 94: Walla Walla Project Study Area—Fire Incident Density (2017–2018)



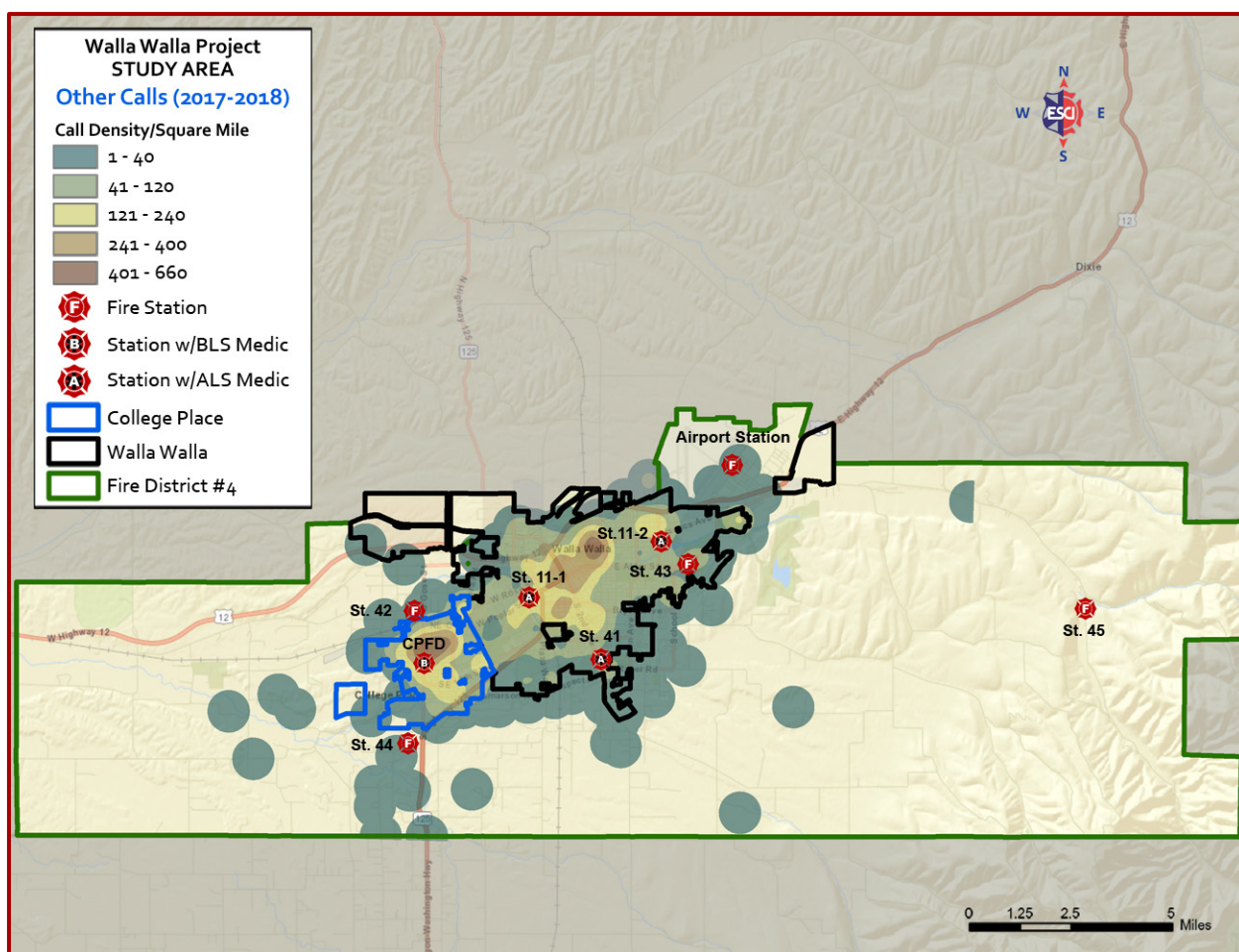
As expected, the demand for fire-related incidents was widely distributed throughout the study area. Two notable areas of higher incident density occurred in the area of the Walla Walla Fire Department Station 11-1 and the College Place Fire Department’s fire station.

The next figure illustrates the distribution of EMS incidents, summarized as incidents per square mile for the Walla Walla project area.

Figure 95: Walla Walla Project Study Area—EMS Incident Density (2017–2018)

During the 24-month study period, calls for emergency medical incidents were widely scattered throughout the study area. Interestingly, the highest EMS incident density occurred in the College Place Fire Department service area.

The next figure illustrates incidents categorized as “Other” in the NFIRS data, summarized as incidents per square mile for the Walla Walla project area.

Figure 96: Walla Walla Project Study Area—Other-Types Incident Density (2017–2018)

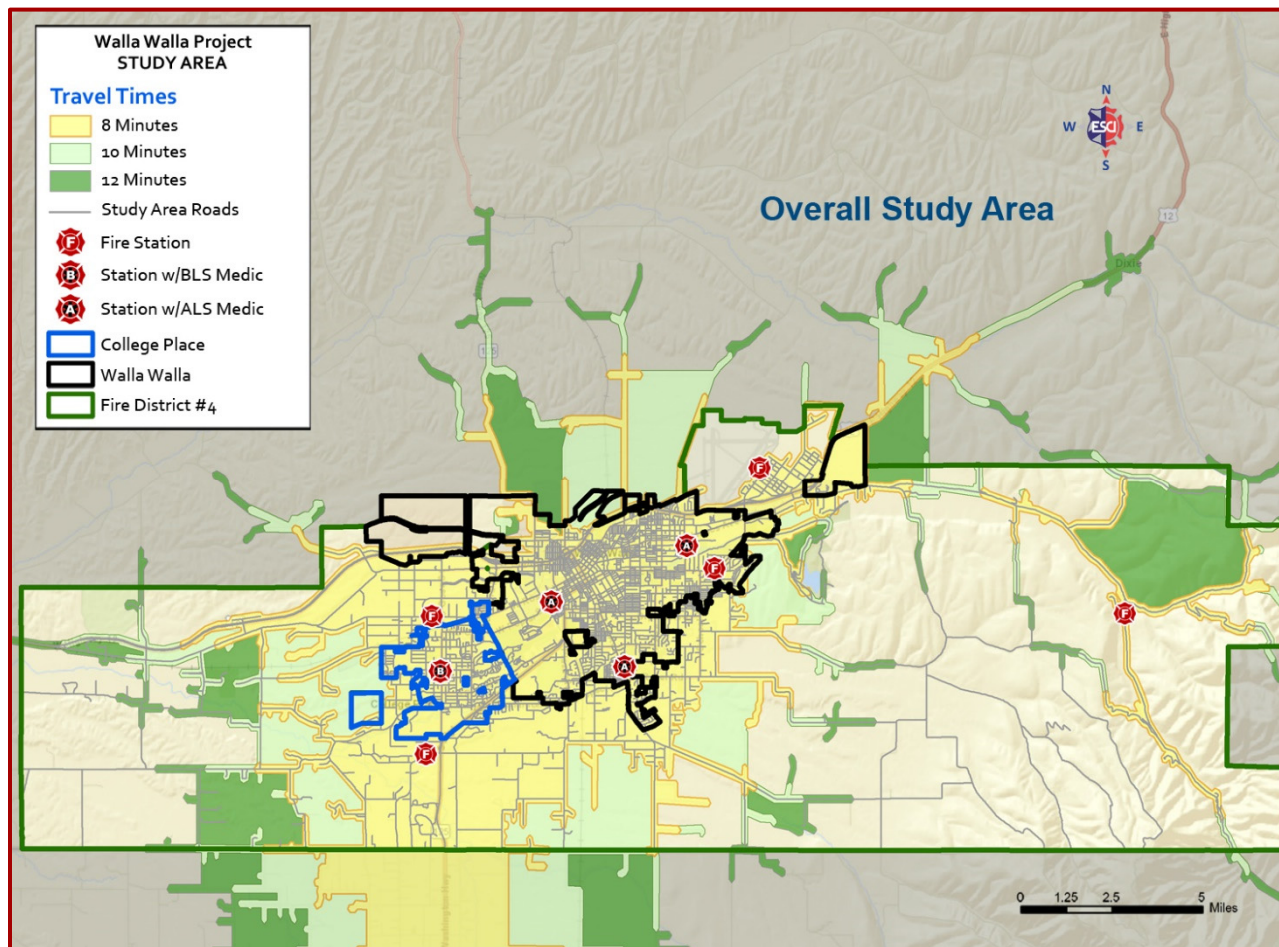
Service-demand for incidents coded as “Other” shows similar patterns to fire and EMS service-demand within the Walla Walla project area. Areas of noted increased demand are again noted in the CPFD service area and WWFD service area.

Distribution Analysis

In the distribution analysis, an overview of the current facility and apparatus deployment is presented. GIS data is utilized to examine the distribution of resources in the Walla Walla Project Area. To provide a benchmark for performance, two performance standards will be utilized from the Washington Surveying & Rating Bureau and National Fire Protection Association. These are important standards for comparison purposes because, while WSRB focuses on fire suppression capabilities for insurance purposes, NFPA standards establish a foundation of system benchmarking for fire suppression, rescue, and other activities fire departments are typically required to perform.

In the next figure, the distribution of resources is examined by geographical location and by travel-time over the existing road network.

Figure 97: Walla Walla Project Study Area—Travel-Time Model



The preceding figure indicates that those portions of the overall study area with the highest population densities can be easily accessed by travel times of 8 minutes or less, and that much of the study area can be accessed with travel times of 10–12 minutes or less.

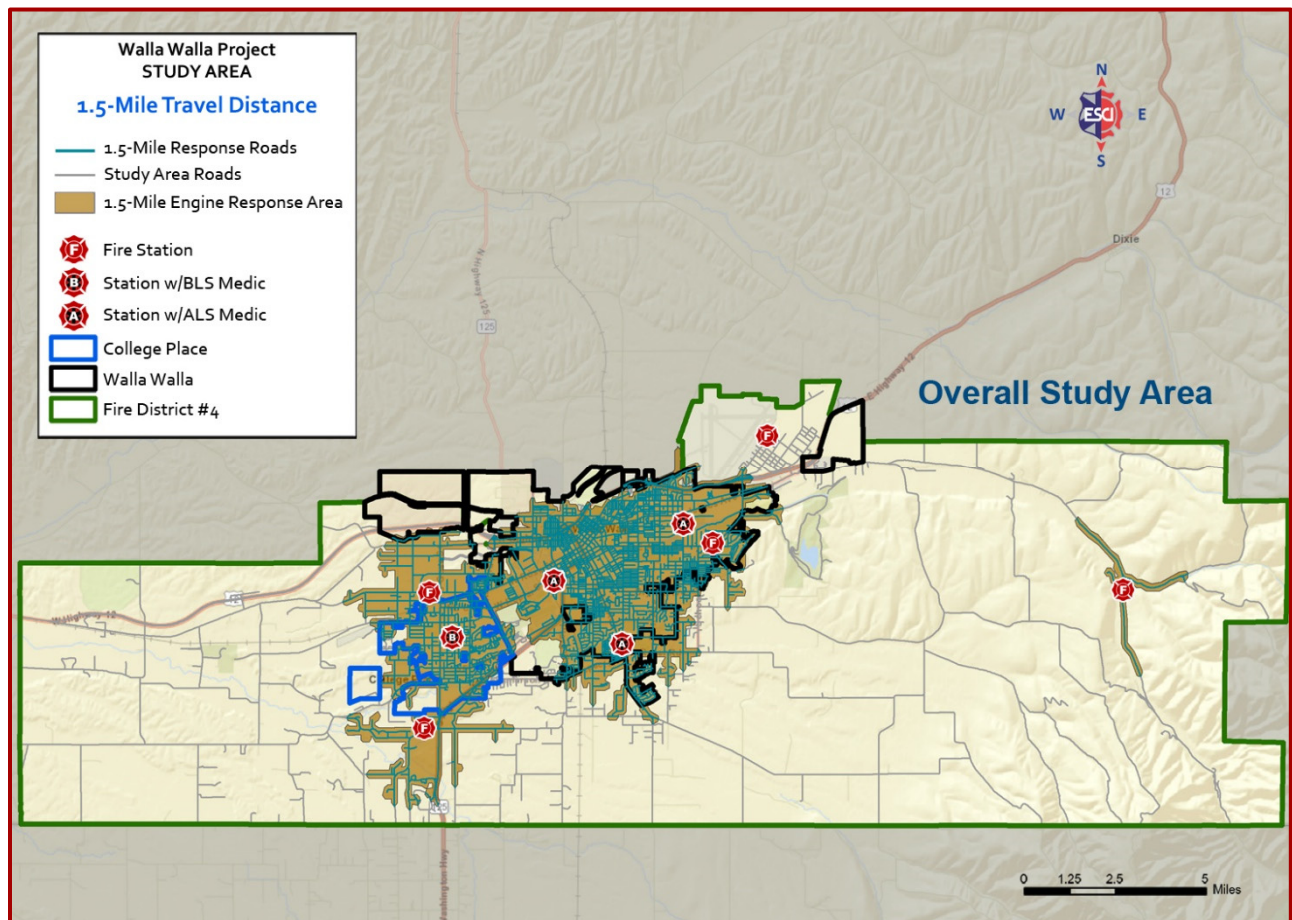
WSRB Distribution & Criteria

The *Washington Surveying & Rating Bureau* (WSRB) is a statewide insurance industry organization that evaluates fire protection for communities across Washington State. A jurisdiction's WSRB rating is an important factor when considering fire station and apparatus distribution, since it can affect the cost of fire insurance for residents and businesses. For a community to receive maximum credit for station and apparatus distribution, WSRB evaluates the percentage of the community (contiguously built-upon area) within specific distances of both engine/pumper companies (1.5 miles) and ladder companies (2.5 miles).

Additionally, a structure should be within five miles of a fire station to receive any fire protection rating for insurance purposes. In the following figures, ESCI examines the three departments in the Walla Walla project area's fire facility distribution by WSRB distance criteria over the existing road network. Deployed from Station 11-2, the Walla Walla Fire Department operates the only aerial apparatus in the study area.

The following figure illustrates the 1.5-mile travel distance from each of the fire stations within the study area, in accordance with the WSRB criteria.

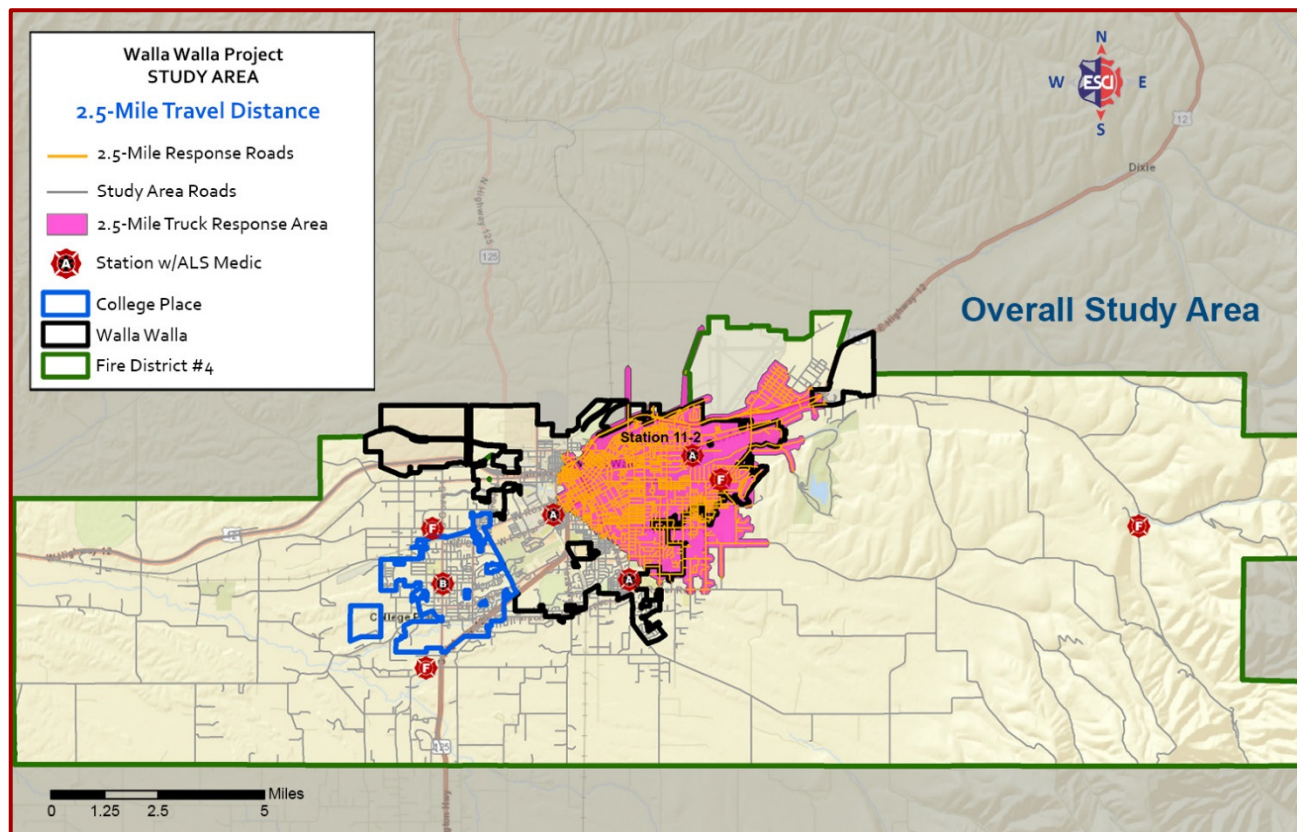
Figure 98: Overall Study Area—WSRB 1.5-Mile Engine Company Criteria



Engine companies are deployed from each of the fire stations in the Walla Walla study area (except for the airport). This deployment provides a high percentage of coverage in the populated regions of the study area, as well as most of the areas with increased service-demand density. As illustrated in the preceding figure, the most populated areas in Walla Walla and College Place—with 1.5-mile coverage gaps in accordance with WSRB criteria—are eliminated when all three service areas are combined into a single response zone.

The following figure shows the 2.5-mile travel distance from Walla Walla Fire Department Station 11-2 throughout the overall study area, in accordance with the WSRB criteria.

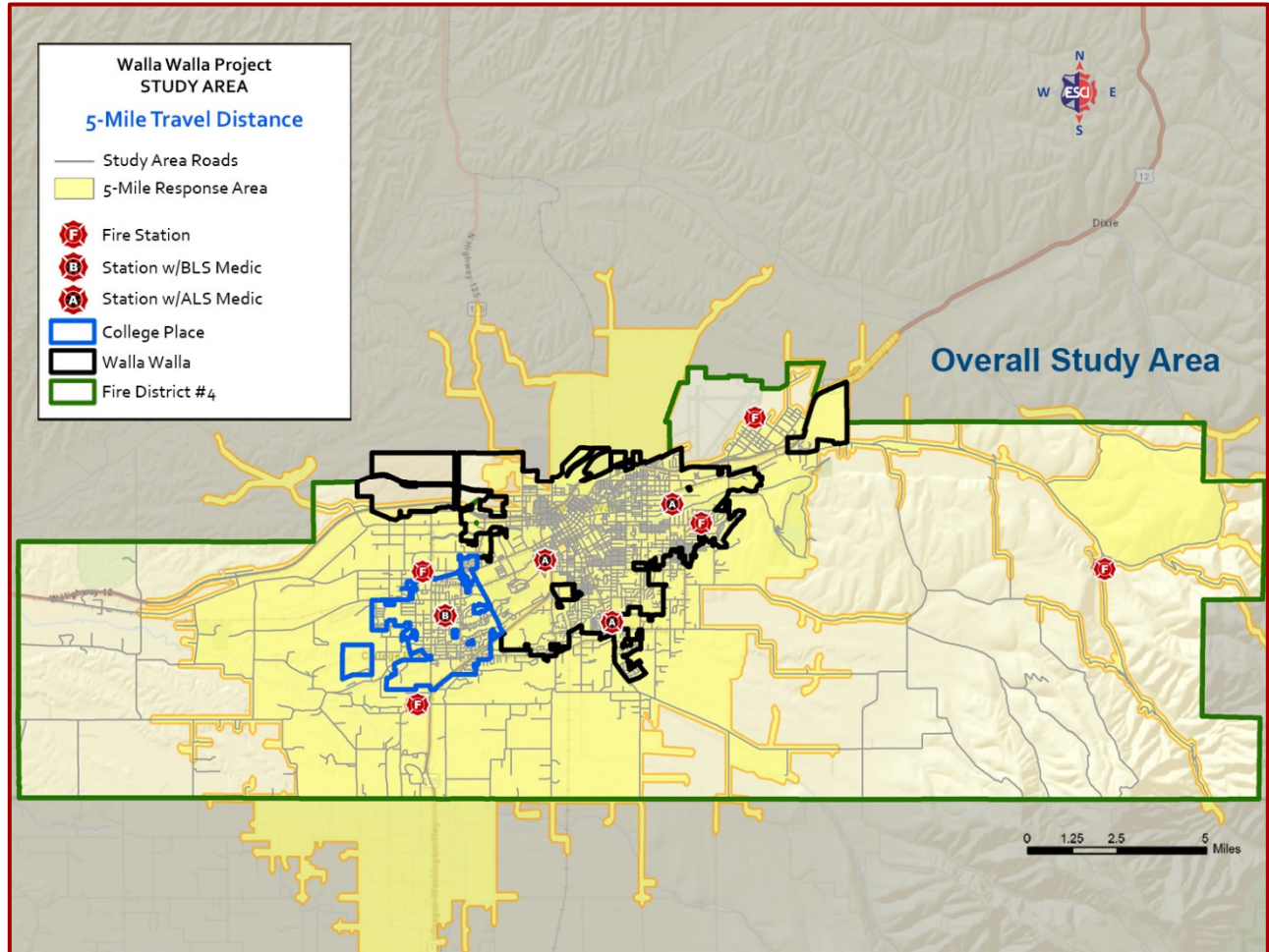
Figure 99: Overall Study Area—WSRB 2.5-Mile Aerial Apparatus Criteria



As shown in the preceding figure, the College Place Fire Department's and Walla Walla County Fire District #4's service-areas are well outside the 2.5-mile WSRB travel-distance criteria.

The next figures illustrate the five-road-mile radius extending outward from each fire station within the Walla Walla Project study area.

Figure 100: Overall Study Area—WSRB 5-Mile Criteria



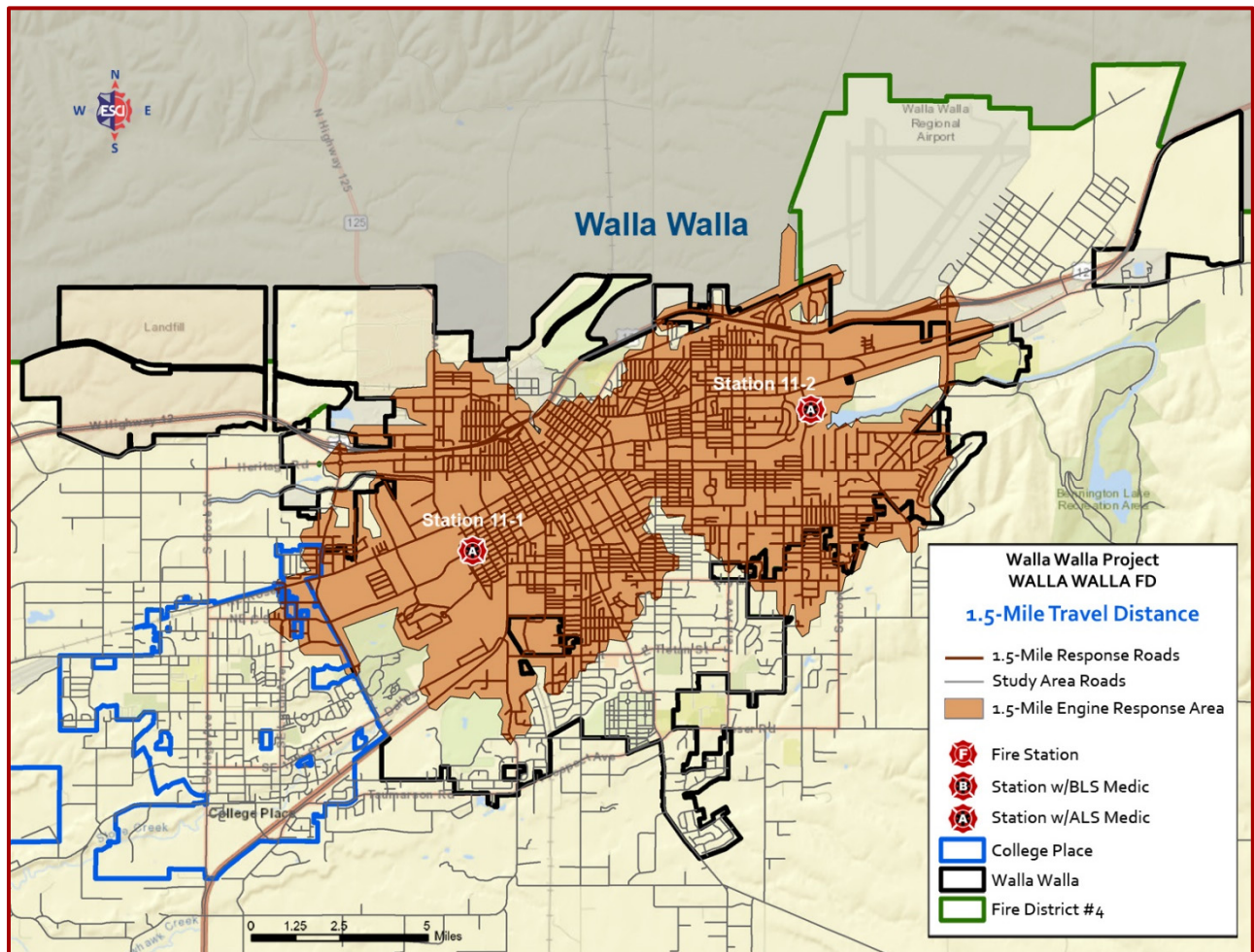
The 5-mile WSRB criteria figure illustrates that the three fire agencies have the capability to deploy to over 90% of the areas in the study area within a five-mile travel distance from the current fire station locations. The only notable coverage area gaps occur within the District #4 service area, which consists primarily of rural, low-density populations.

WSRB Criteria by Fire Department Service Areas

Walla Walla Fire Department

The following figure illustrates the 1.5-mile travel distance from the Walla Walla fire stations in accordance with the WSRB criteria.

Figure 101: WWFD Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 1.5-Mile Engine Company Criteria

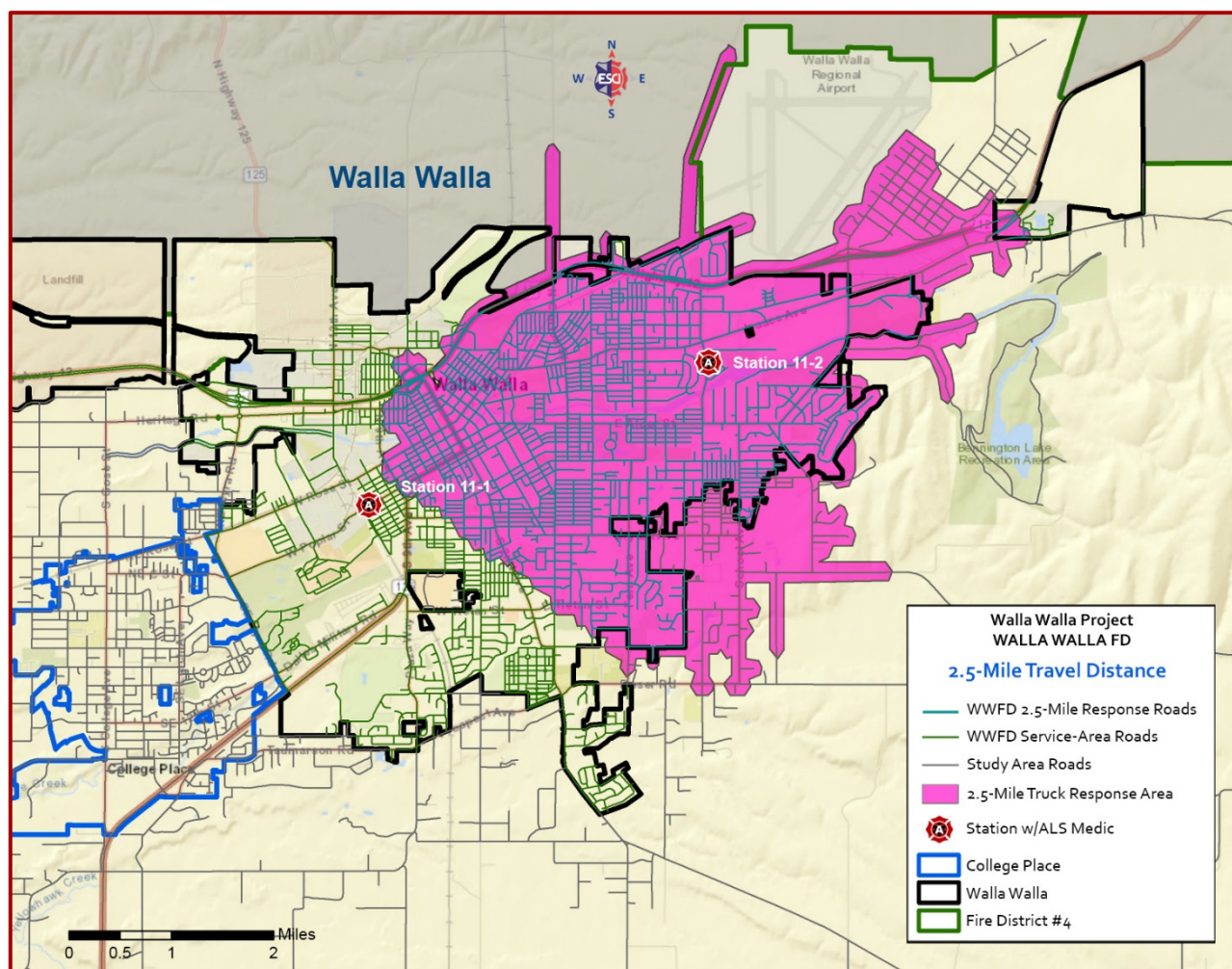


The Walla Walla Fire Department deploys engine companies from both of its fire stations. As expected, the areas centrally located around the stations meet the 1.5-mile WSRB criteria. While WWFD's total service-area falls within five miles of the travel areas of each fire station, noticeable exceptions can be seen regarding the 1.5-mile travel distance in the southern portions of the response zone.

The Walla Walla Fire Department operates the sole ladder truck within the study area. The next closest aerial apparatus is located approximately 10 miles distant in Milton-Freewater, Oregon. After that, Walla Walla County Fire District #5 in Burbank has a ladder truck located about 43 miles away.

The following figure illustrates the 2.5-mile travel distance from Walla Walla Fire Department Station 11-2 in accordance with the WSRB criteria.

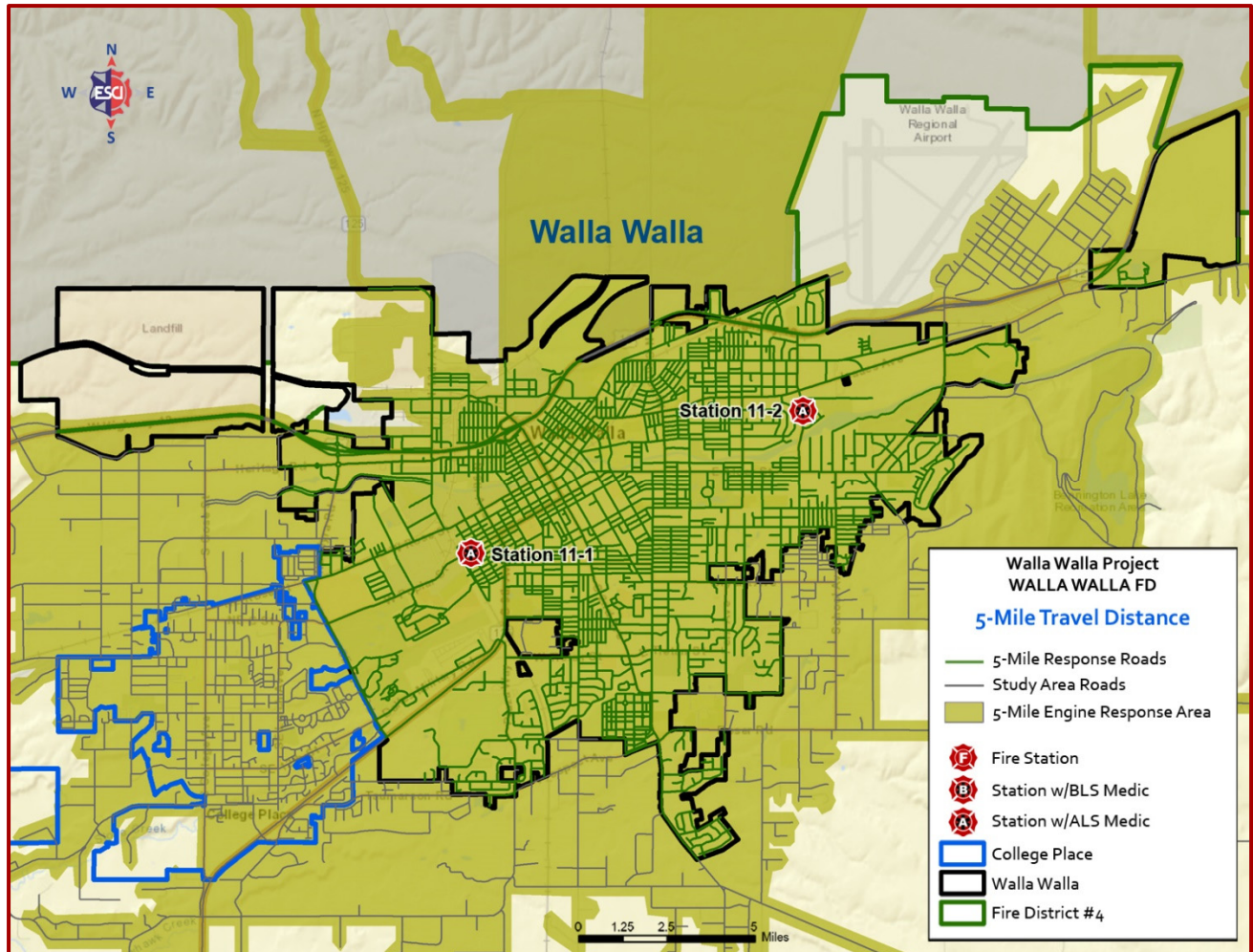
Figure 102: WWFD Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 2.5-Mile Aerial Apparatus Criteria



The preceding figure illustrates that 127 out of 208 road miles within the City of Walla Walla entail a 66% WSRB 2.5-mile coverage.

The next figure illustrates the 5-mile travel distance from the two Walla Walla fire stations in accordance with the WSRB criteria. The five-mile WSRB criteria figure illustrates that WWFD has the capability to deploy to all areas of the City within a five-mile travel distance from its two current fire station locations.

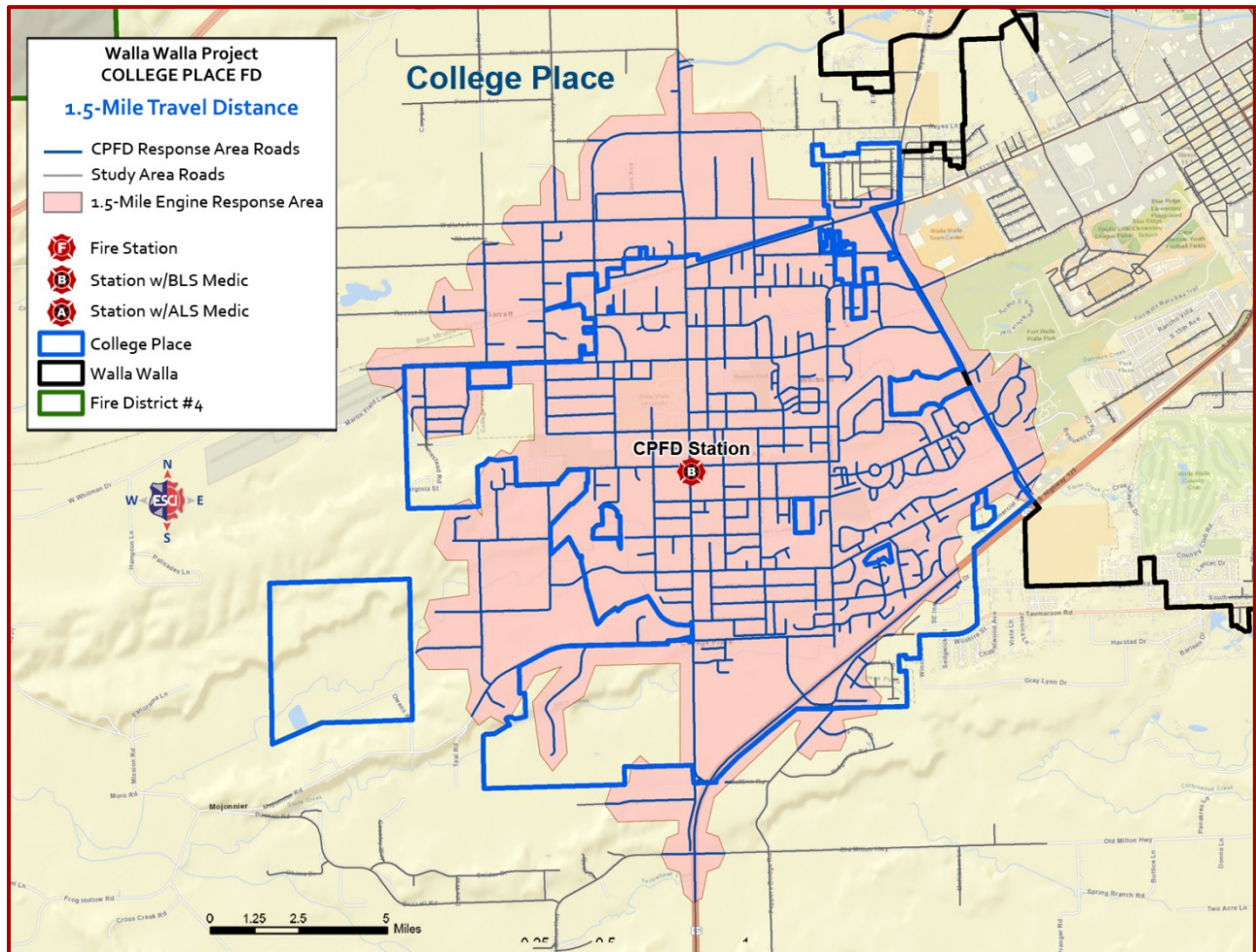
Figure 103: WWFD Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 5-Mile Criteria



College Place Fire Department

The next figure illustrates the 1.5-mile travel distance from the College Place Fire Department fire station in accordance with the WSRB criteria.

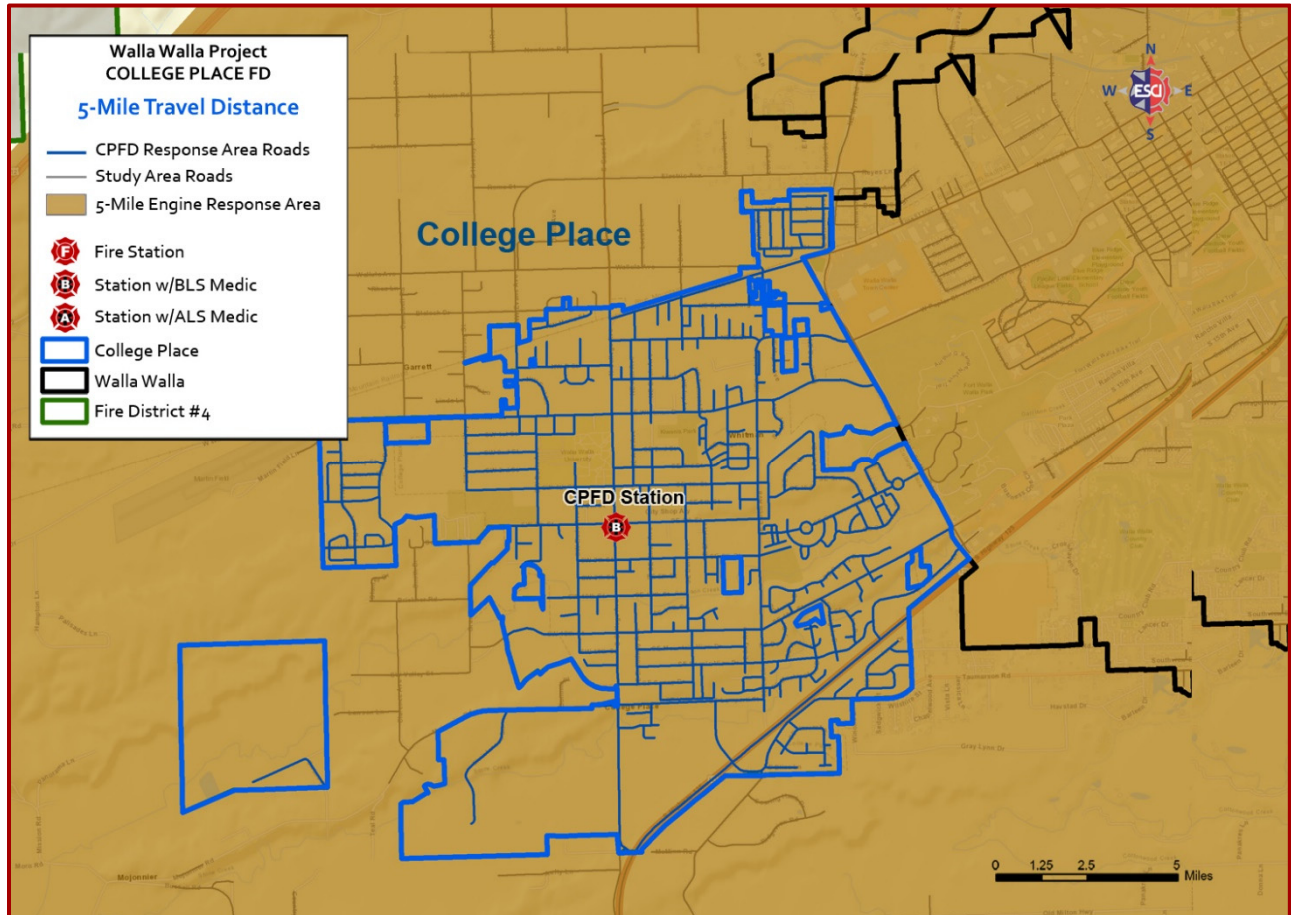
Figure 104: CPFD Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 1.5-Mile Engine Company Criteria



Due to the size of the service area of the College Place Fire Department, most of the City can be covered with a single engine company. While much of CPFD's service-area falls within five miles of travel distance from the fire station, the most noticeable exception can be seen regarding the 1.5-miles of travel in the northeastern portion of the CPFD service area.

The next figure illustrates the 5-mile travel distance from the College Place fire station in accordance with the WSRB criteria.

Figure 105: CPFD Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 5-Mile Criteria

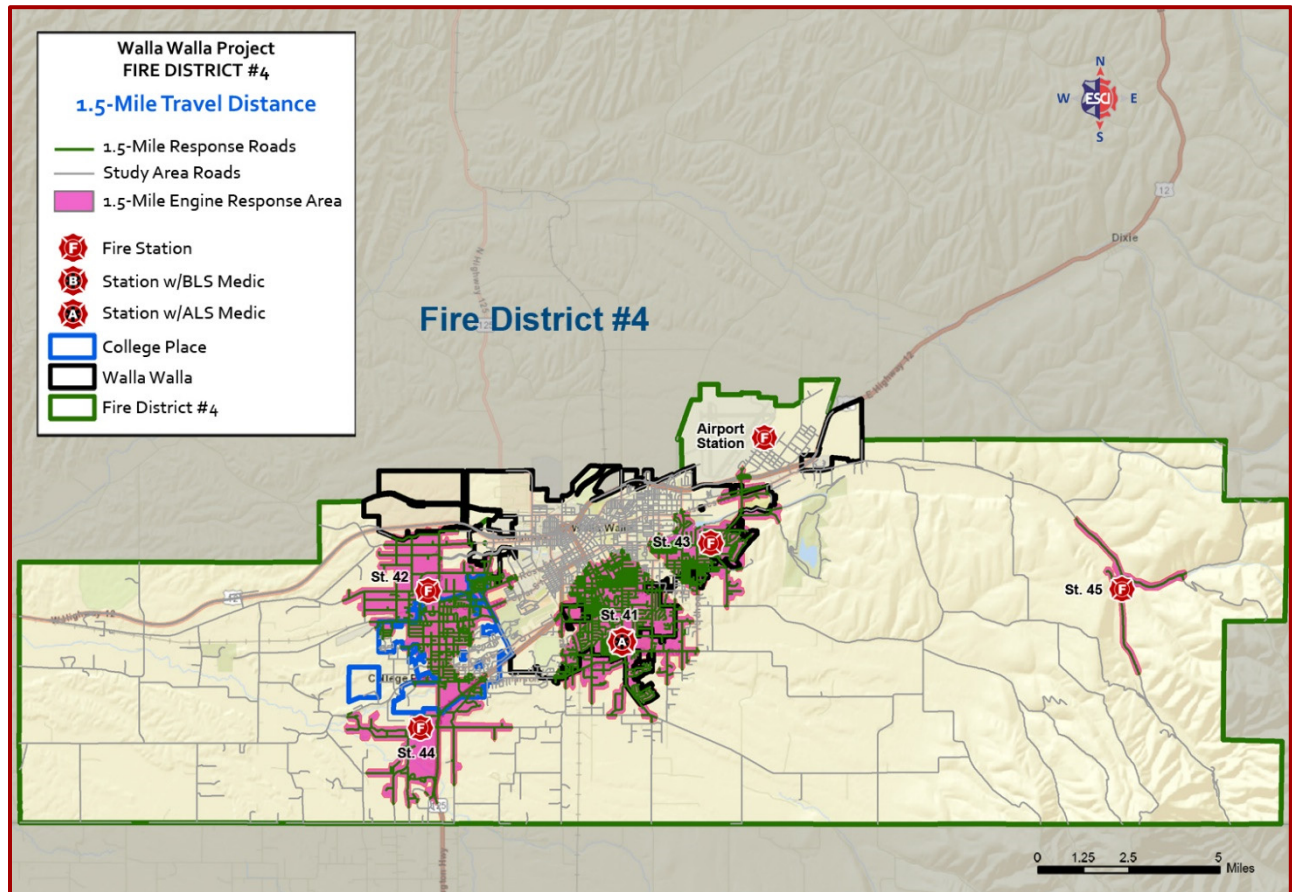


The five-mile WSRB criteria figure illustrates that CPFD has the capability to deploy to all areas of the City within a five-mile travel distance from its current fire station location.

Walla Walla County Fire District #4

The next figure illustrates the 1.5-mile travel distance from District #4 fire stations in accordance with the WSRB criteria.

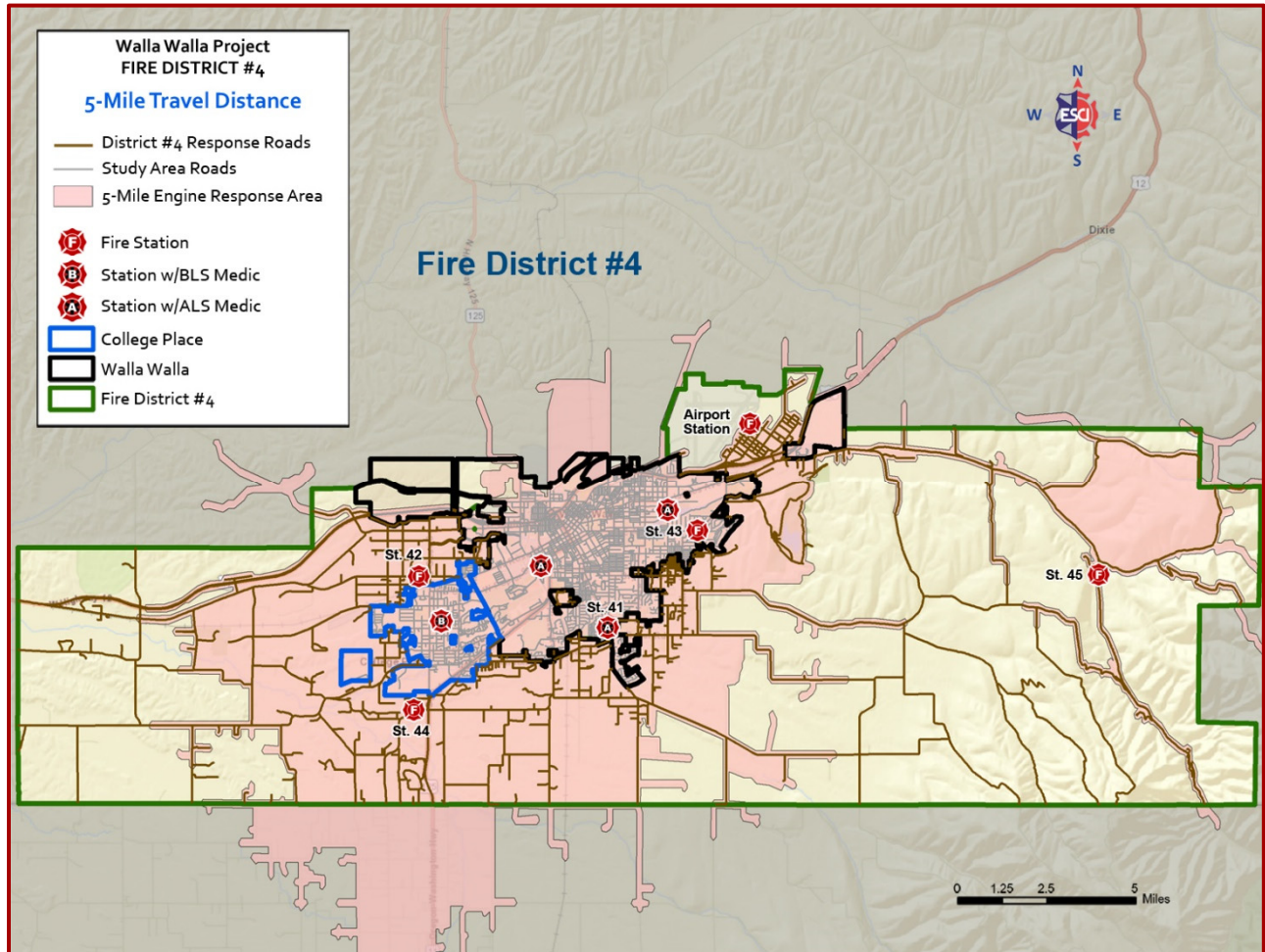
Figure 106: WWCFD4 Station Distribution—WSRB 1.5-Mile Engine Company Criteria



District #4 deploys an engine company from each of its fire stations, except for the airport station. As expected, the areas centrally located around the District #4 stations meet the 1.5-mile WSRB criteria. While a high percentage of the District falls within five miles of travel distance of a fire station, noticeable exceptions can be seen regarding the 1.5-miles of travel.

The next figure illustrates the 5-mile travel distance from the District #4 fire stations in accordance with the WSRB criteria.

Figure 107: WWCFD4 Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 5-Mile Criteria



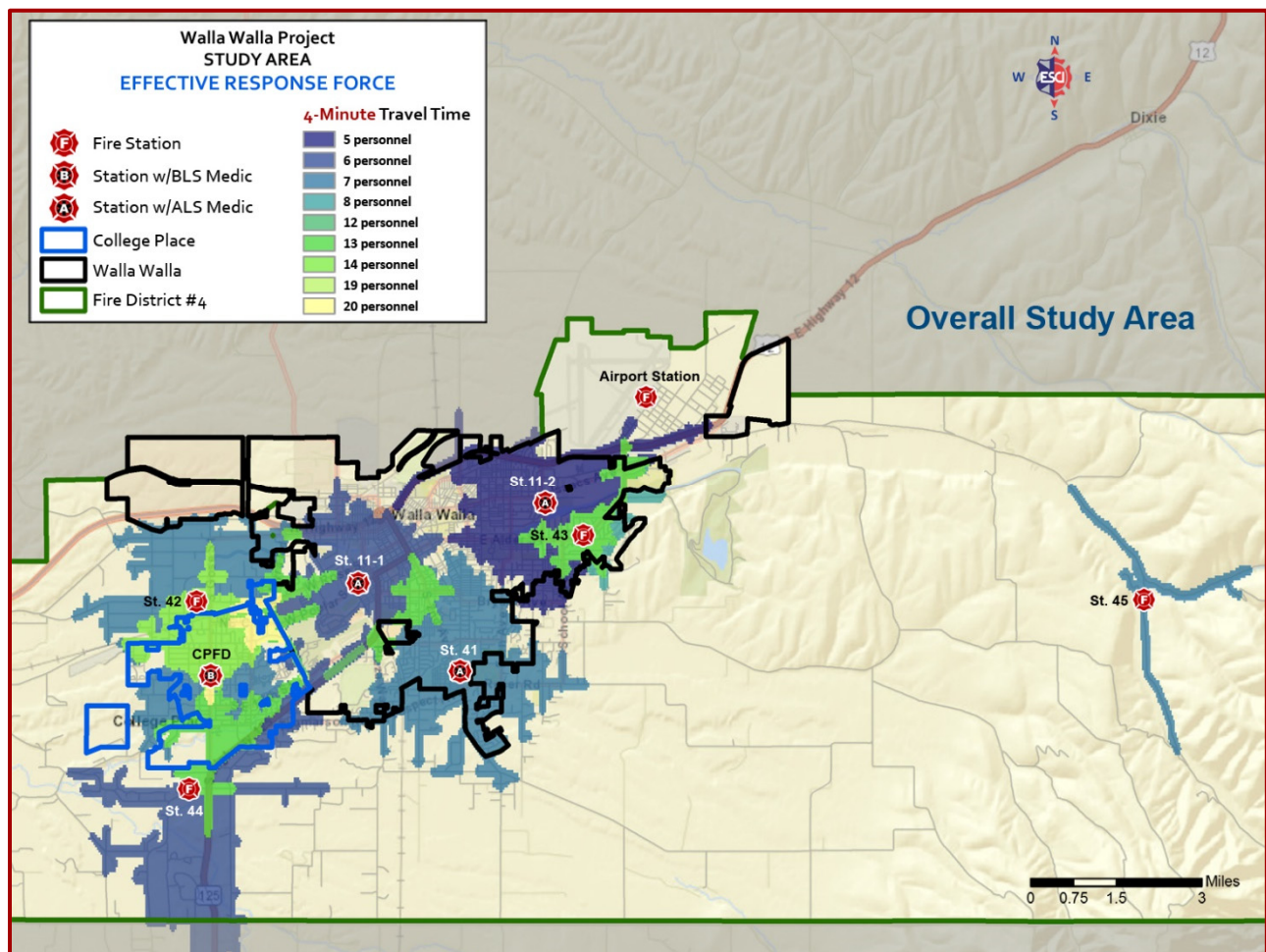
The five-mile WSRB criteria figure illustrates that District #4 has the capability to deploy to over 90% of the areas in the district within a five-mile travel distance from its current fire station locations.

Concentration Analysis

Accepted firefighting procedures call for the arrival of the entire initial assignment or *Effective Response Force* (ERF)—adequate apparatus and personnel to effectively deal with an emergency based on its level of risk—within a reasonable amount of time. NFPA Standard 1710 specifies that career-staffed fire departments deploy resources such that 90% of emergent incidents can be reached within a four-minute travel time or less. Additionally, the standard recommends that a full first-alarm assignment for a low- to moderate-risk structure fire (single-story residential structure) should arrive in 8 minutes of travel time or less at a fire suppression incident (measured at the 90th percentile). This means that all units needed to conduct fire suppression operations must arrive on the scene and commence operations within that period of travel-time. This is to ensure enough personnel and equipment arrive in a timely manner to safely control a fire or mitigate any emergency before substantial damage or injury occurs.

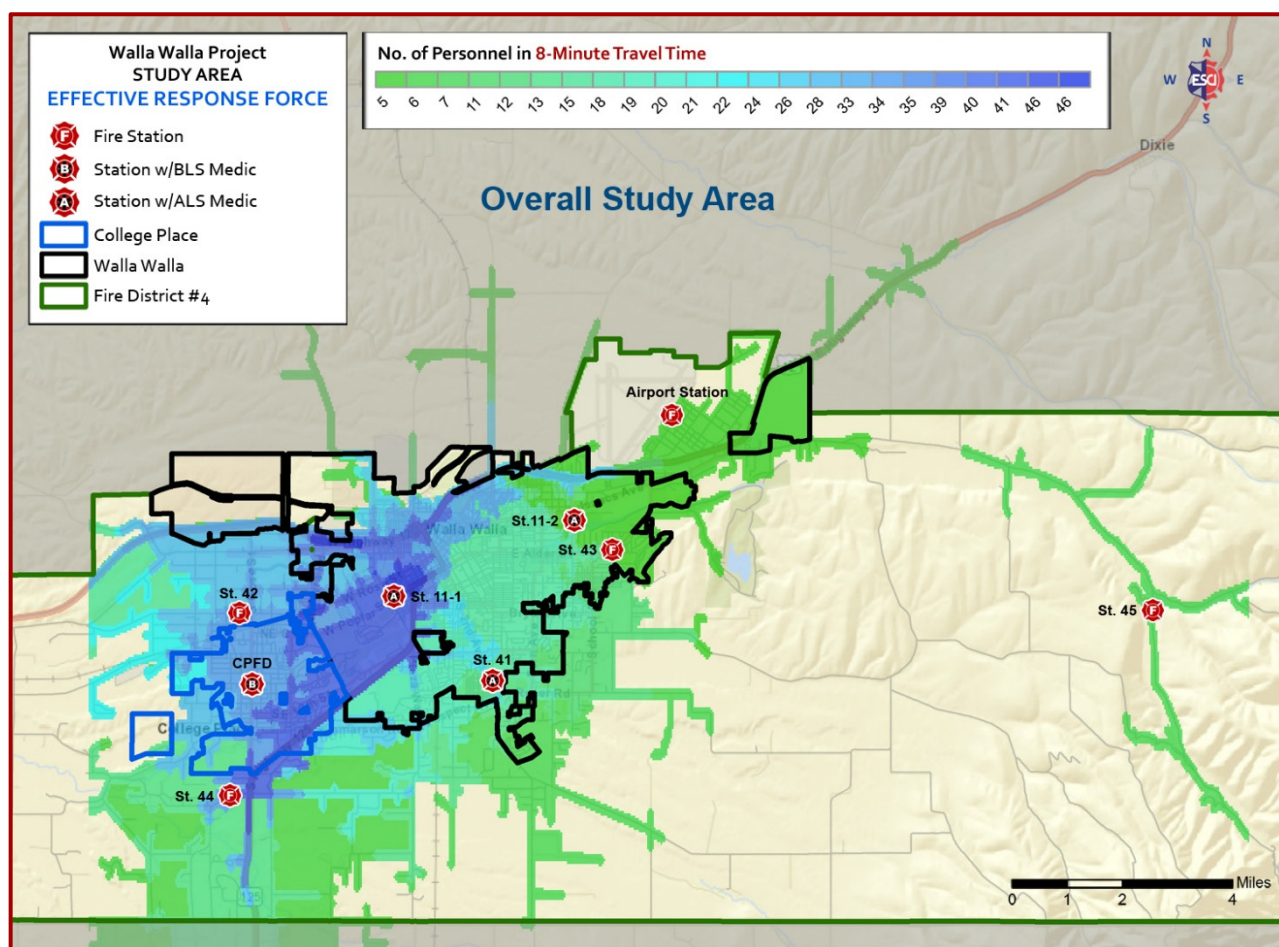
In this analysis, ESCI examined the ability of the Walla Walla study participants to assemble multiple resources across their service area. For the purpose of analysis, it was assumed that all volunteer fire stations could provide minimum staffing on apparatus.

Figure 108: Ability in the Study Area to Assemble an ERF within 4 Minutes



The preceding figure illustrated the estimated number of personnel that could be assembled in 4 minutes or less. The College Place Fire Department's service area shows the highest concentration of firefighters available within 4 minutes of travel.

Figure 109: Ability in the Study Area to Assemble an ERF within 8 Minutes



The preceding figure utilized the 8-minute travel-time model to illustrate those portions of the study area in which 8 minutes of travel would allow for the arrival of the number of firefighters noted. The College Place Fire Department's service area and the western region of the Walla Walla Fire Department's service area show the highest concentration of firefighters available within an 8-minute travel-time.

Reliability Analysis

The workload of emergency response units can be a factor in response-time performance. If a response unit is unavailable, then a unit from a more distant station (or mutual/automatic aid department) must respond. This can result in longer response times. Although fire stations and units may be distributed in a manner to provide quick response, as illustrated previously in the deployment model, that level of performance can be obtained only when the response unit is available in its primary service area.

Call Concurrency

Concurrent incidents and the amount of time individual units are committed to an incident can affect a jurisdiction's ability to muster enough resources to respond to additional emergencies. The higher amount of calls that occur simultaneously can impact available resources and lead to extended response-times from more distant resources. In addition, when resources are dispatched to a distant location, the service area of that resource is then left without personnel and apparatus to respond within its usual response zone.

Walla Walla Project Study Area

In the next figure, ESCI examined 2017–2018 incidents for the three departments among the three study participants to find the frequency of which each fire agency was dispatched to concurrent calls.

Figure 110: Concurrent Incidents of the Combined Fire Departments (2017–2018)

Number of Incidents	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFPD ₄	Combined
One Incident	38%	91%	78%	41%
Two Incidents	40%	9%	18%	33%
Three Incidents	16%	1%	3%	16%
Four or More Incidents	5%	<1%	<1%	10%

Throughout the combined study area, less than four incidents occurred 90% of the time during 2017–2018. Two or three incidents occurred simultaneously 49% of the time, while a single incident occurred 41% of the time within the study area. The College Place Fire Department and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 rarely had more than a single incident occurring simultaneously, while the Walla Walla Fire Department was more likely to experience multiple concurrent incidents.

Unit Hour Utilization

Unit Hour Utilization (UHU) describes the amount of time that a unit is not available for response because it is already committed to another incident. The larger the number, the greater its utilization, and the less available it is for assignment to subsequent calls for service. UHU rates are expressed as a percentage of the total hours in a year. It is important to note that UHU rates do not account for other out-of-service times, such as training.

UHU is calculated by measuring the amount of time individual apparatus are committed to an incident and dividing the result by the total number of hours in a year (8,760). This measure demonstrates the amount of time a unit is not available for response to additional incidents because it is already committed to an incident.

There are no formally adopted industry standards to use as a target measure. However, in May 2016, the Henrico County (VA) Division of Fire published an article after studying its department's EMS workload.¹⁴ As a result of the study, the fire department developed a general commitment-factor scale for its organization. The next figure is a summary of the findings as it relates to commitment factors.

Figure 111: Commitment Factors as Developed by Henrico County (VA) Division of Fire (2016)

Factor	Indication	Description
16%–24%	Ideal Range	Personnel can maintain training requirements and physical fitness and can consistently achieve response time benchmarks. Units are available to the community more than 75% of the day.
25%	System Stress	Community availability and unit sustainability are not questioned. First-due units are responding to their assigned community 75% of the time, and response benchmarks are rarely missed.
26%–29%	Evaluation Range	The community served will experience delayed incident responses. Just under 30% of the day, first-due ambulances are unavailable; thus, neighboring responders will likely exceed goals.
30%	"Line in the Sand"	Not Sustainable: Commitment Threshold—the community has less than a 70% chance of timely emergency service, and immediate relief is vital. Personnel assigned to units at or exceeding 0.3 may show signs of fatigue and burnout and may be at increased risk of errors. Required training and physical fitness sessions are not consistently completed.

The next figures display the total time the Walla Walla Fire Department, College Place Fire Department, and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 apparatus were committed to an incident during 2017–2018, in accordance with CAD and EMS records provided to ESCI.

Walla Walla Fire Department

The following figure shows the historic UHU rates for the primary Walla Walla Fire Department apparatus during 2017–2018.

Figure 112: WWFD Unit Hour Utilization (2017–2018)

Source: EMS & CAD Records

Unit	No. Incidents	Total Time	Average Time	UHU
Engine 3911	1,147	649:45:24	0:33:59	3.7%
Engine 3912	1,090	630:28:11	0:34:42	3.6%
Ladder 3911	290	136:35:25	0:28:16	0.8%
Medic 3921	6,356	3946:58:53	0:37:16	22.5%
Medic 3922	4,283	3049:26:26	0:42:43	17.4%
Medic 3923	332	260:04:28	0:47:00	1.5%
Medic 3924	154	329:55:34	2:08:33	1.9%
Medic 3925	109	644:50:04	5:54:57	3.7%
Medic 3926 ¹	10	32:58:32	3:17:51	0.5%

¹Taken out of service October 1, 2017.

The preceding figure shows that the average time each Walla Walla Fire Department apparatus was committed to an incident during the 24-month study period was about 1 hour, 35 minutes. This placed the WWFD apparatus at an average UHU rate of nearly 6% during the study period. Medic 3921 shows the highest percentage of UHU at 22.5%. Importantly, note that studies have indicated that UHU rates higher than 30% tend to cause system failure in other areas, such as response-time performance and fire effective response force degradation.

College Place Fire Department

The next figure shows the historic UHU for the primary College Place Fire Department apparatus during 2017–2018.

Figure 113: CPFD Unit Hour Utilization (2017–2018)

Source: CAD Records

Unit	No. Incidents	Total Time	Average Time	UHU
Fire Chief 301	28	46:36:22	1:39:52	0.3%
Duty Officer 301	831	337:45:26	0:24:23	1.9%
Engine 3011	1,281	716:19:43	0:33:33	4.1%
Engine 3012	85	38:41:30	0:27:19	0.2%
Engine 3041 ¹	8	107:13:53	13:24:14	0.6%
Engine 3051	9	45:16:29	5:01:50	0.3%
Engine 3061	22	146:08:13	6:38:33	0.8%
Engine 3062 ²	13	15:32:29	1:11:44	0.1%
Rescue 3041	2,078	577:49:28	0:16:41	3.3%
Tender 3021	22	340:14:11	15:27:55	1.9%

¹Placed in-service June 1, 2018. ²In-service during 2017 only.

The preceding figure illustrates that the average time each College Place Fire Department apparatus was committed to an incident over the 24-month study period was just over 4 hours, 30 minutes. This relatively high amount of time may likely be a result of Engine 3041 and Tender 3021 being assigned to extended incidents. This places the CPFD apparatus at an average UHU of 1.35% during the study period.

Walla Walla County Fire District #4

The next figure shows the historic UHU rates for the primary Walla Walla Fire Department apparatus during 2017–2018.

Figure 114: District #4 Unit Hour Utilization (2017–2018)

Source: CAD Records

Unit	No. Incidents	Total Time	Average Time	UHU
Ambulance 3421	1,078	667:32:30	0:37:09	3.8%
Duty Officer 342	91	73:28:30	0:48:27	0.4%
Chief 341	39	21:42:58	0:33:25	0.1%
Duty Officer 341	542	398:37:56	0:44:08	2.3%
Engine 3411	364	184:45:12	0:30:27	1.1%
Engine 3412	352	195:37:07	0:33:21	1.1%
Engine 3413	118	83:26:42	0:42:26	0.5%
Engine 3414	263	185:44:32	0:42:22	1.1%
Engine 3415	49	252:35:13	5:09:17	1.4%
Engine 3416	49	173:37:45	3:32:36	1.0%
Engine 3441 ¹	62	122:39:46	1:58:42	2.4%
Engine 3451	45	170:33:56	3:47:25	1.0%
Engine 3452	78	125:20:27	1:36:25	0.7%
Engine 3453	36	53:25:39	1:29:03	0.3%
Engine 3454	65	93:33:15	1:26:21	0.5%
Engine 3455	27	30:41:24	1:08:12	0.2%
Engine 3456	50	1218:43:59	24:22:29	7.0%
Rescue 3441	139	215:23:05	1:32:58	1.2%
Tender 3422	55	120:52:52	2:11:52	0.7%
Tender 3423	42	703:44:56	16:45:21	4.0%
Tender 3431	56	162:11:32	2:53:47	0.9%
Tender 3433	15	31:27:08	2:05:49	0.2%
Tender 3435	13	24:28:34	1:52:58	0.1%

¹Placed in-service June 1, 2018.

The preceding figure illustrates that the average time each District #4 apparatus was committed to an incident over the 24-month study period was 3 hours, 21 minutes. This placed District #4 apparatus at an average UHU of 1.39% during the study period.

Response Performance

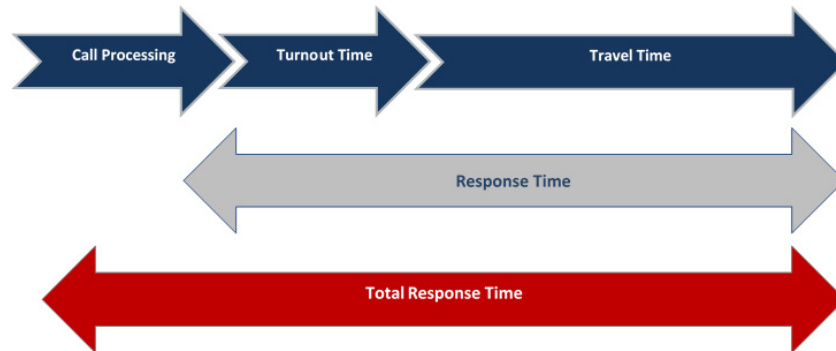
In the performance analysis, ESCI examines emergency incident response-time performance within the study area. The data used for this analysis comprised incidents from January 2017 through December 2018 calls extracted from the datasets of each of the three study participants. Obvious outliers and invalid records from the datasets were excluded from the data utilized in the final analyses. Response-performance was measured from when the fire apparatus was dispatched until the time the first fire department unit arrived on-scene.

When analyzing the response performance, ESCI utilized the “fractile” method for measurement. The use of this method for response-performance follows industry best-practice and is considered a more accurate measure of performance than “average” calculations. Commonly, the “average” measure is used as a descriptive statistic and is also called the mean of a dataset. The reason not to utilize an average calculation lies in its potential to accurately reflect actual performance and can be skewed by data outliers. One particularly good or bad value can skew the average for the entire dataset. The fractile method is a more accurate measure of actual performance.

Fire service best-practice documents such as the *Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) Community Risk Assessment: Standards of Cover, 6th Edition*, NFPA 1710: *Standard for Career Fire Departments*, and NFPA 1720: *Standard for Volunteer Fire Departments* recommend measuring emergency response time performance at the 90th percentile—meaning 90% of emergency responses occurred in the stated value or less.^{15,16,17} In basic terms, the 90th percentile means that 10% of the values are greater than the value stated, and all other data is at or below this level. This can then be compared to the desired performance objective to determine the degree of success in achieving the goal.

Industry best-practices suggest measuring response performance from the time the emergency call is received at the dispatch center until the arrival of the first apparatus—typically referred to as the *Total Response Time*. Tracking the individual components of the Total Response Time allows for identifying deficiencies and areas for improvement.

While progressing through the performance analysis, it is important to understand that each of the components of response performance is not cumulative. Each is analyzed as an individual component, and the point at which the fractile percentile is calculated, exists in a set of data unto itself.

Figure 115: NFPA 1710 & 1720 Response Time Measurements

The response-time continuum, the time between when the caller dials 911 and when assistance arrives, is comprised of several components. The following are the individual components analyzed by ECSI, which are also illustrated in the preceding figure.

- **Call Processing Time**—The amount of time between when a dispatcher answers the 911 call and resources are dispatched.
- **Turnout Time**—The time interval between when units are notified of the incident and when the apparatus are responding.
- **Travel Time**—The amount of time the responding unit actually spends on the road to the incident.
- **Response Time**—A combination of turnout time and travel time. This is the most commonly utilized measure of fire department response performance.
- **Total Response Time**—The time interval from the receipt of the alarm at the dispatch center to when the first emergency response unit is initiating action or intervening to control the incident.

Total response time is the amount of time a resident or business waits for resources to arrive at the scene of an emergency, which begins when they initiate the 911 call. This process begins for the Walla Walla Fire Department, the College Place Fire Department, and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 once the communications center dispatches the appropriate unit. The NFPA standard for call processing is derived from *NFPA 1221—Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems*. Similarly, NFPA 1710 provides response-time measurements for career fire departments, and NFPA 1720 for volunteer fire departments—which are considered the industry best practice standards. Appendices A and B describe the specific response-time performance details of NFPA 1710 and NFPA 1720.

Regarding response-performance, the Walla Walla Fire Department was measured against the NFPA 1710 standard, while the College Place Fire Department and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 are measured against the NFPA 1720 standard.

The data provided to ESCI did not include the elements necessary to measure call-processing times. Therefore, instead of measuring Total Response Time, the basic Response-Time performance was measured. However, in the future, the fire agencies should collect and/or monitor call-processing performance, as it impacts the overall response time.

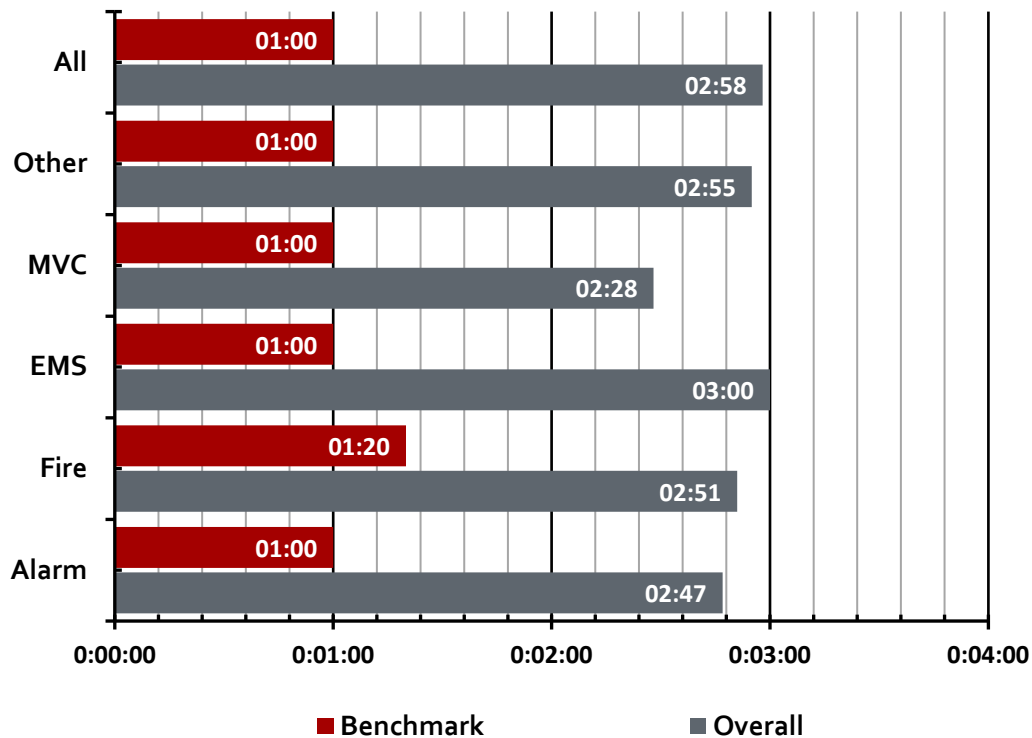
Walla Walla Fire Department

WWFD Turnout-Times

Turnout-time is an important element of the response-time continuum and can be influenced by factors such as station design, apparatus staffing, and the performance of the assigned personnel. Because of this, turnout time is one component in which firefighters have some degree of control.

The next figure illustrates the Walla Walla Fire Department's 90th percentile turnout-time performance. As shown, the Walla Walla Fire Department failed to meet the benchmarks for all incident-types. On fire incidents, WWFD exceeded the benchmark by 1 minute, 31 seconds, while on average for all incident types, the benchmark was exceeded by 1 minute, 58 seconds.

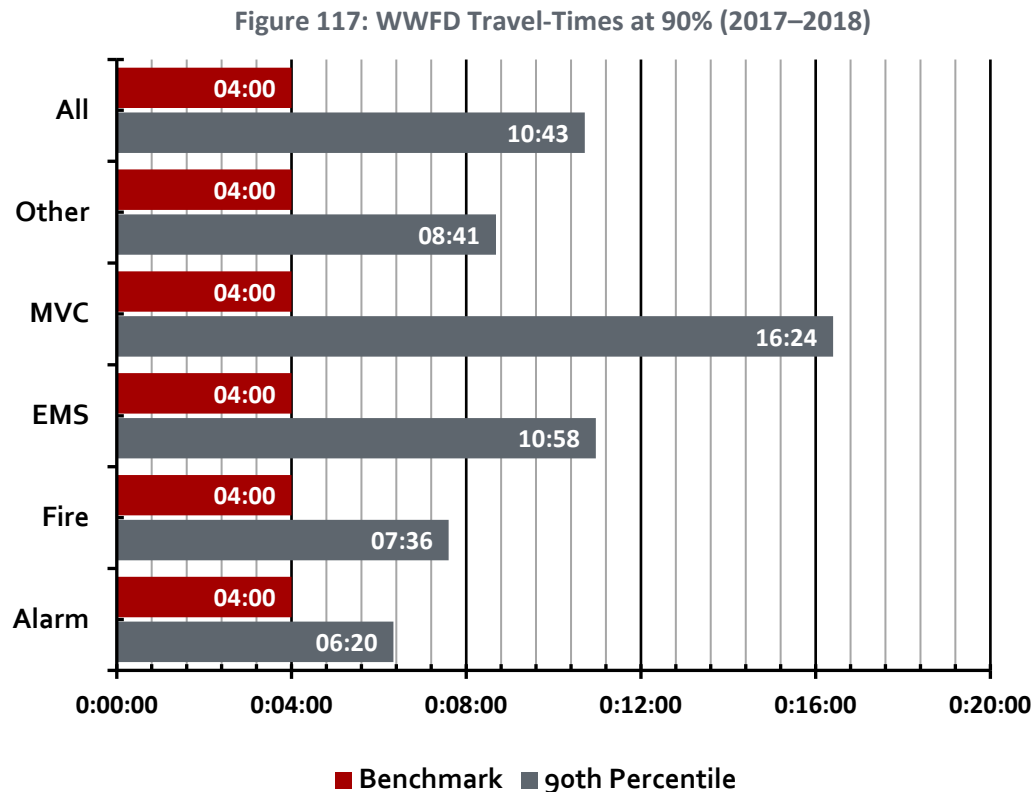
Figure 116: WWFD Turnout-Times at 90% (2017–2018)



WWFD Travel Times

Travel time is one component of the response time continuum that the fire department usually cannot be directly controlled. The existing road network, traffic congestion, geographic barriers, and size of the service-area can all impact travel times.

The next figure illustrates the Walla Walla Fire Department's 90th percentile travel-time performance for the first apparatus on-scene of an emergency incident.

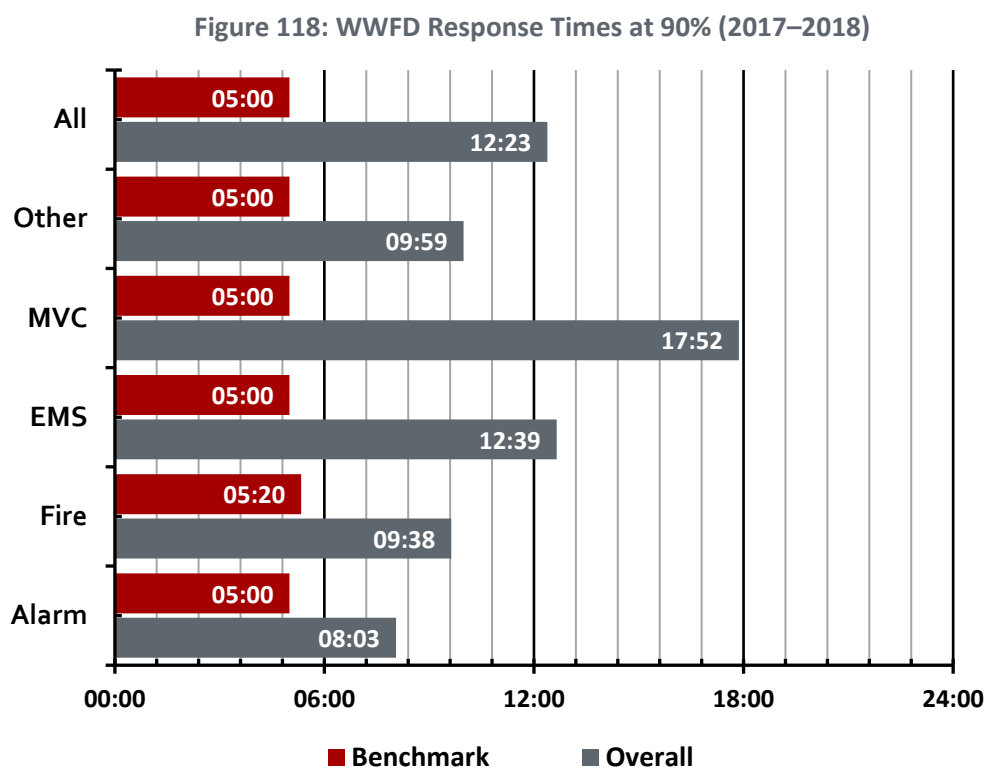


The Walla Walla Fire Department did not meet the NFPA benchmarks for any of the incident-type categories. On average, for all incident-types, WWFD exceeded the benchmark by 6 minutes, 43 seconds.

WWFD Response Times

As previously discussed, Response Time in this report is defined as the interval between when a unit is dispatched until it arrives on-scene (call-processing time is excluded).

The next figure illustrates the Walla Walla Fire Department's 90th percentile emergency response performance for the first apparatus on-scene of an emergency incident.

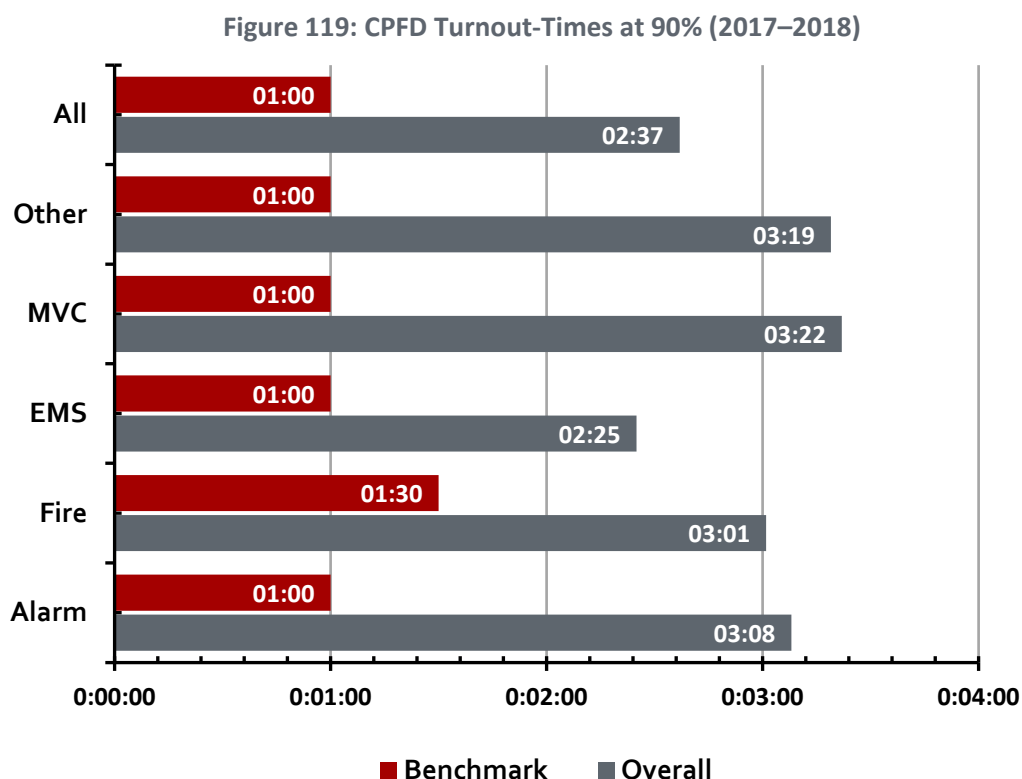


As expected, after analysis of the turnout-time and travel-time performances, the Walla Walla Fire Department did not meet the NFPA benchmarks in any of the incident-type categories. On fire incidents, WWFD exceeded the benchmark by 4 minutes, 18 seconds, while on average for all incident-types, the benchmark was exceeded by 7 minutes, 23 seconds.

College Place Fire Department

CPFD Turnout-Times

The next figure illustrates the College Place Fire Department's 90th percentile turnout-time performance. The figure shows the NFPA 1710 benchmark standards, since the NFPA 1720 standard does not include performance benchmarks for turnout-times. Therefore, this analysis is presented only for informational purposes.

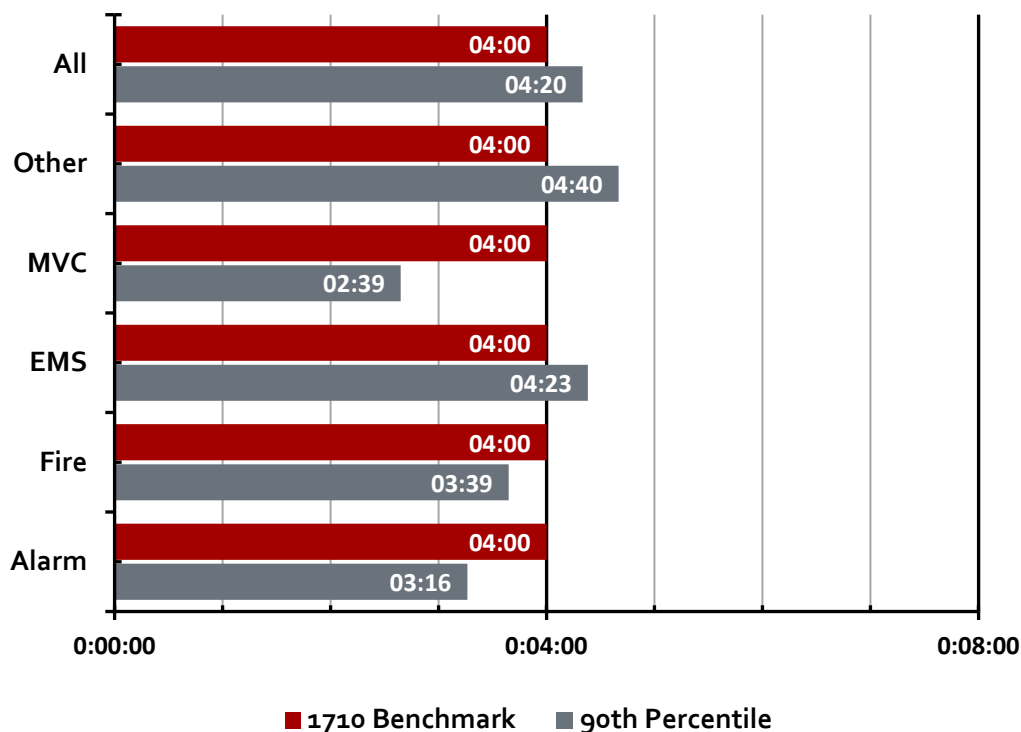


The College Place Fire Department did not meet the NFPA benchmarks in any of the incident-type categories. On fire incidents, College Place exceeded the benchmark by 1 minute, 28 seconds, while on average for all incident-types, the benchmark was exceeded by 1 minute, 36 seconds.

CPFD Travel-Times

The next figure illustrates the College Place Fire Department's 90th percentile travel-time performance for the first apparatus on-scene of emergency incidents that occurred *only* within College Place.

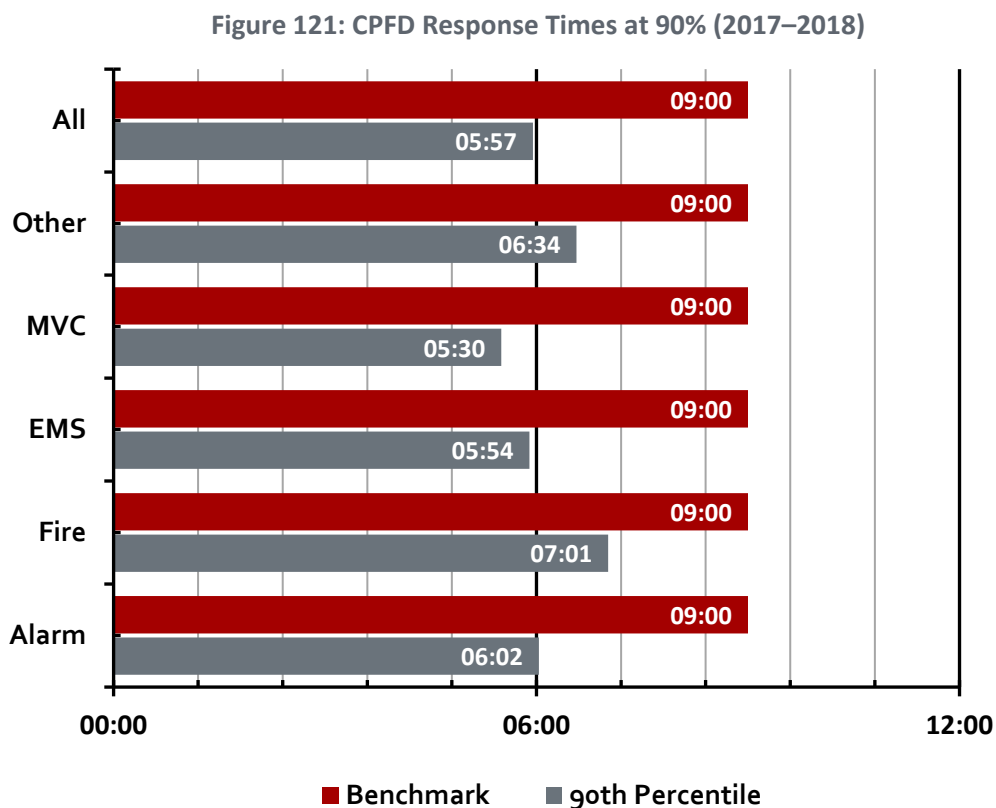
Figure 120: CPFD Travel-Times at 90% (2017–2018)



With the exception of incidents coded as EMS or Other, CPFD's travel-times met the National Fire Protection Association benchmark recommendations. On average, for all incident types, the College Place Fire Department exceeded the benchmark by 20 seconds.

CPFD Response Times

The next figure illustrates the College Place Fire Department's 90th percentile response-time performance for the first apparatus on-scene of emergency incidents that occurred *only* within College Place.

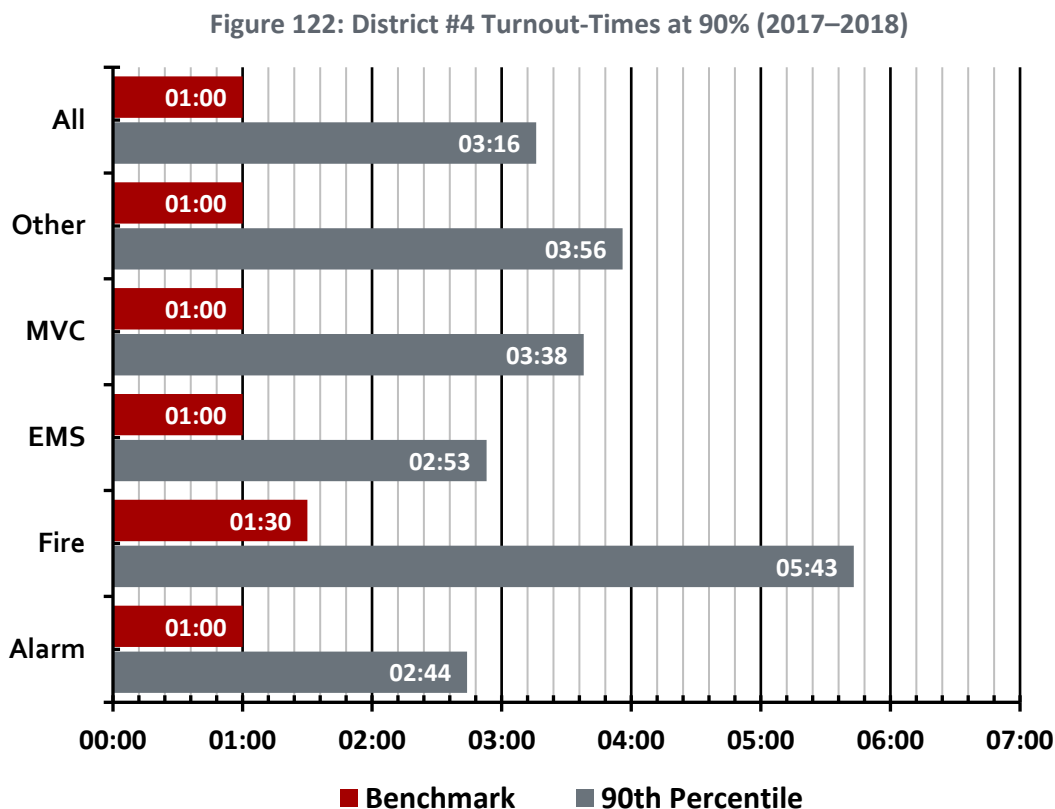


While the turnout-time analyses, along with the EMS and Other incidents travel-time performance exceeded the NFPA benchmark recommendations, the College Place Fire Department's response-time performance met the NFPA benchmark recommendations in all incident categories.

Walla Walla County Fire District #4

District #4 Turnout Times

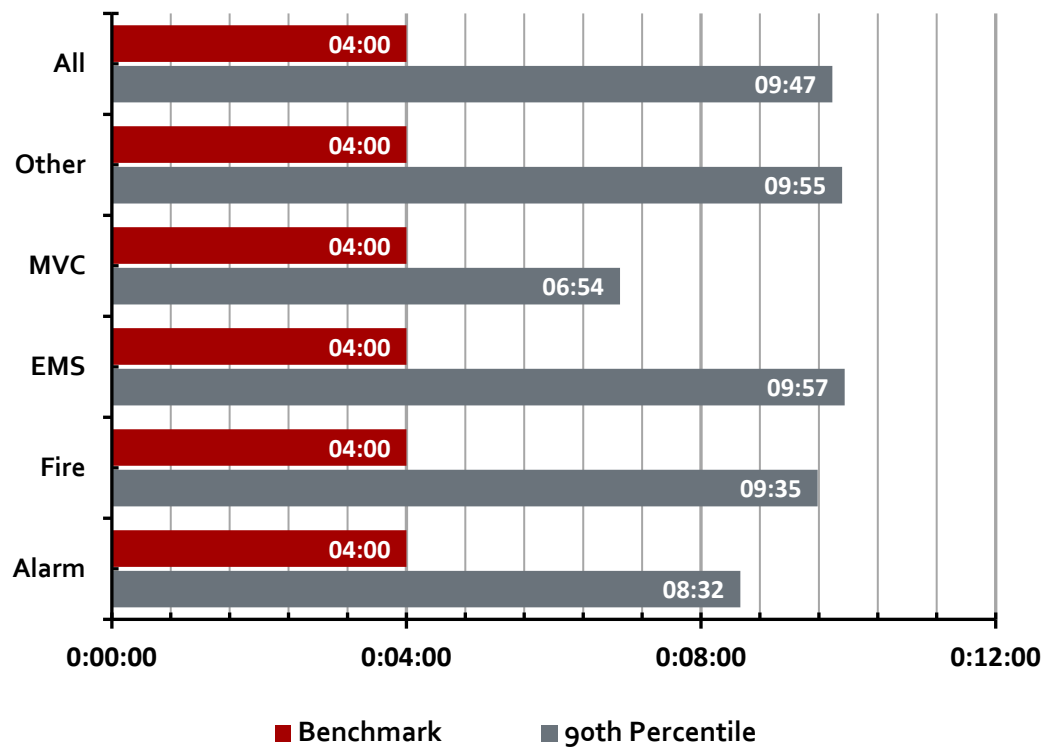
The next figure illustrates Walla Walla County Fire District #4's 90th percentile turnout-time performance.



Fire District #4 did not meet the NFPA benchmark recommendations in any of the incident-type categories. On fire incidents, District #4 exceeded the benchmark by 4 minutes, 13 seconds, while on average for all incident-types the benchmark was exceeded by 2 minutes, 16 seconds.

District #4 Travel Times

The next figure illustrates Fire District #4's 90th percentile travel-time performance for the first apparatus on-scene at an emergency incident.

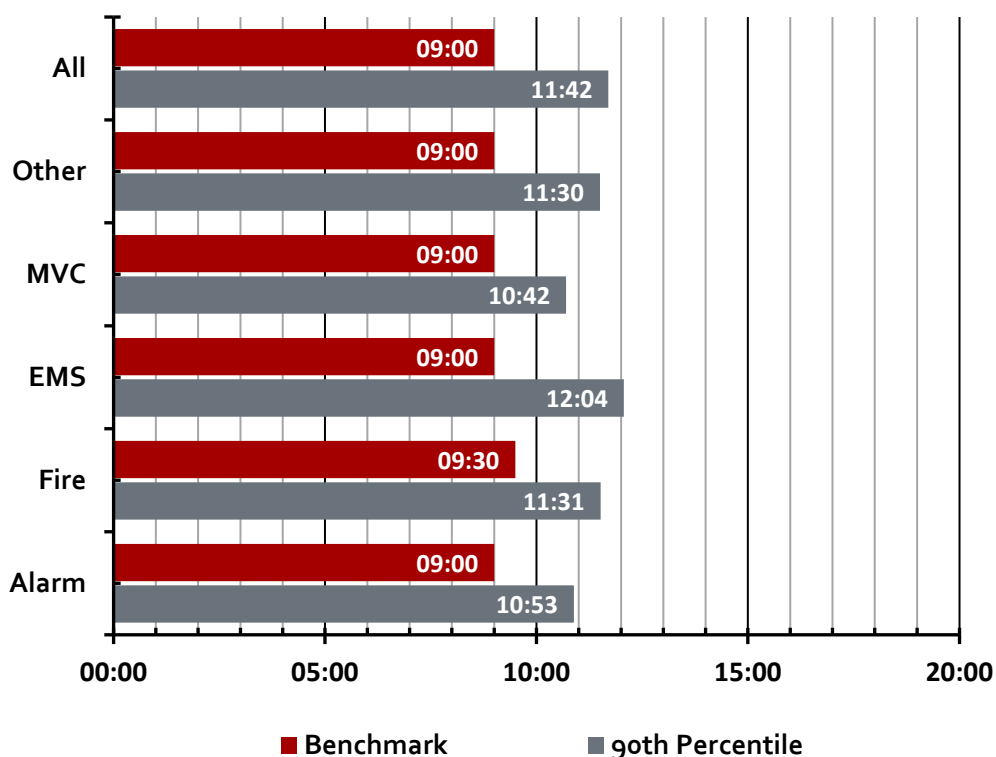
Figure 123: District #4 Travel-Times at 90% (2017–2018)

Walla Walla County Fire District #4 did not meet the NFPA 1710 benchmark recommendations in any of the incident-type categories. On average, for all incident types, District #4 exceeded the benchmark by 5 minutes, 47 seconds.

District #4 Response Times

The next figure illustrates Fire District #4's 90th percentile emergency response performance for the first apparatus on-scene of an emergency incident.

Figure 124: District #4 Response Times at 90% (2017–2018)



District #4 did not meet the NFPA benchmark recommendations in any of the incident-type categories. On fire incidents, District #4 exceeded the benchmark by 2 minutes, 1 second. On average, for all incident-types, the benchmark was exceeded by 2 minutes, 42 seconds.

Overall Study Area Response-Performance Discussion

In the absence of locally adopted performance standards, NFPA 1710 and 1720 are typically utilized as points of reference due to both documents being national consensus standards and desirable goals for fire and EMS organizations. Except for CPFD's travel-time performance for motor vehicle crashes (MVC) and fire alarms, along with their response times to all incident-types excluding fires, none of the three fire agencies achieved the NFPA performances standards. Call processing was not analyzed due to the limitations of the data provided, which also prevented the analysis of Total Response Time performance.

Since turnout times are likely the only performance measure in which fire and EMS organizations have some control, the study participants should further research the causes of why turnout-times fall short of NFPA standards. Of the three fire agencies, the College Place Fire Department had the lowest turnout times, exceeding the benchmark by 1 minute, 24 seconds. Walla Walla County Fire District #4 exceeded the benchmark by 1 minute, 53 seconds, while the Walla Walla Fire Department exceeded the benchmark by 2 minutes. It should be noted, however, that both CPFD and WWCFD4 had a 10-second increase in turnout-times for fire incidents. This was due, primarily, to the type of staffing utilized by each of those fire departments.

Emergency Medical Transport Analysis

As with most communities throughout the U.S., the demand for EMS and patient-transport represents the highest calls for service among the three fire agencies located in the study area. In the following section, ESCI has examined EMS and medical transport services provided by each of the fire agencies. The next figure displays the total EMS service-demand within the study area during 2017–2018.

Figure 125: Medical Incidents & Transports (2017–2018)

Description	WWFD ¹	CPFD ²	WWCFD ₄ ²
EMS Incidents	11,489	2,051	1,131
EMS Incidents with Transport Timestamp	8,987	108	396

¹NEMSIS data. ²CAD data with NFIRS 300 codes.

For the preceding two-year period, a total of 14,671 EMS incidents were reported within the study area. EMS service-demand for the Walla Walla Fire Department accounted for over 78% of the total. The College Place Fire Department responded to nearly 14% of EMS calls, while Walla Walla County Fire District #4 accounted for just under 8% of the incidents. With WWFD, a patient-transport occurred in over 78% of the EMS calls dispatched. However, a patient-transport occurred with CPFD at just over 5% of the EMS calls dispatched, and about 16% of the time with WWCFD₄.

The next figure displays the total EMS service-demand for the Walla Walla Fire Department, and the service areas in which the incidents occurred.

Figure 126: WWFD EMS Incidents by Jurisdiction (2017–2018)

Jurisdiction	Number	Percent of Total
Walla Walla Fire Department ¹	8,490	74%
College Place Fire Department	1,689	15%
Walla Walla County Fire District #4	602	5%
All Others	708	6%

¹NEMSIS data.

As expected, most of the Walla Walla Fire Department's EMS service-demand occurred within its jurisdiction—which accounted for 74% of the Department's total incidents. EMS responses within CPFD's service area accounted for the next highest demand at 15%, followed by other surrounding areas at 6%. Calls to District #4's service area represented 5% of WWFD's total EMS service-demand by jurisdiction.

The next figure displays EMS related time performance within the Walla Walla project area over the previous two years.

Figure 127: EMS-Related Time Performance at 90% (2017–2018)

Jurisdiction	With Patient	Time On-Scene	Transport Time	Hospital Turnaround
Walla Walla FD ¹	03:08	24:36	11:47	25:05
College Place FD ²	N/A	33:47	14:01	19:51
Fire District #4 ²	N/A	31:57	15:31	20:44

¹NEMSIS Data. ²CAD Data with NFIRS 300 Codes.

While response performance was analyzed in the preceding section, the amount of time on-scene is important when evaluating total time-commitment on an incident. This can be critical due to the committed units' inability to respond to additional EMS calls occurring within their area—thus requiring a response of units from outside the response area. The local transport facility's geographic location and overall performance can be important factors in the total time-commitment of EMS response units. These factors affect transport times (interval between when the EMS response unit left the scene to transport and when it arrived at the hospital or clinical facility) and hospital turnaround times (time spent after arrival at the hospital until the ambulance returned to service).

The preceding figure lists the "With Patient" time (sometimes referred to as the "Vertical Response Time") performance by the Walla Walla Fire Department. This is defined as the interval between the point at which the unit arrives on-scene, and the time the firefighters arrive at the patient's side. WWFD should be commended for tracking this time interval, as this typically is done in only the more progressive EMS systems.

Also note that caution should be applied when making assumptions for CPFD and WWCFD⁴ due to the limited number of transports and the limited data provided for these organizations.

EMS Transport Discussion

Although significant constraints existed in the datasets provided to ESCI, it was evident that EMS-related incidents accounted for the highest demand for service among each of the fire agencies. In addition, EMS service-demand appears to be increasing within the study area. With this increased demand, the effects on response performance are inevitable, and will eventually require increased capacity to provide adequate services.

From an EMS transport perspective, over 78% of WWFD's EMS incidents resulted in a patient transport, while CFPD and WWCFD's percentages were both well below 20%. This may indicate two things: first, that WWFD may have conducted a large percentage of the transports within College Place and District #4; second, that many of the EMS calls dispatched may have been unwarranted. If more comprehensive data become available, this should be evaluated to determine the reasons for such differences. The number of patients transported in relation to the number of EMS calls dispatched is relevant because revenue is generated when patients are transported. In general, EMS calls that do not result in a transport do not produce revenue.

Data provided to ESCI indicated that most EMS incidents occurred within the Walla Walla Fire Department's service area. Additionally, 26% of the Walla Walla Fire Department's service-demand occurred outside its normal service area.

Based on historical incident data, Walla Walla Medic 3921 and 3922, at UHU rates of 22.5% and 17.4% respectively, may be approaching the higher ends of UHU rates. It should not be assumed that UHU rates are the sole measure of workload and performance, but should be considered when evaluating and planning for potential changes in operations and deployment.

Due to EMS service-demand and the overall time-commitment related to medical transports, it will be important for the fire agencies in the study area to consistently and regularly monitor EMS system-performance.

Study Area Boundaries & Response-Time Performance

Of concern from a patient-care perspective, is that WWCFD's ALS ambulance is occasionally dispatched from Station 41 and travels through the City of Walla Walla (bypassing two WWFD fire stations with ALS ambulances). This is done in order to respond to EMS incidents on the west side of the District.

ESCI recognizes that much of this is due to recent issues among the fire agencies and the Walla Walla Fire Department's increasing costs to provide ALS ambulance transport services outside the City limits. As ESCI understands it, WWFD's request for additional EMS Levy (or other) revenue, prompted District #4 and the College Place Fire Department to establish their own ambulance services.

For many years within the fire and EMS industry, there has been an emphasis on a standard of providing BLS within four minutes and ALS within eight minutes—which is codified in the NFPA standards. Except in a small number of high-acuity cases (e.g., cardiac arrest, shock, acute myocardial infarction), the need for shorter response times of an ALS transport unit likely does not improve patient outcomes.

There is a growing body of evidence and research to support this contention.^{18,19,20,21} Further, several published articles by industry experts have begun to recommend minimizing the use of "red lights and siren" (RLS) and rapid response.²² Therefore, when considering EMS-incident dispatch policies and response-time performance criteria, this should be taken into consideration. However, community expectations must be considered as well, since citizens typically expect a rapid response from their fire department—regardless of the severity of their condition.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Dispatch & Emergency Communications

Emergency response organizations, regardless of mission, require reliable communications systems to ensure safe and effective emergency operations. Significant advances in radio and phone system technologies have been made in the past decade to meet new government-mandated standards. Concurrently, some radio frequency spectrums previously allocated to private industry have been “re-farmed” to public safety agencies to increase emergency communication system capacity. As a result, many agencies upgraded their radio systems to take advantage of these frequencies and comply with the new federal requirements. The following sections outline the current communication system components in Walla Walla County.

Walla Walla Emergency Services Communications

The *Walla Walla County Emergency 911 Center* (WW911), also known as *WESCOMM*, is the designated Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and E911-compliant dispatch center for almost all local law enforcement, fire, and EMS agencies in the County. Two fire districts—Walla Walla County Fire District #5 and Walla Walla County Fire District #2—are dispatched by Benton County 911 and Columbia County 911, respectively.

An *Emergency Management Communications Advisory Board* (EMCAB), consisting of fire and law enforcement representatives from all Walla Walla County response agencies, provides input and feedback on dispatch operations, planning, and logistical issues with the countywide emergency communications system. An Executive Committee, comprised of elected officials, oversees WESCOMM’s annual budget and financial affairs.

WESCOMM is operated by the City of Walla Walla Police Department, and staffed 24-hours daily by 12 Dispatchers, three Dispatch Supervisors, an Administrative Secretary, and a Dispatch Manager. The center is minimally staffed with two Dispatchers, with one Dispatcher primarily assigned to fire dispatch operations, and one assigned to law enforcement. Dispatchers work a rotating 10-hour shift. A Dispatch Supervisor is typically present as well, and routinely works either position as required for breaks, leaves, and busy periods.

WESCOMM utilizes the *Tyler Technologies/New World*® computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, which is also shared with the City of Milton-Freewater, Oregon’s 911 center, and the Columbia County 911 center. This CAD links to mobile data computers (MDC) that are in use on all WWFD response units, and the WWCFD4 career-staffed units. ESCI understands that CPFD also has MDC’s, but they are not routinely used in the field. Connectivity issues related to intranet firewall security as well as wireless internet connectivity, are currently being addressed—with a solution to be implemented by the end of 2019, possibly.

Dispatchers use the King County (WA) *Criteria-Based Emergency Medical Dispatch* (EMD) protocols, which include pre-arrival instruction protocols. Dispatchers are trained in First Aid/CPR, use of the EMD triage system, and annually complete on-line EMD continuing education training through the *King County EMS Online* web portal.

The fire departments in Walla Walla County primarily utilize an analog VHF radio system, which is simulcast through six repeater sites located around the County. ESCI understands that these six repeater sites provide adequate radio coverage throughout the County, with only a few communication “dead spots” that are well-known to the agencies. The three departments use common radio frequencies and equipment, allowing for seamless emergency communications between departments.

Dispatching & Communications Discussion

WESCOMM’s use of an EMS criteria-based dispatch system is consistent with other progressive organizations that consider dispatch centers as part of the first-responder team and use medically validated call-screening protocols to more accurately identify the type and severity of a problem. Low-acuity calls are identified using these protocols and are dispatched as “code yellow” (no lights and siren) responses. This approach improves public and first-responder safety by reducing the number of “code red” (lights and siren) responses. There is significant evidence many EMS calls do not warrant a lights and siren response. In 2017, the *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Emergency Medical Services* published a paper discussing the efficacy and safety issues related to the routine use of lights and sirens (L&S) to 911 calls for medical situations. In the executive summary, the authors equated the use of L&S to medical care, stating:

Another tenant of medicine is that treatments that have a known risk should be delivered in the lowest possible effective dose. This applies to chemotherapy that may be lifesaving, but has also may have a high risk of serious side effects. In radiology, the ALARA principle attempts to reduce radiation exposure from x-rays and CT scans to doses that are “as low as reasonably achievable” to make diagnoses while minimizing the hazards of radiation. We can apply this same medical principle to the use of L&S. There are some situations where the “medical treatment” of L&S use can improve patient outcome by the time that it saves, but there is a risk when L&S lead to EMS vehicle crashes, provider or patient injury, EMS provider hearing loss, or worsened patient condition due to anxiety and stress. It is even possible that excessive use of L&S by an EMS agency causes some patients with legitimate emergencies to choose private vehicle transportation to the hospital, rather than calling 911 due to the sirens and attention.²³

Further, these protocols allow dispatchers to provide accurate and succinct medical care instructions before the arrival of medical first-responders. A key advantage of these systems—besides the obvious benefit of improving patient care—is that they can reduce or eliminate ad-hoc communication between the caller and dispatcher. Further, implementation of a quality assurance (QA) program can help ensure dispatchers are using the protocol correctly, and provide performance feedback to the dispatcher. While WESCOMM requires dispatchers to complete EMD continuing education topics, there is no formal QA program in place that evaluates, quantifies, and reports EMD performance and adherence to protocols. Supervisors will occasionally review dispatch recordings for compliance with the EMD protocols, especially if an agency expresses concern about how a dispatcher handled a specific incident.

The use of analog VHF radios and simulcasting analog transmissions through strategically located repeater sites appears to ensure reliable emergency radio communications. Analog radio systems, while somewhat dated, allow for marginal voice communications to be understood in fringe coverage areas or areas with loud ambient background noise. Digital radio communications may simply drop off, or be received as unintelligible digitized noise called “artifact.” This can result in significant communication system gaps that may impact responder safety—especially in highly dynamic and rapidly evolving emergency situations.

Reliable broadband connectivity appears to be an issue in the deployment and use of MDCs in the three fire agencies. Robust and reliable MDC software and hardware solutions are plentiful in the emergency response arena. However, these solutions are often only as reliable and useful if they can connect to a secure intranet/internet network. Connectivity challenges are not just an issue of network coverage gaps. Incompatibility between proprietary software programs, network security/firewall issues, poor system “handoffs,” and/or any combination thereof, can lead to a frustrating end-user experience as well as significant unreliability.

To address many of the issues mentioned, the federal government authorized the creation of *FirstNet*®—a broadband wireless network communications system for first responders throughout the United States. Utilizing AT&T’s existing cellular telecommunications infrastructure, FirstNet provides dedicated broadband wireless coverage channels solely for first-responders. In describing the features of FirstNet, one author noted:

*FirstNet is about more than a single network. It is about providing communications for public safety. This can be via the FirstNet terrestrial network, Wi-Fi connections back to FirstNet, satellite backhaul for difficult to cover areas... FirstNet is not simply a network, it is a communications system that, in conjunction with LMR (Land Mobile Radio) gives public safety more access to more modes of communications while at the same time adding yet another level of redundancy.*²⁴

FirstNet reports that 5,250 public safety agencies are now using 425,000 wireless connections throughout the United States. Washington State opted in to the FirstNet program in 2017. From an implementation perspective, it remains in its infancy.

Training & Continuing Education

Delivering safe and effective fire and emergency services requires a well-trained workforce. Initial, ongoing, and high-quality training and education are critical for fire-service effectiveness and the safety of its personnel. Without it, the community may experience poor outcomes and/or a firefighter injury or death.

Initial training of newly hired firefighters is essential, requiring a structured recruit training and testing process—after which regular, ongoing verifiable training must be conducted to ensure skill and knowledge retention and competency. Delivering high-quality training requires dedicating significant internal training resources and/or contracting with outside agencies and providers for these services. High-quality training requires specific written objectives, lesson plans, and methods to verify learning knowledge comprehension and retention.

In the following sections, ESCI has reviewed each organization's fire, EMS, and special operations training programs, resource allocation, schedules, training documents, and practices.

General Training Competencies

The following figure summarizes the general training topics and certification levels provided in each department.

Figure 128: General Training Competencies by Fire Agency

General Training	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Incident Command System	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accountability Procedures	Yes	Yes	Yes
Training SOGs	Under review	Yes	Yes
Recruit Academy	Yes	External ¹	External ¹
Special Rescue Training	Operations	No	No
HazMat Certifications	Tech. & Ops.	Operations	Tech. & Ops
Wildland Certifications	NWCG FF II and/or Engine Boss	NWCG FF II and/or Engine Boss	NWCG FF II and/or Engine Boss
Vehicle Extrication Training	Yes	Yes	Yes
Defensive Driving Program	EVIP	EVIP	EVIP
Communications & Dispatch	Yes	Yes	Yes

¹Recruit academies are regionally accomplished.

The next figure lists emergency medical training competencies among each of the fire departments.

Figure 129: EMS Training Competencies by Fire Agency

EMS Training	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Internal EMT/EMT-P Initial Training	No ¹	No ¹	No ¹
CME Provided In-House	Yes ²	Yes ²	Yes ²
BLS/ALS Skills Training	BLS/ALS	BLS	BLS/ALS

¹Initial EMT certification through WWCC or state reciprocity.

²Facilitated through WWCC and approved Washington State OTEP.

New Employee Training

Each department orients and trains new employees and volunteers differently. WWFD conducts a two-week orientation of new employees, who are hired with at least one year of firefighting experience. WWCFD₄ and CPFD send their new employees and volunteers through a regional Firefighter I recruit training program conducted annually by rotating each year between Walla Walla Community College (WWCC) and a consortium of regional fire departments and fire districts. The WWCC program extends approximately nine months, with the regional program lasting approximately three months. In WWCFD₄ and CPFD, new recruits must also complete department-specific training objectives in addition to the Firefighter I training requirements.

Training Program Administration

To function effectively, a training program must be closely monitored, supported, and funded. Administrative program support is important, along with program guidance through the development of training plans and the setting of goals and specific training objectives.

Each fire agency has identified individuals responsible for training. Rank varies between Firefighter (CPFD), Lieutenant (WWCFD₄), and Captain (WWFD). WWCFD₄ and WWFD have assigned a Lieutenant and Captain respectively, who are primarily responsible for EMS training. CPFD and WWCFD₄ utilize the County Health Coordinator to provide EMS training oversight. Instructors for each of the agencies are medical professional practitioners, EMT-Paramedics, industry specialists, or certified *International Fire Service Accreditation Congress* (IFSAC) Instructors I and II.

Training Methodologies & Delivery

Standardized training is a critical component when providing high-quality emergency response training throughout an organization. This training should be based on established standards, best practices, and a validated curriculum. There are a variety of sources for training standards, including the NFPA, IFSAC, and *International Fire Service Training Association* (IFSTA). Training must also meet applicable federal and state OSHA regulations and standards, and the Washington State *Department of Health, Office of EMS & Trauma System* requirements, as well as standards for Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics.

The Walla Walla Fire Department and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 provide advanced life support by EMT-Paramedics. The requirements for continuing certification necessitate additional skills and training prior to recertification (every three years). Each EMT-P must demonstrate to the local EMS authority proficiency and completion of all skills and training requirements prior to being recertified by the local Medical Program Director.

Each fire agency either directly delivers or supports EMS training and continuing medical education. The State of Washington provides for *On-going Training & Education Programs* (OTEP) to facilitate the delivery of an approved agency curriculum. All three organizations have a recognized program approved by the State of Washington and monitored by the Walla Walla County EMS Coordinator.

Delivering good training to fire and EMS personnel requires the provision of instructors with specific tools and facilities. Each of the fire agencies in this study provides didactic and manipulative skills training, with varying annual training requirements. All three agencies have access to the WWFD drill grounds and tower. However, the drill tower has sustained concrete damage over the years due to heat spalling and decay. As a result, all three agencies are working to purchase a “prefab” drill tower that can be used for live fire, ventilation, search and rescue, and rope-rescue training evolutions.

Training Delivery & Scheduling

The following figure summarizes the training methodologies utilized by each of the fire departments.

Figure 130: Methodologies Utilized in Training by Department

Training Provided	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Manipulative skills & tasks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fire training hours requirements	Per WAC 296-305	36 hours/year	24 hours/year
EMS training hours requirements	OTEP	24 hours/year	OTEP
Annual training hours tracked	Yes	Yes	Yes
Use of lesson plans	Yes	Yes	Yes
In-house or commercial	Both	In-house	Both
Night drills	Yes	Weekly	Quarterly
Multi-agency drills	Yes	Yes	Quarterly
Inter-station drills	Monthly	Six days per week	Monthly
Disaster drills	Yes	No	Annually
Pre-fire planning included	Yes	Yes	Yes

The next figure lists the annual training hours delivered by each fire agency in the study, along with the funds allocated for training.

Figure 131: Annual Training Hours & Training Budgets

Description	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Fire Training Hours Delivered	105 hours/person (4,731/45)	Goal is 72 hours/person (41 members)	93 hours/person (7,534/81)
Fire Training Budget	\$205,950 ^A	\$99,072 ^A	\$190,300 ^A

^ATraining Officer’s salary is included in the Training budget.

Training Delivery & Scheduling Discussion

There is a variation among the fire agencies in the number of training hours and performance requirements, as well as annual training hours delivered to each employee. WWFD and CFPD essentially train the same number of members (45 versus 41, respectively), yet WWFD budgets over twice as much. WWC4's training budget includes funds for EMS continuing medical education and is comparable to WWFD's training budget, even though they have almost twice the number of members compared to the 45 members of WWFD. ESCI notes that the WWFD's and WWC4's training budgets also include the salaries of the Training Officers.

The frequency and method used in conducting routine drills appear consistent among the departments. All tend to conduct frequent inter-station drills. In addition, all conduct occasional night drills (WWC4 conducts monthly night drills), perform multi-agency drills, and include pre-fire planning information in their training and relevant drill scenarios. Each fire agency requires a minimum number of annual fire training hours. However, the average number of hours varies between departments as listed previously.

Consistency in training, coupled with defined minimum performance requirements and standards, is critical to ensuring consistent, effective, and safe emergency operations. The NFPA has identified training standards, performance criteria, and minimum requirements for measuring performance in conducting various emergency operations tasks. NFPA 1001 identifies the minimum job performance requirements (JPR) for Firefighter I and II qualifications.²⁵ NFPA 1410 identifies the performance criteria and minimum requirements for various emergency scene tasks.²⁶ And, NFPA 1500 outlines the training content requirements for new-hires and continuing education training.²⁷

Each of the fire departments currently utilizes the *Staff Members, Activity, & Training Module* in the FIREHOUSE Software® records management system to document training and staff records.

Training Topics Discussion

Each department provides basic fire operations and hazmat-response training in addition to a county approved EMS OTEP program. WWFD and WWC4 deliver Special Rescue Operations training. WWFD conducts their own recruit academies, while CFPD and WWC4 jointly conducts a regional academy. However, each department conducts new-hire orientation training specific to each organization's operational procedures and administrative policies.

Life-Safety & Prevention Programs

An aggressive risk management program, through proactive fire and life safety services, is a fire department's best opportunity to minimize property and income loss as well as trauma associated with fires and other community risks.

The National Fire Protection Association recommends a multifaceted, coordinated risk reduction process at the community level to address local risks. This requires engaging all segments of the community, identifying the highest priority risks, and then developing and implementing strategies designed to mitigate the risks.

Historically, fire departments have emphasized the importance of public education and prevention programs. The financial impact of a fire or injury goes well beyond the cost of extinguishment or treatment. The long-term impact realized by an individual property owner through the loss of revenue is significant. However, additional fiscal impacts may be felt by the community through the loss of employee salaries and associated spending. It is also not uncommon for businesses to never re-open following a fire, and the community further suffers through the loss of tax revenue.

A proactive fire prevention and life-safety program, based on effective application of relevant codes and ordinances, can reduce the loss of property, life, and the personal disruption that accompanies catastrophic fires and accidents.

The implementation of fire codes, smoke alarms, and sprinkler programs are examples of successful programs producing a positive impact throughout North America. However, fire departments have moved beyond simple fire prevention programs into several other areas, including citizen CPR and AED programs to improve cardiac arrest survival rates, bike helmet safety programs, drowning prevention, and fall prevention—to name a few examples.

Many fire departments are now conducting community risk assessments in order to identify potential risks that warrant the highest priority. Based on the results of these analyses, they are developing *Community Risk Reduction* (CRR) plans and programs. A comprehensive CRR plan may be a fire department's best opportunity to minimize the losses and human trauma associated with fires and other community risks.

The National Fire Protection Association recommends a multifaceted, coordinated risk reduction process at the community level to address local risks. This requires engaging all segments of the community, identifying the highest priority risks, and then developing and implementing strategies designed to mitigate the risks.²⁸

Modern fire departments need to review and understand the importance of fire prevention and public education and appreciate their role in the planning process of a community with diversified zoning, including residential, commercial, and industrial properties.

The fundamental components of an effective fire prevention program are listed in the following figure, accompanied by the elements needed to address each component.

Figure 132: Fire Prevention Program Components

Fire Prevention Program Components	Elements Needed to Address Program Components
Fire Code Enforcement	- Proposed construction and plans review - New construction inspections - Existing structure/occupancy inspections - Internal protection systems design review - Storage and handling of hazardous materials
Public Fire & Life Safety Education	- Public education - Specialized education - Juvenile fire setter intervention - Prevention information dissemination
Fire Cause Investigation	- Fire cause and origin determination - Fire death investigation - Arson investigation and prosecution

Fire & Life Safety Code Enforcement

The most effective way to combat fires is to prevent them. A strong fire prevention program, based on locally identified risk and relevant codes and ordinances, reduces the loss of property, life, and the often-crippling impact on a community's economy. All three fire agencies perform fire code inspections, with WWFD and CPFD providing new construction fire-code plan reviews. CPFD attempts to complete annual inspections on target risk hazards (N = 68). The following figure summarizes the plan review programs and ancillary programs for new construction and the fire protection systems among the three fire agencies.

Figure 133: New Construction Plan Review & Inspections

Services Provided	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
FD consulted in proposed new construction	Yes	Yes	No ¹
FD consulted on proposed occupancy changes	Yes	Yes	No
Perform fire & life-safety plan reviews	Yes	Yes	No ²
Charges for inspections or reviews	Yes	Yes	No
Special risk inspections	Yes	Yes	No
Storage tank inspections	Yes	Yes	No
Key-box entry program in place	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hydrant flow records maintained	FH Software	FH Software	FH Software

¹Only for developments requiring fire flow and onsite storage.

²Only for fire flow requirements, hydrants.

Each of the fire agencies has adopted the 2015 edition of the *International Fire Code* (IFC), with local amendments. WWFD and CPFD have adopted a residential fire sprinkler ordinance. WWFD charges for fire alarm, fire sprinkler, and fire suppression installation permits. None of the departments allows self-inspection programs across their communities. The City of Walla Walla may issue citations, albeit through the Police Department.

CPFD has a dedicated Fire Marshal position. The WWFD Fire Chief is responsible for fire-code enforcement and oversees two inspectors/investigators, in addition to the Walla Walla Police Department employing two Code Enforcement Officers. WWFD is the only department that identified the availability of administrative support (0.25 FTE). WWCFD₄ has two trained fire investigators. However, neither has maintained its minimum continuing education requirements

Discussion

Mandating installation of fire sprinkler systems in new and remodeled residential construction is a controversial issue in many jurisdictions. The 2009 *International Residential Code* (IRC) mandates the installation of fire sprinkler systems in all single- and multi-family residential structures and dwellings. However, state and local jurisdictions regularly amend building codes to meet local needs.

Developers, building industry associations, and others have lobbied state and local governments intensely against requiring residential fire sprinklers in new construction—asserting cost-prohibitive installation; ongoing maintenance costs; and an overall negative cost versus benefit. Conversely, life-safety advocates, fire-service associations, and insurance groups continue to push for formal adoption of residential fire sprinkler installations. They cite scientific evidence, advances in cost-effective sprinkler system technology, and real-world experience in which fire-sprinkler activations have saved lives and property.

Evidence-based research and experience have proven the effectiveness and speed of fixed fire-sprinkler systems in containing and/or extinguishing incipient fires in commercial and residential structures. As more residential systems are installed, the number of fire incidents involving residential sprinkler installations should bring clarity and consensus as to their cost-effectiveness and safety.

ESCI also noted that the fire departments do not utilize on-duty fire operations personnel to conduct routine fire inspections. Utilizing operations personnel trained in basic fire inspection practices can be an effective safety and educational endeavor for businesses. It also has the benefit of increasing a department's inspection capabilities and frequency. Additionally, it provides excellent opportunities for response crews to develop familiarization with buildings in their response zones, conduct pre-incident planning, and update pre-incident plans when new hazards are identified in the field.

Community Risk Reduction Programs

Lately, U.S. fire departments have begun to recognize the value of Community Risk Reduction (CRR) programs that go beyond traditional fire prevention activities. Some have gone so far as to re-name their "fire prevention" divisions to "Community Risk Reduction Divisions."

Regardless of the name, fire departments should be able to accurately identify the various potential community risks before developing prevention programs. This is not meant to imply diminishing the focus and importance of addressing the fire problem in a community; rather, it affords an opportunity to identify and mitigate additional community risks through targeted prevention activities.

The first step in developing an effective CRR plan is identifying those risks unique to a community by conducting a Community Risk Assessment CRA. A key component of the assessment process is the collection and analysis of incident data. However, firefighters, officers, and Fire Inspectors can also provide substantial anecdotal information on the various risks found within their respective response-areas.

None of the fire departments in this study stated they have completed a CRA and subsequent CRR plan. The departments and respective communities would likely benefit from adopting a CRR plan. The process does not have to be complex and could consist of simply identifying the most prevalent risks and developing strategies to mitigate those risks.

In the event a consolidation of agencies occurs, it would be essential to complete a CRA and publish a CRR plan reflecting the overall service area risks and proposed actions to minimize hazards.

Fire & Life-Safety Public Education Programs

Providing fire and life-safety education to the public to minimize the number of emergencies while training the community to take appropriate actions when an emergency occurs is an essential part of a fire and life-safety program. Fire and life-safety education provide the best chance for minimizing the effects of fire, including sudden injury and illness to the community.

Public education and outreach are conducted in various ways among each of the fire departments. The following figure is a summary of the programs offered by each.

Figure 134: Six Steps of CRR Planning



Figure 135: Life-Safety & Public Education Services

Services Provided	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD₄
PIO/Public Educator Assigned	Yes	No	No
911 Education Program	Yes	Yes	Yes
Exit Drills In The Home (EDITH)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Smoke Alarm Program	Yes	Yes	Yes
CO Alarm Program	Yes	No	No
Fire Safety	Yes	Yes	Yes
Injury Prevention	No	No	No
Elder Safety/Fall prevention	Yes	No	No
Babysitting Classes	No	No	No
CPR/First Aid Classes	No	No	No
BP Checks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fire Extinguisher Classes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prevention Curriculum in Schools	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wildfire Defensible Space Education	No	Yes	Yes

Public Education Discussion

Each of the fire departments in this study appears to have relatively comprehensive public education programs. While WWFD employs a dedicated public safety educator, CPFD and WWCFD₄ utilize available response-crews to deliver programs. ESCI also noted that only WWFD has a dedicated Public Information Officer (PIO) and utilizes the same two Inspectors/Investigators assigned in fire prevention to deliver public education programs.

WWFD, CPFD, and WWCFD₄ all deliver a cooperative public education program titled "Safety Always Matters" (SAM). This Fire and Life Safety program is delivered by other fire departments to elementary schools to teach how to respond to emergencies. The curriculum is specifically designed for individual grade levels. The annual delivery period for the SAM program is September through October.

In today's fire service, public fire and injury prevention education is much more important than in the past. This is likely the result of evolving community expectations, coupled with the realization by fire departments that community engagement and safety education outreach can build tremendous community support.

If consolidation is pursued, consideration should be given to conducting a formal Community Risk Assessment, with the goal of coalescing and focusing public education efforts on the significant risks identified in the assessment process. The U.S. Fire Administration identified a five-step assessment process for improving public safety education:²⁹

1. Conduct a community analysis.
2. Develop community partnerships.
3. Create an implementation strategy.
4. Implement the strategy.
5. Evaluate the results.

They also emphasize the need for the following pragmatic approach:

The temptation to "just get something implemented" is hard to resist. Unfortunately, this is a trap. Yes, it's easy to schedule some presentations at a school; pass out brochures, stickers, and plastic helmets; and do some media interviews. But do those presentations address the community's worst fire or injury problems? Do the solutions being promoted really work? Is the appropriate target audience even being reached? Are community groups working together? Is the program being implemented in the best way?

A "ready, fire, aim" approach will not hit the target. It can give the impression that the department is out there educating the public but may achieve little else. Successfully reducing fires and preventable injuries involves effective community planning. Notable public education programs around the country always prove this to be true.

Fire Cause & Origin Investigation

Accurately determining the cause of a fire is an essential element of a fire prevention program. When fires are intentionally set, identification and/or prosecution of the responsible offender is critical in preventing additional fires, injuries and fatalities, and catastrophic economic effects. Further, identifying the cause and potential trends enables the department to provide specific public information and fire prevention education to prevent reoccurrence.

Except for the WWCFD₄, the departments have personnel trained in basic fire investigation techniques and have established procedures and excellent partnerships with their respective law enforcement agencies—including maintaining the chain of custody for evidence. WWCFD₄ relies on external resources to assist in fire investigations and evidence gathering. CPFD may request additional resources for unique investigations or where potential litigation may be warranted. Personnel trained in investigations include select Operations firefighters, officers, and Fire Marshals. In addition, a cooperative team of fire and law enforcement investigators has been formally established for large-scale fire investigations. A regional fire investigation trailer is available to each agency as needed.

Fire Investigation Discussion

The results of professional and thorough fire investigations can be extremely powerful in the following:

- Prosecuting arsonists.
- Identifying product safety issues.
- Educating the public about the outcomes of unsafe behaviors and conditions.
- Assisting insurance companies and property owners with insurance claims.
- Providing solid evidence in criminal and civil court proceedings.
- Identifying necessary life safety code changes.

Given the established partnerships with law enforcement and the sharing of resources through mutual aid and a countywide investigation team, it appears the departments have the appropriate capabilities and sound practices necessary for the determination of fire-cause and origin, and for the investigation of suspicious fires.

Technical Rescue & Special Operations

Hazardous Materials Response

The following figure lists the hazardous materials support and response-capabilities among the three fire departments.

Figure 136: Hazardous Materials Support & Response Capabilities

Services Provided	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Apparatus	25-foot trailer	None	None
Equipment for Level B	Yes	None	None
Equipment for Level A	Yes	None	None
Equipment for decontamination	Yes	None	None
Plume modeling/spot weather analysis	Yes	None	None
Equipment for plugging/diking/spills	Yes	None	Basic materials
Gas monitoring	Yes	None	Yes
HazMat Staff Resources			
Awareness certified personnel	0	15	15
Operations certified personnel	36	17	14
Technician certified personnel	9	2	0
WMD certified personnel	No	No	No
HazMat IC-certified personnel	5	1	No
HazMat Safety Officer certified personnel	Yes	No	No

HazMat-Response Discussion

WWFD and WWCFD₄ currently participate in a Tri-County regional hazardous materials response program. An opportunity exists to further develop standardized operating procedures for the delivery of regional response program that enhances the current Tri-County team. Training and distributing resources across the region could provide a higher level of expertise and aid in the direction of proper utilization of specialty equipment deployment. Further economies may be realized through the ability to obtain grants or private funding streams. Further consideration should explore partnerships with other public safety departments, industries, and institutions that optimize program needs while distributing financial obligations.

Technical Incident Response

The following figure lists the technical rescue support and response-capabilities among the three fire departments.

Figure 137: Technical Rescue Services Provided

Services Provided	WWFD	CPFD	WWCFD ₄
Confined Space Rescue	Yes	Awareness	Awareness
Rope (High Angle) Rescue	Yes	Awareness	Awareness
Trench Collapse Rescue	Operational level	Awareness	Awareness
Structural Collapse Rescue	Operational level	Awareness	Awareness
Vehicle/Machinery Rescue	Operational level	No ¹	Yes
Surface Water Rescue	No	Awareness	Awareness
Minimum Staffing Policy	No	No	No
Technical Rescue Team Administration			
Budget for TRT services	No	Not Provided	Not Provided
Training certification obtained	Internal & third party	External	WWFD
SOGs in place for each discipline	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agency has response SOG for TRT	Yes	Yes	Yes
Records maintained for life-safety ropes	Yes	NA	NA

¹Performs limited extrication; relies on mutual aid.

CPFD and WWCFD₄ provide only awareness-level technical rescue capabilities. CPFD requests mutual aid for serious or complex technical rescue response incidents.

Technical Rescue Discussion

There is an opportunity to develop a standardized operating program and deliver a regional response program such as the hazardous materials program. Training and distributing resources across the region could provide a higher level of expertise and aid in the direction of proper utilization of specialty equipment deployment. Further economies may be realized through the ability to obtain grants or private funding streams. Further consideration should explore partnerships with other public safety departments, industries, and institutions that optimize program needs while distributing financial obligations.

Section II: Future Opportunities for Cooperative Efforts

ALTERNATIVES FOR IMPLEMENTING COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

Section I of this report consisted of a baseline assessment of the current conditions of the various components of each of the three fire agencies participating in this study. Based on this comprehensive analysis, ESCI was able to evaluate the opportunities that exist in the region for shared service-delivery opportunities between the three jurisdictions.

Fire-service organizations can work together in many ways, ranging from a simple and fundamental sharing of resources and programs, up to and including legal assimilation of multiple agencies into one in the form of a merger or consolidation, where feasible. The following alternatives have been identified as feasible to the three fire agencies:

- Maintain Status Quo (Autonomy)
- Interlocal Cooperation Agreements (Contract for services)
 - Administrative Collaboration
 - Functional Collaboration
 - Operational Collaboration
- Merger
- Annexation
- Regional Fire Protection Service Authority (Regional Fire Authority)

The balance of this section examines the multiple options available to the fire agencies and provides insight and guidance where appropriate.

Often, one of the assumptions found is that a legal merger of agencies is the only available alternative. However, in general terms, several different strategies are available to the fire agencies when considering the consolidation of services. This begins with a do-nothing approach and ends with the complete unification of the organizations into what is, essentially, a new emergency service provider. A summary of the available methodologies will be addressed in the following sections.

Status Quo (Autonomy)

In some cases, no change to the existing system is the most desirable approach. WWFD, CPFD, and WWCFD₄ could decide to continue as separate entities and not undertake any further partnering opportunities. Remaining separate may prove advantageous, as it provides each agency with the most organizational control (autonomy) under this strategy, as the jurisdictions continue to make decisions considering only unilateral issues. This strategy represents a perpetuation of the status quo and is useful as a comparison by which to measure the other strategies.

The disadvantages of this approach are that any current challenges (if any) facing the fire agencies remain unchanged, the opportunities for efficiency—either financial or at the service-level—through greater collaboration are not realized, and some duplication and overlap may continue. In today’s environment, taxpayers typically hold their elected officials accountable for delivering a quality level of service at an affordable rate, and expect creative thinking to solve problems or achieve those ends. While “maintaining the status quo” is easy and involves the least amount of agency impact, it may well be one of the riskier decisions to make politically.

Interlocal Agreements/Contract for Services

An *Interlocal Cooperation Agreement* (ICA) or joint operating agreement (JOA), is a legal agreement between agencies that can take many forms. These agreements are enabled through *Washington Chapter 39.34 RCW*.³⁰ Examples may include two fire agencies developing a JOA to provide fire protection services; several agencies entering into an interlocal contract with other political subdivisions to form a joint operating agency with a separate governing board; or a simple, interlocal service contract where one jurisdiction may provide emergency services to another.

These agreements are sometimes referred to as “functional consolidations” or “mergers.” The following section lists three types of collaborative options that could be accomplished through the implementation of an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. Any of these options could be adopted independently or combined into one strategy. Many forms of these agreements exist among jurisdictions throughout Washington State. Examples include the following:³¹

Cities Providing Service to Fire Districts

- City of Bothell provides fire protection and EMS to Snohomish County Fire District #10.
- City of Redmond provides fire protection and EMS to King County Fire District #34.

Cities Providing Service to Other Cities

- City of Bellevue provides fire protection and EMS to the City of Clyde Hill.
- City of Tacoma provides fire protection and EMS to the City of Fircrest.

Fire Districts Providing Service to Cities

- Yelm Fire District #2 providing fire protection, EMS, and other services to the City of Yelm.
- Lewis County Fire Protection District #11 provides fire protection to the City of Pe Ell.

Administrative Consolidation

An *Administrative Consolidation* can occur when two or more agencies maintain their separate legal status and separate operational elements, but combine some or all administrative functions. Examples include combining the administration under one Fire Chief and combining clerical, human resources, legal, financial, and other functions while maintaining separate operational activities. An Administrative Collaboration is accomplished legally through an agreement.

Advantages

The advantages of this approach include reduced overhead costs by eliminating administrative duplication; a gradual alignment of otherwise separate operations under a single administrative head; less resistance to change by the affected employees in the operational elements that typically occurs in other collaborative options; and singularity of purpose, focus, and direction at the governance level of the participating organizations. This option lends itself well to a gradual move toward a single, consolidated agency, where differences in attitude, culture, and/or operations are otherwise too great to overcome in a single consolidation process. The success or failure of this type of consolidation is heavily dependent on identifying and hiring the right leader who can clearly define and support the desired direction for multiple fire agencies, while avoiding the political issues that inherently arise from simultaneously serving the interests of multiple groups.

Disadvantages

The disadvantages include potential conflicts in policy direction from the various city councils and fire district boards, potentially untenable working conditions for the Fire Chief (“one-person, multiple bosses”), and increased potential for personnel conflict as separate employee groups vie for dominance and supremacy. Inherent management inflexibility can occur due to the political complexity of the agreement. An administrative team who must answer to two or more political bodies might become “whip sawn” by these entities with conflicting direction and disagreement on crucial issues—resulting in a limited ability to manage the organization effectively.

Another disadvantage relates to funding operations. Contractual consolidations cannot change jurisdictional or taxing boundaries, thereby requiring the participating fire districts or cities to define a fair method of funding the consolidated operations. In contrast, a statutory annexation, merger, or formation of a Regional Fire Authority creates a single taxing district with a more predictable funding stream that is insulated from the political challenges that can arise when funding is dependent on agreements between different entities.

To be effective in sustaining a long-term alliance, this approach requires close governance collaboration and agreement when creating the terms of the agreement, as well as trust in the administrative team in managing the alliance. Many interlocal cooperation agreements (or intergovernmental agreements) are in effect throughout the nation have successfully centralized the administrative functions of fire departments.

Functional Consolidation

A *Functional Consolidation* is when the participating agencies continue to exist as separate fire agencies but combine certain functions into a common resource, such as combining fire and EMS training, fire prevention, public education, administrative and support services, purchasing, and/or apparatus maintenance. Implementing this option may require some alignment of standard operating guidelines, policies, procedures, and certain operational aspects to make the collaborative processes perform properly.

A structure of shared administrative decision-making is typically created as they relate to the collaborative effort(s). This requires policymakers and administrators to voluntarily forfeit or delegate their authority to unilaterally change actions, activities, or direction in the joint functional areas, in favor of a collaborative approach. Like an Administrative Consolidation, a Functional Consolidation is also properly accomplished legally through an ICA between the agencies. In some cases, a Functional Consolidation is all that is required to accomplish the cooperative goals of the fire agencies without considering other forms of complete legal integration.

Advantages

The primary intent of such agreements is to share resources, improve service, and reduce costs at the *program* level. The advantages of this option are greater opportunities for efficiency; an opportunity to reallocate redundant available resources to those areas lacking in resources (e.g., transferring redundant training officers back to an operational function and increasing operational strength, assigning them to address training deficiencies or special programs, etc.); and a closer working relationship between members of the fire agencies, which can spill over to other unrelated activities in otherwise separate organizations.

This type of consolidation may segue into greater levels of cooperation. Also, this option usually has the advantage of being a low-cost and low-risk improvement strategy, and can serve as a foundation on which fire agencies build the experience and trust necessary to implement other collaborative strategies and programs. Finally, this approach may reduce the human factor barriers, as members of each fire agency realize that the other organizations' members "aren't so bad after all."

Disadvantages

The disadvantages of this approach are that the functional option requires much greater collaboration between the participating fire agencies than the other partnering options. Another disadvantage is that interaction by and between operational personnel of the different agencies increases the potential for friction. Numerous details must be worked out in advance of such a contract, including but not limited to work rules, employee assignments, volunteer opportunities, office location, logos, asset allocation, authority, funding (see the preceding discussion under "Administrative Consolidations"), and even the name of the consolidated program. Further, independence and autonomy are lost in the consolidated areas, spilling into other seemingly unaffected areas.

Operational (Full Service) Consolidation

This partnering option takes the next step in the continuum of closer collaboration and potential full consolidation. In this option, all operations are consolidated under a single organization that serves all participating jurisdictions. The fire departments and/or districts remain independent organizations from a legal, political, and taxing standpoint. However, from a service-level perspective, the fire agencies operate as one emergency services organization. The result features a single organizational structure and chain of command. Operational Consolidation is also legally accomplished through an ICA among the participating organizations.

Depending on the form of the agreement(s) establishing the organization, employees and members of each organization may remain with the original agency, or they may be transferred to one of the other agencies, or to an entirely new entity. One Fire Chief oversees a blended organization.

To be successful, this option should be considered only in the context of a formal and comprehensive agreement and substantial movement toward full consolidation between the agency policymakers and administrations. The level of trust required to implement an Operational Consolidation is very high since independence and autonomy have been willingly relinquished in favor of the preferred future state of full consolidation.

Advantages

One of the primary advantages of this form of consolidation is that it produces the maximum opportunity for organizational flexibility and efficiency. This is typical of the operational option, where services are delivered to the communities, and the level of trust and cooperation required to make the implementation successful implies a near-readiness to take the next step towards full consolidation.

Disadvantages

The disadvantage is that administrators and policymakers must share power and gain consensus where they once had unilateral authority to control and implement. Since there are multiple bargaining unit agreements, they would have to be aligned. Further, it can become a challenge to determine which agency would be the contractor.

Finally, funding, as discussed in the preceding section under “Administrative Consolidation,” remains an issue for full consolidations. Long-term funding for full consolidations can be a challenge as each participating fire agency must contribute funding from its own revenues, which are often subject to voter approval from only one member of the consolidated fire agency. Long-term debt-financing is also more challenging, as the consolidated fire agency generally cannot issue its own debt and must rely on the participating entities for debt financing.

Merger

A merger is a complete combining of the participating *fire districts* into one agency. As the current study is focused on two cities and one fire district, a merger is not an option. However, a discussion of a merger is included as it could become an option if, in the future, another fire district was involved in the consolidation discussion.

Washington State regulations prevent cities from merging with a fire district, although they can be annexed by a fire district (discussed in the following section). One or more fire districts are absorbed into and become part of the surviving district. Fire districts merging into a surviving district are referred to as the *merging agency*, and the surviving district is referred to as the *merger agency*.

The employees of the merging agency(s) are transferred to the merger agency, and the elected officials are brought into the merger district and reduced over the next three regular elections until the Board of Fire Commissioners is down to three or five; depending on the structure of the merger district board. If a fire district has a \$10 million budget or more, a seven-member board can be created.³² The merging fire district boundaries must be within reasonable proximity to each other. Reasonable proximity is defined at an operational level, so if it makes sense operationally for the fire districts to merge, it is likely that the reasonable proximity criteria would be met.

Once a decision to merge is made by the merging district board, the merging district must submit a petition to merge to the merger district. If the merger district accepts the petition and terms of the proposed merger, it adopts a resolution accordingly and sends the resolution, along with the original petition, back to the merging district board. The merging district board then adopts a resolution requesting the County auditor to call a special election in the merging district. A simple majority determines the outcome of the election. If the majority votes in the affirmative, the respective district boards adopt concurrent resolutions declaring the districts merged under the name of the merger district.

The election for a merger may also establish commissioner districts if unanimously approved by the boards prior to the merger vote, and must be included in the ballot language for the merger. In this case, the same process of board-member reductions occurs as if no commissioner districts were formed, until the merged board is reduced to the three or five members.³³ At that point, the commissioner districts shall be drawn and used for the election of the successor Fire Commissioners.

The participating fire agencies in this study include two cities and a single fire protection district. Therefore, a merger of Walla Walla and College Place into Walla Walla County Fire District #4 would be prohibited in accordance with Washington State regulations.

“Municipal” Fire District

In 2017, the Washington State Legislature approved Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5628, “Cities and Towns—Fire Protection District Formation.” This resolution added a new section to Chapter 52.02 RCW to provide an alternative method for incorporated communities to establish a fire protection district with boundaries that are the same as the corporate boundaries of the city or town.³⁴

By forming a fire district, the city divests itself of the responsibility and governance of fire protection and EMS; reduces certain city property taxing authority (by transferring that authority to the fire district), and other revenue sources; eliminates negotiations with the fire department labor group; and the district becomes its own independent organization that no longer competes with other city departments for General Fund revenue.

Prior to an election, the respective cities would need to pass a resolution that would include the following:

- A financing plan for the new fire district, including the imposition of revenue sources, such as property taxes or benefit charges, and...
 - The dollar amount the fire protection district will levy in the first year in which the fire protection district imposes any regular property taxes.
 - The city's highest lawful levy, reduced by the fire district's levy amount.
 - The estimated aggregate net dollar amount impact on property owners within the city based on the changes.
- And a date for a public hearing on the resolution.

Governance

Since the governing statutes do not require a separate board of fire commissioners to be created, the current elected city council (or an appointed subset) serves in that capacity ex officio, or may relinquish governance authority of the fire district to an independently elected board of commissioners that is established within the resolution and election forming the fire district, or may relinquish governance authority of the fire district to an appointed board of three fire commissioners at any time after formation. Each appointed commissioner serves until successors are elected at the next qualified election.

While an election of fire commissioners could be done after the initial election, it could result in potential conflicts, as the city council's first responsibility is to city government. In ESCI's opinion, establishing an independent Board of Fire Commissioners, whether initially or not long after the district is formed, would be key to the fire district's success. It avoids the appearance of conflicts of interest or the very real incompatibility-of-office dilemma that may be faced by a city council member acting as an ex officio board member and having to decide between what is best for the city and what is best for the fire district if the issue is mutually exclusive.

Considerations & Issues

All resources and personnel currently employed by each city for the delivery of fire protection and emergency medical services are transferred or credited to the fire district. All funds, credits or other assets held by each city for fire protection and EMS are transferred to the fire district.

Careful analysis of comingled equipment reserve funds set aside for fire apparatus replacement, along with other municipal equipment unrelated to fire apparatus, will be an important consideration. So too are legacy costs, such as pension liabilities or *Other Post-Employment Benefits* (OPEB) provided for in statute or current collective bargaining agreements, for example.

What also must be considered in this case is how various administrative and other support services will be provided to the new fire district. If the city were willing, the fire district could contract for services such as human resources, information technology, payroll and finance, vehicle and facilities maintenance, and other services. If not, and the district elects to provide its own internal services, operational costs would likely increase substantially.

Because the formation of a fire protection district creates a new entity, there is an added layer of complexity to the planning. The new entity will need to register with the *Internal Revenue Service* (IRS); establish new accounts with the County and vendors; in addition, contracts will need to be assigned and negotiated, labor agreements negotiated, payroll systems established, and so on. In other words, the formation of a new entity can be incredibly time-intensive and attention to detail would be crucial.

Financial

When forming a municipal fire district, a city must reduce its General Fund regular property tax levy by the total combined-levy of the fire protection district as proposed by the district. The reduced levy amount of the city must occur in the first year in which the fire district imposes any of the property taxes authorized in RCW 52.16.130, 52.16.140, or 52.16.160. If the fire district does not impose all levies under the applicable RCWs when it begins operations, the city must further reduce its General Fund regular property tax levy if the district initially imposes any of the levies in subsequent years, by the amount of such levy or levies initially imposed in a subsequent year.

A city contemplating the establishment of a municipal fire district must ensure the fire district starts on the right foot. Establishing a weak fire district may ultimately cause a drain on municipal finances if, for example, the fire district starts with a property tax levy below its maximum authority and insufficient to provide similar services to what the city fire department had provided historically. In this case, the fire district would have to levy its maximum property tax levy, requiring the city to reduce its maximum lawful tax rate to compensate.

Implementation Options

In the case of the three jurisdictions participating in this study, should the policymakers elect to pursue the “Municipal” Fire District option, a combination of various steps and processes would be required. Example:

- The City of Walla Walla forms a fire district.
- This is followed by either the new fire district annexing the City of College Place, or Fire District #4 annexing College Place, creating a single fire district.
- Finally, the remaining two fire districts would conduct a merger.

As shown, it would be a much more complex process in this case than some of the other options.

Annexation

In Washington State, a city may be annexed into a fire district for the purposes of receiving fire protection services. Annexation into a fire district expands the boundaries of the fire district to include the current and future boundaries of the city. The city boundaries do not change as a result of annexation. Regarding the participants in this study, Walla Walla County Fire District #4 would need to expand its boundaries to include the cities of Walla Walla and College Place. If the two cities were to be annexed, they would have no elected representation or authority specifically reserved for them. However, once annexation occurs, residents of the cities would be eligible to run for office as a Fire Commissioner. Commissioner districts can also be created, guaranteeing representation from within each city if the district was created accordingly and if each commissioner district was approximately equal in population.

Annexation would *not* affect any other authority of the cities. The cities would simply transfer their responsibility for fire protection and EMS to the fire district. Each city's maximum allowed tax levy rate would be reduced by the actual tax levy rate of the fire district. Although each city's tax capacity might be reduced by the amount of the district's tax levy, depending on each city's tax rate, this might or might not decrease their actual tax levy. It must be noted that any library districts encompassing a city can also impact its tax revenue. The following is a generic example:

Current Property Tax Levy Rates (Example only):

- City—\$1.89 Maximum allowed—\$3.60
- Fire District—\$1.00 Maximum allowed—\$1.50

City Annexes into Fire District (Example only):

- City Maximum Tax—\$3.60
- Less Fire District Levy—\$1.00
- *Resulting City Tax Capacity—\$2.60*

There are no statutory requirements that a city being annexed by a fire district must transfer its fire department assets. The city may retain its fire stations, for example, and lease them to the district at a nominal rate. RCW 52.04.111 through 52.04.131 provide for the transfer of city firefighters to the district in the event of the annexation of the city by the district. These statutory provisions should be reviewed in detail prior to the initiation of annexation proceedings, in order to ensure that the rights of all parties will be protected and to further ensure compliance with the statutory requirements.

Advantages of Annexation

Some of the advantages of annexation include the elimination of each city's responsibility for fire protection and EMS, avoidance of annual contract negotiations, and the ability of city residents to participate in fire district elections and serve as fire commissioners. In some cases, reductions in cost may ensue, although this should not be the primary motive for annexation. Annexation—as opposed to the formation of an RFA—is a simpler process, since no need exists to create a new legal entity. Also, the fire district would retain the ability to levy four-year Maintenance and Operation (M & O) excess levies, whereas an RFA would be limited to single-year M & O excess levies.

Disadvantages of Annexation

Some of the disadvantages—from a city perspective—may include a loss of control over service levels, tax levy impacts on the city, and a potential increase in property tax rates unless the city's tax rates are reduced.

Withdrawal from the District

Assuming the two cities in this study were to be annexed into Fire District #4, they could, after three years, withdraw from the District. The City of Walla Walla and/or the City of College Place would have the option to initiate, by resolution, a proposal for withdrawal from Fire District #4.

Such a proposal for withdrawal would need to be submitted to the voters in the City of Walla Walla and/or City of College Place for their approval or rejection. If approved, either or both cities would have a vested right in the assets of Fire District #4, proportionate to the taxes levied within the boundaries of the Walla Walla and/or College Place, which were utilized by the District to acquire such assets.

Regional Fire Protection Service Authority

Washington is one of the few states that provide an alternative to a merger in the form of a *Regional Fire Protection Service Authority* (RFPSA)—more often referred to as a *Regional Fire Authority* (RFA). An RFA is a new entity whereby fire agencies, whether districts, cities, or a combination, fall under this new structure with a new tax base, a new operational plan, and a new legal framework.

If agencies contemplate forming an RFA, it is usually wise to begin meeting informally to discuss and address issues in advance of initiating the first formal step in the process. Most successful efforts start with establishing exploratory or steering committees composed of a wide variety of stakeholders to determine the feasibility of creating an RFA far in advance of forming the actual Planning Committee. This study also serves that purpose. Should the decision be made to move forward with RFA formation, the first legal step is the formation of a Planning Committee, considered to be the most important component of the process. The Planning Committee is charged with establishing the RFA plan, which specifies how the RFA will be funded, operated, and governed. The RFA plan should be considered the “charter” or “constitution” of the new agency.

The Planning Committee is comprised of three elected officials appointed from each of the participating agencies, assuring an equal voice in the decision-making process for everyone involved. Moving forward with the formation of an RFA also requires approval by the affected governing bodies prior to the initiative being put before the voters.

Funding Mechanisms

A key consideration of the RFA formation decision is that of funding. The RFA plan will identify funding sources that may include some (or all) of the following:

- Fire levies
- EMS levies
- Excess levies
- Ambulance utility fees
- Benefit charges
- Bonds for capital purchases

Legal Considerations

Important legal considerations must be considered in the formation of a Regional Fire Authority. They are summarized as follows:

- *Regional Fire Authority Plan*—Planning Committees are tasked with forming the RFA plan. The RFA plan outlines the plan for governance, financing, operations, asset transfers, and other considerations and is the plan that the voters are asked to approve when voting on the formation of the RFA.
- *Formation Procedures*—Like any other type of significant consolidation, the formation of RFA requires careful planning. Because the RFA creates a new entity, there is an added layer of complexity to the planning. The new entity will need to register with the IRS, establish new accounts with the County and vendors, assign and negotiate new contracts, negotiate new labor agreements, establish payroll systems, etc. In other words, the formation of a new entity can be incredibly time-intensive, and attention to detail is crucial. The formation of an RFA is not subject to review by a Boundary Review Board or a county legislative authority. The formation of an RFA is, however, likely subject to compliance with the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Legal counsel familiar with RFAs should be obtained to guide policymakers in the process.

The advantages of this option are that it allows agencies to retain the strengths they bring to the new agency, minimizes the weaknesses of each agency, and may allow for establishing new best-practices not currently provided by any of the participating agencies alone. It facilitates a contemporary look at services, resources, and costs, finding the right balance for the community. It retains (or has the potential to retain) the policymakers of the participating agencies in a governing board (including participating cities), thus utilizing the vision and commitment that initiated the implementation of this option. Finally, it creates an opportunity to “right-size” the revenue with the cost of operation, and it provides an active role for the citizens being served in setting their service-level and costs.

The disadvantages of pursuing this option are the loss of autonomy for each participating agency; the loss of a familiar structure (although RFAs operate almost identically to a fire district); the investment of time and effort to develop an RFA plan that can be rendered moot by the voters; and funding options that are not significantly better for RFAs than for fire districts. RFAs, like cities, are restricted to one-year maintenance and operations levies. In contrast, fire districts can run four-year maintenance and operations levies. Although not applicable in this study, no limitations exist regarding crossing county lines.

Governance & Administration

A Regional Fire Authority is presided over by a single governance board. The number of board members and the length of their service terms is determined by the Planning Committee and consistent with applicable statutes. The statute authorizing the formation of an RFA does not place limitations on the number of members serving on the board, leaving that decision to the Planning Committee and, ultimately, the voters. The governing plan can include RFA Commissioner positions, elected officials from the participating jurisdictions, or a mixture thereof. RFAs can also be formed with commissioner districts which can be established, in part, on the jurisdictional boundaries of the participating jurisdictions. Numerous examples of the flexibility relating to RFA governance can be found by looking at existing RFAs in Washington State.

Once established, the administration of the new RFA becomes the responsibility of the newly formed governing board. The Planning Committee, however, will include in its body of work identification of the composition of the RFA's administrative staff. The Fire Chief and his/her command staff, as agreed to by the Planning Committee, will subsequently report to the governing board.

Staffing & Personnel

Under an RFA configuration, employees and members of the agencies joining forces in the RFA become employees and members of the new organization, including career and volunteer personnel. Unless an agreement for different terms of transfer is reached between the collective bargaining representatives of the transferring employees and the participating fire protection jurisdictions, employees will retain the rights, benefits, and privileges that they had under their pre-existing collective bargaining agreements.³⁵

Equipment & Facilities

The ownership or transfer of ownership of capital assets is not prescribed by law and would need to be determined by the Planning Committee. Although ownership of these assets would most likely be transferred to the newly formed RFA, the responsibility for bonded indebtedness for capital assets will remain that of the originating agency until the debt is satisfied.

Legal Counsel

ESCI's review and discussion of Washington State regulations on each of these options have been necessarily brief—only adequate to ensure that the basic elements for some form of consolidation were addressed. As always, it is emphasized that the members of the ESCI project team are neither licensed or qualified to provide legal advice. ESCI strongly recommends that the three participating jurisdictions consult with qualified legal counsel experienced in such matters.

OPTIONS FOR FUTURE COOPERATIVE SERVICES

The decision to establish a single, regional fire-service organization can be a daunting task. When consolidating two city fire departments and a fire district, the process of accomplishing this can be somewhat complex and challenging. After its findings and detailed analyses of the current conditions of each of the fire agencies, ESCI evaluated various options for consideration by the policymakers. The options were analyzed for their financial impact on the taxpayers, sustainability, and service-delivery—while identifying opportunities for increased efficiency wherever possible. ESCI recognizes that long-term financial sustainability must be viewed with equal importance to other elements of a consolidated fire department.

Strategy A: Maintain the Status Quo

As described previously, this is essentially a do-nothing option. However, all participating agencies have probably made temporary decisions or deferred decisions awaiting the result of this study. If the agencies ultimately decide to maintain a status-quo approach, future decisions will have to be made to position each of the fire agencies to move forward effectively.

Given the amount of interaction and interagency collaboration currently in place between the three fire agencies, a status-quo approach would most likely be configured in a manner that would continue that level of cooperation. However, the organizations could decide to lessen or withdraw from current shared practices. Doing so would be viewed as a step backward and should be considered a waste of valuable efforts that have been undertaken in recent years between the agencies.

Each fire agency will need to take a careful look at their future and where their organizations are headed if they continue their existing operations. In the future, some aspects of their operations may be difficult to sustain. Therefore, the organizations are encouraged to scrutinize and evaluate current conditions in this context closely. ESCI recommends that there should be a focus on financial projections, referencing the fiscal analysis in this report along with other sources.

Strategy B: Annexation

As stated previously, incorporated cities cannot merge with a fire district. However, a fire district can annex cities. Therefore, this strategy would involve Walla Walla County Fire District #4 absorbing both city fire departments through the extension of its boundaries through annexation. Either city could decline to participate in an annexation. However, since both are adjacent (or "...within reasonable proximity") to Fire District #4, annexation could be accomplished with a single city.³⁶

Level of Cooperation

Annexation by Fire District #4 of the cities of Walla Walla and College Place is essentially a permanent integration between those jurisdictions. From the time annexation is approved, Fire District #4 would have permanent responsibility for the provision of fire protection, EMS, and other related emergency services in Walla Walla and College Place.

Informal discussion between the three jurisdictions will be necessary to determine the level of willingness to consider the implementation of this strategy. Assuming agreement to pursue this strategy, it would be wise to obtain legal counsel to develop an annexation checklist of actions and activities needed to bring the issue of annexation before the voters. It will be very important to communicate with the existing constituencies—both internal and external—on the value and benefits of pursuing this strategy.

Annexation would need to be coordinated between the jurisdictions and require and begin with each of the city council's approval of an ordinance indicating their intent to join Fire District #4. The issue would then go to the Board of Commissioners of Fire District #4 for their concurrence. Upon approval by the Board, the issue would be submitted to the boundary review board for approval.

Financial Issues

Prior to annexation being submitted to the voters for approval, contracts would need to be negotiated between Fire District #4 and the cities of Walla Walla and College Place. The contracts would address payments to the District from the cities for fire and EMS services, until such time as the District begins collecting taxes for fire protection in both cities.

The intent of the contract would be to address the revenue gap since, immediately upon annexation approval by the voters, the District would be obligated to provide services, but would not otherwise receive payment for those services from the cities until the tax rolls were updated in the next revenue cycle. Once the tax rolls were changed, Walla Walla County Fire District #4 would receive taxes from within the cities as it does for all other district taxpayers.

There are no statutory requirements for a city that is annexed by a fire district to transfer its fire department assets. The city may retain its fire stations, for example, and lease them to the district at a nominal rate. RCW 52.04.111–131 provides for the transfer of city firefighters to the district in the event of annexation of the city by the district. These statutory provisions should be reviewed in detail prior to the initiation of annexation proceedings, to ensure that the rights of all individuals would be protected and, further, to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements.

Estimated Timeline for Completion

The timeline for this process can vary, depending upon the initiation of the process in relation to the special election cycles. However, this process could be completed within six months without difficulty. A contract to address the revenue gap can be accomplished in a very short period if all three jurisdictions are motivated to execute agreements.

Election Timing

Washington State law requires that an election approving annexation must be certified by August 1 for it to be effective the following calendar year (RCW 84.09.030). The allowed election dates are described in RCW 29A.04.330. If this option is selected, it will be important to discuss this with the Walla Walla County election officials.

Impact on the Fire Agencies

Employees of city fire departments (used in this report to describe all personnel, whether compensated or volunteer) would be impacted as their employer changes. Transfer of personnel from a city to an annexing district is outlined in Washington State statute.³⁷ These statutory provisions should be reviewed in detail by each of the fire agencies prior to the initiation of annexation proceedings, in order to ensure that the rights of all current employees would be protected. Support by employees (whether compensated or volunteer) regarding the transfers, wages, benefits, and working conditions will be critical to successful integration, whether statutorily required or not. This can be a key element to obtaining support from each of the communities in the case of annexation.

Local Union Affiliates

Issues regarding the three IAFF local union affiliates have been addressed earlier in this report under *Strategy B: Regional Fire Authority*. In the event of annexation, the same issues regarding the local bargaining units would apply.

Impact on the Leadership

It is obvious that the citizens of each jurisdiction would be impacted by this strategy. The Walla Walla and College Place City Councils would be impacted, as they would no longer have direct control over their respective fire departments, and those responsibilities would be deferred to the elected board of fire commissioners.

From a governance standpoint, the composition of the Walla Walla County Fire District #4 Board of Commissioners could change if the board expands its membership from three to five members (or seven if the district budget is \$10 million or higher). The three jurisdictions may decide to create commissioner districts to provide greater opportunity for Walla Walla and College Place to have representation on the fire district board.

Special Considerations

In Washington State, RCW 52.04.101 does not allow a city that has been annexed into a fire district to withdraw (during a general election) from the district for least three years following annexation. This requires the city council to pass a resolution calling for a vote by the city voters on annexation withdrawal. If the voters of the city approve the withdrawal, the city, therefore, will have withdrawn from the fire district without the consent or approval of the district. ESCI is not aware of any city in Washington State that has withdrawn from a fire district in which it has been annexed.

Issues of reconciling district investment into the city service area during those three years, as well as remedies for other unforeseen and perhaps unintended consequences of annexation withdrawal, are absent within the statute. The statute is silent on the details regarding changing the boundaries of the district and whether a special review committee appointed by the county commissioners would need to review such withdrawal. Legal counsel is recommended in such cases.

Policy Actions

The annexation of a city into a fire district is subject to limited compliance with the *Washington State Environmental Policy Act* (SEPA). This requires that either party designate itself as the lead agency, prepare an environmental checklist, and issue a *Determination of Non-significance* (DNS). The Environmental Checklist form is provided in WAC 197-11-960.

As with the other strategies, ESCI's review and discussion of Washington State law on this topic have been necessarily brief. As always, ESCI emphasizes that the company and project team members are not qualified to give legal advice. ESCI recommends the participating agencies consult with legal counsel experienced in such matters before undertaking this strategy.

Strategy C: Regional Fire Authority

Of the strategies discussed in this report, the development of a Regional Fire Authority may be the most complex to achieve. RFAs are authorized by Washington State statute to create a new governance model for the fire services of both cities and fire districts.³⁸ Essentially, an RFA operates in a very similar manner as a contract for services, but with shared governance, voter approval, and the creation of an independent municipal corporation with its own taxing authority and statutory framework.³⁹ The College Place Fire Department, Walla Walla Fire Department, and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 are eligible to be included in an RFA as they are adjacent to each other.

Level of Cooperation

Of any of the integration options, the development of an RFA would require the highest degree of cooperation between the three fire agencies. Statutorily, it begins with the formation of a Planning Committee.⁴⁰ The committee would be required to have three elected representatives from each of the participating jurisdictions to develop an RFA Plan. The plan serves as the charter for the newly formed entity and outlines the services, service-level standards, budget, funding mechanism(s), governance, and any other considerations deemed appropriate by the committee. It becomes the plan voters are asked to approve when voting on the formation of the RFA.

If the three jurisdictions agree to pursue this strategy, it requires the Planning Committee to adopt an RFA Plan first by the elected officials of each participating jurisdiction, then by the voters served by the fire agencies. It would also be prudent to obtain legal counsel as the Planning Committee formulates the RFA Plan, prior to submitting the finished product to the electorate. It would also be necessary to communicate with existing constituencies—both internal and external—in order to educate them on the value and benefits of pursuing this option.

Estimated Timeline for Completion

Although a Regional Fire Authority could be formed within 90 days, it is more likely that the creation of an RFA Planning Committee, RFA Plan, educating the constituents of the two cities and the fire district, holding an election, and transitioning from the current governance and organizational structure to a new structure would take significantly longer.

Impact on the Fire Agencies

All divisions and programs of the two city fire departments and the fire district would be affected in the development of an RFA. Employees from each of the participating fire agencies would likely be impacted, since the RFA would probably be redesigned to take advantage of efficiencies and develop a more effective deployment model; furthermore, pooled resources could result in a modification of the dynamics of each of the three fire agencies.

The requirements of transferring personnel from the cities of Walla Walla and College place to an RFA are outlined in RCW 52.26. Under an RFA configuration, personnel from the consolidating agencies become employees and members of the new organization (the term “employees” is used to identify both compensated and volunteer personnel). Unless an agreement for different terms of transfer is reached between the collective bargaining representatives of the transferring employees and participating fire agency jurisdictions, employees will retain the rights, benefits, and privileges that they had under their pre-existing collective bargaining agreements.⁴¹ Although specifically mentioned in the same statute, this requirement probably also pertains to non-represented employees.

Local Union Affiliates

As discussed previously, operations personnel from each of the fire agencies are represented by three separate IAFF local union affiliates—each with distinct labor agreements. The success of any form of consolidation will hinge, in large part, on union participation, compromise, and agreement. The variation in work schedules, benefits, and other conditions currently outlined in the bargaining unit agreements of the three local affiliates will need to be carefully addressed and homogenized for an effective and efficient consolidation. This can take the form of one affiliate absorbing the membership and obligations of other affiliates, commonly called a “merger,” or by legally dissolving the current IAFF affiliates and forming an entirely new bargaining unit—commonly called an “amalgamation.”

Merger or amalgamation of local union affiliates is encouraged by the IAFF where it makes sense. In 2012, the IAFF Legal Department published a manual to guide union leaders in merger/amalgamation efforts. The manual reviews the applicable sections in the IAFF *Constitution & Bylaws*, and defines the reporting requirements, legal requirements, and specific duties of merged and amalgamated affiliates. The manual states:

"The Executive Board recommends that when the consolidation, unification, or merger of two or more counties, cities, or townships is anticipated, all locals involved should merge as soon as possible. If a merger of locals is not immediately possible, a joint committee should be established to work with the department administration to negotiate the benefits for all members. Every effort should be made to conclude the bargaining prior to the merger."

Given the labor implications related to a potential new Regional Fire Authority—including internal union governance issues—the involved local affiliates would likely benefit from the participation of the *Washington State Council of Fire Firefighters* (WSCFF) District Vice President and other legal resources available through the IAFF national organization. Also, given the complexity and variation of wages and benefits between the affiliates, if an RFA were actively pursued, the local affiliates should engage in internal planning as soon as practical to reach agreement on how they will be organized within the RFA.

Impact on the Jurisdiction's Leadership

As with a merger or annexation, the residents of the three jurisdictions would be affected by the creation of an RFA since each fire agency currently providing service would give way to the RFA. The elected officials from the cities of Walla Walla, College Place, and Fire District #4 would also be affected. Since the governing statutes do not require a specific number of governing board members to serve on an RFA, the RFA Plan could call for as many or as few representatives as the Planning Committee would deem appropriate.

In order to avoid tie votes, conventional wisdom has typically called for an uneven number of governing board members. However, this is not mandatory, and ESCI is aware of RFAs with an even number of Board members. The RFA can either select from their existing elected membership, or they could call for RFA commissioner districts—who would then be elected from their respective districts by the electorate of the RFA. This could impact the existing elected officials of each agency.

Objectives of this Strategy

This strategy combines each of the participating fire agencies into one. The objectives should include:

- Creating a smooth transition from multiple organizations into a single, cohesive organization.
- Obtaining a balanced representation from the currently separate agencies.
- Providing a depth of resources, strength of service, financial sustainability, and resiliency.

This strategy combines all three fire agencies into a single Regional Fire Authority. Services would be provided by the existing resources of all three agencies, pooled and reconfigured to provide optimum services, and governed by the policymakers representing all three agencies. Again, as determined by the RFA Plan, the policymakers of the three currently separate jurisdictions (or from the commissioner districts) would come together to ensure balanced representation.

Special Considerations

It is a requirement of the statute to establish an RFA plan that addresses each of the various services, services levels, governance, funding mechanisms, asset transfers, debt liabilities, and structure. The RFA Planning Committee would need to determine whether all changes to the plan were required to be submitted to the voters for approval, no changes would require voter approval, or some sections would require voter approval, and if some would require only a majority vote by the governing board. The difficulty is adopting a plan that makes clear the intent of the parties without tying the hands of future elected officials if circumstances change, which would then necessitate modification. If those modifications regard the substance of the plan, it will would voter approval to make the changes. Therefore, during the planning process, it may be prudent to evaluate and discuss if there is potential for future fire district(s) participation in the RFA. In no circumstance could the plan exceed statutory authority.

ESCI recommends that dynamic components of the plan, such as service levels and performance, be addressed in detail in a separate document by referral. In this way, the RFA plan would address the specifics of service level by reference to the separate document, noting that it would be periodically reviewed and modified as necessary by the governing board.

Election Timing

Washington State law requires that taxing boundaries for an RFA must be established by October 1 for it to be effective the following calendar year (RCW 84.09.030). This would allow an RFA that is voted on at the August primary election to be created and taxes would be levied the following year—provided that the plan establishes the effective date of the RFA formation as being before October 1. The allowed election dates are described in RCW 29A.04.330. If this option were selected, it will be important to discuss this with the Walla Walla County election officials.

Policy Actions

The creation of an RFA does not change the boundaries of the participating jurisdictions. The participating jurisdictions may continue to exist after the formation of the RFA (in the case of Walla Walla and College Place, they certainly continue to exist as cities, but without their own fire department). Fire District #4 would continue to exist for the sole purpose of providing elected officials for the governing board. RCW 52.26.120 provides a mechanism for dissolving the fire districts if RFA commissioner districts are created to serve on the governing board. Commissioners are directly elected by the voters within the RFA.

ESCI's review and discussion of Washington State Law on this topic has been necessarily brief—only adequate to ensure that the basic provisions for RFA formation exist. As always, ESCI emphasizes that the company and project team members are not qualified to give legal advice. ESCI recommends the participating agencies consult with legal counsel experienced in such matters before undertaking this strategy.

Discussion of Other Strategies

ESCI considered the various contract-for-services options that included Administrative Consolidation, Functional Consolidation, and full Joint Operational Consolidation. Although joint operations contractual consolidation with a joint operations board should be considered on a temporary basis (discussed in detail in the "Planning & Implementation" section), toward a longer-term permanent strategy such as an RFA. Should the jurisdictions determine to utilize these strategies on a long-term basis, the issues and impacts that should be considered in a services contract may include the following:

- Since this would be a contractual arrangement, no permanent organizational commitment is made.
- All final decision-making power would remain with individual fire agencies.
- Requires a collaborative approach to the management of program(s) between administrations.
- Would not require approval by the electorate.
- The existing Fire District Board and City Councils would be preserved.
- Administrative leaders (Fire Chief, command staff, and others) could be pulled in multiple directions when serving multiple "masters."
- Would require the blending of rules, regulations, and operating procedures.
- Could attain efficiency by eliminating unnecessary duplication or reassigning duplicate resources.
- Efficiencies could be gained in fleet maintenance, training, and other services.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR CONSOLIDATION

ESCI found the leadership of each of the three fire agencies to be fully engaged, cooperative, and willing participants in this study. The amount of data requested by ESCI was substantial, but each organization provided the necessary information and were available for interviews, phone calls, and draft reviews, and continued to be dedicated to the quality and accuracy of this report.

Of concern, however, were some of the comments in ESCI's confidential online survey of personnel affiliated with the fire agencies. It was apparent that many misconceptions and misinformation existed about ESCI's study and a potential "consolidation" of the three fire agencies. This was particularly true of the volunteers' and residents' responses. It was obvious that all respondents (career, volunteer, and residents) are proud of their organizations and apprehensive of any changes that could impact them and their agencies negatively.

Recommended Strategies

After a comprehensive analysis of each of the fire agencies participating in this study, as well as careful consideration of the various options and potential strategies, ESCI has developed recommendations in the following section. It must be noted that the recommendations involving organizational structure, operations, and deployment comprise ESCI's *recommendations*, and should not necessarily be considered absolute. During the planning and implementation process, more viable alternatives from some of the recommendations may be identified and adopted.

Strategy A: Status Quo—would not result in improvement, as it represents *no* change or improvement over the current conditions—While it remains an option, it is *not* recommended.

Strategy B: Annexation—represents the least complicated process for consolidating the three organizations. However, the current property tax rate and other revenue sources would likely not produce adequate ongoing funding to maintain existing services. In addition, Fire District #4 employees currently pay Social Security, while the employees of the two cities do not. Annexation would require city employees to begin paying social security—likely resulting in opposition by the bargaining units.

Organizational Identity in an Annexation

If the policymakers elect to consolidate their organizations through annexation into Fire District #4, ESCI recommends that the Board of Directors consult legal counsel to determine the process for changing the name of the District to reflect the new service-area better. An alternative would be to retain the current name for legal purposes (e.g., contracts, banking, property taxes, etc.), but adopt a different title in a "doing business as" (DBA) format.

This rebranding should include a new logo, apparatus decals, uniform patches, badges, and possibly different uniforms. Recognizing there would be significant expenses associated with this, ESCI believes that the benefits would outweigh the costs. Whether having a real or perceived outlook, firefighters, officers, and staff from the Walla Walla Fire Department and College Place Fire Department would more likely embrace a "new department" rather than the feeling of being moved to that "other department."

Strategy C: Regional Fire Authority—represents the most viable option for these three fire departments. It has the potential to control costs, enhance services, and provide an opportunity for shared governance among the three jurisdictions. This option may be more “politically palatable” among the leadership and key stakeholders, but it also represents a much more complex process than annexation.

ESCI Recommends:

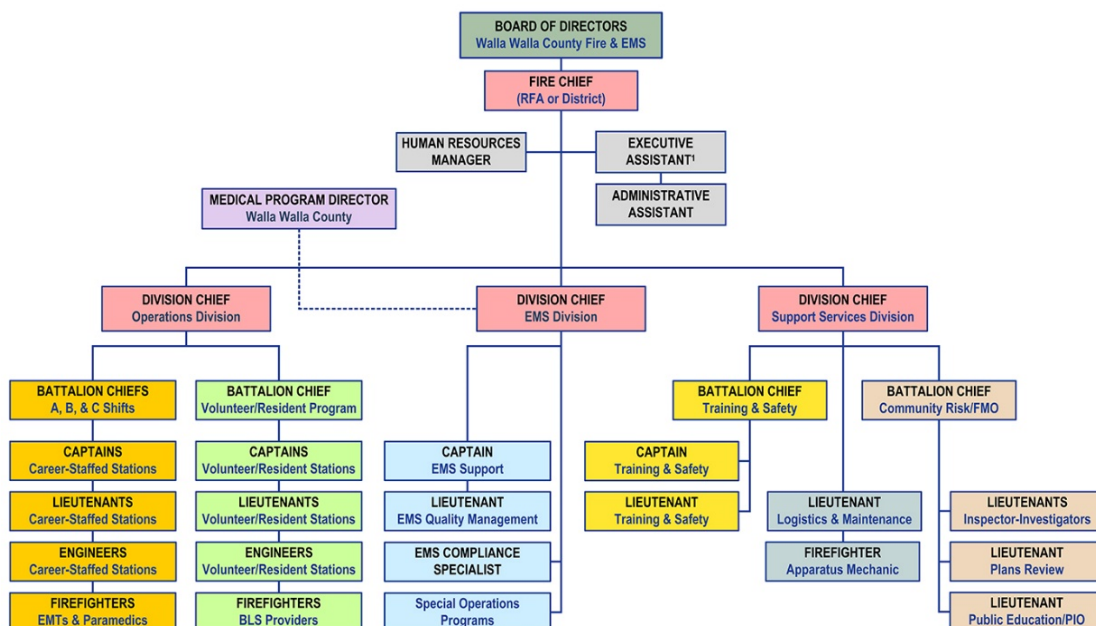
Strategy C: Regional Fire Authority

The following section entails ESCI’s recommendations on the organizational structure and various components of emergency services, should the jurisdictions elect to pursue *Strategy C: Regional Fire Authority*. However, most of these could also be applied to *Strategy B: Annexation*.

Recommended Organizational Structure

The following figure represents a proposed organizational structure for a “new” consolidated fire department (RFA). This could be modified as necessary during the planning process and is only presented here for consideration. The new organizational structure would be comprised of three divisions: Operations, Emergency Medical Services, and Support Services. Each would be managed and overseen by a Division Chief, with subordinate Battalion Chiefs managing various programs.

Figure 138: Proposed New Fire Department Organizational Structure



¹Also serves as District Secretary

ESCI strongly recommends that the elected and appointed officials collaborate on an organizational structure that retains *all* members of each fire agency, and places the most qualified persons in the right positions. For the purposes of discussion, ESCI has used the name “Walla Walla County Fire & EMS” to reference a potential new organization. However, ESCI recognizes the leadership of the jurisdictions will ultimately determine the final name.

Operations Division

In this model, the Operations Division Chief would manage all career personnel assigned to operational positions. Within this division, a Battalion Chief would be responsible for the Volunteer/Resident Program, including those that function in fire suppression and EMS roles, and those that provide non-combat support services as well.

EMS Division

Calls for EMS represent the highest demand for service among the three fire agencies. Each provides some level of ground emergency medical transport at the BLS and/or ALS level. The successful operation of ambulance service—especially at the ALS level—requires knowledge, experience, and skill-sets beyond those required in a typical fire department providing medical first-response services. Additionally, there are many components related to EMS that must be addressed—ranging from quality management to billing and collection. It will be important for the EMS Division Chief to work regularly with the Operations Division Chief.

The EMS Division would also be responsible for managing and administering various Special Operations programs, such as Technical Rescue and HazMat Response. An alternative would be to place this within the Operations Division.

Support Services Division

This Division will be an important component and critical to the overall success of the organization. The primary responsibilities of the Support Services Division Chief will be to manage the Training & Safety Program, Community Risk Program (Fire Marshal), logistics, and apparatus and equipment maintenance.

Other Services

Other administrative support services will need to be addressed through outsourcing or potentially hiring staff. This may include IT support, payroll, some facilities maintenance, and legal counsel.

Organizational Leadership

ESCI recommends that the elected officials from each of the jurisdictions consider employing a professional Fire Chief from outside, in lieu of a Chief from one of the current fire agencies. The rationale for this is to avoid potential discord among the personnel of three jurisdictions. Should one of the current Fire Chiefs be appointed to lead the RFA, experience has shown that this could produce resentment and conflict among the personnel from the other two departments. This can result in a perception—whether real or imagined—that the Fire Chief from one of the current agencies would mold the RFA into a replica of his previous fire department.

ESCI must state *emphatically* that this recommendation does *not* reflect negatively on the leadership, skills, knowledge, and capabilities of any of the current three Fire Chiefs—each of whom has managed their respective fire departments effectively. ESCI strongly recommends that all three Fire Chiefs be appointed to upper management command positions in the RFA, and without loss of wages and benefits.

Volunteers in a Consolidated Fire Department

Both the College Place Fire Department and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 rely heavily on volunteer firefighters (and volunteers serving in other roles) for emergency operations. There is no doubt these individuals have contributed to providing fire protection, EMS, and other emergency services to their respective communities. ESCI strongly recommends providing the volunteers with necessary support, training, and experience to enable them to continue service to the fire department successfully.

Status of the Fire Stations

ESCI recommends that changes should be considered in how the existing fire stations are utilized be considered during the planning process.

Headquarters Station

Given its size, location, capacity, and various features, Fire Station 41 should be considered for assignment as the headquarters/administration facility for a new consolidated fire agency.

Fire Station 43

Because of its proximity to the current Walla Walla Fire Department Station 11-2 (re-numbered to Station 47) and low historical incident-density in the areas surrounding its location, Station 43 would have no first-due response area. ESCI recommends discontinuing the use of this station for the deployment of apparatus and personnel. However, this facility may have some value for storing reserve apparatus or other uses. Volunteers at this station should be assigned to a station where they would be more useful and have more opportunities to respond to emergency incidents.

Operations & Deployment

The following figure represents a potential model for staffing and deployment of apparatus at each of the fire stations. The model suggests an upgrade of the ambulance currently assigned to the CPFD station (renumbered Station 48) to an ALS Medic Unit. In addition, the figure excludes the assignment of staff (career or volunteer) and apparatus for deployment from Station 43.

Figure 139: Proposed Apparatus Assignments & Operational Staffing

Renumbered Fire Stations	Engine ^A	Transport Medic	Tender	Wildland	Minimum Staffing
Station 41	2	1 (ALS)	1	2	2/[C]
Station 42	1	0	1	1	[V]
Station 43	—	—	—	—	—
Station 44	1	0	1	0	[V]
Station 45	1	0	1	1	[V]
Station 46 (WWFD 11-1)	1	1 (ALS)	0	0	6 [F]
Station 47 (WWFD 11-2) ^C	1	1 (ALS)	0	0	5 [F]
Station 48 (CPFD Station)	1	1 (ALS)	1	1	2/[C]
Station 49 (Airport)	0	0	0	0	0 ^B
Totals:	8	4	5	5	11^C

[C] = Combination career and volunteer. [V] = Volunteer staffed only. [F] = Full-time career staff only

^AType 1 engines. ^BStaffed when commercial flights arrive and depart. ^CTruck located here also. ^DCareer staff total.

In the preceding figure, the BLS ambulance currently assigned to the College Place fire station would be upgraded to a 24-hour ALS Medic Unit. The City of College Place is the second most populated community in the study area, and has the second-highest historical EMS service-demand among the three fire agencies.

Deploying an ALS Medic Unit from this facility would reduce the necessity of dispatching an ALS Medic Unit from Station 41 through the City of Walla Walla to the west side of District #4. This would provide more immediate access to ALS transport service to the residents of College Place. This model also provides the most flexibility in dispatching, as no matter which ambulance is dispatched, the patient(s) will have access to advanced life support if required.

Future Peak-Demand Unit

As EMS service-demand increases in the future, and funding allows it, there may be value in considering the addition of a peak-demand BLS ambulance or ALS Medic Unit. It will be important to continue to monitor EMS service-demand and unit hour utilization rates in order to determine if such an addition would be justified.

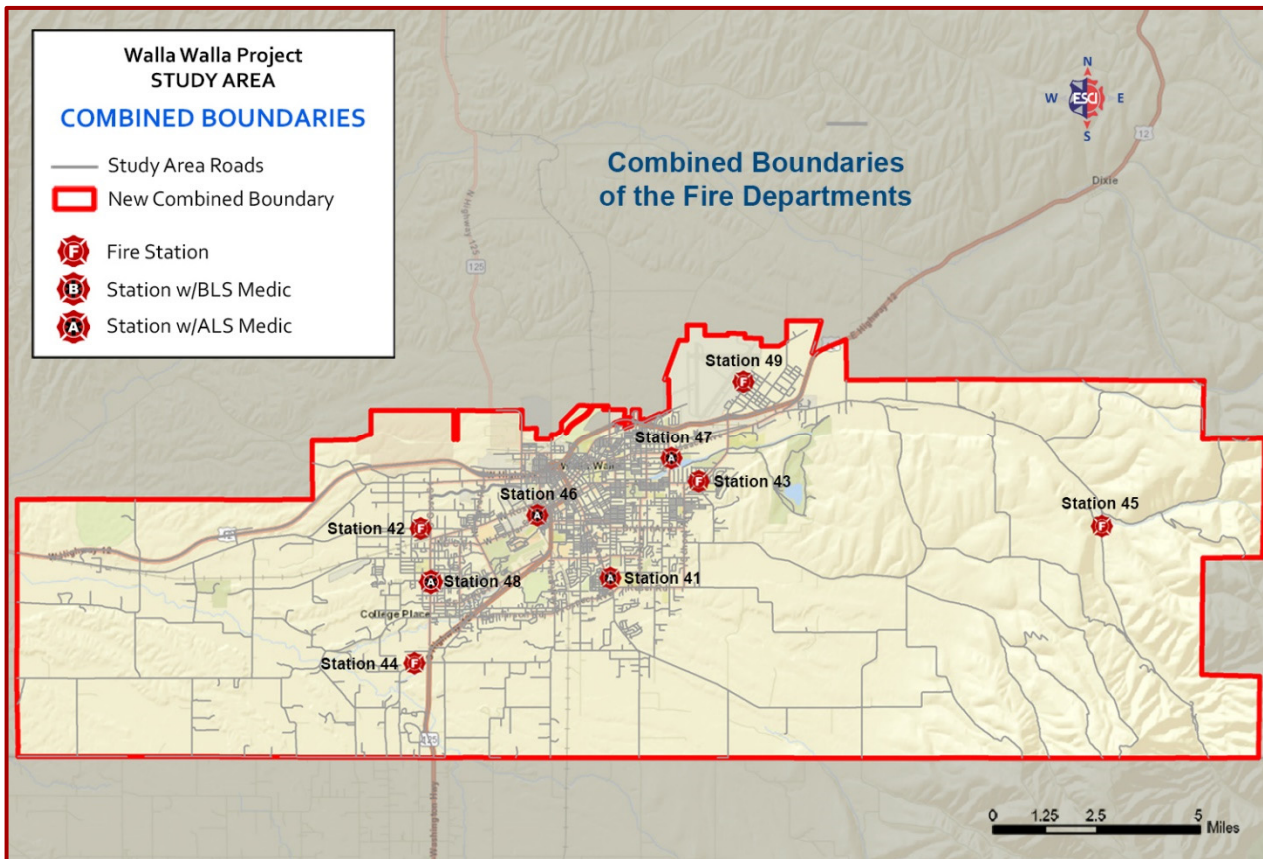
The next figure shows another perspective of staffing and apparatus assignments to each of the functioning fire stations in a new consolidated fire department.

Figure 140: Proposed Staffing Configurations by Renumbered Stations & Apparatus

Station #41		Station #42		Station #43		Station #44	
Engine	Medic	Engine/Tender/Wildland		None		Engine/Tender/Wildland	
Officer	EMT-P	Volunteer Staff		<i>Consider discontinuing deployment of personnel & apparatus</i>		Volunteer Staff	
Engineer	EMT-B						
Firefighter	—						
Station #45		Station #46		Station #47		Station #48	
Engine/Tender/Wildland		Engine	Medic	Engine	Medic	Engine	Medic
Volunteer Staff		Officer	EMT-P	Officer	EMT-P	Officer	EMT-P
		Engineer	EMT-B	Engineer	EMT-B	Engineer	EMT-B
		Firefighter	—	Firefighter	—	Firefighter	—

Expanded Fire District Boundaries

The following figure shows a single consolidated response-area with each of the current fire stations renumbered. District #4 station numbers would remain unchanged (except for the airport) while the College Place and Walla Walla stations would be assigned new numbers.

Figure 141: Consolidated City Fire Departments & District with Proposed Re-Numbered Fire Stations

The preceding figure shows a total of nine individual fire stations throughout the consolidated boundaries. In this case, the former Airport Station has been assigned a station number consistent with the numbering of the other fire stations. Although the figure shows the current locations of both ALS and BLS medic units, these may not necessarily be the most optimal locations for deployment in a new consolidated organization.

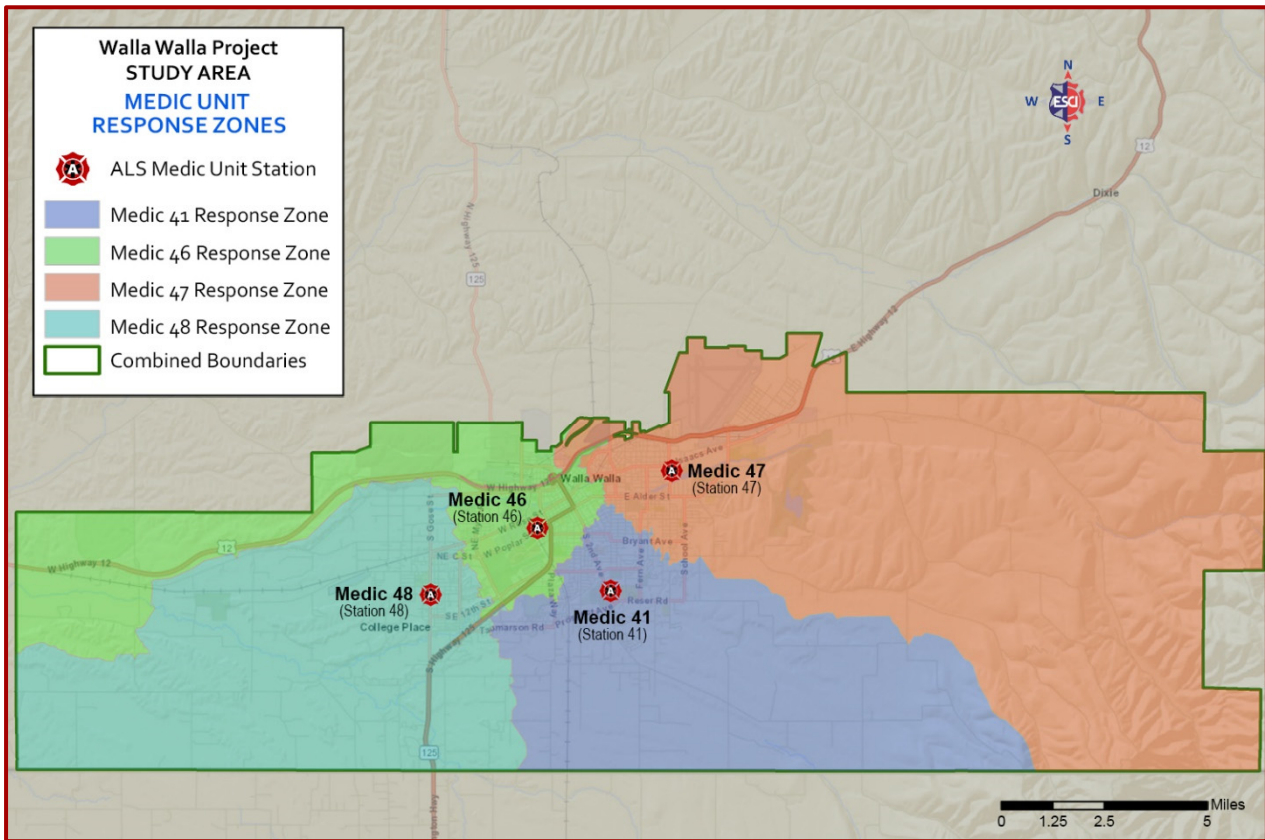
ALS Medic Unit Response Zones

The next figure entails proposed ALS Medic Unit response zones developed using GIS technology. The first-due areas were developed to produce the shortest response-times based on the road network and locations of fire stations from which Medic Units would be deployed.

The figure represents a static-deployment model. However, in a larger consolidated fire department, there should be consideration of a dynamic-deployment system in which Medic Units are moved up to cover the busier response zones when other units are unavailable.

ESCI recommends that the consolidated department regularly monitor Medic Unit response-data, and that the CAD system includes the response zones in each record and subsequently downloaded to the new department's records management system.

Figure 142: Proposed ALS Medic Unit Response Zones



Administrative Support Services

In the event of consolidation through an RFA, it will be necessary for the new organization to ensure that certain administrative support services are available to the organization. Some of these could be done internally with existing staff, while other services may be more effective through outsourcing. Examples of such services may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Legal counsel.
- Information technology support (hardware, software, records management, mobile data computers, etc.).
- Communications support (portable and mobile radios, etc.).
- Human resources.
- Logistics and equipment maintenance (probably best done by internal staff).
- Facilities maintenance.
- Finance and payroll.
- Apparatus and vehicle maintenance (A state-of-the-art maintenance facility is maintained by District #4).

- Ambulance billing and collection (would need internal staff support for preparation, but outsourcing this service should be considered).
- Internal administrative support staff for various functions within the organization.

These positions and services will be an important element to consider during the planning process. In the case of an RFA, the leadership should consider approaching the City of Walla Walla to determine its interest in providing certain services through a contractual arrangement or ILA.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF CONSOLIDATION

The purpose of this fiscal analysis is to provide a high-level assessment of the financial feasibility of two of the options presented by ESCI for consideration. The estimates and analysis presented are dependent on the outlined assumptions and subject to change depending on any factors that may influence revenues and expenses.

Proposed Employee Wages & Benefits

For the purpose of this study, ESCI has made certain assumptions on employee wages and benefits, in order to forecast potential costs of a consolidated (following annexation) fire district. It must be emphasized that the dollar amounts used here are by no means final, nor do they entail ESCI's recommendations for wages. Ultimately, this will need to be determined by the leadership of the jurisdictions following negotiation with the respective bargaining unit(s). However, should annexation occur, ESCI recommends that *no* employees be given a reduction in wages and benefits if transferred to the new expanded fire district.

Uniformed Personnel Benefits

The following figure is a list of recommended benefits that represent a conglomeration of the various benefits found among each of the three agencies. In some cases, employees will see an increase in their benefits, and others will remain unchanged with one exception. WWFD currently provides additional life insurance for its uniformed staff, which would be eliminated in the following model.

Figure 143: Proposed Benefits for Uniformed Personnel

Benefit	Consolidated Agency
Uniform Allowance	\$125 annually
Educational Incentives	Yes
Social Security ¹	No
Workers Compensation	Yes
Pension (LEOFF)	Yes
Deferred Compensation	3% match
Medical	Yes
Dental	Yes
Short-term Disability	Yes
Vision	Yes
Life Insurance	Yes
Survivor Income Benefit	No
Additional Life Insurance	Employee purchase

¹District #4 no longer pay social security.

Non-Uniformed Staff Benefits

Administrative support staff (non-uniformed) should retain the same benefits they receive in their current positions within their respective fire agencies. The Human Resources Manager would be a new position within District #4 (although the two cities have those positions, but not within their respective fire departments). ESCI suggests that this position be provided with the same benefits package as administrative support staff receives.

Estimated Personnel Wages & Benefits

The following figure represents the estimated cost of wages and benefits to employees, as well as the compensation rates for volunteers and residents (estimated for 2020).

Figure 144: Estimated Career Personnel Wages & Benefits for Projected Financial Analysis

Staff Positions	Total FTE	Base Annual Salary	Estimated Benefits Cost ^A	TOTAL COST
Fire Chief	1	\$148,249	\$50,586	\$198,835
Division Chief	3	\$136,956	\$46,733	\$551,066
Battalion Chief	6	\$114,648	\$39,121	\$922,612
Captain (Admin./Operations)	2	\$92,340	\$31,509	\$247,698
Lieutenant (Admin./Operations)	18	\$86,796	\$29,617	\$2,095,431
Engineer/EMT	12	\$84,216	\$28,736	\$1,355,430
Firefighter/Paramedic	12	\$84,216	\$28,736	\$1,355,430
Firefighter/EMT	24	\$73,872	\$25,207	\$2,377,893
Firefighter/Mechanic	3	\$75,084	\$25,620	\$302,113
Human Resources Manager	1	\$68,000	\$20,400	\$88,400
Executive Assistant	1	\$62,000	\$18,600	\$80,600
EMS Administrative Assistant	1	\$50,160	\$15,048	\$65,208
EMS Compliance Specialist	1	\$55,404	\$16,621	\$72,025
Totals:	85	—	—	\$9,712,739

^ABenefits calculated at 34.1% of salaries for uniformed personnel and 30% for civilian personnel.

^BIncludes Battalion Chief functioning as the Fire Marshal.

To reiterate, the wage and benefit amounts listed in the preceding figure are not final and are utilized only for the purpose of developing a conservative estimate of employee costs in a consolidated fire district. ESCI assumes the hourly compensation for part-time employees would remain the same, and work hours would vary by employee availability and department need.

Volunteer Compensation

As previously noted, volunteers in CPFD and WWCFD₄ receive a stipend for participating in specific department-sanctioned activities, including emergency response, training and drill attendance, other activities, and volunteer fire-officer pay. The activities stipend matrix in each fire agency varies slightly. However, WWCFD₄ pays volunteer officers and residents a monthly stipend in addition to stipends for specific District activities. The District's volunteer pay-scale is more detailed than the CPFD pay scale.

The 2019 volunteer stipend budgets between the two organizations vary significantly, in both the amounts paid in the fire and EMS categories and the total amounts budgeted. The following figure illustrates this disparity.

Figure 145: Comparison of CPFD & WWCFD₄ Volunteer Stipend Budgeted Amounts (2019)

Budget Line-Item	CPFD	WWCFD ₄	% Difference
Volunteer Stipend (EMS)	\$35,000	\$96,000	174%
Volunteer Stipend (Fire)	\$85,000	\$42,000	(25%)
Volunteer Benefits (EMS)	\$6,678 ^A	\$28,000	319%
Volunteer Benefits (Fire)	\$6,503 ^A	\$42,000	546%
TOTAL	\$133,181	\$230,000	

^A FICA payments only.

The large disparity in volunteer benefits between the two departments is because WWCFD₄ provides a wide range of benefits, including life insurance, disability insurance, a Life Flight aeromedical subscription, social security, Medicaid, and annual physical exams.

Since the WWCFD₄ stipend matrix is more detailed in awarding "units" for time spent in various District activities and includes payments for officers, ESCI recommends adopting District #4's methodology in a potential new organization.

Specific to budget forecasting, ESCI assumes that the same number of volunteers, officers, and residents would transition into a new organization. Therefore, the current budgeted amounts in each agency would be combined. However, the WWCFD₄ budgeted volunteer benefits (approximately 43% of the budgeted stipend amounts) would need to be added to the CPFD stipend amount to account for the expansion of benefits to all volunteers in the new organization. The following figure represents a forecasted budget amount for a new organization.

Figure 146: Combined Projected Volunteer Stipend Budget

Budget Line-Item	New
Volunteer Stipend (EMS)	\$131,000
Volunteer Stipend (Fire)	\$149,000
Volunteer Benefits (EMS)	\$34,678
Volunteer Benefits (Fire)	\$48,503
TOTAL	\$363,181

Summary of Career & Volunteer Compensation

The following figure represents a summary of the costs of salaries and benefits of the career staff, along with the costs of volunteer benefits.

Figure 147: Salaries & Benefits of Career & Volunteer Personnel (Actuals)

Fire Agency	Career Salaries	Career Benefits	Volunteer Stipends	Volunteer Benefits
Salaries & Benefits				
Walla Walla Fire Department	\$4,821,990	\$1,662,250	N/A	N/A
College Place Fire Department	\$296,927	\$126,516	\$120,000	13,181
Walla Walla County Fire District #4	\$956,000	\$296,500	\$160,000	70,000
Totals by Column:	\$6,074,917	\$2,085,266	\$280,000	\$83,181
Total of All Wages & Benefits:	\$8,523,364			
Benefits Percentages				
WWFD Benefits %		34.5%		
CPFD Benefits %		42.6%		11.0%
WWCFD4 Benefits %		31.0%		43.8%
Total Benefits Average %:		34.3%		29.7%
Total Career/Volunteer Average %:	34.1%			

The preceding figure displays the benefits percentages for each fire agency's career personnel and volunteers. ESCI used the combined average of the agencies to determine forecasted benefits costs for consolidated fire department.

Financial Analysis of an Annexation

The following is based on the 2018 actual revenues and expenditures of the combined fire jurisdictions. This is presented to provide a general overview of the estimated revenues and costs. In addition, the figure only includes regular recurring revenues and expenditures. Assumptions made in this figure include the changes in the salaries and benefits as described in the preceding section, "Proposed Employee Wages & Benefits" along with the combined current expenditures of the three fire agencies.

Payroll and revenue projections are based on Walla Walla's experience, since its size is most representative of a consolidated fire department, and its economy is dominant. Volunteer stipends and benefits growth were based on a simple 2.5% inflation rate. Other expenditure projections were based on each fire agency's individual experiences.

ESCI believes there can be significant savings and revenue opportunities in combining capital equipment and facilities—both from sharing resources and selling surplus items. For capital expenses, ESCI therefore assumed a simple \$250,000 per year as basic factor rather than using the combined expenses identified in each fire agency's capital facility plan.

Interfund charges for administrative services (overhead) were added to the status quo calculations to make the cities comparable in an RFA. These line-items were removed from the RFA calculations, since ESCI included additional personnel in its projections to cover administrative functions.

Figure 148: Estimated Revenue & Expenses in the Event of Annexation (based on 2018 actuals)

Description	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recurring Revenue Sources					
District #4 Property Tax ^A	\$5,702,587	\$5,839,340	\$5,977,054	\$6,115,780	\$6,255,368
EMS Levy Revenue	\$1,994,110	\$2,042,673	\$2,094,052	\$2,141,303	\$2,198,634
Ambulance Fees	\$1,502,734	\$1,508,017	\$1,513,406	\$1,518,903	\$1,524,510
All Other Revenue Sources	\$1,610,271	\$1,639,551	\$1,669,203	\$1,699,245	\$1,729,699
Total Revenue:	\$10,809,702	\$11,029,581	\$11,253,714	\$11,475,232	\$11,708,212
Recurring Expenses					
Salaries & Benefits	\$10,000,893	\$10,298,192	\$10,604,947	\$10,921,482	\$11,248,132
Volunteer Stipends	\$430,507	\$441,270	\$452,302	\$463,609	\$475,199
Supplies and Services	\$1,090,674	\$1,117,941	\$1,145,889	\$1,174,537	\$1,203,900
Capital & Other Expenses	\$918,021	\$938,366	\$943,197	\$965,016	\$969,757
Total Expenses:	\$12,440,096	\$12,795,769	\$13,146,335	\$13,524,644	\$13,896,988
Net Income (Deficit):	(\$1,630,394)	(\$1,766,188)	(\$1,892,620)	(\$2,049,412)	(\$2,188,776)

^ARate of \$1.2268 per \$1,000 assessed value.

As shown in the preceding figure, if District #4 were to annex the two cities it would need to find new revenue sources or reduce services to balance its budget. This deficit makes intuitive sense because Walla Walla effectively funded its department with the equivalent of a \$1.72 levy in 2018, and District #4 would need to shoulder this burden.

Based on 2018 actuals, the next figure shows the forecasted revenue deficits excluding capital. Although costs would be somewhat reduced without capital expenses, significant revenue shortfalls would remain, given the current property tax rate and revenue sources. However, with the combined existing resources (apparatus, capital equipment, etc.) of the three fire agencies, the need for capital expenditures may not be necessary in the immediate future.

Figure 149: Estimated Revenue Deficits Excluding Capital Expenditures in an Annexation

Description	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Revenue:	\$10,809,702	\$11,029,581	\$11,253,714	\$11,475,232	\$11,708,212
Expenses (Excluding Capital):	\$12,190,096	\$12,545,769	\$12,896,335	\$13,274,644	\$13,646,988
Net Income (Deficit):	\$(1,380,394)	\$(1,516,188)	\$(1,642,620)	\$(1,799,412)	\$(1,938,776)

Should the voters approve the regular levy by approximately \$0.30, to the full \$1.50 allowed, the 2021 deficit would be reduced to only \$13,274 (effectively, the agency would break even). This deficit would however climb by roughly \$100,000 per year, necessitating either additional revenues or expenditure controls.

Financial Analysis of a Regional Fire Authority

The purpose of this analysis is to provide a high-level assessment of the financial feasibility of the formation of an RFA. The estimates and analysis presented are dependent on the outlined assumptions and subject to change, depending on actual factors that influence revenues and expenses. Key assumptions used in the assessment are followed by estimates of revenues over five years. Specific implications of the RFA strategy on the cities of Walla Walla and College Place property tax levy and the tax rates in all jurisdictions are presented next. This section concludes with a summary of the financial considerations associated with the RFA strategy.

RFA Revenues

The following represent various assumptions related to revenues in an RFA:

- An RFA plan approved by voters that would include a regular levy rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value. If approved, the levy would supersede the existing levies in each of the jurisdictions.
- An RFA would continue to receive EMS-related revenues equal to those currently received by the parent jurisdictions.
- An RFA would include an excess levy, set to match the operating and capital needs of the first year of operations (assumed to be 2021). Note that an RFA plan could alternatively include higher ambulance charges, benefit charges, bond levies, or other revenue-generating tools.

- The analysis assumes that existing approved bond levies would continue until their respective debt obligations are satisfied. It does not assume any new bonds will be voted on in an RFA, but instead assumes that any capital purchases would be made from regular and excess levy revenue.

A key consideration in determining the potential formation of an RFA is that of funding. While all the options are not included in the analysis of this study, the RFA plan will identify funding sources that may include the following:

- Fire levies
- EMS levies
- Excess levies
- Benefit charges
- Bonds for capital purchases

The revenue forecast under an RFA strategy, using the identified assumptions, results in annual revenue that is approximately \$12,626,156 in 2021. Property tax revenue assumptions specific to an RFA include:

- Regular property tax rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 assessed value (this is the maximum rate allowed by state code) set in 2021.
- Annual property tax increases are 1% of the previous year plus new construction (which is forecasted using a 2.5% growth rate).
- Excess levy approved to meet the forecast needs for the years 2021–2025. This results in excess revenue in the initial years, which is offset by projected deficits in later years. Note that while this ensures that the RFA is fully funded for the first five years, it also inflates the excess levy by about \$0.04. This inflated levy is reflected in comparisons with existing levies.
- EMS levy transfers continue, forecasted with increases using a linear model.

RFA Revenue Forecast

The revenue forecast under the RFA strategy, using the assumptions identified above, results in an annual revenue of \$12,626,156, increasing to \$13,702,722 due primarily to steady property tax growth. A summary of the RFA strategy revenue projection is shown in the following figure.

Figure 150: Regional Fire Authority Revenue Projections (2021–2025)

Revenue Source	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	% Change
Regular Property Tax	7,290,832	7,466,605	7,643,279	7,820,959	7,999,486	9.7%
EMS Property Tax	1,994,110	2,042,673	2,094,052	2,141,303	2,198,634	10.3%
Excess/Special Levy	228,210	233,712	239,242	244,803	250,391	9.7%
Other Taxes	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ambulance Fees	1,502,734	1,508,017	1,513,406	1,518,903	1,524,510	1.4%
Other Revenue	1,610,271	1,639,551	1,669,203	1,699,245	1,729,699	7.4%
Subtotal Revenue:	\$12,626,156	\$12,890,558	\$13,159,181	\$13,425,214	\$13,702,722	8.5%
Annual % Increase:	—	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	—

The next figure shows the projected levy rates. In projecting these rates, assessed values were projected using a linear forecast model, and each levy was assumed to begin in 2021. The EMS levy is included (and assumed to be renewed at \$0.50 by Walla Walla County in 2021) to indicate the total tax burden. It would not actually be included in an RFA plan since it is a countywide levy that would exist outside an RFA. The preceding and following figures also include an Excess Levy, which would be required to balance the budget (discussed later).

Figure 151: Forecasted Combined Levy Rates in an RFA (2021–2025)

Combined Levies	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Combined AV:	\$4,860,554,449	\$5,051,610,448	\$5,242,666,447	\$5,433,722,445	\$5,624,778,444
Regular Levy Revenue	1.5000	1.4781	1.4579	1.4393	1.4222
EMS Levy Revenue	0.5000	0.4902	0.4812	0.4727	0.4648
Excess Levy Revenue	0.0470	0.0463	0.0456	0.0451	0.0445
Total Levy Rate:	2.0470	2.0146	1.9847	1.9571	1.9315

Impact on the Jurisdiction's Regular Property Tax Levies

The next figure estimates what the 5-year average property tax rate would be for each jurisdiction with and without an RFA. It then calculates the total property tax impact of creating an RFA for each jurisdiction. For the City of Walla Walla, an RFA would result in tax savings. In the case of District #4 and the City of College Place, an RFA would result in an additional tax burden.

Much of the reason for the additional burden stems from payroll increases, as ESCI assumes that wages and benefits for firefighters in CPFD and WWCFD₄ would increase to the levels at the Walla Walla Fire Department—while recognizing that much of this would need to be negotiated. This adds up to roughly \$1.2 million more for an RFA than for the sum of the individual jurisdictions. College Place and District #4 take a larger impact because they carry that burden on a much smaller tax basis. Walla Walla would enjoy much of the savings, in part, because this burden would be offset by the loss of their current administrative services (overhead) costs, which is projected to be \$692,743 in 2021.

Figure 152: Comparison of Status Quo & Five-Year Levy Rates

Jurisdiction	2021–2025 Average Levy Rate			Taxes Paid	
	Status Quo	RFA	Difference	Difference	% Total Taxes Paid
Walla Walla					
Regular (2.2779 total)	1.7710	1.5000	(0.2710)		
EMS	0.5000	0.5000	—		
Excess	—	0.0693	0.0693		
Total:	2.2710	2.0470	(0.2240)	(\$635,549)	(-9.9%)
College Place					
Regular (2.1286 total)	0.6509	1.5000	0.8491		
EMS	0.5000	0.5000	—		
Excess	—	0.0470	0.0470		
Total:	1.1509	2.0470	0.8961	\$630,380	77.9%
District #4					
Regular	1.1502	1.5000	0.3498		
EMS	0.5000	0.5000	—		
Excess	—	0.0470	0.0470		
Total:	1.6502	2.0470	0.3968	\$523,867	24.0%

RFA Expense Forecast

Expenses under the RFA strategy are assumed to be the same as the combined expenses of the predecessor organizations, but include ESCI's recommendations on career and volunteer compensation as described previously. Aside from increases in salaries and benefits, some expenses would likely be higher while others are lower. The expense forecast does not consider any potential savings through the reduction of services or supplies (which cannot be predicted), but does assume significant capital savings as described previously under the annexation scenario. Using the combined expense projections is considered reasonable for the purposes of this analysis. The assumed expenses in the following figure are the same as those in the annexation scenario.

Figure 153: Forecasted Annual Expenses of a Regional Fire Authority (2021–2025)

Expenses	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Salaries & Benefits	\$10,000,893	\$10,298,192	\$10,604,947	\$10,921,482	\$11,248,132
Volunteer Stipends	\$430,507	\$441,270	\$452,302	\$463,609	\$475,199
Supplies & Services	\$1,090,674	\$1,117,941	\$1,145,889	\$1,174,537	\$1,203,900
Capital & Other Expenses	\$918,021	\$938,366	\$943,197	\$965,016	\$969,757
Estimated Total Expenses:	\$12,440,096	\$12,795,769	\$13,146,335	\$13,524,644	\$13,896,988

Combined Revenue & Expense Forecast of an RFA

The following figure represents the combined estimated revenues and expenditures in the event the jurisdictions elect to pursue the implementation of a Regional Fire Authority. ESCI has prepared each of the financial analyses from a conservative perspective, rather than underestimating the costs.

Figure 154: Forecasted Revenues & Expenses of a Regional Fire Authority (2021–2025)

Expenses	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Revenue	\$12,626,156	\$12,890,558	\$13,159,181	\$13,425,214	\$13,702,722
Total Expenses	\$12,440,096	\$12,795,769	\$13,146,335	\$13,524,644	\$13,896,988
Net Income (Deficit):	\$186,060	\$94,789	\$12,847	(\$99,430)	(\$194,266)

As shown in the preceding figure, the net income over the first five years balances to zero. The large deficit in 2022 is primarily the result of capital purchases, including an engine for the Walla Walla Fire Department, and two engines and an ambulance for Walla Walla County Fire District #4. However, as mentioned previously, there may be adequate existing apparatus among the three fire agencies that would negate the need for these capital expenditures. The declining net revenues from 2023–2025 are due to expenses increasing faster than property tax revenues.

GENERAL FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

During the evaluation of current conditions described in Section I of this report, ESCI identified areas and issues that should be considered for change and improvement. In some cases, these may apply to a consolidated organization while in others it may only apply to the individual fire agency.

Recommendations on Communications & Data Collection

- The *FirstNet* mission is to deploy, operate, maintain, and improve the first high-speed, nationwide wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety. The fire agencies in Walla Walla County should monitor implementation of FirstNet in Washington State, and participate in the regional planning processes in order to leverage FirstNet resources to bolster Countywide broadband connectivity.
- Improve the collection of CAD data from the dispatch center.
 - Work cooperatively with the dispatch center to improve recording, tracking, and retrieval of fire department data, while also monitoring call-processing (alarm-handling) performance.
- Improve overall data collection (data points such as individual station volumes are critical when making deployment decisions).
- Ensure utilization of the EMD triage process to determine the level of response (initial dispatch of a transport ambulance may not be necessary for non-life threatening and unlikely transport-related incidents)

Training Recommendations

Consolidation between two or more departments would present an excellent opportunity to collaborate, bolster, and standardize training in a new organization, in addition to establishing performance criteria and annual training requirements.

In the event of consolidation, the formal creation of a Training Division should be developed. Current job descriptions and positions should be reviewed, assessed, and updated. Adequate staffing and support will be needed to provide training of approximately 166 operational response positions.

- If WWFD, CPFD, and WWCFD₄ consolidate, strong consideration should be given to creating a Training Division within the organization.
- A chief officer should be appointed to oversee the Division, which should be staffed sufficiently with four positions: one chief officer, two Training Officers, one EMS Specialist, and one administrative support person.
- On-duty personnel should be utilized to conduct training (respective to specialty/discipline).

- Personnel assigned to training should have certification in accordance with instructor-level standards (e.g., NFPA and WAC standards). These standards should include proper Safety Officer training to supervise training scenarios.
- Training curriculum for all hazards and response requirements should be defined, and revisions to individual minimum training established.

Notably, it would not be necessary to fulfill all positions within the new division immediately.

Life-Safety & Prevention Recommendations

- If WWFD, CPFD, and WWCFD₄ consolidate, strong consideration should be given to creating a “Community Risk” or “Life-Safety” Division within the organization.
 - A Fire Marshal should be appointed to oversee the Division, which should be staffed to sufficiently address the various elements of a prevention, investigation, and life-safety program.
 - If created, this Division should be staffed with four positions: one Fire Marshal, two Inspector/Investigators, one Plans Reviewer, and one Public Educator/Public Information Officer.
- On-duty fire crews should be utilized to conduct inspections and develop pre-fire plans.
- Members assigned to investigate all types of fires, should receive training and certification in accordance with NFPA 1033, as well as NFPA 921: *Guide for Fire & Explosion Investigations*.⁴² These standards provide thorough information for conducting scientific-based fire investigations and the education necessary for investigators.
- In the future, if adequately staffed, the new Division should begin the process of completing a Community Risk Assessment and subsequent Community Risk Reduction Plan.

Technical Rescue & Special Operations Recommendations

WWFD is currently the only department with an operational level of technical rescue and special operations members. CCFD and WWCFD₄ rely on mutual aid or regional response resources, which delay the ability to intervene during an imminent lifesaving event. All departments function under an integrated and scalable regional hazardous material response plan. It appears that these technical rescue and special operations models are currently best serving the County’s and community’s needs. Resources and training are provided through qualified instructors.

In the event that the departments pursue consolidation, it would be beneficial to task-specific response stations to provide for incident support functions such as decontamination, containment, Level A entry, and rope/confined space/surface-water rescue that strives to reduce needless duplication and minimize the overall impact for maintaining specialized training or certification proficiencies. Distribution of resources may also allow for refining standard operating guidelines and management of materials and supplies. This model could be replicated for additional technical response disciplines as the demand or needs are identified.

Additional discussion may determine the need for bolstering internal resources for incident command and safety officer positions to assure regulatory compliance during routine and emergent technical rescue and special operations. Training programs should include succession planning and professional development to ensure minimum staffing needs are sustained.

Community risk assessments should clearly identify potential risk hazards in the service area and assess the needs for revising standard operating guidelines, response plans, and minimum daily staffing levels for certified or technician levels of response members. Lastly, response standards should clearly identify benchmarks and performance standards for the necessary distribution, response measurements, and assembly for an effective response force.

Dispatch & Performance Recommendations

The following represents general recommendations related to emergency operations and deployment of apparatus and personnel.

- Should the key stakeholders elect not to pursue consolidation, the fire agencies should determine new dispatch policies that would “eliminate” the boundaries of each jurisdiction and result in dispatching the closest apparatus and personnel to incident scenes—especially with the ambulances.
- Each fire agency, or a new consolidated organization, should establish and adopt *realistic* and *effective* specific response performance goals (using state and national performance standards as a guide, along with identified community risks and citizen expectations).
- Monitor and evaluate emergency turnout-time performance.
- Identify any geographical barriers within the study area that could be negatively impacting response-time performance.
- Monitor and evaluate UHU rates, particularly among the ambulances, to assist in analyzing efficiency and effectiveness.
- Consider the possibility of additional staffing at Walla Walla County Fire District #4 Station 41, and Walla Walla Fire Department Stations 11-1 and 11-2, in order to increase Effective Response Force in the areas of higher incident density.

Recommendations on Firefighter Physical Examinations

- Regardless of the outcome of consolidation, all firefighters, including new hires, should undergo a physical examination consistent with NFPA Standard 1582, as well as participate in annual physical examinations, regardless of age.
- Consider adopting the *Candidate Physical Ability Test* (CPAT) criteria and require a current CPAT card to ensure the physical capability to perform fireground tasks.

Firefighter Reserve Program

Following consolidation, a long-term strategy to establish a Firefighter Reserve Program for individuals pursuing a career in the fire service. It is beyond the scope of this study to address this in detail. However, many successful reserve programs throughout Washington State could serve as a model for Walla Walla County.

Community Paramedicine Program

Another long-term strategy that should be evaluated and considered for implementation would be establishing a potential Mobile Integrated Healthcare-Community Paramedicine (MIH-CP) program. MIH-CP programs can take a variety of forms that can address different local healthcare issues. These may range from mental health issues to persons with chronic illnesses who tend to be frequent users of the EMS system. In many communities, there are a variety of sources that can fund such programs.

RFA PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION

If the RFA option is selected, a joint and comprehensive planning process that addresses the restructuring of the agencies as they integrate at the policy level, as well as at the operational, administrative, and support levels. Greater efficiency can be achieved if the collaboration is permanent, with one methodology, one set of work rules, one standardized level of service to the community, and one organizational structure to administer it.

Basic Procedural Steps of Consolidation

The following section outlines the basic steps to initiate consolidation and ultimately the development of a Regional Fire Authority comprised of the Walla Walla Fire Department, College Place Fire Department, and Walla Walla County Fire District #4.

Step One—Development of a Shared Vision

The process of considering and implementing the recommendations will need to begin with a shared vision by the elected and appointed officials and fire agency leadership of the three jurisdictions. From this vision, goals and objectives should be identified which, if accomplished, compel the agencies toward the vision. Essentially, this process is the framework of a plan for integration. When considering the development of an RFA, three questions must be asked:

- Are you considering an RFA for the benefit of the citizens you serve?
- Are you considering an RFA to gain efficiencies for the benefit of the citizens you serve?
- Are you considering an RFA to improve the overall level of service, standards of cover, and enhance services for the benefits of the citizens you serve?

If the answer to all three questions is “Yes,” then an RFA should be considered.

Step Two—Initial Collaboration

In the previous section of this report entitled, “Alternatives for Implementing Cooperative Efforts,” ESCI discussed three methods for collaboration: Administrative, Functional, and Operational. Should the jurisdictions elect to move forward with the development of an RFA, ESCI recommends that the policymakers consider implementing a joint operations board prior to final consolidation into an RFA.

This is intended to be a temporary collaboration of the three fire agencies, during which time the RFA planning process can be completed, as well as identifying latent issues that will likely surface only when functional collaboration occurs. During this period, the fire agencies and employees can begin to get accustomed to a “new” organization while addressing the various challenges that will most certainly occur during the consolidation. ESCI recommends that the temporary collaboration be maintained a maximum of 12–24 months.

Collaboration Planning

Contractual consolidation is recommended here as an initial step in working toward a regional fire authority. One of the challenges of contractual consolidations is in creating a fair and consistent funding model. The two models (RFA and contractual consolidation) involve the same considerations. Accordingly, the following discussion of contractual consolidations also serves as a guide to forming an RFA plan. ESCI recommends the establishment of a three-member *Joint Operations Board* comprised of elected officials appointed from the three separate agencies.

The Interlocal Cooperation Act (ICA), chapter 39.34 RCW, authorizes municipal corporations (in this case, cities and fire districts) to create a joint board to direct the operations in which each entity is represented on the board. Alternatively, the separate agencies may create a separate board of directors appointed by the three elected bodies to manage the joint operations.

Under the provisions of the ICA the joint operation can only exercise the powers that the most statutorily restricted agency included in the joint operation possesses. In other words, an interlocal agreement cannot confer new powers on a participating agency. The legislative bodies of the participating agencies will still retain the primary authority and responsibility for the joint operations. The contractual agreement that creates the joint operation must be carefully drawn to ensure that the participating entities do not jeopardize their responsibilities to their residents and property owners.

Contractual consolidations do not have any statutory provisions (other than the ICA itself), so all details of the contractual relationship must be defined by contract. The checklist included at the end of this section should be used to guide the development of contract terms.

The objective should be initial integration of the participants across the jurisdictions by means of an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement, as provided for under RCW 39.34, as a precursor to the formation of an RFA. The joint board should hire an administrator (fire chief) to supervise and direct the workforce, including the incumbent fire chiefs of the separate agencies. This ensures that no one agency becomes the *de facto* lead agency, but the joint operation is managed and directed as a consolidated function. It is ESCI's intent that the Administrator/Fire Chief ultimately be appointed the permanent Fire Chief of the regional fire authority, once formed.

Joint Operations Board

The Joint Operations Board under the provisions of the Interlocal Cooperation Act should include the following considerations in the agreement:

- The selection and retention of an administrator.
- Procedure for the creation of the joint board.
- Establish the authority and limitations on the authority of both the administrator and the joint board.
- Establish a method for appointing representatives by each participating agency on the joint board.
- Establish required meetings and the method of calling special meetings of the joint board. The joint board is subject to the *Open Public Meetings Act*.

Budgets

The method for establishing a budget for the joint operations must be considered. The agreement should establish how each participating agency will provide input to the joint budget.

District Expense

In establishing a joint operation, particularly where a joint board as a separate entity will govern the entire operation, the board of fire commissioners must recognize that each District participating will still incur its own expenses apart from the joint operations. The expenses involved include the following:

- Commissioner fees and costs.
- Insurance premiums, if applicable.
- Membership fees.
- Publications.
- Seminar registration fees and costs.
- Attorney's fees.
- State audit fees.
- Election expenses.

Hold Harmless

Depending on the insurance requirements and the nature and identity of the policies obtained, provision could be included to provide a hold harmless provision to protect against broad risk exposures. In this situation, the joint operation is to be established as a separate entity and to provide its own insurance, it should agree to hold each of the participating municipalities harmless from the insured risks.

Operations & Levels of Service***Services***

The services that are to be provided under the contract must be specified together with the level of the services. Contractual consolidations should cover all the following services.

- Fire suppression
- Fire prevention
- Emergency medical services
- Hazardous material incident response services
- Dispatch services
- Administrative services
- Financial services
- Fire and building code inspection
- Fire investigations
- Mechanical services
- Training

Term & Termination Provisions

A consolidation agreement could provide for a specific term with renewal options or could provide for a continuing agreement subject to termination by the actions of the parties. If a consolidation agreement is subject to termination by any of the participating parties, enough time for notification of termination must be provided to enable the parties to reestablish their own operational departments.

Personnel

One of the major issues in the consolidation of existing fire departments relates to the integration of the personnel from each participating entity and the hiring of future personnel. Initially, a determination must be made as to whom will be the employer. In some situations, each of the participating parties may continue to employ its own personnel to operate under a consolidated chain of command. In other situations, the personnel, both paid and volunteer, of each participating entity will terminate employment with that entity and be hired by the joint operating board. The following are factors that should be reviewed and considered prior to consolidation.

- The appointment of the chief and supervisory officers and the determination of how replacement appointments will be made in the future.
- The provisions of the existing collective bargaining agreements must be reviewed and may need to be renegotiated or amended.
- Wage scales and fringe benefits provided by the participants.
- Accrued retirement and medical benefits and the future funding of the benefits.
- The rank and positions of existing employees.
- Longevity of existing employees.
- Existing hiring list.
- Existing promotional list.
- Accrued vacation time of employees and the funding of the vacation time.
- Accrued sick leave of the employees and the funding of the sick leave.
- Accrued compensatory time and the funding of the compensatory time.
- Pension fund commitments of each participant.
- LEOFF I contingent liability for existing and retired employees.
- Medical insurance coverage.
- Dental insurance coverage.
- Life insurance coverage.
- Integration of existing vacation leave schedules.
- The method of accrual of vacation time.
- The method of accrual of sick leave.
- The method of accrual of compensatory time.

- Holiday schedules.
- Integration of job descriptions.
- Integration of work schedules.
- Compatibility of shift schedules.
- Department logo, identity, and uniforms.
- Fair Labor Standards Act 7(K) elections.

Step Three—Development of an RFA Plan

Washington State regulations (RCW 52.26.030) require the formal establishment of an RFA Planning Committee to develop the design of the new fire agency, financing, and other issues (this will be addressed in more detail later in this section). Each of the three jurisdictions must appoint three elected officials to the Planning Committee (RCW 52.26.030). ESCI recommends the Committee retain legal counsel with expertise in fire department consolidations and RFAs.

Note that ESCI recommends that the plan be developed in a manner that would allow future integration of other fire districts into the RFA to avoid the necessity of the creation of a new plan.

Public Input

The Planning Committee will need to provide opportunities for public input in the development of the Plan. This can be accomplished through public hearings, public meetings, and other similar venues.

Step Four—Submit the Plan to the Governing Bodies

The final plan will require formal submission and approval of the governing bodies of the City of Walla Walla, City of College Place, and Walla Walla County Fire District #4, in order to initiate an election.

Step Five—Election and Approval by the Voters

Once a decision is made to place the RFA on the ballot, it will take a concerted effort by the employees and volunteers of each of the fire agencies to develop a campaign committee to convince the electorate of the benefits of an RFA and to ultimately approve the ballot initiative. It must be noted that public funds cannot be utilized to promote a “Yes” vote, and campaign activities must be done by employees off-duty. However, the agencies can provide unbiased information describing the details of the RFA.

If a simple majority of votes cast are in favor, the RFA is declared organized by the resolution of the Walla Walla County Commissioners. However, if the plan includes the authority to impose fire benefit charges or 60% voter-approved taxes, it must be approved by a 60% supermajority in accordance with RCW 52.26.050.

Step Six—Implement the RFA Plan

Following approval by the electorate, the Plan should have included a date and process in which to begin implementation of the Regional Fire Authority formally.

Recommendations During the Initial Collaboration

In the preceding section, Step 2 described the processes for establishing an interim collaborative process until such time as an RFA could be implemented. In this case, ESCI recommends the following:

- Establish a Joint Operations Board comprised of one elected official from each of three jurisdictions.
- Hire a qualified and experienced professional to serve as the new Fire Chief and administrator.
 - This individual would be responsible for developing the collaboration process, overseeing the temporary structure, developing the RFA plan, and eventually serving as the Fire Chief of the Regional Fire Authority.

Cost-Sharing Options

Usually, when a single local government provides fire protection to its residents, that community bears the entire financial burden because of the presumption that everyone benefits from the service. In the case of municipalities, the full cost of the service may not be easily determined because administrative and support expenses are frequently borne by other departments within the municipality, and not directly incorporated into the fire department's budget. It all works because individual users of the service are not charged. Therefore, the actual cost of that service may not be an issue. On the other hand, when two or more communities share in the provision of fire protection (as well as EMS and other services), elected officials must assure that each community assumes only its fair pro-rata share of the cost—thereby fulfilling an obligation to act as stewards to the best interest of their respective constituencies.

There are several options (formulas) that can be utilized to share costs among jurisdictions during a temporary collaboration. Regarding the three fire agencies in this study, ESCI recommends the following potential cost-sharing method. Note that certain administrative support costs (human resources, finance and payroll, IT support, etc.) will also need to be considered.

Multi-Variable Allocation Method

Often in fire department consolidation planning the policymakers and leadership find it difficult to reach an accord on the cost—even though everyone may agree on the benefit of a consolidated organization. The differences between community demographics and/or development can cause the perception of winners and losers, along with changes that occur within the system over the long term. This can be especially prevalent when a single variable is used to apportion costs. An agreement based on a combination of allocation methods may help resolve the issue.

The following figure is a summary of each jurisdiction's share of potential cost allocations.

Figure 155: Summary of the Cost Allocation Methods by Department & Percentages

Jurisdiction	Assessed Value	Population	Service Demand
College Place FD	14%	19%	18%
Walla Walla FD	57%	63%	71%
Fire District #4	29%	18%	11%

One example of using combined methods to produce a multi-variable cost allocation could be as follows. It uses three determinants that would be applied to each jurisdiction.

- *Population*: 50% of the total
- *Service Demand*: 25% of the total
- *Assessed Value*: 25% of the total

As mentioned previously, a community's population is the primary driver of the demand for fire and EMS. Therefore, population is given the most weight in this formula. Actual service-demand reflects the need for resources and needed staffing and deployment of apparatus and medic units. Communities with higher assessed values tend to have more commercial and residential properties that require more comprehensive fire protection—although communities with a high number of residents in the lower socioeconomic range tend to have a higher demand for EMS.

If desired, a fourth element could be added to the formula shown in the preceding figure, which would be the service-areas of each jurisdiction:

- College Place Fire Department Service Area: 2%
- Walla Walla Fire Department Service Area: 10%
- Walla Walla County Fire District #4 Service Area: 88%

Planning Groups & Committees

The process of considering and implementing any of these recommendations starts first with a shared vision by the policymakers of the participating agencies. From this vision, goals and objectives can be identified, which, if accomplished, propel the agencies toward the vision. This process is the framework of a strategic plan for the creation of an RFA.

The process flowchart begins with the policymakers convening a series of meetings to discuss and develop a shared vision of the agencies. Key external stakeholders may be invited into the process to lend their expertise and perspective, ensuring that the community at large is represented in these important deliberations. Often, internal stakeholders have difficulty with “possibilities thinking” because of their close association with the status quo, which is human nature. The external stakeholders add valuable perspective by asking key questions and challenging the status quo.

Establish Implementation Working Groups

Various Implementation Working Groups (IWG) should be established by the Planning Committee and charged with the responsibility of performing the necessary detailed work involved in analyzing and weighing critical issues and identifying specific tasks. Membership for IWGs should be identified as part of that process, as well. The next figure is a flowchart that outlines a process whereby these strategies can be further refined, other critical issues identified, timelines assigned, and specific tasks developed and implemented.

The following are key recommended working groups used in collaborative processes, and a description of some of their primary assigned functions and responsibilities. The actual number and titles of the working groups will vary depending on the type and complexity of the strategies pursued.

Governance Working Group

This group will be assigned to examine and evaluate various governance options for the RFA. A recommendation and the proposed process steps will be provided back to the Planning Committee. Once approved, this working group is typically assigned the task of shepherding the governance establishment through to completion. The membership of this group typically involves one or more elected officials and senior management from each fire agency. Equality of representation is important.

Figure 156: Planning Process



Administration Working Group

Working in partnership with the Governance Working Group, this group will study the administrative and legal aspects concerning the final leadership composition (Governing Board) of the RFA in accordance with RCW 52.26.080(2) and (3). This group will also identify steps to ensure the process meets administrative best-practices and the law. Where necessary, this group will oversee the preparation and presentation of policy actions such as proposed ordinances, joint resolutions, dissolutions, and needed legislation to the policymakers. The membership of this group typically involves senior management staff from the entities involved and may also include legal counsel.

Logistics/Support Services Working Group

This group will be responsible for any required blending of capital assets, disposition of surplus, upgrades necessary to accommodate operational changes, and the preparation for ongoing administration and logistics of the cooperative effort. The membership of this group typically involves mid-level agency management, administrative, and support staff. Where involved, support functions such as maintenance or fire prevention may also be represented.

Operations Working Group

This group will be responsible for an extensive amount of work and may need to establish multiple sub-groups to accommodate its workload. It will work out the details necessary to make operational changes required by the strategy, using the recommendations contained in this study as a basic guideline. This involves a detailed analysis of assets, processes, procedures, service-delivery methods, deployment, and operational staffing. Detailed integration plans, steps, and timelines will be developed. The group will appoint and coordinate closely with a Logistics/Support Services Working Group. The membership of this group typically involves senior management, mid-level officers, training staff, volunteer leadership, and labor representatives. This list often expands with the complexity of the services provided by the agencies.

Finance Working Group

This group will be assigned to review the financial projections contained in the ESCI study and complete any refinements or updating as necessary. The group will look at all possible funding mechanisms and will work in partnership with the Governance Working Group to determine the impact on local revenue sources and options. Where revenue is to be determined by formula rather than a property tax rate, such as in a contractual cooperative venture, this group will evaluate various formula components and model the outcomes, resulting in recommendations for a final funding methodology and cost distribution formula.

Funding options for the RFA may include any tax or benefit charge that would be available to a fire district:

- Fire levy
- EMS levy
- Excess levy
- Benefit charge
- Bonds for capital purchases

The membership of this group typically involves senior financial managers and staff analysts, and may also include representatives from the agencies' administrative staffs.

Labor Working Group

This group will have the responsibility, where necessary, for blending the workforces involved. This often includes the analysis of differences between collective bargaining agreements, shift schedules, policies, and working conditions. The process also includes work toward developing a consensus between the bargaining units on any unified agreement that would be proposed. Often, once the policymakers articulate the future vision, labor representatives are willing to step up and work together as a team to identify challenges presented by differing labor agreements and offer potential consensus solutions. The membership of this group typically involves labor representatives from each bargaining unit, senior management and, as needed, legal counsel.

Communication Working Group

This is one of the most important groups and will be charged with developing an internal and external communication policy and procedure to ensure consistent, reliable, and timely distribution of information related exclusively to the cooperative effort. The group will develop public information releases to the media and will select one or more spokespersons to represent the communities in their communication with the public on this specific process. The importance of speaking with a common voice and theme both internally and externally, cannot be overemphasized. Fear of change can be a strong force in motivating a group of people to oppose that which they do not clearly understand. A well-informed workforce and public will reduce conflict. The membership of the group typically involves public information officers and senior management.

Meet, Refine, & Address the Challenges

Once the working groups are established, they will set their meeting schedules and begin their various responsibilities and assignments. It will be important to maintain organized communication up and down the chain of command. The working group chairs should also report regularly to the Planning Committee. When new challenges, issues, impediments, or opportunities are identified by the working groups, this needs to be communicated to the Planning Committee immediately, so that the information can be coordinated with the findings and processes of the other working groups. Where necessary, representatives of the Planning Committee and a working group chairperson can meet with the policymakers to discuss significant issues requiring a refinement of the original joint vision.

The process is continual as the objectives of the implementation plan are accomplished one by one. When specific objectives have been met, the Planning Committee can declare various goals as having been accomplished, subject to implementation approval by the policymakers. This formal turning over will mark the point at which implementation ends and integration of the agencies—to whatever extent has been recommended—begins.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the process of consolidating multiple fire departments from several jurisdictions is a complex and challenging process requiring substantial effort and cooperation by all participants. To be successful, it will require compromise by the elected officials and leaders of the fire agencies and, ultimately, approval by the voters of each jurisdiction.

It must be emphasized that ESCI's various recommendations on a new organizational structure, deployment and operations, revenue and expenses, and employee wages and benefits are *not* intended to be final. During the planning and implementation process, the participants may identify unforeseen issues or better alternatives based on current conditions, and make the necessary changes accordingly. The recommendations contained in this report are meant to provide some options for discussion and consideration by the key stakeholders, who will ultimately determine the final elements of the RFA.

ESCI commends the Fire Chiefs and their respective employees for their substantial efforts and cooperation in providing a substantial amount of data, information, and time, along with multiple suggestions and input to assist in the successful completion of this study.

During this study, ESCI found that the elected officials of each jurisdiction, along with Fire Chiefs of each organization and many of their employees were open to a potential consolidation. ESCI found some level of trepidation, as well as misconceptions, among many of the volunteers and a few of the career staff. However, when provided with the facts, most individuals appeared to be more receptive.

Finally, ESCI strongly believes that the consolidation of the College Place Fire Department, Walla Walla Fire Department, and Walla Walla County Fire District #4 into a Regional Fire Authority would ultimately improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of fire protection, EMS and patient transport, and other emergency services throughout the three jurisdictions.

Section III: APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: NFPA 1710 RESPONSE-TIME PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Term	Reference Number	Definition	Performance Standard	Minimum Staff
Alarm Answering Time	4.1.2.3.1	911 call-time from first ring to answer	Within 15 seconds, 95% of the time; within 40 seconds, 99% of the time	N/A
Alarm Transfer Time	4.1.2.3.2	Time from receipt of alarm at PSAP until alarm receipt at dispatch	Within 30 seconds, 95% of the time	N/A
Alarm Processing Time	4.1.2.3.3	Call process-time from acknowledged at dispatch until unit notification	Within 64 seconds, 90% of the alarms & within 106 seconds, 95% of alarms	N/A
Alarm Processing Time—Exceptions	4.1.2.3.3.1	1. Calls requiring EMD & pre-arrival medical instructions 2. Calls requiring language translation 3. Calls requiring use of TTY/TDD device or audio/video relay services 4. Calls of criminal activity requiring information vital to responder safety prior to dispatching units 5. Hazardous material incidents 6. Technical rescues 7. Calls requiring determining location of alarm due to lack of information 8. Calls received by text	Within 90 seconds, 90% of time; within 120 seconds 99% of the time	N/A
Turnout Time	4.1.2.1(2) 4.1.2.4	Time from notification of response personnel until initiation of movement towards the incident	Within 80 seconds for fire & special operations response, 90% of the time; within 60 seconds for EMS response, 90% of the time	N/A
Travel Time—Fire	4.1.2.1(3) 4.1.2.4	Time begins when engine is en route to incident & ends when unit arrives at the scene	Within 4 minutes travel time for arrival of first arriving engine, 90% of time	N/A
Travel Time—EMS	4.1.2.1(6) 4.1.2.4	Time begins when an unit with AED or higher-level capability is en route to incident & ends at arrival at the scene	Within 4 minutes travel time for arrival of unit with 1st responder with AED or higher-level capability at an EMS Incident, 90% of the time	N/A

Term	Reference Number	Definition	Performance Standard	Minimum Staff
Travel Time–ALS (when FD based)	4.1.2.1(7) 4.1.2.4	Time begins when unit with ALS capability is en route to incident & ends at arrival at the scene	Within 8 min. travel time for arrival of ALS unit at EMS incident, provided a first responder with AED or BLS arrived in 4 minutes or less travel time, 90% of the time	N/A
Travel Time–Full Alarm Assignment (residential fire)	4.1.2.1(4) 4.1.2.4 5.2.4.1	Initial full-alarm assignment to structure fire in typical 2,000 ft ² two-story single-family dwelling without basement or exposures	Within 8 min. travel time for deployment of initial full alarm at fire suppression incident, 90% of the time	14 FFs, or 15 w/aerial (5.2.4.1.1)
Travel Time–Full Alarm Assignment (open-air strip mall fire)	4.1.2.1(4) 4.1.2.4 5.2.4.2	Initial full-alarm assignment to structure fire in open-air strip shopping center from 13,000 ft ² to 196,000 ft ²	Within 8 min., travel time for deployment of an initial full alarm at fire suppression incident, 90% of time	27 FFs, or 28 w/aerial (5.2.4.2.1)
Travel Time–Full Alarm Assignment (apartment fire)	4.1.2.1(4) 4.1.2.4 5.2.4.3	Initial full-alarm assignment to structure fire in typical 1,200 ft ² apartment within three-story, garden-style apartment building	Within 8 min. travel time for deployment of an initial full alarm at fire suppression incident, 90% of time	27 FFs, or 28 w/aerial (5.2.4.3.1)
Travel Time–Full Alarm Assignment (high-rise fire)	4.1.2.1(4) 4.1.2.4 5.2.4.4	Initial full-alarm assignment to fire in building with highest floor greater than 75 ft above lowest level of FD vehicle access	Within 8 min. travel time for deployment of an initial full alarm at fire suppression incident, 90% of time	46 FFs (5.2.4.4.1)
Total Response Time	3.3.53.6	Time from receipt of alarm at the primary PSAP to first emergency response unit is initiating action or intervening to control incident.	Too many variables, depends on call type—no standard for initiation action or intervening to control incident	Depends on call type
Response Time–Fire & Special Operations (ERF)	Accumulation of Turnout & Travel Times	The initial full alarm assignment arrives	Within 9 min., 20 sec., 90% of time	Depends on call type
1 st Unit Response Time–Fire & Special Operations	Accumulation of Turnout & Travel Times	Fire and special operations incidents	Within 5 min., 20 sec., 90% of time	4 FFs (5.2.3.1.1)
1 st Unit Response Time–BLS EMS	Accumulation of Turnout & Travel Times	Emergency medical incidents	Within 5 min., 90% of the time	Typically 2 BLS staff 5.3.3.2.1
ALS Unit Response Time–ALS EMS	Accumulation of Turnout & Travel Times	ALS EMS incidents where FD provides BLS 1 st response	Within 9 min., 90% of time (if FR w/AED or BLS unit arrived in 4 min. or less travel time)	Typically 2 5.3.3.2.1

APPENDIX B: NFPA 1720 RESPONSE-TIME PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Term	Reference Number	Definition	Performance Standard
Alarm Answering Time	4.1.2.3.1	911 call from first ring to answer	Not defined or measured
Alarm Transfer Time	4.1.2.3.2	Time from receipt of alarm at PSAP until alarm receipt at communication center	Not defined or measured
Alarm Processing Time	4.1.2.3.3	Call-process time from acknowledged at the dispatch center until notification of units	Not defined or measured
Alarm Processing Time–Exceptions	4.1.2.3.3.1	1. Calls requiring EMD questioning & pre-arrival medical instructions 2. Calls requiring language translation 3. Calls requiring use of a TTY/TDD device or audio/video relay services 4. Calls of criminal activity that require information vital to responder safety prior to dispatching units 5. Hazardous material incidents 6. Technical rescue 7. Calls requiring determining location of alarm due to insufficient information 8. Calls received by text	Not defined or measured
Turnout Time	4.1.2.1(2) 4.1.2.4	Time from notification of response personnel until initiation of movement towards the incident	Where staffed stations provided as defined by AHJ: Within 90 seconds for fire & special operations, 90% of time Within 60 seconds for EMS, 90% of the time
Travel Time–Fire	4.1.2.1(3) 4.1.2.4	Time begins when an engine company is en route to incident & ends when unit arrives at the scene	Not defined or measured
Travel Time–EMS	4.1.2.1(6) 4.1.2.4	Time begins when unit with 1 st responder AED or higher-level capability at EMS Incident & ends when unit arrives at the scene	Not defined or measured
Travel Time–ALS (when FD based)	4.1.2.1(7) 4.1.2.4	Time begins when unit with ALS capability at EMS Incident & ends when the unit arrives	Not defined or measured
Travel Time–Full Alarm Assignment (residential fire)	4.1.2.1(4) 4.1.2.4 5.2.4.1	Initial full-alarm assignment to a structure fire in typical 2,000 ft ² two-story single-family dwelling without basement & no exposures	Not defined or measured

Term	Reference Number	Definition	Performance Standard
Travel Time–Full Alarm Assignment (open-air strip mall fire)	4.1.2.1(4) 4.1.2.4 5.2.4.2	Initial full-alarm assignment to a structure fire in open-air strip shopping center ranging from 13,000 ft ² to 196,000 ft ²	Not defined or measured
Travel Time–Full Alarm Assignment (apartment fire)	4.1.2.1(4) 4.1.2.4 5.2.4.3	Initial full-alarm assignment to a structure fire in typical 1,200 ft ² apartment within three-story, garden-style apartment building	Not defined or measured
Travel Time–Full Alarm Assignment (high-rise fire)	4.1.2.1(4) 4.1.2.4 5.2.4.4	Initial full-alarm assignment to fire in building with highest floor greater than 75 ft above lowest level of FD vehicle access	Not defined or measured
Response Time–Fire & Special Operations (ERF)	Table 4.3.2	Fire and special operations incidents	• Urban area > 1,000 people/mi²—15 FFs delivered within 9 min., 90% of the time • Suburban area 500–1,000 people/mi²—10 FFs delivered within 10 min., 80% of the time • Rural area < 500 people/mi²—6 FFs within 14 min., 80% of the time • Remote area Travel distance ≥ 8 miles—4 FFs within timeframe dependent on travel distance, 90% of the time • Special risks determined by AHJ; minimum FFs, response time, risk determined by AHJ 90% of the time
Response Time–EMS	Accumulation of Turnout & Travel Times	Emergency medical incidents	EMS operations shall be organized to ensure FD's EMS capability includes personnel, equipment, & resources to deploy initial arriving company & additional alarm assignments. (no specific standard)
Initiation of Fire Attack	4.3.4	Upon assembling necessary resources at an emergency scene, FD shall have the capability to safely commence initial attack (determined by population density, or AHJ for special risks)	Within 2 minutes, 90% of the time.

APPENDIX C: FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN A CONSOLIDATION

Motivating Factors

When organizations were asked to list reasons for undertaking a strategic restructuring, respondents most often cited internal decisions to increase the effectiveness and/or efficiency of their organization.⁴³

Notwithstanding the tax limitation issues facing many communities, most perceive that they undertook strategic restructuring to improve the quality and/or range of service.

The least mentioned reasons for restructuring were funding issues; but not surprisingly, when funding was judged as a motivator, those involved in the development of an intergovernmental alliance were less likely to mention it than those organizations undertaking complete consolidation.⁴⁴ Collaboration is less threatening than consolidation to an organization's autonomy. The recognition of imminent financial problems can cause some to take greater organizational risk.

Fire departments sometimes tend to consider the options of collaboration and consolidation when the agencies experience certain events. This may be due to a sudden interruption of the status quo, such as the loss of key leadership, a financial crisis, a rapid change in the community, or a substantial increase in service demand—any or all of which can compel significant change.

Other times, forward-thinking policymakers and/or fire department leaders may champion the idea. Frequently, these same leaders work against their own self-interest, especially in promoting consolidation. Last, the political or operational climate in which the fire department operates may dictate a change in the way it does business.

ESCI conducted multiple interviews with the leaders of the fire agencies participating in this study, as well as the elected and appointed officials. It was evident among the majority of those interviewed that the primary motives for exploring consolidation included the desire to:

- Improve fire protection and EMS.
- Increase cost-effectiveness and reduce costs, if possible.
- Improve efficiency and reduce unnecessary duplication of services.

While the motivating factors were not limited to the preceding list, these tended to be commonly identified through ESCI's interviews and discussions.

Success Factors

The success of the fire department/district consolidation depends on many factors. In ESCI's experience with dozens of consolidations and cooperative agreements, *leadership* is the single most important factor that most frequently determines success. Nearly always, a credible key staff or board member champions the concept, garnering the support of the various affected groups (political, labor, employees, and community). In addition, good leadership fosters an organizational culture receptive to planning, calculated risk-taking, and flexibility.

The way leaders promote a trusting relationship between all groups and enable respectful and meaningful dialogue between them proves essential. For example, research by Kohm, Piana, and Gowdy identified five factors that most often tend to contribute to the successful implementation of a collaboration or consolidation.⁴⁵ These include:

- Leadership that believes strongly in the collaborative partnership and demonstrates this belief—often by acting selflessly to maintain it.
- Multiple forms of communication to keep all persons (employees, elected and appointed officials, and community members) up to date about plans, problems, and benefits concerning the partnership.
- Consistent face-to-face communications with the collaborative partners in the form of meetings, training, and other forums to build trust and understanding among staff.
- Flexibility through an expectation that even in the best-planned collaborative partnerships, unforeseen issues will arise, mistakes will be made, and alternative paths will be identified.
- Early evidence of the potential benefits, in order to assure everyone that they are on the right track—such as better service, lower costs, and improved efficiencies.

Potential Complications

Fire department/district collaborations or consolidations may fail for many reasons. Sometimes legal constraints prohibit the concept at the outset. Other times, the proposal may be doomed by the unfavorable outcome of a public election or the reality of finance. Aside from these issues, four major pitfalls may cause even the most feasible collaboration or consolidation to fail. Specifically, these are command, communication, control, and culture.

Command

Undertaking any partnership absolutely requires a demonstration of consistent, courageous, and effective leadership at all levels. Policymakers and leaders must guide their respective fire departments, yet (at the same time) must cooperate with the other organizations. Ineffective or perceived selfish leadership styles may tend to cause passive resistance at best, and open conflict at worst. Problems with sharing control and making decisions send the wrong message to the firefighters and employees of the organizations, which can lead to an unraveling of even the best proposal.

Even in the best-planned collaborative efforts, unforeseen issues may arise, errors made, and alternative paths identified.

Communication

Silence or limited information from leaders about potential or upcoming collaborative efforts breeds fear, mistrust, and misinformation among affected persons. The leadership of collaborating organizations must agree to communicate actively with *all* affected groups. Everyone must be provided with the same information at the same time. Most importantly, leaders must demonstrate two-way communication skills by carefully listening to, considering, and strategically acting on the concerns of the affected parties.

As described earlier in this report, ESCI conducted an online survey and invited all career and volunteer personnel from each of the fire agencies, support staff, and appointed and elected officials to participate. It was evident from the responses that there were many assumptions and misconceptions regarding a potential consolidation of the three agencies.

Control

Frequently, the collaborative or consolidation process is compared to a marriage. As the saying goes, “Marriage is when two people become as one; the trouble starts when they try to decide which one.” As in marriage, consolidation often fails because of organizational or personal ego issues.

The tenets of leadership require that someone be in charge, but in the interest of greater good, some of those in leadership positions must agree to yield power. Some who are used to operating in a position of control may have trouble adjusting to new roles that require more collaboration. Personal sacrifice in the interest of community good may not always win out. At present, each fire agency participating in this study employs a career Fire Chief. Ultimately, the key stakeholders will need to make the difficult decision of who will lead a potential new organization.

Culture

There tend to be two schools of thought regarding organizational culture. The first camp views culture as implicit in social life, naturally emerging as individuals transform themselves into social groups (tribes, organizations, communities, and nations). The second camp offers that culture is comprised of distinct observable forms (language, use of symbols, customs, methods of problem-solving, and design of work settings) that people create and use to confront the broader social environment. This second view is most widely used in the evaluation and management of organizational culture, but the first is no less important when considering bringing three distinct organizations into a closer relationship.

The general characteristics of a fire department/district encourage the creation of a culture unique to that organization. The paramilitary structure, the reliance on teamwork, and the hazards of the work builds strong bonds between the members, who tend to share group behaviors, assumptions, beliefs, and values. Bringing three such groups together with cultures formed through different experiences always results in a change to their respective organizational cultures. If the partnership is successful, no one culture will overcome the other—instead, a new culture will evolve from the three. If the organizational cultures are incompatible—the partnership will likely fail.

Often, the planners of consolidations forget about the intangibles found in the individual cultures of the affected organizations. Leaders must be aware of the importance of these and their role in the wellness of the agency's soul. Attempting to eliminate those cultures in order to create a new "culture" cannot only prevent the creation of a new organization, but may also disrupt or destroy the positive attributes and morale.

New cultures will tend to be created naturally as firefighters, officers, and employees merge their former cultures into a new culture. A new department name; new uniforms; new patches and logo; and other organizational identifiers can contribute to the transition to a new culture. However, previous traditions and organizational identifiers must also be recognized and honored.

The results of the online survey indicated that some of the volunteer members of Walla Walla County Fire District #4 (as well as some from the Walla Walla Fire Department) are adamantly opposed to some type of merger with the other fire departments. This should not be the sole reason for avoiding the pursuit of a consolidation, but should be taken into consideration during the planning process. It is important *not* to allow a small setback or period of adversity to derail the momentum for a positive change.

Historical Recognition

During this study, the members have consistently demonstrated a focus on serving their communities and ensuring uninterrupted quality fire protection and EMS. Each of the three organizations has a long and proud history. The Walla Walla Fire Department was first organized in 1864, becoming a full-time, paid department in 1903, with volunteers continuing to supplement the career staff until 1924. Walla Walla County Fire District #4 was initially formed in 1948. The College Place Fire Department was created in 1947.

Should consolidation eventually occur, these histories must continue to be recognized and valued. Historical photos, trophies, certificates of recognition, antique fire equipment, and other related paraphernalia from each of the fire agencies should be preserved and displayed prominently.

Other Potential Complications

In addition to the potential issues described previously, in his article in *Fire Engineering*, Murphy lists other elements that should be considered:⁴⁶

- People (employees)
- Money
- Politics

People (Employees & Volunteers)

Culture and communication are closely related to this element. Effective leaders recognize that the most important resource in their organization is their people. A consolidation that results in reductions of salaries and/or benefits of any employees would only produce disgruntled and discontented staff members, and should be avoided. ESCI considered this when proposing specific positions and salaries in a new organization.

The firefighters and employees of each of the fire agencies have a degree of responsibility towards making a consolidation successful. Without a doubt, there will be differences in culture, operational methods, and training among the firefighters and company officers of each of the organizations. It will be important for members to recognize that change is inevitable and that they must begin to develop an attitude of mutual respect.

The career firefighters at WWFD, CPFD, WWCFD⁴ are represented by three separate IAFF local bargaining units with different contracts. It will be important for the three locals to come together as soon as possible after a decision to consolidate is made, in order to determine how the members of a potential consolidated fire department would be represented. Firefighters are stronger together than divided. By working together as a group, as well as providing constructive suggestions to management, the potential for a successful consolidation is much greater.

Because many changes can take place in the event of consolidation, every effort should be made to ensure that employees (in all positions) are not adversely affected. During the consolidation process, the planners should work diligently to transfer all employees to similar or better positions within the new organization. In some cases, it may be necessary to “grandfather” a few employees who do not meet the job standards of the new organization. It has been ESCI’s experience that requiring these individuals to work towards attaining the standard will suffice in the long term.

Money

A common misconception is that a merger will produce major cost savings to the individual jurisdictions. Often, this is not reality. The real objective of a consolidation is to create and achieve improved efficiencies in the delivery of emergency services. Efficiencies can also be found in leaner and less top-heavy leadership, increased purchasing power, consolidation of stations, larger sources of revenue, and the ability to pass bonds and levies successfully.

Certainly, there may be methods to lower costs by reducing overhead; eliminating certain redundancies; merging certain administrative, support, and operational functions; and other potential cost-saving methods. However, the primary impetus for consolidation should *not* be the desire to generate major reductions in costs.

Politics

Not surprisingly, local politics can be a significant obstacle in collaborative or consolidation efforts. Political issues can occur at all levels, from volunteer and career firefighters to the elected officials of each of the jurisdictions. In order to achieve success, the following (and other) political questions must be addressed prior to moving forward with a full consolidation:

- Who will be the political/elected leaders in the new organization?
- How will each of the jurisdictions be represented?
- Will it be necessary to hold a vote of the taxpayers?
- As mentioned previously, who will be the Fire Chief?
- Why is my jurisdiction paying more than the partner agencies?

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE AGREEMENT FOR INTERIM REVENUE COLLECTION

SAMPLE:

Agreement to Cover Time Period between Election & RFAs Ability to Collect Revenues

THIS AGREEMENT is made by and between the [City Name] (hereinafter "City") and [Fire Agency Name] (hereinafter "District"), both of which are municipal corporations in the State of Washington, pursuant to RCW 39.34.030, a part of the Interlocal Cooperation Act, for the purpose of providing secure financing for the Regional Fire Protection Authority (hereinafter "RFPSA"), which will serve both jurisdictions' service areas.

WHEREAS, for some time the City and the District have operated as one consolidated fire department pursuant to Chapter 39.34 of the Revised Code of Washington; and

WHEREAS, the consolidation of the two fire departments has been successful; and

WHEREAS, therefore the governing bodies of both municipal corporations have deemed it to be in the best interest of both jurisdictions to form an RFPSA, effective January 1, 2008, under the authority of Chapter 52.26 of the Revised Code of Washington, and the parties placed such a ballot proposition before the appropriate voters in the November 2007 general election which was approved; and

WHEREAS, the voter approved proposition included a Regional Fire Protection Service Authority Plan that contemplated financing the RFPSA in 2008 through, in part, a regular property tax levy approved by the governing body of the RFPSA, to be collected in 2008; and

WHEREAS, these parties have now learned that such an RFPSA would be unable to levy such a tax to be collected in 2008, due to the provisions of RCW 84.09.030, which would have required such an RFPSA to be formed no later than October 1, 2007, in order to levy such a 2007 regular property tax, to be collected in 2008; and

WHEREAS, these parties desire to provide secure property tax funding for the RFPSA to provide service commencing on January 1, 2008.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS NOW HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Regional Fire Protection Service Authority Plan. The parties are committed to implementation of the Regional Fire Protection Service Authority Plan and to formation of the RFPSA as proposed which shall commence service effective January 1, 2008.

Section 2. Interim Financing. In as much as the RFPSA will require secure property tax funding commencing on January 1, 2008, the parties recognize that it is imperative to provide the RFPSA with interim financing until such time as the RFPSA begins to receive property tax revenue in 2009, resulting from a levy imposed by the governing body of the RFPSA. The primary purpose of this agreement is to provide that interim financing.

Section 3. 2007 District Taxes. The parties agree that all District property taxes levied in 2007, that are collected in 2008, or thereafter, shall be paid to the RFPSA, or to its benefit, as soon after collection as feasible, but no later than July 10, 2008 for collections received through June 30, 2008 and no later than January 10, 2009 for collections received through December 31, 2008. All other property tax revenues or receipts of the District, including delinquent taxes, shall be and remain the property of the District. All District property tax collections during 2008 shall be transferred to the RFPSA in recognition that the District has budget authority for 2007 taxes collected during 2008 and the District taxing authority for tax levies will be with the RFPSA for 2008 for said taxes collected in 2009. All other property tax revenues or receipts of the District, including delinquent taxes, shall be and remain the property of the District.

Section 4. 2007 City Taxes. The parties agree that all City property taxes levied in 2007, pursuant to any emergency medical services (EMS) levy imposed pursuant to RCW 84.52.069, that are collected in 2008, or thereafter, shall be paid to the RFPSA, or to its benefit, within 5 working days after receipt from [County Name]. Additionally, the City agrees that, with respect to the regular property taxes levied in 2007 by the City which is hereby defined to mean, and limited to \$1.50 per thousand of assessed valuation of property within the [City Name], that are collected in 2008, or thereafter, shall be paid to the RFPSA, or to its benefit, within 5 working days after receipt from [County Name]. All other property tax revenues or receipts of the City, including delinquent taxes, shall be and remain the property of the City. All City fire property tax collections during 2008 shall be transferred to the RFPSA in recognition that the City has budget authority for 2007 taxes collected during 2008 and the City taxing authority for tax levies will be with the RFPSA for 2008 for said taxes collected in 2009.

Section 5. EMS Levy Receipts. The RFPSA agrees to comply with [City Name] Ordinance 2076, where 15% of the EMS Levy collected is required to be set aside for the sole purpose of the purchasing of EMS capital equipment.

Section 6. Loan. In addition, the City and the District agree that, during at least the first five months of 2008, there will be insufficient property tax revenues transferred to the RFPSA pursuant to the provisions of Sections 3 and 4 of this agreement for the RFPSA to operate the joint fire department for the citizens and residents of the City and the District. Therefore, the parties agree, if necessary, to jointly make, or arrange for, through all short-term borrowing means available to these municipal corporations, or otherwise in accordance with law, a loan to the RFPSA to provide sufficient funds to operate the RFPSA until such property tax revenue can be made available to the RFPSA in 2008.

Such loaned funds will be repaid to the respective parties by the RFPSA as agreed upon.

Section 7. Filing. A copy of this interlocal agreement shall be filed with the financial agents for both parties and with the county auditor.

Section 8. Prior Agreements. All provisions of prior interlocal agreements between these parties shall remain in full force and effect, unless they conflict directly with any provision hereof.

Section 9. Notices. All notices, requests, demands, and other communications required by this agreement shall be in writing and shall be deemed to have been given at the time of delivery if personally delivered or at the time of mailing if mailed by first class, postage prepaid and addressed to the party at its address as stated in this agreement or at such address as any party may designate at any time in writing.

Section 10. Severability. If any provision of this agreement or its application is held invalid, then the remainder of the agreement or the application of the remainder of the agreement shall not be affected.

Section 11. Waiver. No waiver of any provision of this agreement shall be valid unless it is in writing and signed by the person or party against whom charged.

Section 12. Applicable Law. This agreement shall be subject to and governed by the laws of the State of Washington and any applicable federal laws.

Section 13. Modification. This agreement represents the entire agreement between the parties. No change, termination, or attempted waiver of any of the provisions of this agreement shall be binding on either of the parties unless executed in writing by authorized representatives of each of the parties. This agreement shall not be modified or otherwise affected by the course of dealing between the parties.

Section 14. Third Party Beneficiary. This agreement is entered into for the benefit of the parties to this agreement only and shall confer no benefits, express or implied, on any third persons or parties, except for the Regional Fire Protection Service Authority.

Section 15. Dispute Resolution. The parties may resolve any dispute arising from this agreement through any dispute resolution process, including but not limited to mediation and arbitration, provided that the parties may pursue any other remedies available to them, including those available at law or in equity.

[FIRE AGENCY NAME]

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

ADDRESS: _____

ATTEST:

District Secretary

[CITY NAME]

City Manager

ADDRESS: _____

ATTEST:

City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Attorney

APPENDIX E: CONSOLIDATION CHECKLIST

Although designed to cover contractual consolidations, the following checklist should prove useful for any type of consolidation.⁴⁷

1. GOVERNANCE

- 1.1. Provisions for a joint board
- 1.2. Delegation of authority by City and District to joint board
- 1.3. Scope of authority of joint board
- 1.4. Representation on joint board
 - 1.4.1. Chair of board
 - 1.4.2. Quorum requirements
 - 1.4.3. Voting requirements
 - 1.4.4. Secretary to Board
- 1.5. Required meetings of joint board
 - 1.5.1. Time and location of meetings
- 1.6. Annual City/District meeting.

2. ADMINISTRATION:

- 2.1. Chief
 - 2.1.1. Powers and authority
 - 2.1.2. Hiring/firing/discipline
- 2.2. Chain of command
- 2.3. Administrative staff

3. SERVICES

- 3.1. Services to be covered and level of services
 - 3.1.1. Fire suppression
 - 3.1.2. Fire prevention
 - 3.1.3. Emergency medical services and the level of such services
 - 3.1.4. Hazardous materials incident response
 - 3.1.5. Dispatching services
 - 3.1.6. Administrative services
 - 3.1.7. Financial services
 - 3.1.8. Fire and building code inspection
 - 3.1.9. Fire investigation

4. PERSONNEL

- 4.1. Determination of employer of fire department personnel
- 4.2. Stationing of personnel
- 4.3. Labor negotiations
- 4.4. Wage and benefits
- 4.5. Employment, termination, promotions, discipline, grievances
- 4.6. If personnel will change employment:
 - 4.6.1. Provisions of existing collective bargaining agreements
 - 4.6.2. Wage scales and fringe benefits
 - 4.6.3. Accrued retirement and medical benefits
 - 4.6.4. Existing positions and rank of employees

- 4.6.5. Longevity
- 4.6.6. Existing hiring lists
- 4.6.7. Accrued vacation time
- 4.6.8. Accrued sick leave
- 4.6.9. Accrued compensatory time
- 4.6.10. Pension fund commitment
- 4.6.11. LEOFF 1 contingent liability

5. PROPERTY/EQUIPMENT

- 5.1. Ownership of property – joint or separate
 - 5.1.1. Existing property
 - 5.1.2. Future acquisitions
- 5.2. Location of Equipment
- 5.3. Station use
- 5.4. Disposal of property on termination
- 5.5. Maintenance of property during term of contract
- 5.6. Insurance coverage of property and use of property
- 5.7. Transfer of ownership of real property and personal property

APPENDIX F: TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Walla Walla County Population Density (2010)	9
Figure 2: Current College Place Fire Department Organizational Chart (2019).....	10
Figure 3: Current Walla Walla Fire Department Organizational Chart (2019).....	11
Figure 4: Current Fire District #4 Organizational Chart (2019)	12
Figure 5: Walla Walla Project Study Area	13
Figure 6: Mutual Aid Fire Districts & Agencies in Walla Walla County.....	14
Figure 7: Mission, Vision, & Strategic Planning Efforts of the Study Departments	16
Figure 8: Critical Issues Identified by the Fire Chiefs.....	17
Figure 9: Communications Methods Used by Departments	18
Figure 10: Regulatory Documents	19
Figure 11: Reporting & Recordkeeping by the Fire Agencies	20
Figure 12: Comparison of Health, Safety, & Counseling Services by Agency	23
Figure 13: Comparison of Hiring-Process Components by Agency	24
Figure 14: Current Labor Agreement Periods by Agency.....	27
Figure 15: Uniformed & Non-Uniformed Administrative & Support Staff Positions by Agency	28
Figure 16: Operations Staff Positions by Fire Agency	29
Figure 17: Combined Total Uniformed Career & Volunteer Personnel by Rank.....	30
Figure 18: Theoretical Relief Factor Calculation (2018).....	31
Figure 19: WWFD Calculated Operational Staff Shortage/Overage.....	32
Figure 20: Comparison of Monthly Pay by Agency & Position	33
Figure 21: Average Monthly Staff Salary Comparisons (2018)	33
Figure 22: Employee Benefits Provided to Career Personnel.....	34
Figure 23: Agency Affiliations of the Survey Respondents	36
Figure 24: Job Positions of the Survey Respondents	36
Figure 25: Respondent Opinions on a Possible Consolidation	36
Figure 26: CPFD General Fund Cash Reserves (2014–2018).....	38
Figure 27: CPFD Financial History (2014–2019)	40
Figure 28: College Place Fire Department Forecasts (2019–2024).....	41
Figure 29: College Place Fire Department Expenses by Population.....	42
Figure 30: WWFD General Fund & Ambulance Fund Beginning Balances.....	43
Figure 31: WWFD General Fund Financial History (2014–2019)	44
Figure 32: WWFD Ambulance Fund Financial History (2014–2019)	45
Figure 33: WWFD Financial History (2014–2019)	46
Figure 34: Walla Walla Fire Department Forecasts (2019–2024).....	48
Figure 35: Walla Walla Fire Department Combined Funds Forecasts (2019–2024)	49

Figure 36: Walla Walla Fire Department Expenses by Population (2014–2024)	50
Figure 37: Fire District #4 General Fund Cash Reserves (2014–2024).....	51
Figure 38: Fire District #4 Financial History (2014–2019).....	52
Figure 39: Fire District #4 Financial Forecasts (2019–2024).....	53
Figure 40: College Place Fire Department Costs per Population.....	54
Figure 41: Revenue & Expenditure Comparisons of the Fire Agencies	55
Figure 42: Criteria Utilized to Determine Fire Station Condition	57
Figure 43: College Place Fire Department Station 12-1	58
Figure 44: Walla Walla Fire Department Station 11-1	59
Figure 45: Walla Walla Fire Department Station 11-2	60
Figure 46: District #4 Station 41	61
Figure 47: Fire District #4 Station 42	62
Figure 48: Fire District #4 Station 43.....	63
Figure 49: Fire District #4 Station 44	64
Figure 50: Fire District #4 Station 45.....	65
Figure 51: Fire District #4 Airport Fire Station.....	66
Figure 52: Collective Summary of Fire Stations in the Study Area	67
Figure 53: Minimum Available Staffing by Fire Station (2019)	67
Figure 54: College Place Fire Department Frontline Apparatus (2019)	68
Figure 55: Walla Walla Fire Department Frontline Apparatus (2019)	69
Figure 56: Fire District #4 Frontline Engine Inventory (2019)	70
Figure 57: Fire District #4 Other Frontline Apparatus Inventory (2019)	70
Figure 58: Collective Inventory of the Fire Department Frontline Fleets.....	71
Figure 59: Collective Frontline Apparatus & Minimum Staffing by Fire Station	71
Figure 60: Average Age of the Combined Primary Frontline Apparatus (2019).....	72
Figure 61: Example Criteria & Method for Determining Apparatus Replacement.....	73
Figure 62: Combined Inventories of Cardiac Monitors & AEDs (2019)	74
Figure 63: Combined Inventories of Ambulance Cots & Patient Movement Equipment	75
Figure 64: Summary of Data Sources Used	77
Figure 65: WWFD Historical Service-Demand from NFIRS Reports (2014–2018).....	78
Figure 66: WWFD EMS Service-Demand from NEMSIS Reports (2017–2018)	79
Figure 67: WWFD Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type (2014–2018).....	80
Figure 68: WWFD Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type Percentages (2014–2018)	80
Figure 69: CPFD Historical Service-Demand by NFIRS-Type (2014–2018).....	81
Figure 70: CPFD Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type (2014–2018)	82
Figure 71: CPFD Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type Percentages (2014–2018)	82
Figure 72: WWCFD4 Historical Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type (2014–2018)	83

Figure 73: District #4 Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type (2014–2018).....	84
Figure 74: District #4 Service-Demand by NFIRS Incident-Type Percentages (2014–2018).....	84
Figure 75: Combined Historical Service-Demand of the Fire Jurisdictions (2017–2018)	85
Figure 76: WWFD Service-Demand by Month (2017–2018)	86
Figure 77: WWFD Service-Demand by Day-of-Week (2017–2018)	87
Figure 78: WWFD Service-Demand by Hour-of-the-Day (2017–2018)	88
Figure 79: CPFD Service-Demand by Month (2017–2018).....	89
Figure 80: CPFD Service-Demand by Day-of-Week (2017–2018).....	90
Figure 81: CPFD Service-Demand by Hour-of-Day (2017–2018)	91
Figure 82: WWCFD4 Service-Demand by Month (2017–2018).....	92
Figure 83: WWCFD4 Service-Demand by Day-of-Week (2017–2018)	93
Figure 84: WWCFD4 Service-Demand by Hour-of-Day (2017–2018)	94
Figure 85: WWFD Fire Incident Density (2017–2018)	95
Figure 86: WWFD EMS Incident Density (2017–2018)	96
Figure 87: WWFD Other-Types Incident Density (2017–2018)	97
Figure 88: CPFD Fire Incident Density (2017–2018)	98
Figure 89: CPFD EMS Incident Density (2017–2018).....	99
Figure 90: CPFD Other-Types Incident Density (2017–2018)	100
Figure 91: WWCFD4 Fire Incident Density (2017–2018).....	101
Figure 92: WWCFD4 EMS Incident Density (2017–2018)	102
Figure 93: WWCFD4 Other-Types Incident Density (2017–2018).....	103
Figure 94: Walla Walla Project Study Area—Fire Incident Density (2017–2018).....	104
Figure 95: Walla Walla Project Study Area—EMS Incident Density (2017–2018).....	105
Figure 96: Walla Walla Project Study Area—Other-Types Incident Density (2017–2018).....	106
Figure 97: Walla Walla Project Study Area—Travel-Time Model	107
Figure 98: Overall Study Area—WSRB 1.5-Mile Engine Company Criteria.....	108
Figure 99: Overall Study Area—WSRB 2.5-Mile Aerial Apparatus Criteria	109
Figure 100: Overall Study Area—WSRB 5-Mile Criteria	110
Figure 101: WWFD Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 1.5-Mile Engine Company Criteria	111
Figure 102: WWFD Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 2.5-Mile Aerial Apparatus Criteria	112
Figure 103: WWFD Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 5-Mile Criteria	113
Figure 104: CPFD Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 1.5-Mile Engine Company Criteria	114
Figure 105: CPFD Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 5-Mile Criteria.....	115
Figure 106: WWCFD4 Station Distribution—WSRB 1.5-Mile Engine Company Criteria	116
Figure 107: WWCFD4 Fire Station Distribution—WSRB 5-Mile Criteria	117
Figure 108: Ability in the Study Area to Assemble an ERF within 4 Minutes	118
Figure 109: Ability in the Study Area to Assemble an ERF within 8 Minutes	119

Figure 110: Concurrent Incidents of the Combined Fire Departments (2017–2018)	120
Figure 111: Commitment Factors as Developed by Henrico County (VA) Division of Fire (2016).....	121
Figure 112: WWFD Unit Hour Utilization (2017–2018)	122
Figure 113: CPFD Unit Hour Utilization (2017–2018).....	123
Figure 114: District #4 Unit Hour Utilization (2017–2018).....	124
Figure 115: NFPA 1710 & 1720 Response Time Measurements	126
Figure 116: WWFD Turnout-Times at 90% (2017–2018)	127
Figure 117: WWFD Travel-Times at 90% (2017–2018).....	128
Figure 118: WWFD Response Times at 90% (2017–2018)	129
Figure 119: CPFD Turnout-Times at 90% (2017–2018).....	130
Figure 120: CPFD Travel-Times at 90% (2017–2018)	131
Figure 121: CPFD Response Times at 90% (2017–2018).....	132
Figure 122: District #4 Turnout-Times at 90% (2017–2018).....	133
Figure 123: District #4 Travel-Times at 90% (2017–2018).....	134
Figure 124: District #4 Response Times at 90% (2017–2018).....	135
Figure 125: Medical Incidents & Transports (2017–2018).....	136
Figure 126: WWFD EMS Incidents by Jurisdiction (2017–2018).....	136
Figure 127: EMS-Related Time Performance at 90% (2017–2018)	137
Figure 128: General Training Competencies by Fire Agency.....	142
Figure 129: EMS Training Competencies by Fire Agency.....	142
Figure 130: Methodologies Utilized in Training by Department	144
Figure 131: Annual Training Hours & Training Budgets.....	144
Figure 132: Fire Prevention Program Components.....	147
Figure 133: New Construction Plan Review & Inspections	147
Figure 134: Six Steps of CRR Planning	149
Figure 135: Life-Safety & Public Education Services	150
Figure 136: Hazardous Materials Support & Response Capabilities	152
Figure 137: Technical Rescue Services Provided	153
Figure 138: Proposed New Fire Department Organizational Structure.....	177
Figure 139: Proposed Apparatus Assignments & Operational Staffing.....	180
Figure 140: Proposed Staffing Configurations by Renumbered Stations & Apparatus.....	181
Figure 141: Consolidated City Fire Departments & District with Proposed Re-Numbered Fire Stations	182
Figure 142: Proposed ALS Medic Unit Response Zones.....	183
Figure 143: Proposed Benefits for Uniformed Personnel.....	185
Figure 144: Estimated Career Personnel Wages & Benefits for Projected Financial Analysis.....	186
Figure 145: Comparison of CPFD & WWCFD4 Volunteer Stipend Budgeted Amounts (2019)	187
Figure 146: Combined Projected Volunteer Stipend Budget	188

Figure 147: Salaries & Benefits of Career & Volunteer Personnel (Actuals).....	188
Figure 148: Estimated Revenue & Expenses in the Event of Annexation (based on 2018 actuals).....	189
Figure 149: Estimated Revenue Deficits Excluding Capital Expenditures in an Annexation	190
Figure 150: Regional Fire Authority Revenue Projections (2021–2025).....	192
Figure 151: Forecasted Combined Levy Rates in an RFA (2021–2025)	192
Figure 152: Comparison of Status Quo & Five-Year Levy Rates.....	193
Figure 153: Forecasted Annual Expenses of a Regional Fire Authority (2021–2025).....	194
Figure 154: Forecasted Revenues & Expenses of a Regional Fire Authority (2021–2025)	194
Figure 155: Summary of the Cost Allocation Methods by Department & Percentages	205
Figure 156: Planning Process.....	206

APPENDIX G: REFERENCES

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