

Final Report

City-County Cooperative Fire Rescue Services



Background:

At the April 24, 2010 City/County meeting convened by Delegate David Toscano, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors and Charlottesville City Council agreed to the formation of a subcommittee to evaluate areas of possible further collaboration and cooperation between the Departments of Fire/Rescue for each jurisdiction. At the conclusion of the April 24th meeting, both bodies instructed County Executive Bob Tucker and Interim City Manager Maurice Jones to form a subcommittee comprised of two (2) Council members, two (2) Board of Supervisors members and staff.

In 2006, the City and County retained the services of Matrix Consulting Group to conduct a Regional Fire and Rescue Study. Matrix completed its evaluation in the spring of 2007 and concluded that “consolidation of the Departments would offer minimal opportunities to reduce staff levels” and would result in additional costs rather than cost savings.¹ Although this analysis concluded that it was not economically viable to consolidate departments, an ongoing dialogue exists to achieve efficiencies. In the summer of 2009, command staff from both Departments met to discuss areas of collaboration and cooperation. These areas included a plan to fund a joint technology RFP, developing a regional fire investigation task force, conducting regional fire prevention educational sessions, standardizing operational policies between departments, conducting a regional hiring process, and strengthening the regional hazardous materials team.

Committee Members:

- a) County: Ann Mallek, Rodney Thomas, Bryan Elliott & Chief Dan Eggleston
- b) City: David Brown, Holly Edwards, Aubrey Watts & Chief Charles Warner

Purpose:

Expand collaboration and cooperation between the Albemarle County Department of Fire/Rescue and Charlottesville City Fire Department to enhance the delivery of fire/rescue services to the citizens and guests of both jurisdictions by building upon efforts already launched by Chiefs Eggleston & Warner in the summer of 2009.

Goal:

Examine delivery of current/future services & implement measures which increase the level of fire/rescue services at the same cost or provide the same level of service at lower cost to taxpayers of both jurisdictions.²

¹ COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE AND CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
Regional Fire and Rescue Study, page 9

² WORKING PRINCIPLES/GOALS FOR APRIL 24, 2010 MEETING, authored by Delegate David Toscano

Department Profiles

	Charlottesville	Albemarle
Personnel		
FTE staff (uniformed & non-uniformed)	89	80
Volunteers	25	750
Budget		
Operating budget (FY2011)	\$8,785,536	\$9,213,501
Capital budget (5 year 2011-2016)	\$15,000,000	\$9,899,000
Area served		
Population	41,228	95,247
Square miles	10.4	726
Call volume		
Fire responses	2,200	3,370
Fire first responses to EMS incidents	2,300	3,901
Rescue/Ambulance responses	N/A	9,384
Service goals		
Urban	6:00 min @ 80%	5:00 min average
Rural	N/A	13:00 min average
Ratings/Assessment		
Accredited?	Yes	No
ISO rating	2	Ranges from 4 to 10

Charlottesville City

The Fire Department consists of five divisions: Administration, Fire Fighting, Fire Prevention, Maintenance, and Training and Technology. Administration seeks input from members of the Department, other City departments, and citizens to develop and coordinate the Fire Department's mission. Fire Fighting responds to over 6,200 requests for fire suppression and emergency medical service annually. Fire Prevention is responsible for enforcement of the Fire Prevention Code, plans review, fire investigations, and public fire education. Training and Technology provides administrative, technical, communication and training support for the Department's programs.

Albemarle County

Emergency services in Albemarle County are provided by a combination system consisting of volunteer and career personnel working cooperatively and collaboratively together to provide fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to the community while at the same time partnering with other local and regional emergency services organizations. The system consists of two County stations staffed full-time by career personnel, seven volunteer fire companies and three volunteer rescue squads. In addition, the County contracts with the City of Charlottesville to provide fire/rescue services primarily in the Pantops development area and Ivy. The system is an equal opportunity, progressive organization whose goal is to provide the highest quality service within the constraints of its funding and personnel resources.

Areas Explored

- 1) Compared the departments' divisions to seek opportunities for further cooperation.

Administration

The Administration Division provides guidance, technical assistance, budget oversight, and emergency service management to several "divisions" of the Department. Administration is responsible for planning the future of Fire and EMS system and improving the working relationship with employees and volunteer fire and EMS personnel.

Prevention

The Fire Prevention Division develops and implements programs aimed at the prevention of fire and life safety emergencies within the respective jurisdictions. Programs are also developed to take an analytical approach to problem solving as well as "targeting" fire prevention. This approach involves a proactive target hazard inspection program, permit process, building construction plan review, public education and fire investigation. The division places an emphasis on compiling data that is gathered from performing duties. This information is passed along to all other divisions as well as the public. The Fire Prevention Division acts as a contact point for all fire and life safety information and guidance as well as information on local, state and federal laws and ordinances pertaining to fire.

Training

The Training Division increases the training level of emergency responders throughout the respective departments, provides a training academy, conducts on-going continuing education for employees, plans and implements annual regional training schools, and assists volunteers with implementing an aggressive, in-house training curriculum.

Operations

The Operations Division responds to fires, medical emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, and other emergencies that endanger life and/or property throughout the respective jurisdictions. Responses to emergencies are handled through a network of fire and rescue stations strategically placed throughout the region.

2) Examined existing and future City/County station locations

Pantops (County)

This project involves future construction of the Pantops-area Fire Rescue station and for the purchase of fire rescue equipment (i.e., engines, ambulances, etc.) This station will serve the Pantops Mountain urban area and other surrounding areas to backup existing stations.

The Pantops development area has become one of the highest risk areas in the County with the planned Martha Jefferson hospital (400,000 sq ft hospital), over 640 units of progressive care, assisted living, and independent living: West Minster Canterbury, Winterhaven I & II, Jefferson Heights, New construction planned (next door to Winterhaven), Carriage Hill, and Overlook.

Existing coverage to the Pantops area does not meet the County's urban response time goals. GIS analysis shows that a fire rescue station placed in the middle portion of the development area would enable the County to meet its response time goals of an average of (5) five minutes.

Ivy (County)

This project involves the future construction of the Ivy-area Fire Rescue station and for the purchase of fire rescue equipment (i.e., engines, tankers, ambulances, etc.).

A fire rescue station is needed in the east Ivy area of the County to:

- a) To meet the urban response time goals in the western portion of the county's development area that is adjacent to the City. Currently, the area is served by the City's Ivy Rd station which will be relocated to the Fontaine Research park area. The relocated station will not be able to meet the response time requirements in the western portion of the county's development area that is adjacent to the City.
- b) There is a need to provide services within 5 miles of the densely populated area of Ivy (the most populated rural area of the County) to help lower insurance ratings from a 10 (worst rating) to a 5 or 4. Staff estimates that a citizen who lives within 600 ft of a fire hydrant would save an average of 50% on their annual insurance premium.

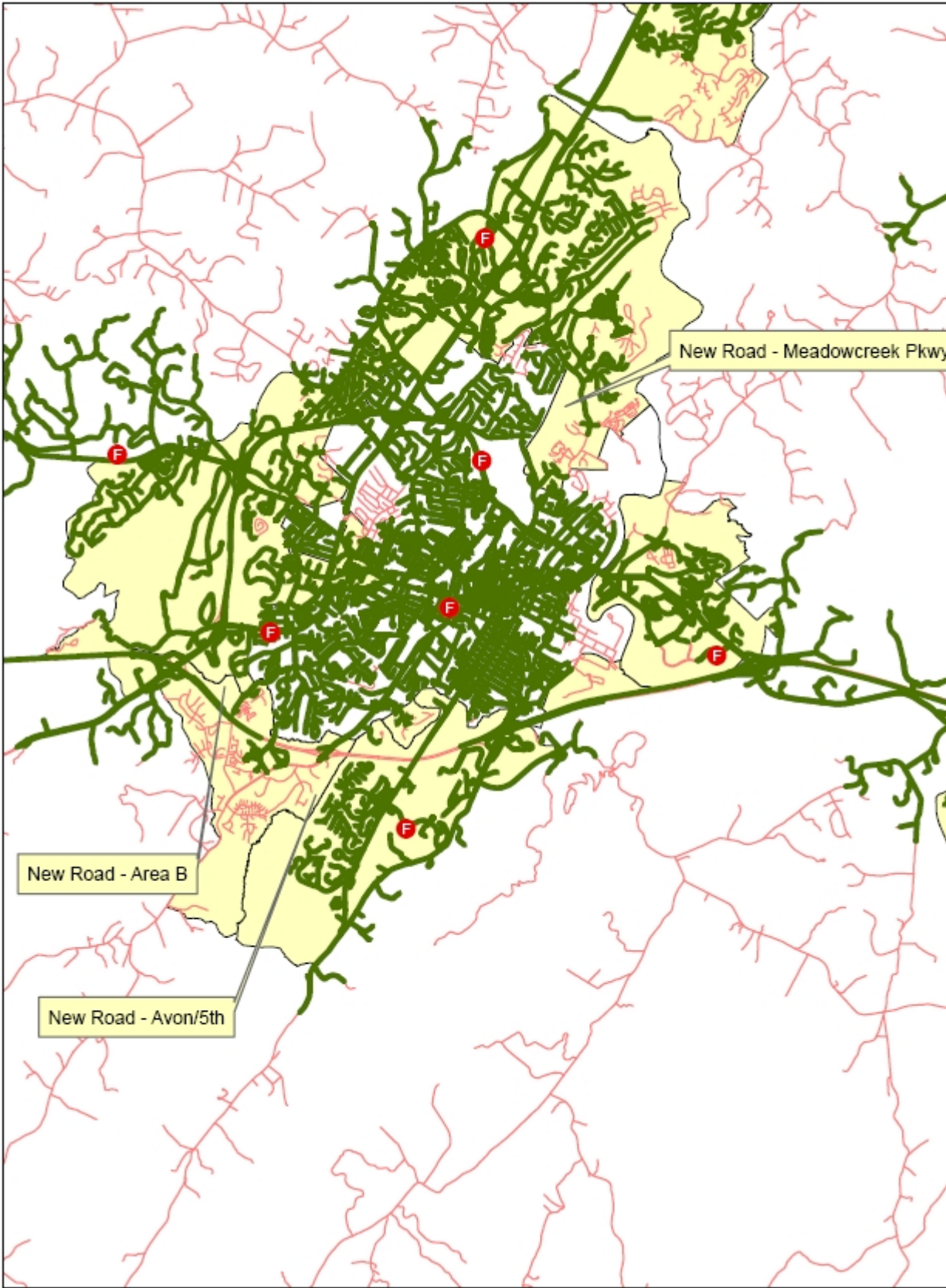
Fontaine (City)

The future Fontaine Avenue Fire Station will be a new fire station facility which will relocate the present temporary fire station (trailer and garage) and its respective fire apparatus/staffing from the current location on Ivy Road. This fire station on Ivy Road was initially a temporary relocation of one City engine company during the Ridge Street railroad bridge replacement in 1993. The new location will better serve the Jefferson Park Avenue and Fry's Spring Neighborhoods which currently exceeds the City's response time goal of 80% within (6) six minutes . This geographic area of the City is the furthest from fire and EMS facilities. This relocation better serves the City and compliments responses to the University of Virginia and Albemarle County.

Impact of existing and future City/County station locations

The proposed Ivy and Pantops stations and the relocation of the City's Station 10 to Fontaine Avenue will significantly improve response times in the first due areas served by the stations. Moreover, the stations will provide additional support to both the City and the County's urban ring and rural districts during multi-station incidents and where one or more station is already committed elsewhere. The following map helps to illustrate how the proposed and existing stations will create a regional network that will cover the City and County urban areas.

**note that response time improvements will occur with addition of the Meadow Creek Parkway, new road in area B, and the Avon-5th connector.*



Identified Current and On-going Regional Cooperative Efforts

1) Administration

a) Create a joint technology RFP

The goal is to develop an overall master plan on how the two departments would implement various technologies such as computer-aided-dispatch, mobile data computers, automatic vehicle locators, pre-alerting systems, and traffic preemption devices to reduce overall response time, improve service delivery, and create a safer environment for all personnel.

b) Continue to standardize policies, practices, equipment

The goal is to collaboratively analyze, evaluate, and provide policy recommendations concerning: regional public safety issues related to fire and emergency medical services, hazardous materials emergencies, technical rescue, fire prevention and code enforcement, homeland security and infrastructure protection, emergency response to weapons of mass destruction and all hazards disaster response.

2) Prevention

a) Coordinate business inspection programs

The goal is to coordinate and standardize compliance to the statewide fire prevention code by utilizing on-duty operations personnel working in concert with fire prevention inspectors.

b) Share resources for juvenile fire setter, public education, and investigation programs.

The goal is to create opportunities to share resources to expand public education and enforcement initiatives through respective fire prevention divisions.

3) Training/Operations

a) Establish an Incident Command Team to help manage significant events

The goal is to establish and share regional ICS teams that can be used for any City/County significant event.

b) Further develop joint policies/programs for the Regional HazMat Team

The goal is to further develop the direction and long-term sustainability of the Regional HazMat Team

c) Conduct a regional hiring process

The goal is to share resources by conducting joint hiring process which includes physical ability and written test processes.

- d) Schedule additional joint continuing education programs for fire and EMS

The goal is to share resources by conducting joint fire and EMS educational programs for career and volunteer personnel.

- e) Develop a Fire RMS knowledge sharing team

The goal is to develop an in-house knowledge sharing team that helps to better utilize our common records management system.

- f) Merge Fire/EMS incident dispatch and combined ECC operations

The goal is to create a more effective and efficient dispatching system by consolidating fire and EMS dispatching channels and protocols.