

PS COMMITTEE #1
July 23, 2015
Worksession

MEMORANDUM

July 21, 2015

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Essie McGuire, Senior Legislative Analyst *EM*

SUBJECT: **Worksession – FY16 Savings Plan, *continued***

Today the Public Safety Committee will continue its work on the FY16 savings plan for the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS). The Committee reviewed the County Executive’s recommended savings plan for public safety departments and agencies on July 13, and deferred final recommendation on two issues pending additional information. This packet presents follow up information on the two deferred issues only.

1. Hyattstown Fire Station #9

The Executive recommended a reduction of -\$1.68 million associated with removing staffing from Engine 709 at Hyattstown Fire Station #9. The Committee requested more information on the impact of this reduction on call times as well as context for other rural areas of the County before making a final recommendation on the reduction.

Call volume

Hyattstown FS#9 has the lowest call volume of any station in MCFRS. In CY2014, the station ran a total of 494 calls from the engine; however, most of these were outside of the station’s first due area. For context, MCFRS provided the information below regarding the first due area call volume for the four lowest volume stations in CY2014.

FIRE STATION	CALLS in AREA	Sq. Miles	POPULATION
Hyattstown FS9	163	15.42	1,351
Upper Mont. FS14	761	86.45	7,546
Clarksburg FS35	1,010	21.46	13,728
Laytonsville FS17	1,042	41.42	17,373

This data shows that FS#9 is significantly less busy than the next lowest call volume stations and covers the lowest amount of population. For reference, the map on circle 2 shows the geographic locations of each station by number.

Response time

The Committee requested quantitative information on how this staffing change would impact response times in the FS#9 area. MCFRS provided the response time goal information on circle 1 as context for how response times are determined. The chart shows a benchmark response time for each type of unit and call; for first due engines, the response time benchmark is 6 minutes. MCFRS response time goals are to meet this benchmark 90% of the time in urban areas, 75% of the time in suburban areas, and 50% of the time in rural areas.

The map on circle 2 shows engine response time coverage for the whole County. This map includes the Executive's reduction of E709 as well as the proposed reduction of E705 at Kensington (which the Committee recommended restoring). The map shows that coverage times are greater than 8 minutes for several more rural portions of the County (the areas in white around the perimeter of the County). As seen in on the population data in the table above, the population impacted by the reduction in E709 is significantly less than the population in another rural area, Upper Montgomery Fire Station #14 in Beallsville.

MCFRS provided response time maps specific to the FS#9 first due area, showing the current coverage with E709 (circle 3) and showing the coverage without E709 under the proposed reduction (circle 4). Council staff has hand annotated the maps to clarify the gray shading. These maps show that the response times shift generally from 6-8 minutes to 10-12 minutes for the areas in Montgomery County. The area closer to Clarksburg is unaffected due to the coverage from FS#35.

Council staff concurs with the Executive's recommended reduction of staffing for E709 totaling -\$1.68 million. Particularly given the low call volume and the proximity to FS#35, this reduction achieves a significant amount of savings with a manageable impact on a relatively small service area.

2. Potential savings from the Local Fire and Rescue Departments (LFRDs)

The Committee requested that the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association (MCVFRA) consider whether, on behalf of the LFRDs, the volunteers would participate in the FY16 savings plan. Specifically, the Committee requested whether the volunteers could commit to not spending in FY16 an identified amount of public funding allocated to the volunteers, which would result in savings.

The MCVFRA response is on circles 5-7. It does not specifically identify an amount of savings that the volunteers can contribute. The response identifies the MCFRS expenditure areas of facility maintenance and station mowing/snow removal that MCVFRA says it may be able to

offset with EMST expenditures. The amount that MCVFRA quantifies is \$75,000 related to facility maintenance, and the response does not provide anticipated amounts for the other suggested areas.

Council staff suggests that the MCVFRA response does not provide the quantifiable approach that the Council needs for the FY16 savings plan at this time. In the three functional areas MCVFRA suggested, the Council made a policy decision several years ago to centralize these functions within MCFRS to achieve operational and cost efficiencies. In addition, it is unclear how these types of reductions would be operationalized during the year and what the final amount saved would be.

- **Facility maintenance:** MCFRS spends significant funds each year addressing facility maintenance issues and responds to repair or other critical maintenance needs at all stations. Even if the LFRDs assumed the identified \$75,000 in light maintenance referred to in the response, if significant expenses are incurred to address critical facility issues the County will provide the needed funding and savings will not be realized.
- **Mowing:** The Executive's savings plan already identified the mowing contract at the stations as a reduction of -\$25,000, and the Committee concurred.
- **Snow removal:** This function currently operates on contract, and purchasing equipment at select stations may not result in savings overall. Council staff also notes that timely snow removal is a safety and response issue at fire stations; it may not be the best approach to leave this function to individual station efforts, particularly at busy stations.

In Council staff's view, the question before the Committee remains whether to specify at this time an amount of public funding allocated to volunteers that should be identified as a savings target in FY16.

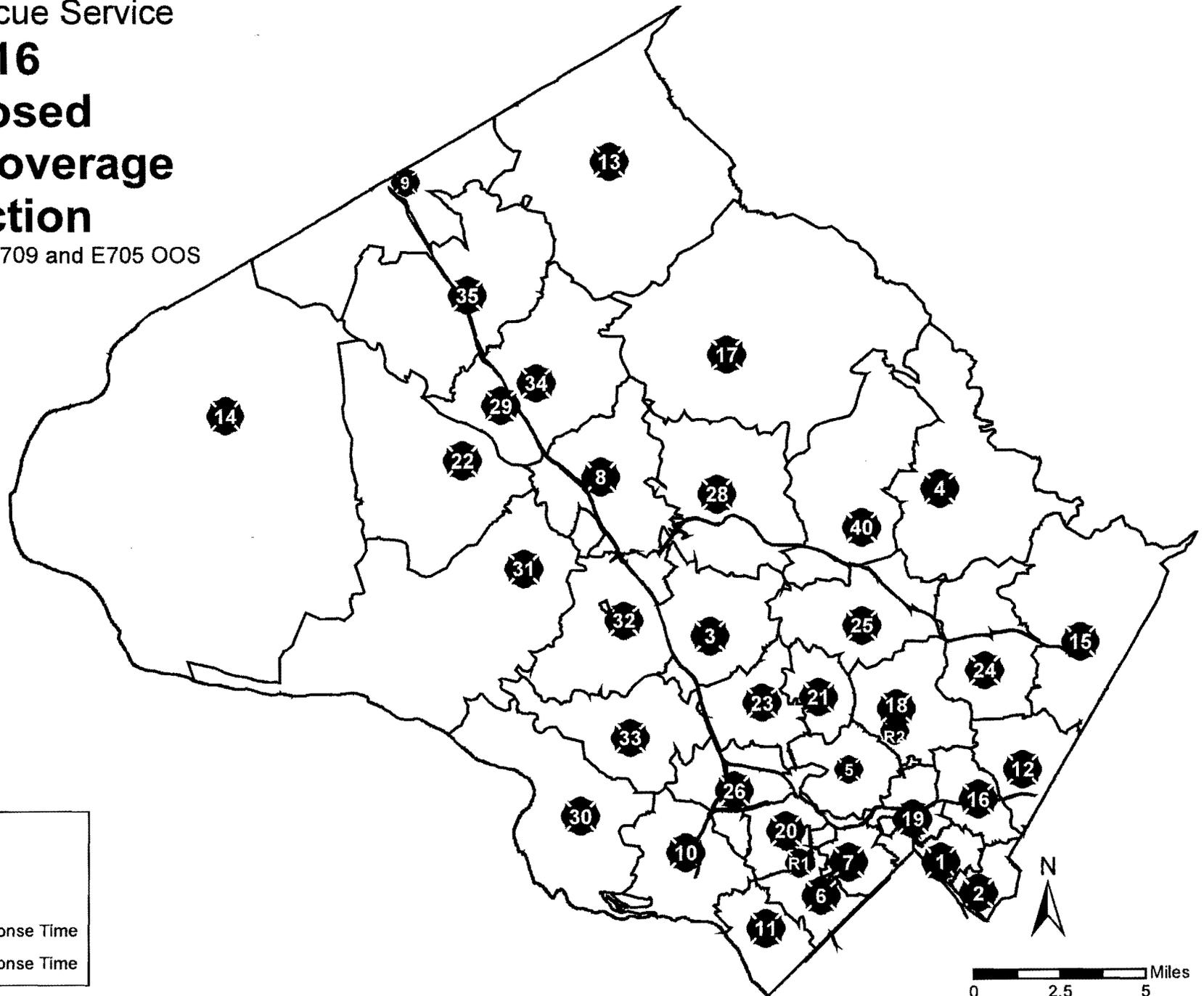
MCFRS RESPONSE TIME GOALS
 (From 2009 MCFRS Master Plan)

	Response Time Benchmark	Urban Goal	Suburban Goal	Rural Goal	NFPA 1710 Goal
1st arriving unit to ALS call:	6 min	90%	75%	50%	90%
1st arriving ALS unit to ALS call:	8 min	90%	75%	50%	90%
1st arriving unit to BLS call:	12 min	98%	95%	90%	N/A
1st arriving transport unit to ALS call:	10 min	90%	75%	50%	N/A
1st arriving Engine to fire	6 min	90%	75%	50%	90%
2nd arriving Engine to fire	8 min	90%	75%	50%	N/A
2nd arriving Truck to fire call:	8 min	90%	75%	50%	90%
2nd arriving Truck to fire call:	12 min	90%	75%	50%	N/A

Montgomery County
Fire and Rescue Service
FY16

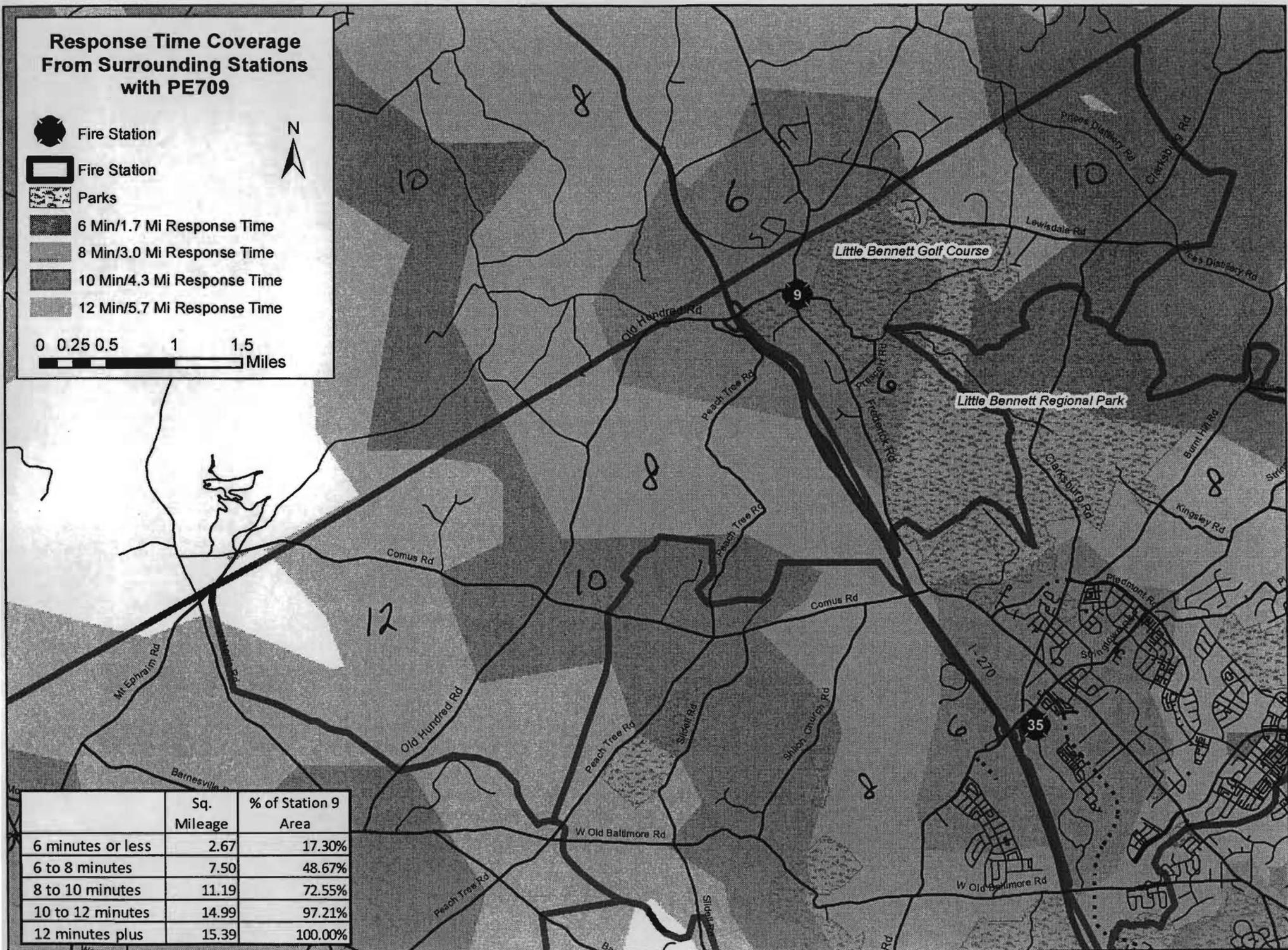
**Proposed
Engine Coverage
Reduction**

33 Staffed Engines - E709 and E705 OOS



Response Time Coverage From Surrounding Stations with PE709

-  Fire Station
-  Fire Station
-  Parks
-  6 Min/1.7 Mi Response Time
-  8 Min/3.0 Mi Response Time
-  10 Min/4.3 Mi Response Time
-  12 Min/5.7 Mi Response Time



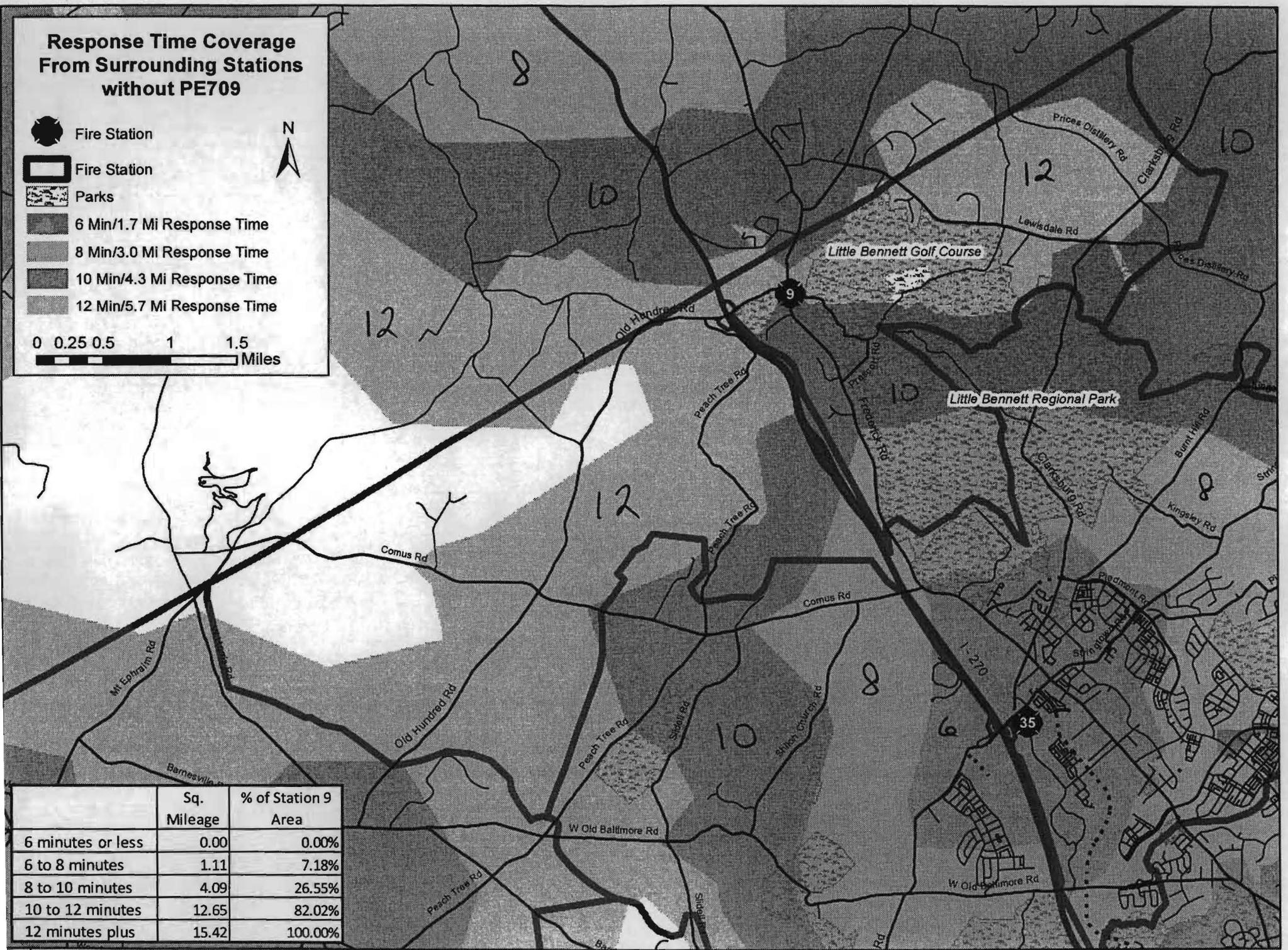
	Sq. Mileage	% of Station 9 Area
6 minutes or less	2.67	17.30%
6 to 8 minutes	7.50	48.67%
8 to 10 minutes	11.19	72.55%
10 to 12 minutes	14.99	97.21%
12 minutes plus	15.39	100.00%

Response Time Coverage From Surrounding Stations without PE709

 Fire Station
 Fire Station
 Parks
 6 Min/1.7 Mi Response Time
 8 Min/3.0 Mi Response Time
 10 Min/4.3 Mi Response Time
 12 Min/5.7 Mi Response Time

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5
 Miles

N



	Sq. Mileage	% of Station 9 Area
6 minutes or less	0.00	0.00%
6 to 8 minutes	1.11	7.18%
8 to 10 minutes	4.09	26.55%
10 to 12 minutes	12.65	82.02%
12 minutes plus	15.42	100.00%



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230 N. Washington St. Rockville, MD 20850
301-424-1297
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**MARCINE D. GOODLOE, PRESIDENT
ERIC N. BERNARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
A. MICHAEL KELLEY, PROGRAM MANAGER**

M E M O R A N D U M

July 20, 2015

TO: Marc Elrich, Chairman
Public Safety Committee, Montgomery County Council

FROM: Marcine D. Goodloe, President
Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association (MCVFRA)

SUBJECT: MCFRS FY16 Budget Savings Plan

This memorandum is in response to questions raised at the Public Safety Committee (PSC) meeting on Monday, July 13, 2015. Specifically, the MCVFRA was asked to consider alternatives to the budget savings plan forwarded by the County Executive (CE) and use of EMST Funds which would reduce MCFRS spending associated with the LFRDs.

Staffing Reductions

The MCVFRA supports of the positions taken by the two affected LFRDs, Kensington Volunteer Fire Department (KVFD) and Hyattstown Volunteer Fire Department (HyVFD) rejecting the County Executive's cuts. We also support Council staff's recommendation to restore the engine and ambulance at KVFD Station 5 during the day for the reasons stated in KVFD's letter to the PSC.

We thank you for this first opportunity for MCVFRA to be included in discussions involving the proposals before the PSC. We understand the tight time period for all involved.

HyVFD was targeted in the last budget savings plan, losing career staffing 24/7. They have since seen the return of their ambulance, yet it is staffed only with volunteers. HyVFD does not have the volunteer capacity to staff the engine should the PSC accept the CE's plan. Its few qualified volunteers routinely staff a brush truck and tanker in a 1st due area which has no fire hydrants, yet includes historic houses and buildings, and massive new mansions. Response times for engine service from surrounding jurisdictions will be significantly increased to the greater Hyattstown region if the CE's savings plan is adopted.

It is not reasonable to remove all career staffing from any station, leaving an area void of 1st due fire protection, no matter how low the call volume may appear over a select period of time.

If a decision is made to distaff an engine, MCVFRA recommends a station with other fire services available (truck and/or squad) so that a large area of the County is not left without fire protection.
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A viable alternative would be to reduce 4th person staffing either in selected stations or on a rotating basis until the budget stabilizes. Another alternative is to defer upstaffing at Station 40 for 3 months saving \$172K, or for six months, saving \$344K.

EMST Funds

Barely two years into the EMST funding program, following a lengthy agreed upon process with the volunteers and County government with amendments to the County Code and a related MOU, the MCVFRA is being asked/expected to relinquish that which was promised and signed into law.

While we understand the need for the budget savings plan, there is no reason why the MCVFRA & LFRDs should be expected to shoulder over 50% of the MCFRS load. MCFRS' reduction is 1.8% of its budget, and MCVFRA's share should be no more than the same percentage (even though no other collectively bargained agreement in the County was opened or reduced for any amount in the plan.)

Notwithstanding the forgoing, the MCVFRA is prepared to offer the following alternative uses of EMST funds which will result in direct savings to the MCFRS budget (subject to buy-in by the organizations represented by our Association.)

1. Facility Maintenance – Each LFRD will be budgeted \$3,000 per LFRD-owned station to be used for light maintenance items, such as light ballasts, paint, clogged drains, etc. This will result in a potential savings to the MCFRS facility budget up to \$75,000 (for 25 LFRD-owned stations.)
2. Station Mowing/Snow Contracts - For those LFRDs who opt to manage their own landscaping and snow removal, authorize EMST purchases for mowers, plows (already an approved use), blowers and other like equipment. This will allow MCFRS to cancel mowing and snow removal contracts at those locations, further reducing required funds in those areas.
3. Other Savings – The MCVFRA will continue its dialogue with the Fire Chief on other potential cost saving ideas and possible cost-sharing measures.

At the most recent PSC meeting, information was presented summarizing LFRD spending on apparatus, facilities and other equipment. The MCVFRA prepared its own spending analysis (attached) which was delivered to the PSC Chairman last week.

The MCVFRA further analyzed its spending with EMST and Amoss for the past five years. (Both funds were combined because many projects utilize both funds concurrently.) Further, many of the totals below were supplemented by LFRD private funds, so the actuals totals may be significantly higher than posted.

Apparatus

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Ambulances | \$ 1,825,629 |
| 2. Engines | \$ 1,480,923 |

3. Ladder Trucks \$ 695,000
 4. Rescue Squads \$ 616,906
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5. Tankers \$ 150,000
 6. Brush Trucks \$ 55,000
 7. Support Vehicles (command; utility; canteen; chase-car, etc.) \$ 1,326,816
 8. ATVs & Trailers \$ 51,500
 9. Boats & Boat Supports \$ 203,860

Total Apparatus \$ 6,405,634 55.34%

Facilities

1. Station Renovations \$ 2,572,820
 2. Station Repairs \$ 477,537

Total Facilities \$ 3,050,357 26.35%

Other Uses

1. Equipment \$ 616,947
 2. Administrative Support \$ 944,500
 3. Standby Food \$ 256,933
 4. Other Operating Expenses \$ 301,174

Total Equipment & Other \$ 2,119,554 18.31%

Total 5-Year Spending \$11,575,545

90% of these funds, 10.4 million dollars (plus a significant amount of private LFRD funds) has been spent by the LFRDs over the last five years on apparatus, equipment, and facility repairs and renovations, most of which has resulted in direct savings to the County/MCFRS for items the County/MCFRS otherwise would have had to fund. Cutting the LFRD's EMST funds will only transfer additional spending responsibilities back to MCFRS and the County. As you can see the Standby Food is less than 2% of those funds and the limited Administrative Support is 8.2%. Both of these volunteer needs were eliminated from the LFRD's when their tax funds were removed. Clearly, the EMST funds are being used, as promised, for the needs of our combined fire, rescue service that must be met. A promise and agreement that we respectfully hope will be kept by all. Thank you.