

Executive Report

In 2010, the City of Edmonds' governing board elected to transition from a municipal fire service provided by the city to a contracted service with then called Snohomish Fire District 1. In 2017, the City of Lynwood and Snohomish Fire District 1 formed a new Regional Fire Authority (RFA) called South County Fire. The City of Edmonds continues to contract with South County Fire Regional Fire Authority (RFA) for fire and emergency medical services (EMS). Even though the current contract with the RFA and City of Edmonds is set to expire in 2030, South County Fire sent the city an "intent to terminate inter-local agreement for fire and emergency medical services" in December 2023 with the understanding that the contract will be terminated on December 31, 2025.

This report is a culmination of information developed from onsite-structured interviews with key stakeholders, budget analyses, staffing analyses, quantitative and temporal analyses.

The *FITCH* team found South County Fire to be a high quality, innovative, and professional fire department organization. The management team was well versed in modern management and operational practices in the provision of emergency services and has provided exemplary service to the City of Edmonds. South County Fire has received multiple awards for innovative practices in emergency medical services and is providing efficient and effective services as prescribed at the inception of the current agreement between the city and the district.

The recommendations in this report aim to guide future discussions for alternative emergency service options and negotiations between the City of Edmonds. They provide an objective, data-

driven analysis of current performance and identify future opportunities.

The city is interested in forecasting General Fund revenues and expenditures under multiple scenarios: continuation of a service contract, annexation into the RFA, contract services with another provider, and forming a municipal fire department. *FITCH* developed these scenarios reviewing historical financial data, forecasting General Fund revenues and expenditures under these different options, and estimating impacts to residential taxpayers.

Professionals of the *FITCH* consulting team conducted onsite interviews in January 2024. The team met with elected officials of Edmonds and stakeholders, including South County Fire Authority, South County Professional Fire Fighters, IAFF Local 4683, and other community Fire Chiefs. Additionally, phone interviews were conducted with community members, as well as follow-up conversations. The team received documentation from all of the stakeholders, including the draft Berk Fire Annexation Financial Analysis completed in 2023 for the City of Edmonds. *FITCH* gathered and analyzed this data and it was determined that the City of Edmonds has three potential scenarios for providing fire and EMS services within their community:

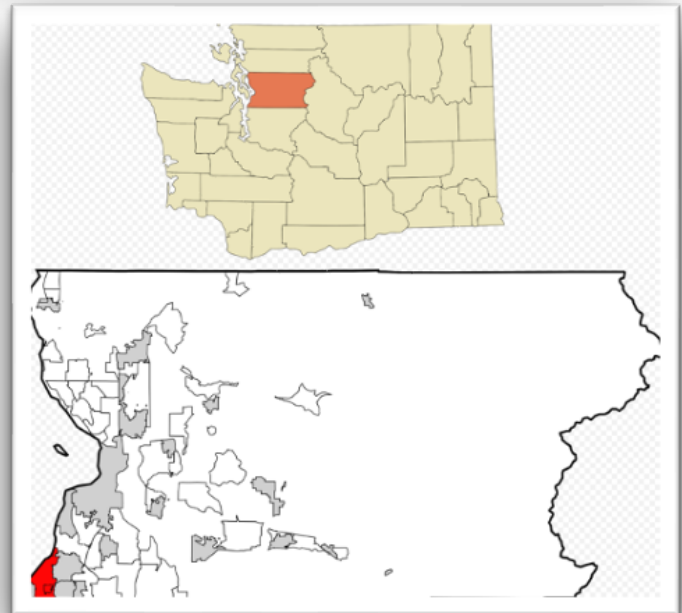
- Annex into the RFA
- Contract with Shoreline Fire Department
- Create a new Edmonds Fire and Rescue Department.
- Separate fire and EMS services-contract with an EMS provider.

Description of Community

Edmonds is located in the southwest corner of Snohomish County in Western Washington, facing Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains to the west. The city is considered a suburb of Seattle, located 15 miles to the south and 18 miles southwest of Everett. With a population of 42,853 residents in the 2020 U.S. Census, Edmonds is the third most populous city in the county.



The city is bordered to the west by Puget Sound and the city of Woodway, which lies south of Pine Street and west of 5th Avenue South. To the south of the county boundary at 244th Street Southwest is Shoreline in King County. The city's southeastern border with Mountlake Terrace is defined by the Interurban Trail, while the eastern and northern borders with Lynnwood run along 76th Avenue West, Olympic View Drive, and Lund's Gulch. The unincorporated area of Esperance, located in the southeast corner of the city, is an enclave of Edmonds and has resisted several attempts at annexation. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 18.42 square miles of which 8.90 square miles is land and 9.52 square miles is water.



Edmonds has 5 miles of shoreline, which is crossed by several small streams. The Puget Sound makes up 86 percent of the city's drainage basin, with other streams flowing into Lake Ballinger to the southeast. The city's main commercial districts are Downtown Edmonds, situated in a valley known as the "bowl", and the State Route 99 corridor at its east end. The downtown area and "bowl" have views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains. The city has several outlying suburban neighborhood with their own commercial centers, including Firdale, Five Corners, Perrinville, Seaview, Sherwood, and Westgate.

History of Relationship with RFA and Legal Basis

In 2010, the City of Edmonds' governing board elected to transition from a municipal fire service provided by the city to a contracted service with then called Snohomish Fire District 1. In 2017, the City of Lynwood and Snohomish Fire District 1 formed a new Regional Fire Authority (RFA) called South County Fire. The City of Edmonds continues to contract with South County Fire Regional Fire Authority (RFA) for fire and emergency medical services (EMS). The RFA includes the cities of Brier, Edmonds, Lynnwood, Mill Creek, and Mountlake Terrace, and unincorporated areas in the southwest portion of Snohomish County.

As the legislative branch of a mayor-council, non-partisan, representative form of government, seven part-time council members are elected directly by the people to staggered four-year terms. All positions represent the community at large.

The City Council adopts the city budget, establishes law and policy, approves appropriations and contracts, levies taxes, and grants franchises. Council members also represent the city on boards and commissions and to other organizations.

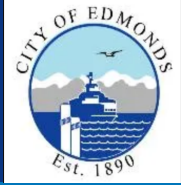
The City Council is the legislative body that establishes city policy. The Council's legislative authority is established by Title 35 of the Revised Code of Washington Laws of Cities and Towns. Section 35A.11.020 of the Optional Municipal Code sets forth the powers vested in legislative bodies of non-charter code cities.



The South County Fire District's services within the City of Edmonds are appropriately resourced for the contractual requirements. In addition, the district has internally developed and adopted response standards by call type for travel time for the entire district.

The elected body for the City of Edmonds is a partner with all of the RFA as a service provider, but also retains the responsibility to participate in a fluid standard setting process for the contracted services within the city, as occurred at the inception of the relationship. In other words, the city should have an expectation that they have input into the development of service expectations within the city and the flexibility to adjust said performance standards. For example, there may be greater value in adopting achievable performance standards within the city, rather than acknowledging continued deficiencies without the associated active planning efforts to improve service to meet the current standards.

In 2022, voters in Mill Creek voted to annex into the RFA. In 2023, voters in Brier and Mountlake Terrace voted to annex, as well. Although the current contract with the RFA and City of Edmonds is set to expire in 2030, South County Fire sent the city an "intent to terminate inter-local agreement for fire and emergency medical services" in December 2023.



U.S Census Data

Population ¹

The City of Edmonds is located in Snohomish County, Washington with an estimated population in 2022 of 42,593. Spanning over 9 square miles, Edmonds has a population density of 4,806.3 people per square mile. Edmonds is the third most populous city in Snohomish County, behind Everett and Marysville. Since the 2010 Census, the population has seen an increase of around 9%.

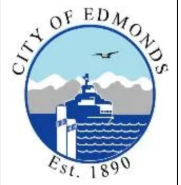
U. S. Census Estimates	City of Edmonds
Total Population	42,593 (2022)
Population Per Square Mile	4,806.3 (2020)
Land Area in Square Miles	8.92 (2020)

Socioeconomic Characteristics ²

For the City of Edmonds, the growth and age of the population are not the sole variables that influence demand for services. Additional factors, such as socioeconomic and demographic factors can ultimately have a greater influence over demand. For example, median household income in the community was evaluated to determine to the extent to which the city has socioeconomically challenged populations. According to the latest data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts in 2022, the City of Edmonds household income is almost double the national average. The median household income in the city is reported at \$110,057, whereas the national average is \$69,021. Edmonds per capita 2022 income was \$68,793, with approximately 4.2% of the inhabitants below the poverty level. The United States per capita income is at \$37,638 and poverty average is 11.6%. These types of monetary variability can impact personal healthcare and prevention practices which impact district services.

U. S. Census Demographics	City of Edmonds
Median Household Income	\$110,057 (2022)
Median Home Value	\$761,300 (2020)
Owner Occupied	69.7% (2020)
Households	18,269
Persons in Poverty	4.2%

1, 2 <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/edmondscitywashington>



Community Demographics

Age Demographics³

According to the United States Census Bureau, persons under 5 years of age account for 4.8% of the population in the City of Edmonds, persons under 18 account for 17.4% of the population, and persons over 65 for 22.8% of the population.

Populations younger than 5 years and older than 65 years are considered by the U.S. Fire Administration at a high risk for injury and death from fires. The aging population poses significant risks for emergency services, as persons older than age 65 years utilize EMS services at a far greater rate than younger populations. This is due to chronic conditions and diseases including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, dementia and cognitive declines, and elderly falls.

Years of Age	City of Edmonds	Snohomish County	United States
Under 5	4.8%	5.9%	5.6%
Under 18	17.4%	21.8%	21.7%
65 and over	22.8%	15.0%	17.3%

Diversity⁴

The City of Edmonds diverse population is as follows:

White, alone	77.1%
Black or African American alone	2.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.4%
Asian alone	9.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.7%
Two or More Races	7.7%
Hispanic or Latino	6.5%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	74.8%

^{3,4} <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/edmondscitywashington>

Community Characteristics

Area Economics

The City of Edmonds has an estimated workforce population of 22,152 and an unemployment rate of 6.2 percent. As of 2019, most of the city's employed residents commute to neighboring cities for work, including 11 percent to Seattle, 6 percent to Lynnwood, 6 percent to Everett, and 5 percent to Shoreline. Only 11.7 percent of residents work at employers within Edmonds city limits. The average one-way commute for Edmonds residents was approximately 31 minutes. The most common occupational industry for Edmonds residents is in educational and health services, employing 23 percent, followed by retail (13%) and professional services (12%).

Transportation Features



The city is connected to nearby areas by two state highways and the state ferry system, which operates a ferry route to Kingston on the Kitsap Peninsula. Public transit service in Edmonds is centered around the downtown train station, served by Amtrak and Sounder commuter trains, and includes several Community Transit bus routes that travel through outlying neighborhoods.

The city's ferry terminal is located at the west end of Main Street at Brackett's Landing Park and is served by a ferry route to Kingston on the Kitsap Peninsula. From 1979 to 1980, Washington State Ferries also ran ferries to Port Townsend during repairs to the Hood Canal Bridge.

The Edmonds train station lies a block southwest of the terminal and is served by Amtrak's intercity *Cascades* and *Empire Builder* trains, as well as Sound Transit's Sounder commuter train. These trains operate on the BNSF Railway, which runs along the Edmonds waterfront and is primarily used for freight transport.

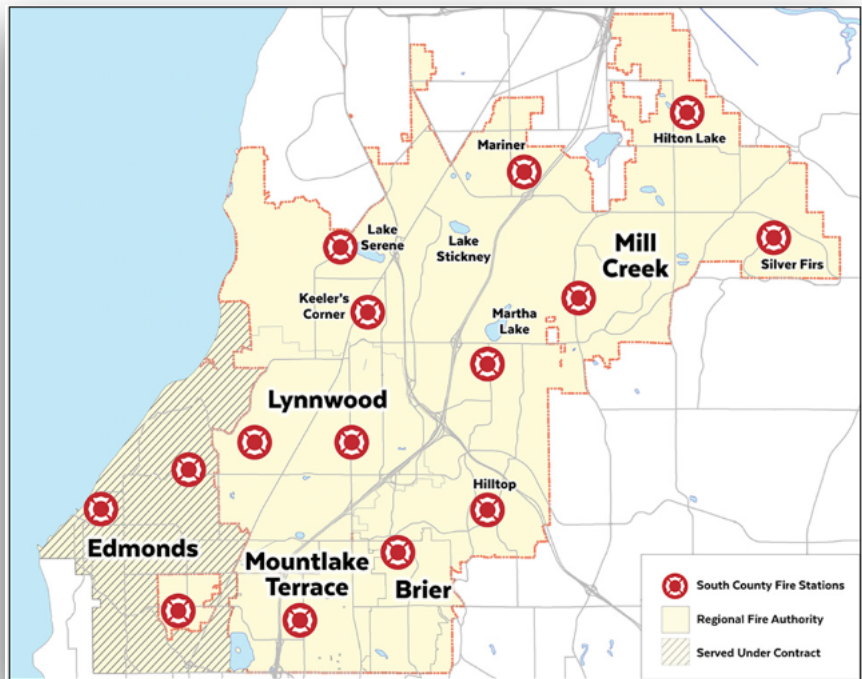
Two state highways, State Route 104 and State Route 524, connect the downtown area to eastern Edmonds and other points in southern Snohomish County and northern King County. An additional state highway, State Route 99, runs north-south in eastern Edmonds and connects the city's commercial district to Seattle and Everett.

Public transportation in Edmonds is provided by Community Transit, which serves most of Snohomish County and covers 74 percent of Edmonds residents. Community Transit's local buses run on major streets and connect downtown Edmonds to transit hubs at Aurora Village, Lynnwood Transit Center, and Edmonds Community College. It also operates Swift on State Route 99, a bus rapid transit service connecting Aurora Village and Everett. Community Transit also operates three commuter routes that run from park and ride lots in Edmonds to Downtown Seattle and the University District.

South County Fire Organizational Overview

The South County Fire Department provides high quality fire suppression, emergency medical, technical rescue, and hazardous materials services from 15 fire stations staffed with a minimum daily staffing level of 58 personnel. Additionally, the organization delivers a full spectrum of fire and life safety services supported by administrative staff and training officers to ensure the first responders are well prepared for any hazard or situation they may face.

The department provides services to nearly 259,641 residents in southwest Snohomish County in an area of approximately 52 square miles. The department serves the cities of Lynnwood, Brier, Edmonds, Mountlake Terrace and surrounding unincorporated areas. The combined response coverage area consists of 922 miles of public roadways. The department's service area includes more than 97,000 housing units and more than 2,000 non-residential occupancies, including office, professional services, retail/wholesale sales, restaurants/bars, hotels/motels, churches, schools, government facilities, healthcare facilities, and other non-residential uses.



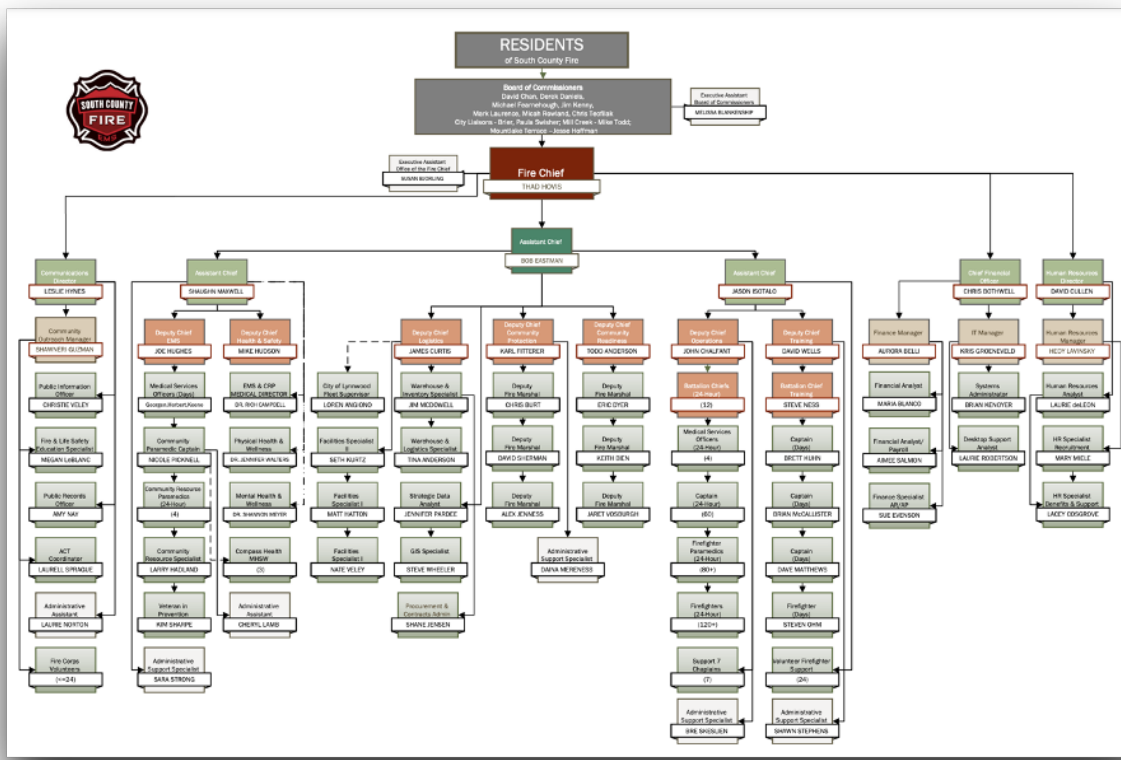
South County Fire Organizational Overview

Human Resources

The Fire Chief is accountable to the district for the overall operations of the fire department and implementation of policy. As the department director, the chief oversees an annual budget of \$110 million. The chief is responsible for the development and support of collaborative relationships with other fire and emergency services agencies, and the public.

South County Fire is governed by a board of seven elected commissioners: five commissioners elected from districts of roughly equal population and two commissioners elected at-large. Commissioners are responsible for defining the agency's long-term vision and for adopting the budget and policies to be implemented by administrative staff.

The department's service capacity consists of a daily on-duty response force of 70 personnel from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., staffing 12 engines, two ladder trucks, and six Advanced Life Support (ALS) / Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances, as well as three Battalion Chiefs and one Medical Services Officer stationed at 15 strategically placed stations. Three aid/medic ambulances are out of service from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., reducing on-duty staffing to 64 personnel during those hours. Four platoons of firefighters work on a rotating schedule to provide 24-hour coverage. Battalion Chiefs oversee operations in three geographic zones, and captains provide supervision at the station level.



South County Fire Organizational Overview

All station personnel are trained either to the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level to provide BLS pre-hospital emergency medical care or to the EMT-Paramedic (EMT-P) level to provide ALS pre-hospital emergency medical care. The department also provides both ALS and BLS ground ambulance transportation services. When needed, air ambulance services are provided by Airlift Northwest operating from Arlington and Boeing Field or the U.S. Coast Guard, as available.

There are four hospitals with emergency services within the region, including one trauma center and burn center in Seattle. The department's dispatching service, Snohomish County 9-1-1, is part of a countywide joint dispatch partnership agency that allows the dispatching of the closest fire and ambulance resources countywide, regardless of agency boundaries.

All response personnel are trained either to the U.S. Department of Transportation Hazardous Material First Responder Operational (FRO) level to provide initial hazardous material incident assessment, hazard isolation, and support for a hazardous material response team or to the Hazardous Materials Technician level. The department cross-staffs a Hazardous Materials Decontamination Unit as needed from Station 12 to support the regional Hazardous Materials Response Team sponsored by Boeing, City of Everett Fire Department, Marysville Fire Department, and many other jurisdictions in Snohomish County. Response personnel are also trained to the Confined Space Awareness, Low Angle Rope Rescue Operational, and Swift Water Rescue Awareness levels.

The department cross-staffs a Technical Rescue unit at Station 21 in Lynnwood with confined space rescue, trenching/shoring, structural collapse, Urban Search and Rescue, high/low-angle rope rescue, and ice/water rescue capabilities. The department has two aluminum outboard water rescue boats, one cross-staffed by Station 16 personnel in Edmonds and the other cross-staffed by Station 19 personnel in Mountlake Terrace.



South County Fire Organizational Overview

Fire Prevention

The Fire Prevention Division provides a coordinated community risk reduction effort. The goal is to identify, prioritize and strategically plan to reduce risks and build healthy, safe and resilient communities. South County Fire provides fire marshal services in the City of Edmonds, including fire inspections and plan reviews.

Properties with Edmonds addresses in unincorporated areas outside the city limits (Picnic Point, North Meadowdale, Esperance, etc.) receive these services from the Snohomish County Fire Marshal.

Community Outreach

South County Fire offers online and in-person classes and programs to help citizens stay safe and informed. Classes offered include:

- ACT First Aid & CPR
- Aging in Place
- Car Seats
- Child Safety & CPR
- Disaster Preparedness
- Home Fire Safety
- Impact Teen Drivers
- Workplace Emergency Preparedness



Residents who reside in the South County Fire service area can request a home safety evaluation. South County Fire conducts home safety evaluations which involve a visit from Outreach staff to assist with smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and to evaluate home fall hazards.

Community Paramedic

South County Fire's Community Resource Paramedic Program links patients with the community services needed. The main goal of the program is to help people stay safely at home - and out of the emergency room.

This program is partially funded by a grant from Verdant Health Commission and a contract with North Sound Accountable Community of Health.

Community paramedics follow up with at-risk patients through a telephone call or a home visit to find out what's behind multiple calls to 9-1-1. In addition to a medical assessment, there is a home safety survey to prevent falls and other risks. The program also assists patients with food issues, transportation for care, in-home care referrals, and mental and behavioral health services.

Physical Resources- Apparatus



Engine - A piece of fire apparatus that carries water, medical equipment, and tools to the scene of an emergency. The primary function of this crew at a fire is to establish a water supply, search for people in the interior of a structure and apply water with hose lines to extinguish the fire.

Engines in Edmonds: 3



Medic/ Aide Unit- This apparatus is equipped for basic or advanced life support medical care. Its primary purpose is to provide diagnostic assessment, treatment, and transport for patients experiencing medical emergencies.

Medic/Aide units in Edmonds: 3-5

Physical Resources- Apparatus



Battalion Chief – This emergency response vehicle is staffed by a Battalion Chief who oversees emergency responses, line personnel, and some non-emergency programs.



Rescue Boat – This emergency response vehicle is used to staff water rescue personnel to the scene of a water related emergency.

Located at Port of Edmonds



Brush Engine- A wildland or brush truck is specifically designed to assist in fighting brush, forest and wildfires by transporting firefighters to the scene and providing them with access to the fire, along with water or other equipment.

Physical Resources- Edmonds Fire Stations



Station 16
Maplewood Station

8429 196th Street SW
Edmonds, WA

Resources:
Engine / Medic
(cross-staffed)

Personnel: 3



Station 17
Downtown Edmonds

275 Sixth Ave. North
Edmonds, WA

Resources:
Engine / Medic
(cross-staffed)

Personnel: 3



Station 20
Esperance Station

23009 88th Avenue W
Edmonds, WA

Resources:
Engine / Medic

Personnel: 5

Edmonds Emergency Call Volume

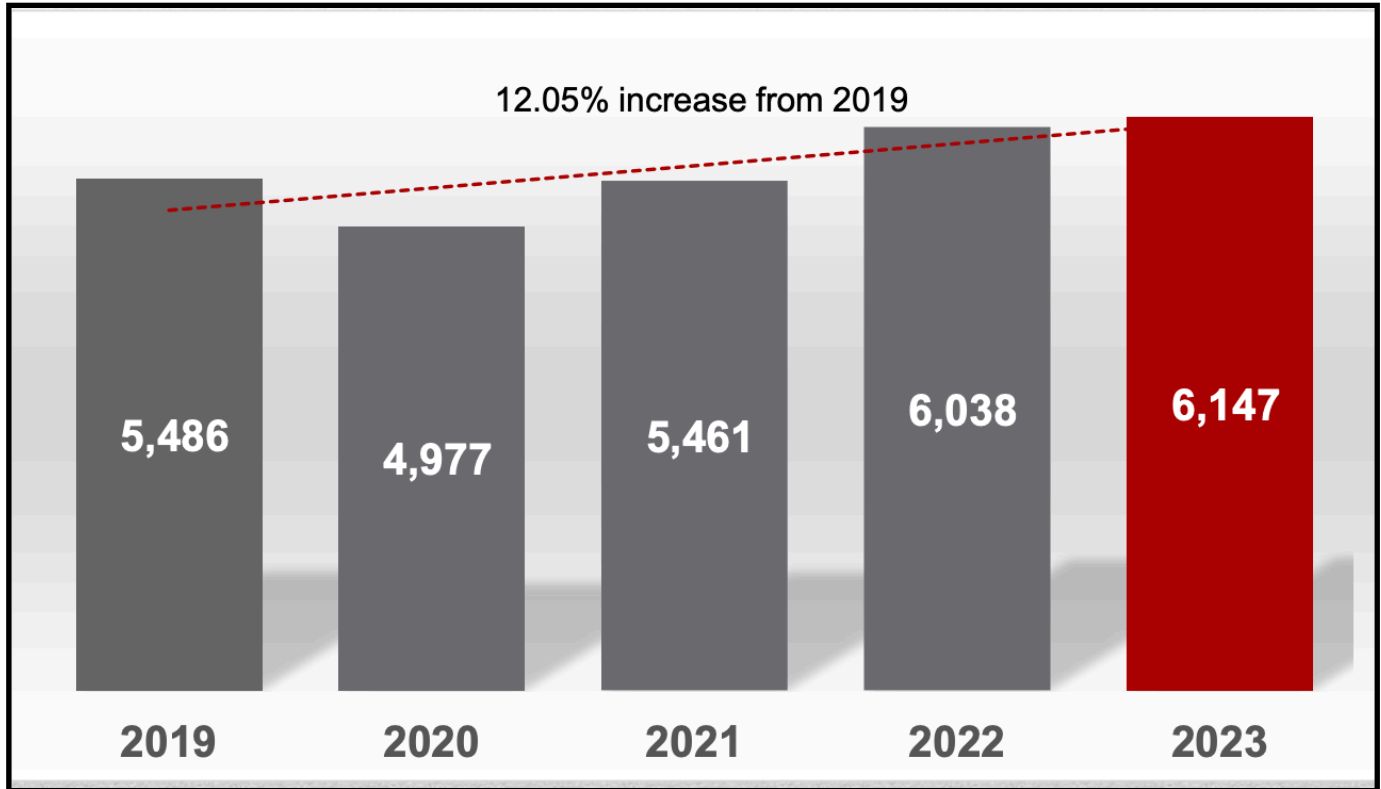
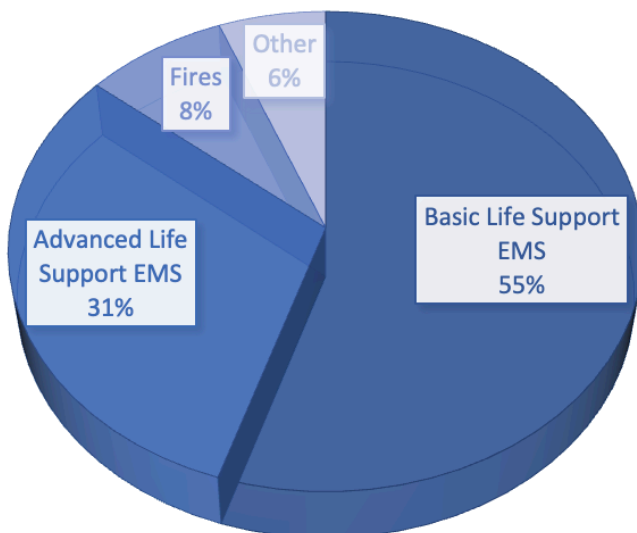


Chart and data retrieved from South County Fire Annual Report to City of Edmonds April 2024

SERVICE TYPE CALLS



Calls volumes across the country have increased dramatically in the last decade. The residents in Edmonds are calling 9-1-1 and using emergency services 12% more than they did just five years ago.

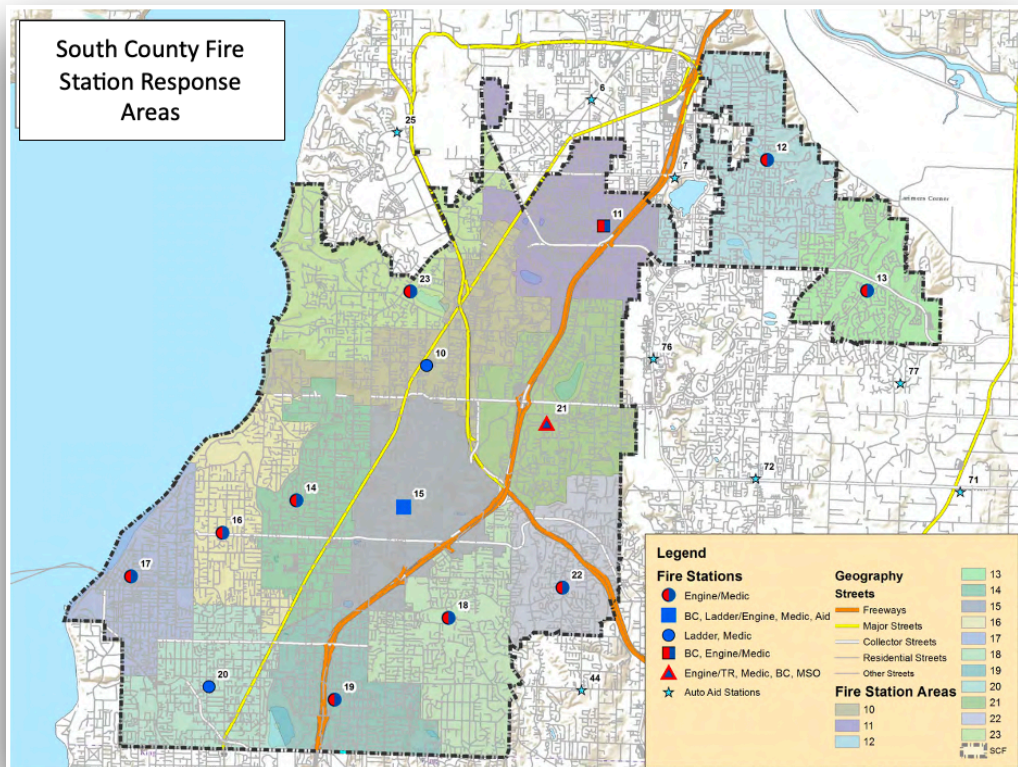
In 2023, community demand requests for service totaled 6,147, averaging 16.84 calls per day. EMS calls totaled 5,299, or 86.2% of the total, averaging 14.5 calls per day. Fire related calls totaled 500 or 8.1% of the total, averaging 1.37 calls per day. The third largest category is service calls, which totaled 335 or 5.4% of the total requests.

Edmonds Emergency Call Volume

Busy time, or time on task, was measured from unit dispatch date and time to unit clear date and time. All units assigned to South County Fire for the City of Edmonds made 6,147 responses, and were busy on calls for a total of 6,042 hours. Overall, average busy minutes-per-response was 31.2 minutes, and average number of units responding per call was 1.9. The EMS program was the busiest program in the department, accounting for ~84.5% of the department’s total response volume, and 87.8% of the department’s total busy hours.

Call Category	Number of Calls	Number of FD1 Unit Responses	Average Responses per Call	Total Busy Hours of FD1 Units	Avg. Busy Minutes per Response	Average Calls per Day	Avg. Responses per Day	Avg. Busy Hours per Day
EMS	2,882	4,154	1.4	2,248	32.5	7.9	11.4	6.2
EMS-ALS	2,417	5,676	2.3	3,057	32.3	6.6	15.6	8.4
Fire	500	1,305	2.6	519	23.9	1.4	3.6	1.4
Special Ops	13	83	6.4	58	42.0	0.0	0.2	0.2
Service	335	412	1.2	159	23.2	0.9	1.1	0.4
Total	6,147	11,630	1.9	6,042	31.2	16.8	31.9	16.6

Map from South County Fire Standards of Coverage Analysis Volume 2 March 2019



City of Edmonds Physical Assets Protected

Sufficient data was available from the internal inspection records that provided specific building occupancy information. Individual buildings were rated by multiple variables such as number of stories, location, stories below grade, construction class, and the presence of automatic sprinklers. Although this information was utilized throughout the risk assessment process and calculations, the map on the following page shows specific locations of rated occupancies and the respective risk severity.

Buildings₅

The department’s service area in Edmonds includes more than 19,471 housing units and more than 1,642 non-residential occupancies, including offices, professional services, retail/wholesale sales, restaurants/bars, hotels/motels, churches, schools, government facilities, healthcare facilities, and other non-residential uses.

Building Occupancy Risk Categories

The CFAI identifies four risk categories that relate to building occupancy as follows:

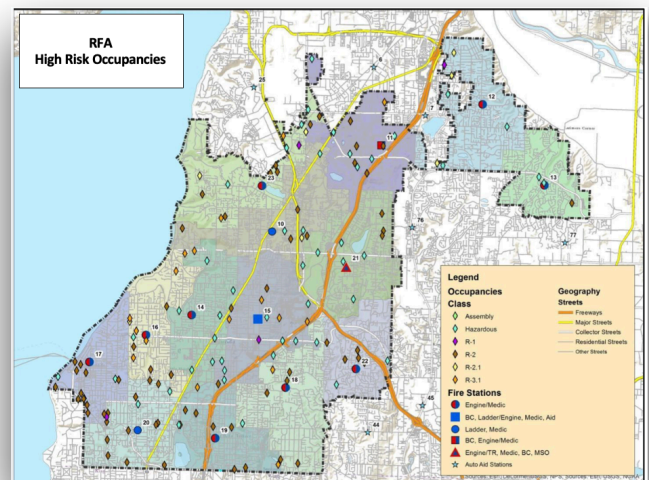
Low Risk – includes detached garages; storage sheds; outbuildings; and similar building occupancies that pose a relatively low risk of harm to humans or the community if damaged or destroyed by fire.

Moderate Risk – includes detached single-family or two-family dwellings; mobile homes; commercial and industrial buildings less than 10,000 square feet without a high-hazard fire load; aircraft; railroad facilities; and similar building occupancies where loss of life or property damage is limited to the single building.

High Risk – includes apartment/condominium buildings; commercial and industrial buildings more than 10,000 square feet without a high-hazard fire load; low-occupant load buildings with high-fuel loading or hazardous materials; and similar occupancies with potential for substantial loss of life or unusual property damage or financial impact.

Maximum Risk – includes buildings or facilities with unusually high risk requiring an Effective Response Force involving a significant augmentation of resources and personnel, and where a fire would pose the potential for a catastrophic event involving large loss of life and/or significant economic impact to the community.

Evaluation of the city’s building inventory identifies 109 high- and maximum-risk building uses as they relate to the CFAI building fire risk categories.



Map from South County Fire Standards of Coverage Analysis volume 2 March 2019

Risk Factors	Station Response Zone			Total
	St. 16	St. 17	St. 20	
High Risk Occupancies	38	37	34	109

*5*South County Fire Standards of Coverage Analysis Volume 1 March 2019

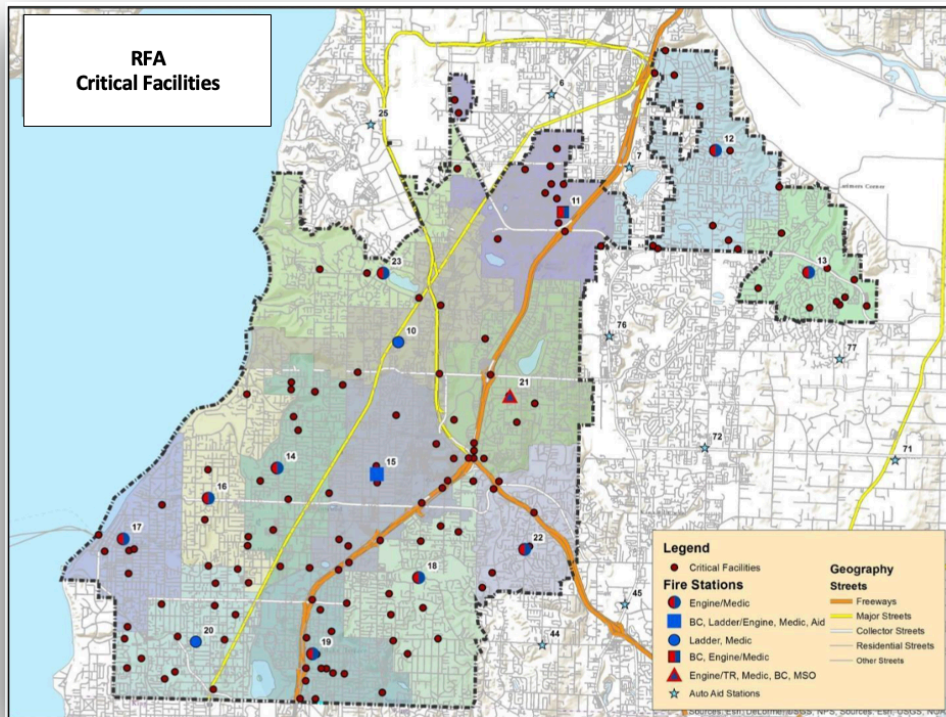
City of Edmonds Physical Assets Protected

Critical Facilities⁶

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security defines critical infrastructure / key resources (CIKR) as those physical assets essential to the public health and safety, economic vitality, and resilience of a community, such as lifeline utilities infrastructure, telecommunications infrastructure, essential government services facilities, public safety facilities, schools, hospitals, airports, etc.

South County Fire identified 155 critical facilities throughout the service area, 28 of which are located in Edmonds. A hazard occurrence with significant impact severity affecting one or more of these facilities would likely adversely impact critical public or community services.

Risk Factors	STATION RESPONSE ZONE			TOTAL
	Station	Station	Station	
Critical Facilities	16	17	20	28
	4	9	15	



Map from South County Fire Standards of Coverage Analysis Volume 2 March 2019

⁶ south County Fire Standards of Coverage Analysis Volume 1 March 2019

Current Deployment Model

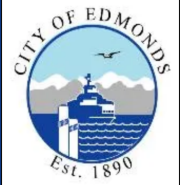
The South County Fire Department provides a high level of service within the City of Edmonds. This level of service includes three advanced life support ambulances and three engines. In addition to these resources stationed within the city, when various emergencies occur, the RFA sends the following resources described in the chart below.

Risk Type	Minimum Type of Resources Sent	Total Department Personnel Sent
1- Patient EMS	1 Engine/ Ambulance or Ladder Ambulance	3-5 FF
Vehicle Fire	1 Engine	3 FF
Fire in Residential Structure	2 Battalion Chiefs, 1 Medic Unit, 1 BLS Unit, 3 Engines, 1 Ladder, 1 Technical Rescue Unit and 1 Medical Services Officer	22 FF
Fire in Commercial Structure	Same as "Residential Fire" with One Additional Engine	25 FF
Technical Rescue	2 Engines, 2 Ambulances, 1 Ladder, 1 Technical Rescue and 1 Battalion Chief	17 FF
Hazardous Materials Response	First Alarm- 2 Engines Second Alarm and above: Decon Unit, Battalion Chief, Hazardous Materials Technical Units and Ambulances Based on Patients	16-19 FF

Response Resources chart from South County Fire Standards of Coverage Analysis Volume 1 March 2019

As the emergency situation becomes more complex and creates increased risk for responders, South County Fire must utilize additional resources to mitigate these incidents.



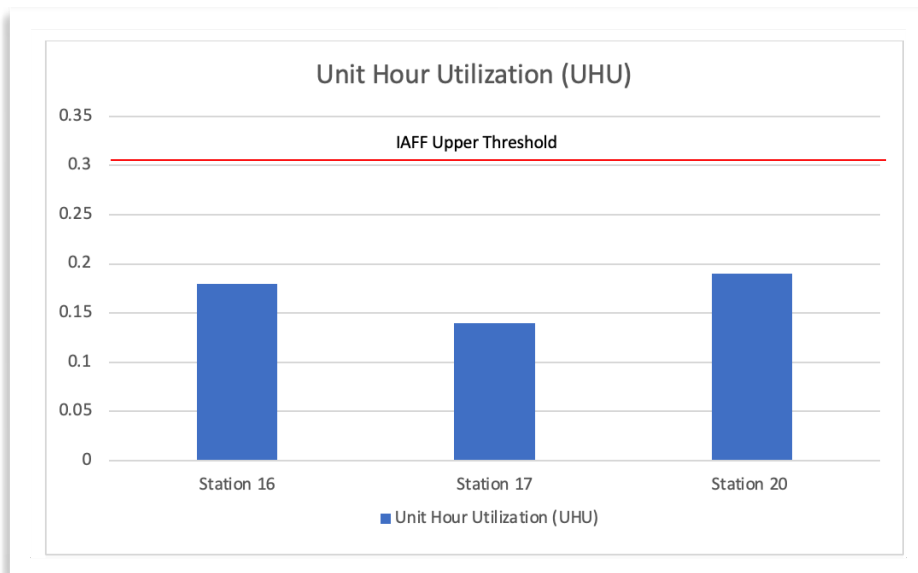


Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)

Time on task is necessary to evaluate best practices in efficient system delivery and for considering the impact the workload has on personnel. Unit Hour Utilization (UHU) values represent the proportion of the work period (e.g., 24 hours) that is utilized responding to requests for service.

Historically, the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) has recommended that 24-hour units utilize 0.30, or 30%, workload as an upper threshold.⁷ In other words, this recommendation would have personnel spend no more than 7.2 hours per day on emergency incidents. These thresholds take into consideration the necessity to accomplish non-emergency activities such as training, health and wellness, public education, and fire inspections. The 4th edition of the IAFF EMS Guidebook no longer specifically identifies an upper threshold. However, *FITCH* recommends that an upper unit utilization threshold of approximately 0.30, or 30%, would be considered best practice. In other words, units and personnel should not exceed 30%, or 7.2 hours, of their work day responding to calls. These recommendations are also validated in the literature. For example, in their review of the City of Rolling Meadows, the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association utilized a UHU threshold of 0.30 as an indication to add additional resources.⁸ Similarly, in a standards of cover study facilitated by the Center for Public Safety Excellence, the Castle Rock Fire and Rescue Department utilizes a UHU of 0.30 as the upper limit in their standards of cover due to the necessity to accomplish other non-emergency activities.⁹

Every day, the agency staffs three units including one engine, one ALS unit, and one ladder truck. We combined the workload of two engines, three ALS units, and ladder/rescue units to calculate UHU since only three units were staffed daily.



(UHU data from South County Fire Standard of Coverage March 2019- p. 57)

The three stations which cover the city of Edmonds Station 16 (17.5%), Station 17 (14.3%) and Station 20 (19.8%). The average UHU for the stations in Edmonds is 17.2%

The busiest unit in the department was the ALS units with a UHU value of 15.1% (1,321 busy hours for 24 hours per day), followed by the engine unit with a UHU value of 8.6% (751 busy hours for 24 hours per day). The least utilized unit was the ladder with a UHU value of 1.0%. The three units combined had a UHU value of 8.2%.

7 International Association of Firefighters. (1995). *Emergency Medical Services: A Guidebook for Fire-Based Systems*. Washington, DC: Author. (p. 11)
8 Illinois Fire Chiefs Association. (2012). *An Assessment of Deployment and Station Location: Rolling Meadows Fire Department*. Rolling Meadows, Illinois: Author. (pp. 54-55)
9 Castle Rock Fire and Rescue Department. (2011). *Community Risk Analysis and Standards of Cover*. Castle Rock, Colorado: Author. (p. 58)

Option 1: Join the RFA Through Annexation

Beginning in 2003, the City of Edmonds and the South County Fire Authority have had a contractual relationship which provided a high level of fire and emergency medical services to the residents within their community. By supporting the annexation of the City of Edmonds into the Fire Authority, the community would continue to receive the high level of service the community has been provided. In addition, the community has many benefits with services that would be difficult to replicate and assign a quantitative cost to these services.

Pros
City would be relieved of current portion LEOFF1.

Maintains current Level of Service.

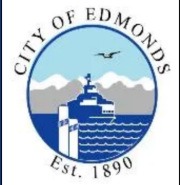
Annexation into the RFA would reduce the general fund liabilities by ~\$6.5 million, which partially funds the current annual contract cost. This would strengthen Edmonds' general fund to address future projects and other city-provided services. Additionally, The City could potentially use these funds to lower the city's portion of the property taxes for their residents.

In an annexation scenario, Edmonds would be relieved of the current firefighter portion of the LEOFF1; South County would transfer that liability from Edmonds (\$6.6M-OPEB); annual cost of \$83,000. In addition, they would no longer be responsible for the fire dispatch fees payable to Snohomish County 9-1-1. In 2024, that amount is \$401,107.

Cons

Level of Service is governed by elected fire commission, not the City of Edmonds





Option 2: Contract with Shoreline Fire Department

FITCH met with the Fire Chief of Shoreline Fire Department to assess the level of interest in entering a service contract with the City of Edmonds to provide Fire and EMS services.

In 2022, King County Fire Protection NO.4 (Shoreline Fire Department) and King County Fire Protection District NO.16 (Northshore Fire Department) entered into an inter-local agreement for fire and emergency medical services, where Northshore Fire Department contracts with Shoreline to provide fire and emergency medical services within their jurisdiction. Shoreline’s response area is within King County except for the town of Woodway in Snohomish County.

Due to location of Edmonds, Shoreline Fire Department is the only viable option.

The Shoreline Fire Department Emergency Medical Services is governed by Medic One, King County Emergency Medical Services. Due to funding through King County for emergency medical services, it has been determined that Shoreline Fire Department could provide an EMS unit within the City of Edmonds. However, the Shoreline and King County EMS Levy would have to be applied (\$1.48, AV/1000).

Further discussions need to be facilitated with Shoreline Fire, King County, and medical directors to find out if this service can operate out of Snohomish County and within the jurisdiction of another medical system’s direction and protocols.

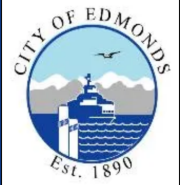
In 2023 and 2024, the costs to Northshore for contracted services:
(This is provided to demonstrate the increased cost in one year for contracted services).

North Shore	2023	2024
Annual Contract Fee	\$9,551,329.00	\$12,041,180

Under the current contractual agreement, Northshore is responsible for all the capital funding necessary to provide service within its area.

The City of Edmonds needs capital equipment for fire and EMS services to explore and consider any option outside annexation within the RFA. Depending on the terms of the contract, Edmonds would likely be required to purchase the initial capital (~\$6.7M) and renovate its facilities (~\$20M). In addition, an annual capital replacement amount would be needed to replace items as they reach the end of their life cycle.

Numerous variables in this scenario contribute to uncertainty regarding both its extent and the potential cost to the City of Edmonds. Debt service, replacement capital funding, and labor rates could feasibly exceed the price of the current contract with South County Fire.



Option 3: Create Own Department

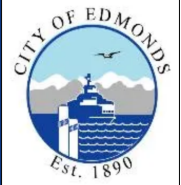
In 2009, the City of Edmonds dissolved its fire department, sold its assets, and merged its personnel to Snohomish County Fire Protection District NO. 1 (South County Fire). In total, 50 personnel were transferred from the City of Edmonds to South County. For the city to continue to provide the same level of service as it is currently receiving, it will require 51 operations personnel and five administrative/support positions for a total of 56 personnel.

To maintain the current level of service; 51 operations and five administrative/support personnel would need to be hired, equipped, and trained.

In discussions with South County Fire, they aim to retain all personnel assigned to the City of Edmonds contract. Given current labor challenges, Edmonds may experience difficulty recruiting and hiring qualified personnel to provide fire and EMS services to the community. Additionally, Edmonds will need to hire a complete command staff with support personnel to continue the present level of service. South County Fire employees are at the midpoint of the mutually agreed upon comparable agencies for collective bargaining purposes in comparing total compensation.

Shift Staffing Needs	Firefighter/Paramedic	Driver Operator	Company Officer	Battalion Chief	Total
Edmonds Station 16					
Fire Suppression Unit	2	1	1		4
EMS Unit	2				2
Battalion Chief				1	1
Edmonds Station 17					
Fire Suppression Unit	2	1	1		4
EMS Unit	2				2
Minimum Shift Staffing	8	2	2	1	13
Staffing Relief Factor	4.5	2.5	3	3	
3 Platoon System	36	6	6	3	51

Administrative Position	
Fire Chief	1
Deputy Chief	2
Fire Inspector	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Suppression and EMS Personnel (Total)	51
Total FTEs	56



Option 3: Create Own Department

Capital Funding and Purchase

South County purchased the assets utilized by the former Edmonds on a depreciated scale. According to the 2009 Inter-local Agreement for Services between Snohomish County Fire Protection District NO.1 and the City of Edmonds, dated 3 November 2009, the following values were agreed upon:

Category	Depreciated Purchase Price
Rolling Stock (Vehicles)	\$1, 419,205.00
Attractive Assets (Equipment, PPE, Radios)	\$248,399.00
On-Board Equipment	\$100, 253.00
Non-Built in, Non-Fixed Station Furnishings	\$30, 366.82
Total (2009)	\$1,798,223.82

Applying a conservative inflation rate of six percent (6%) to the 2009 agreement equates to \$4,309,548.00 in 2024. Fire and EMS have experienced an inflation rate year after year, far exceeding the conservative value of six percent (6%) for rolling stock and attractive assets.

The following illustration estimates what Edmonds may require for expenditures (~\$6.7M) if they purchase capital assets to provide fire and emergency services. These figures are only estimates and formal Requests For Proposals (RFP) would be required to determine exact costs based on agency specifications. * Note: Build time for new apparatus is currently 20-36 months after the order is placed.

The city would need to purchase apparatus, equipment, and firefighter protective gear.

Estimated Capital Start Up Costs

Item	Current Market Estimate
Fire Appartaus (4)- includes 1 reserve	\$3,900,000
Ambulances (4)-includes 1 reserve	\$1,550,000
Command Staff Vehicles (3)	\$250,000
Firefighter Protective Equipment-(2) sets per firefighter	\$401,000
Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (24)	\$250,000
EKG- Monitor Defibrillator (4)	\$150,000
Radios (25)	\$250,000
~Total	\$6,751,000

New apparatus is currently taking 20-36 months for delivery.

* There is a myriad of options based on the acceptable level of risk in a community.

Option 3: Create Own Department

Current facilities

The current fire stations within Edmonds need remodeling, rebuilding, and relocations. South County Fire has forecasted a project price of ~\$20 million to complete this project. An updated needs assessment will be required to determine a refined cost estimate.

Operational Costs

In evaluating current and future service levels within the City of Edmonds, the operational costs would be \$19.2M (which includes ancillary and support services such as, fire prevention, training academy access, community resource paramedic, medical officer, PIO, and public education) in addition to ongoing replacement funding for future capital expenditures.



Option 4: Contract with EMS Service

Feasibility of Separate Fire and EMS Services for Edmonds

Collective Bargaining Agreements for Shoreline Fire Department and Shoreline Firefighters Local 1760, South Snohomish County Fire & Rescue, Regional Fire Authority, and International Firefighters Local 1828, prohibit subcontracting for emergency medical services. Currently, no ALS private ambulances are operating within Snohomish County.

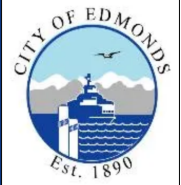
The development of a single role (EMS-only Providers) would require additional research and development to determine the feasibility of the City of Edmonds.

This approach has declined nationally due to decreased private EMS providers and communities needing to retain transport fees. Another consideration is that current economic conditions would necessitate the City of Edmonds to subsidize any private provider.

Current CBA's does not allow for private service EMS to respond to 9-1-1 calls for service.

Nationally, private service EMS agencies are struggling due to increased costs and call demand.





Summary of Options- Based on Current Level of Service

Option 1: Annex into South County Fire-RFA

Reduce General Fund expenditures by: **Revised 6-3-2024*

~\$6 million—Current contract savings
 \$401,107- County 911
 \$83,000- OPEB annual Savings
 Total Savings= ~\$6,484,000

Relieved of \$6.6 million- LEOFF1 liability
 Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB)
 Retiree medical benefits
 Annualized Cost- \$83,000

Annual Cost= \$18.7M

~\$6.5M reduction in
 general fund liabilities

\$6.6M reduction in long
 term liability

City does not have to buy capital equipment or repair/replace stations.

Pro

Allow City of Edmonds to transfer cost of contracting to the RFA.

Cons

Increased cost to residents.
 Level of Services (LOS) Defined by elected fire board.

Option 2: Contract with Shoreline Fire Department

Annual operations and personnel cost-
 \$22.7M

Debt Service: equipment and stations-
 \$2.2M*

** Amortized station relocation, repair, construction and other capital equipment.*

Annual Cost= \$24.9M

Pro

Shoreline FD is a professional all-hazards emergency service which can handle the unique hazards of the community.

Con

Upfront capital expenditures.
 Contract cost.

Option 3: Create Own Department

Annual operations and personnel cost-\$18M

Debt Service- equipment and stations- \$2.2M*

Estimated Ambulance Billing Revenue= ~\$1M (offset)

\$18M + \$2.2M - \$1M (ambulance billing offset) = \$19.2M

** Amortized station relocation, repair, construction and other capital equipment.*

** See page 28 for buyback option analysis.*

Annual Cost= \$19.2M

Pro

Community would have control over emergency services.

Cons

Start up and ongoing costs.
 Recruitment, retention, training, and reliance on mutual aid from surrounding agencies.

Option 4: Separate fire and EMS services-contract with an EMS provider

Not a viable option due to CBA's and lack of 911 private services.

Station and Staffing Models: The City of Edmonds Forms Their Own Fire and EMS Service

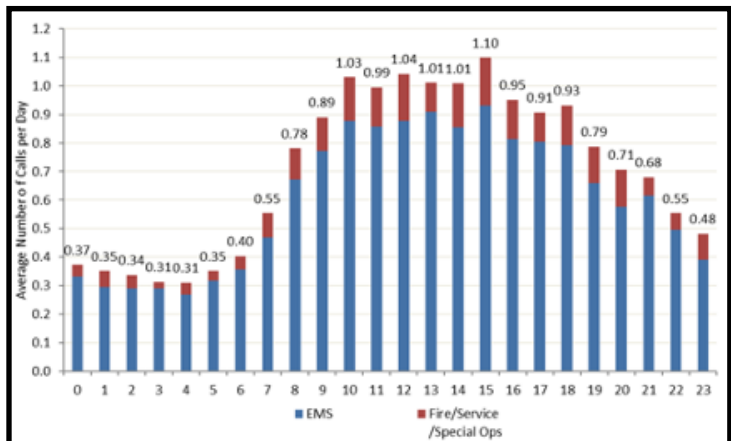
3 Station Model		On Duty Staffing	2 Station Model		On Duty Staffing	1 Station Model		On Duty Staffing
Personnel and operating	\$18M	11-15	\$12M	10-12	\$6M	5-7		
Annual Debt Service	\$2.2M		\$2.1K		\$1.7M			
Ambulance Transport fees	~(\$1M)		~(\$670K)		~(\$500K)			
Levy-req. AV/1000	\$1.25		\$0.87		\$0.47			
Total	\$19.2M		\$13.4M*		\$7.1M*			

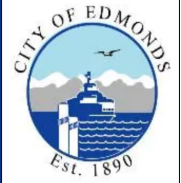
Station and Staffing Models-Considerations

Additional considerations for reduced staffing or stations:

- A “One Station Model” would significantly Impact **RESPONSE TIMES**.
- Reliability of Units (available for the next call).
- Effective Response Force (ERF) – EMS-ALS (3-5 personnel), Residential structure Fire (14-22 personnel).
- Unable to complete critical tasks (Fire-EMS for moderate risk, high risk, and max risk calls).
- Reliance on mutual aid when units are tied up (could include a service charge per unit by provider).
- Stations would have to be optimized (relocated \$\$) for maximum effectiveness.

- ♦ A minimum of 3 resources are needed to handle current call volume
- ♦ Stations (3) x 1.10 = 3.3 Resources
- ♦ Average of 16.8 calls per day





Side by Side Comparison of Options- Revised 6-3-2024

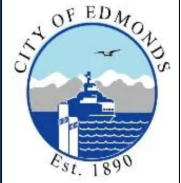
Annex into South County Fire RFA	Contract with Shoreline Fire Department	Form Edmonds Fire Department
<p>Reduce General Fund expenditures by:</p> <p>\$6 million–Current contract savings \$401,107- County 911 \$83,000- OPEB annual Savings Total Savings= ~\$6,484,000</p> <p>Relieved of \$6.6 million- LEOFF1 liability Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Retiree medical benefits Annualized Cost- \$83,000</p>	<p>Annual operations and personnel cost-\$22.7M</p> <p>Debt Service- equipment and stations- \$2.2M*</p> <p>* Amortized station relocation, repair, construction and other capital equipment.</p>	<p>Annual operations and personnel cost-\$18M</p> <p>Debt Service- equipment and stations- \$2.2M*</p> <p>* Amortized station relocation, repair, construction and other capital equipment.</p> <p><i>Estimated Ambulance Billing Revenue offset = ~\$1M</i></p>
<p>*Annual Cost= \$18.7M</p> <p>\$6.5M reduction in general fund liabilities. \$6.6M reduction in long term liability.* Number transposed in original report (\$17.8M)</p>	<p>Annual Cost= \$24.9M*</p>	<p>Annual Costs = \$19.2M*</p> <p>See buyback of apparatus and equipment option below:</p>

Analysis of buy-back option:

Fitch’s final report assumed the city would need to procure all new apparatus and equipment upon re-establishing a city fire/EMS department, estimating an initial capital investment of \$6,751,000. Purchasing back rolling stock and equipment could reduce the cost, with the following caveats:

- Assuming apparatus and equipment are halfway through their 10-year useful life, they would need to be replaced within five years.
- The required initial capital investment under this assumptions would be \$3,375,500.
- The annual debt service would decrease from \$811,749 to \$405,875.
- The city would need to plan for earlier replacement of apparatus and equipment than the Fitch’s methodology suggests.
- Fitch recommends a “sinking fund” to ensure funding of capital equipment.
- Alternatively, the city could use “pay-as-you-go” approach, potentially requiring bonding of capital reinvestment.
- The choice of methodology is a policy decision for the community.

Form Edmonds Fire Department <i>With capital buyback option</i>
<p>Annual operations and personnel cost-\$18M</p>
<p>Debt Service- equipment and stations-\$2.2M* (less \$405,875=\$1.8M**)</p>
<p>* Amortized station relocation, repair, construction and other capital equipment.</p>
<p><i>Estimated Ambulance Billing Revenue= ~\$1M</i></p>
<p>Annual Costs = \$19.2M* (\$18.8M Adjusted for reduced debt service)</p>
<p>** Assumes \$3,375,000 equipment buy back. Fitch Recommends a ~\$3M Sinking fund to purchase future rolling stock.</p>



Implementation Tasks and Timelines

Annex into South County Fire RFA	Contract with Shoreline Fire/EMS	Form Edmonds Fire Department
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution requesting annexation. • Review of request by SCF Governing Board. • Negotiations- Terms and Conditions: Cost sharing, contracts, fire marshal services. • Pre-annexation agreement. • Amendments to plan: Governance Boundaries • Transition plan. • Public referendum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make formal request for proposal. • Initiate Contract negotiations. • Ratify contract by all parties. • Purchase capital assets. • Negotiate transition with SCF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, and Administrative Assistant. • Begin Negotiations with SCF on transition plan. • Develop specifications for fire equipment and trucks. • Order equipment. • Develop policies and procedures. • Hire and train new personnel.
<p>Timeline: 18-24 months</p>	<p>Timeline: 24-36 months</p>	<p>Timeline: 36 Months</p>

*Buy back option: time would be reduced by up to 12 months