



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 18-370, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 7/5/2018

TITLE:

Albemarle County Fire Rescue Standards of Response Coverage

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Albemarle County Fire Rescue Standards of Response Coverage

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Walker; Kamptner, Farley, Eggleston; Puckett

PRESENTER (S): Dan Eggleston

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Doug Walker

BACKGROUND: In 2016, Albemarle County Fire Rescue (ACFR) contracted with Fitch & Associates (Fitch) to evaluate the fire department's operations, deployment, and staffing and develop a comprehensive deployment and staffing plan referred to as a Standards of Response Coverage (SOC). Fitch followed the standards set out by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) Standards of Cover process, which uses a systems approach for deployment rather than a "one-size-fits-all" prescriptive formula. This comprehensive approach allows agencies to match local community needs (risks and expectations) with the appropriate level of service to operate in a safe, efficient and effective manner. Utilizing that information, ACFR should be in a good position to assist the Board of Supervisors in adopting appropriate and affordable service levels.

Using national, state, and local standards, as well as information guidelines set forth by organizations such as the CFAI, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and the Insurance Services Organization (ISO), Fitch evaluated the current response model, as well as the risk profile of Albemarle County to develop a risk-based, data-driven staffing and deployment plan for ACFR. Fitch used comprehensive data-based quantitative and geospatial analyses to objectively evaluate the historical demand for services by type and severity. Fitch also obtained occupancy level data from the ISO and the County's databases and used this data to assess occupancy level risk within the community. The report from this data is provided in Attachment A. Ultimately, over 600 occupancies were categorized as low, moderate, and high risks and geocoded to the respective existing district boundaries in an effort to establish an efficient and objective risk-based strategy for resource allocation.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Quality Government Operations: Ensure County government's capacity to provide high quality service that achieves community priorities

DISCUSSION: ACFR is a system of numerous agencies that provide a full portfolio of services including fire suppression, fire prevention, technical rescue, hazardous materials mitigation, as well as emergency medical services (EMS) which includes transportation of patients to the hospital at both first responder basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support services (ALS). The fire and rescue services are provided by an

administrative facility; five county-owned stations; seven non-profit fire company facilities; and three non-profit rescue squad facilities.

The current *fire* response time average is 10 minutes 36 seconds in the Rural Area and 6 minutes 18 seconds in the Development Area. The current *EMS* response time average is 11 minutes 36 seconds in the Rural Area and 6 minutes 12 seconds in the Development Area. The current rural response times are meeting or exceeding the County's Comprehensive Plan expectations in the Rural Area of 13 minutes or less on average. However, the Development Area responses will require some modifications to the current fire rescue response system in order to meet the expectations developed for an average response time of 5 minutes for fires and 4 minutes for rescue calls.

The distribution of risk and demand within Albemarle County is primarily focused in and around the identified Development Area of the County. The density of the Development Area is not as high as the City of Charlottesville creating challenges for ACFR to meet the same service level as the City with the current model and allocation of resources.

Several alternative staffing and deployment models were evaluated and presented. Additionally, a number of variations of deployment and response times were evaluated that include differentiated performance and service levels based on the Comprehensive Plan's designated Development Area and Rural Area. Additionally, several variations of collaboration with the City of Charlottesville were evaluated to determine the best service delivery models that balance the competing demands of each of the agencies.

The overall evaluation is the final component of the Standards of Cover (SOC) process. As a risk-based process that incorporates risk, mitigation, and outcome measures, both the Department and the County's leadership can more easily discuss service levels, outcomes, and the associated cost allocations based on community risk.

Priority recommendations were developed and are presented as follows:

1. Develop and adopt system performance measures that should provide accountable service levels regardless of employment status
2. Adopt a service level objective of a 6-minute travel time in the Development Area at the 90th percentile
3. Adopt a service level objective of a 15-minute travel time in the Rural Area at the 90th percentile

BUDGET IMPACT: The specific recommendations will have no impact on the adopted FY19 operating budget and do not obligate the Board of Supervisors to appropriate funds. Rather, the recommended modifications, if and when adopted, will better enable the Board of Supervisors to consider objective performance measures, community risk, and appropriate service levels as part of future budget deliberations, beginning likely in FY20.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the following response time standards, based on the recommendation of the attached Standard of Cover document (Attachment B):

1. Adopt a service level objective of a 6-minute travel time in the Development Area at the 90th percentile
2. Adopt a service level objective of a 15-minute travel time in the Rural Area at the 90th percentile

Please note that adopted response time standards will be reflected in a future Comprehensive Plan amendment.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Standard of Cover Data Report

Attachment B: Standard of Cover Document

