



Public Safety

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- As a second class borough, the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) has the legal authority to provide a suite of emergency operations services as mandated in Alaska Statute, Title 29: Municipal Government, and as specifically acquired by election or ordinance. These powers include: animal control, fireworks control, emergency medical services (EMS), emergency management, fire protection, and emergency communication services.
- Overall, with existing mutual aid agreements in place, and a potential expansion of those agreements, existing fire protection and EMS resources are adequate to meet increased demand related to the incoming F-35 population. The 911 infrastructure is also adequate to support additional population.
- In the Greater North Pole Area, where most F-35 families are anticipated to live, there may be a need for additional public safety staff, and an evaluation of the location of fire stations and apparatus. This need will be determined by the location of new housing.
- The Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR), a shared and primary radio system for all local, state and federal public safety entities, is challenged by uncertain state funding and poor coverage in some areas of the borough, including those most likely impacted by historical and projected growth (Greater North Pole, Moose Creek and Salcha). FirstNet, a nationwide broadband network for first responders, would supplement and replace ALMR, but the cost and capabilities are uncertain.
- The current process to update the 2015 FNSB Emergency Management Plan is an opportunity to better coordinate across municipalities toward a shared and tested set of borough-wide emergency management priorities.
- The Borough's Animal Control/Shelter has adequate capacity to address F-35 related needs. However, the facility is dated and in need of major upgrades or total replacement to effectively and efficiently address current and projected need. Additionally, the facility was never designed to care for and shelter exotic birds, reptiles and other animals, which comprise an increasing number of animals surrendered to the facility.



During a series of focus groups with active duty personnel and their families in October of 2017, participants shared a spectrum of comments related to the importance of and their perception of public safety in the FNSB. Some participants compared the Fairbanks area to Boston where crime rates are “much worse”. Others had read about and/or experienced crime in the FNSB area, while other families noted they felt safe in the FNSB. Most families identify safety as a factor in selecting where to live, where to send their children to school, and which childcare to select. Safety is integral to a high quality of life for military families.

When choosing a place to live, what do you look for? What are the most important characteristics? What is your preferred location?

- “Safety.”
- “Have heard there is a lot of crime in the FNSB.”
- “The internet says crime is really bad.”

What factors influenced your decision on where to send your child(ren) to school?

- “Crime rates in areas surrounding schools is also a factor.”

What are your main concerns related to public safety?

- “This is probably the safest place to live.”
- “Public safety wise, this is a good place.”
- “I’ve heard people will take your plug-in cord if you leave it out, but that’s the worst.”
- “I’m concerned about the distance if I live off-base. If something bad happens, how far away is the fire department and the emergency personnel?”
- “The areas, including the homes and businesses, near child care facilities in the community look sketchy. You hear stories about needles. It’s not that I don’t think the police are doing their job; they are too spread out.”
- “There are only a handful of public safety officers who are assigned to Salcha.”
- “Living on base is safer and my stuff doesn’t wander off.”
- “Crime in Boston and other cities is much worse.”

A necessary starting point, for existing and/or future residents, is the basic understanding of the Borough's public safety, or emergency operations powers. As a second class borough, the FNSB has the legal authority to provide a suite of emergency operations services as mandated in Alaska Statute, Title 29: Municipal Government, and as specifically acquired by election or ordinance. The Borough's Emergency Operations Department oversees these functions, including: animal control, fireworks control, emergency medical services (EMS), emergency management, fire protection, and emergency communication services. As outlined in the Borough's most recently approved budget for fiscal year (FY) 2017-2018 ¹, these powers include a combination of areawide, non-areawide and service area powers. By definition:

- Areawide powers are exercised throughout the borough. Specific functions include:
 - Animal Control (and additional powers to prohibit cruelty to animals) – conferred areawide power by ordinance (1965; 1996).
 - Emergency Communication Services (911) – acquired by ordinance (1993).
 - Emergency Management – acquired non-areawide power (1983).
- Non-areawide powers are exercised in the area of the borough outside the cities of Fairbanks and North Pole. Specific functions include:
 - Fireworks Control – conferred non-areawide by ordinance (1969).
 - Emergency Medical Services – acquired non-areawide power (1983).
- Service area powers are exercised in specific areas upon petition and adoption by vote of the

residents of the specific service area. Specific functions include:

- Fire Protection – acquired by election, powers of some service areas (1981).

The focus area includes the broad umbrella of “public safety”. Existing conditions, potential needs and gaps, and recommended solutions are outlined for each of the functions identified above, including those functions administered by the cities of Fairbanks and North Pole, and the State of Alaska (which includes the University of Alaska Fairbanks). Many of the potential needs and gaps identified in this focus area are longstanding public safety issues in the Borough, and have been identified in other Borough reports, including but not limited to:

- FNSB Assembly Discussion about Fire and Emergency Medical Services: Information Packet (August 2015)
- FNSB Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (January 2015)
- FNSB Comprehensive Review of Emergency Medical Services: Final Report (August 2011)

Summarizing and strategizing solutions to these historical and often complex public safety issues through the RGP process, better positions the



¹ <http://fnsb.us/Documents/ApprovedBudget.pdf>

Borough and its partners to improve existing levels of service, a benefit to both existing and future residents. The perspective of the public safety leaders in the FNSB is equally important. For this focus area, the Regional Growth Plan team conducted interviews with leadership at the FNSB Emergency Operations Department, Fairbanks Fire and Police and Fire Departments, City of North Pole Fire and Police Departments, Salcha Fire and Rescue, and the Alaska State Troopers.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, POTENTIAL NEEDS AND GAPS

Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

Existing Conditions

To summarize Borough fire protection and EMS powers and contractor roles:

“The Borough has non-areawide emergency medical services and ambulance powers. Non-areawide means that the Borough, through its contractors, can perform this function in any area in the borough, outside of the cities. It can assist within the cities pursuant to a mutual aid agreement...Each EMS contractor must make the decision, based on its available staffing, resources, and funding, as to what means it will use to access a known patient in a known location... Within the fire service areas, the Borough exercises its fire protection powers. The fire departments can perform fire protection duties outside of fire service areas pursuant to a mutual aid agreement, or if otherwise authorized by law. If fire service area assets are used to support an EMS function, the fire service area must be compensated for that use.”

- Excerpt from September 10, 2010 letter written to fire department chiefs by Brad A. Paulson, FNSB Emergency Services Administrator (illustrating the complexity of fire protection and EMS infrastructure and administration in the FNSB)

Fire service is provided in areas of the borough where residents have elected to tax themselves for the specific purpose of procuring fire protection services². Wildland fire service is provided by the State of Alaska. However, the State of Alaska may also provide limited service outside of fire service areas, as resources are available. Their mission in those instances is to hold the fire to the structure. Fire departments can also respond to areas outside of their service areas or agreements if lives are threatened (e.g., entrapment).

As shown in Figure 1, there are nine fire service areas in the FNSB. Five of the nine fire service areas are established through Borough election and include the Chena Goldstream, Ester, North Star, Steese and University fire service areas. Other service areas include geographies and populations covered by the City of Fairbanks, City of North Pole and the military installations of Eielson Air Force Base and Ft. Wainwright.

The Borough's five fire service areas are funded through a percentage of FNSB property tax. Each fire service area is served by a non-profit fire department (or "Inc."), funded through a combination of contract funds with the Borough (i.e., property tax funds) for labor and operations, and unique funding mechanisms as implemented by individual fire departments (e.g., profits from pull tab operations, percentage of transactions through Amazon). Unique to this model is Salcha Fire and Rescue, a volunteer department established in 1992, and the University Fire Department. Unlike the departments described above, Salcha Fire and Rescue has no defined service area and covers those areas outside of the North Star Fire Service Area, south of Eielson Farm Road. Salcha Fire and Rescue is funded primarily through one-off subscriptions with residents for fire protection services, but like other departments serving designated areas, they receive EMS funding from the Borough. The Borough

contracts with the State of Alaska for the University Fire Department.

Each fire department, or "Inc.", has a fire chief and board of directors. Fire department leadership coordinates with fire service area commissioners, each of whom is appointed by the Borough mayor for a three-year term. In most cases, fire department equipment is owned and provided by FNSB. There are some exceptions such as new apparatus recently purchased by North Star Volunteer Fire Department using funds raised separate from Borough funding, or the Salcha Fire and Rescue that has acquired apparatus through donations from the Borough and legislative grants.

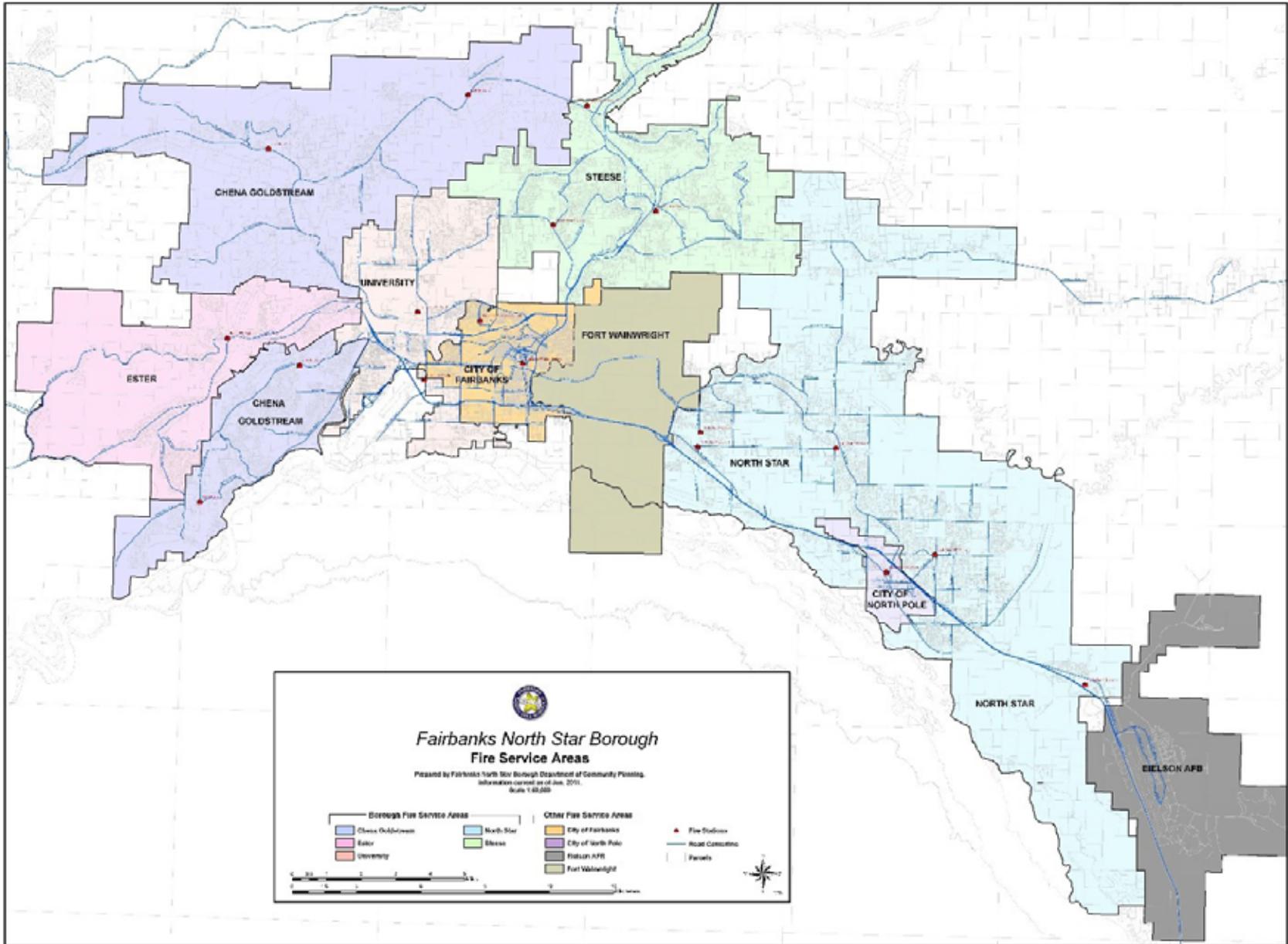
Under mutual aid agreements (further described below) between fire departments, fire services from both Ft. Wainwright and Eielson respond to calls for assistance in FNSB communities. In recent years, as other fire services have experienced reductions in available staff, mutual aid from both military fire services have become more important for fires and emergency medical assistance responses.³

² Salcha Fire is not tax payer supported for operations, but does receive surplus equipment that was originally purchased by FNSB tax payers.

³ Communication with David Gibbs, Director of the FNSB Department of Emergency Operations, 10/31/2017



FIGURE 1: FNSB FIRE SERVICE AREAS



The Borough also provides non-areawide emergency medical services (EMS) in all areas outside the cities of Fairbanks, North Pole, Ft. Wainwright and EAFB. The Inc.s outlined above, and Salcha Fire and Rescue, have independent contracts with FNSB Emergency Operations to provide EMS. As detailed in a 2015 FNSB Memorandum on legally available options for fire services: “the EMS areas are generally larger than fire service areas because EMS is a non-areawide service (all borough areas except cities). Also, while EMS is available to all residents on the road system, some FNSB residents live outside of the fire service areas.” To summarize, the EMS area is the entire non-areawide area, so all EMS contracted services will respond to the entire area. Their primary response areas are designated for initial dispatch, based upon location. In that way, there are no

“larger” EMS areas, only one non-areawide EMS area.

Like the fire service areas described above, the Borough contracts with local fire and rescue departments to deliver EMS. However, the bulk of fire department activity is EMS-related. That said, per a 2015 Borough Memorandum from the then Assistant Borough Attorney, “...fire service area funds cannot be diverted and expended on EMS obligations. If fire service area equipment or resources are expended in support of the Borough’s EMS services, EMS funds must reimburse the fire service.” Each department has paid staff to crew ambulances, but many staff play a dual role, with the skills to crew ambulances and fire apparatus. As such, fire department chiefs have two core leadership roles, or “wear two hats”, one for fire, one for EMS.

While they are called volunteer services, all departments have a dedicated paid staff to provide service on a 24-hour basis. Departments operate in a semi-autonomous manner and are participants in the FNSB Emergency Operations Department automatic and mutual aid agreements for fire protection and EMS services. Automatic aid is assistance that is dispatched automatically by a contractual agreement between two fire departments, communities or fire districts. Mutual aid is assistance that is dispatched, upon request, by the responding fire department. Usually it is requested upon arrival at the scene. Mutual aid in the FNSB is defined by signed contractual agreements. Specifically, fire department chiefs have developed detailed GIS-driven response plans that are implemented by dispatchers. All area response agencies have signed a "mutual aid" agreement to send requested resources within their capabilities upon request by another agency. There is no cost to the receiving agency for this assistance.

An additional factor differentiating fire departments (service providers) are those that operate transport ambulances and those that provide first responder services (see list below). First responders have less medical training and administer care until ambulances arrive and can transport individuals to hospital.

Operate transport ambulances:

- University Fire Department
- Steese Area Volunteer Fire Department
- Chena Goldstream Fire and Rescue
- Salcha Fire and Rescue

Provide first response services:

- Northstar Volunteer Fire Department
- Ester Volunteer Fire Department

Response to wildland fires is the responsibility of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR), Division of Forestry (DOF), with assistance from FNSB fire services as needed. More specifically, "at-risk communities", including the FNSB, are covered by the Borough's Community Wildfire Protection Plan⁴. The FNSB is in an area where lightning strikes and other ignition sources frequently cause summer wildland fires. These fires can grow quickly, creating hazards to property and health. It is not uncommon for these fires to cause unhealthy air quality in the borough's inhabited areas. With climate change accounting for the increasingly drier weather in the Interior, longer summers and the warmer temperatures recorded in the last 20 years, there is an expected increase in frequency, intensity, growth and overall seasons for wildland fires in the FNSB.

⁴ Community Wildfire Protection Plan Phase I, 2006 and Phase II 2009, ADNR Division of Forestry, Fairbanks Area Office. A third phase of the plan is still needed for completion of the project.

Potential Needs and Gaps

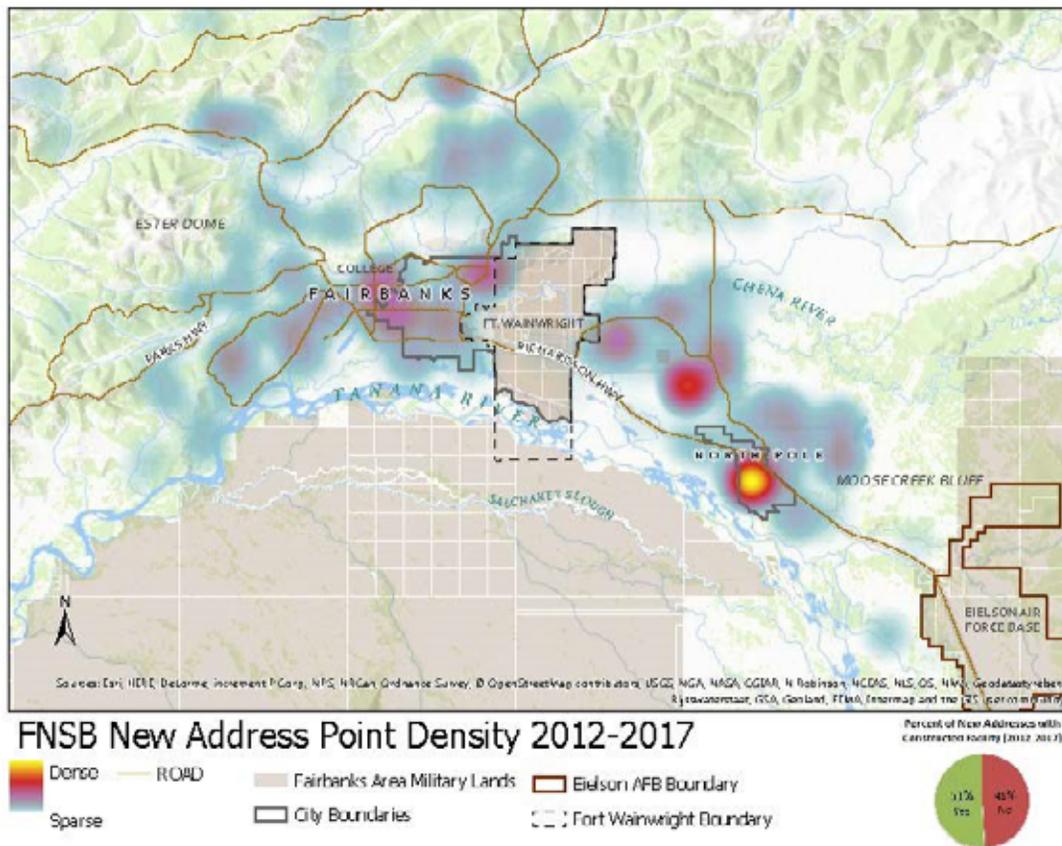
Issues impacting current levels of service that could be exacerbated by additional population and housing in the FNSB, especially in the Greater North Pole area, include:

- While the service from area to area is essentially the same, the various fire and rescue organizations have different staffing compositions and numbers which can affect levels of service.
- Geographic boundaries do not align with fire and EMS service areas. Efforts have been made to align EMS contracts around fire service area contracts, but that has not always led to the most efficient EMS service. Because of service agreement limitations, ambulances and apparatus are not always in optimal locations for the most effective and efficient service delivery. From the 2011 Comprehensive Review of FNSB Emergency Medical Services:

“The locations of EMS response facilities in relation to geographic and demographic needs of the EMS system are generally effective and in the right places. However, some of the potential boundaries between EMS corporation response areas unnecessarily complicate response practices, such as not sending the closest EMS response unit regardless of whose territory it is in.”
- The current organizational structure, independence and potential lack of coordination between individual fire departments serving Borough fire service areas can sometimes result in duplication of services and an overall lack of coherency and efficiency in service delivery. This can lead to potentially longer response times and a reduction in level of service.
- As independent organizations comprised of volunteers, fire departments within the FNSB are often vying for the same limited pool of potential volunteers. Related, there is no succession planning to prepare for the departure of older volunteers near retirement.
 - As demographics are changing, recruiting and retaining fire department volunteers is becoming more challenging. The tradition of volunteering for the long-term, in some cases decades, is becoming very rare. Older, more seasoned volunteers are being replaced by younger volunteers, many of whom desire to volunteer for a short period, potentially through the duration of an educational program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, or as they are transitioning to a full-time paid position in a related or different field, in Fairbanks or elsewhere. In some instances, this is for significantly more pay, but most departing staff are moving to a similar position with a defined benefit retirement plan. In response, at least three volunteer fire/EMS departments offer housing, scholarships and/or college tuition as part of the service stipend.
 - Given the shift described above, FNSB fire departments are subsequently left with a “staff extreme”, with younger entry level volunteers, and older volunteers who are nearing retirement. There is no middle management (from where future leadership usually comes) to bridge the gap as young recruits move to other opportunities and older volunteers retire.

- The best illustration of this “hollowing out” of public safety staff are the staffing numbers received from the City of North Pole Fire Department. Eighty percent of the department’s current leadership is eligible for immediate retirement. With few experienced staff staying for more than four years, the ability to replace retiring staff is a significant challenge and may begin to impact the department’s ability to respond to fire and EMS calls effectively and efficiently. The likely addition of most of the F35 personnel and families to the North Pole community will further compromise responsiveness.
- Addressing is one of the best and most accurate indicators of where new development is and will be occurring in the borough. As known (see Figure 2), the Greater North Pole area has and continues to experience the most rapid growth. As such, public safety providers serving those areas are and will continue to be most impacted by historical and F-35-related growth.

FIGURE 2: FNSB NEW ADDRESS POINT DENSITY



Source: FNSB Emergency Operations Department

911 Network

Existing Conditions

The Borough provides all equipment for the areawide 911 system in the FNSB, including the areawide network and all call processing and handling of equipment. The Borough also provides addressing services, a critical Borough function. The Emergency Operations Department employs two full-time GIS technicians who are committed to updating addresses and consistently developing accurate maps for dispatch centers toward more effective and efficient emergency response.

There are two public safety dispatch or “answering points” for the 911 system. The primary contact is contracted to and operated by the Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center (FECC), a department of the City of Fairbanks. The secondary answering point is the Alaska State Troopers (AST) dispatch; FECC dispatchers immediately transfer calls to AST dispatch when the call location is known. All users, including fire and EMS agencies, police agencies and the Borough contribute to the dispatch contract, as implemented by FECC.

Potential Needs and Gaps

As noted above, FECC handles all public safety calls within FNSB, but also for the Delta Junction area, and the entire Denali Borough. The FECC area of service is the largest dispatch service in Interior Alaska. The FECC is authorized 20.5 FTEs, a third of which is currently vacant. City staff indicate difficulty in recruitment and retention of FECC staff for a variety of reasons, including those already identified for fire protection and EMS departments. Additionally, even at full capacity, new recruits/trainees require time and experience before they are able to operate without direct supervision. With the addition of 3,300 new residents to the borough, the need for additional dispatch staff is anticipated, starting with filling existing vacancies. Not filling vacant positions will overtax existing staff, potentially resulting in additional vacancies, compounding current recruitment and retention challenges.

Some disparity exists between what different public safety entities contribute to the FECC contract, and what they receive. For example, the City of North Pole has very few calls within city limits, but do respond to calls within the North Star service area per fire and EMS aid agreements. They provide more assistance than they receive, but are not compensated for that “overage”.

Communications

Existing Conditions; Potential Needs and Gaps

The Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR), a shared and primary radio system for all local, state and federal public safety entities, is challenged by uncertain state funding and poor coverage in some areas of the borough, including those most likely impacted by historical and projected growth (Greater North Pole, Moose Creek and Salcha).

FirstNet, a nationwide broadband network for first responders, would supplement and replace ALMR, but the cost and capabilities are uncertain.

Law Enforcement

Existing Conditions

Generally, three primary organizations provide law enforcement in the borough: the Fairbanks Police Department, City of North Pole Police Department and the Alaska State Troopers. Other agencies that provide service to specific populations and geographies include: Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities Fairbanks International Airport Police and Fire Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks Police Department, and the EAFB Security Police and Ft. Wainwright Military Police. A brief description of primary organization capacity follows.

- **City of North Pole Police Department** provides law enforcement services within North Pole city limits. Per their FY17 budget, there are 13 sworn officers dedicated to the North Pole Police Department.
- **The “D” Detachment of the Alaska State Troopers** serves the Fairbanks area. “D” Detachment has 25 sworn officers assigned to the Fairbanks North Star Borough that primarily respond to calls outside the cities of

Fairbanks and North Pole, although they have the capability to respond to cities when called for assistance. “D” Detachment has other units, such as investigations (six staff), three command level officers, troopers who patrol outside of the FNSB area, and wildlife troopers. Of the 25 funded positions, AST Captain Ron Wall anticipates four vacancies. Vacant positions consistently fluctuate with transfers and new recruits. Regarding capacity, Captain Wall noted the national standard of one trooper per 1,000 people, and that AST is well below that in the FNSB. He does not anticipate a significant increase to his workload, aside from occasional traffic violations or domestic violence calls.

- **Fairbanks Police Department** officers patrol the area within Fairbanks city limits. For FY 2017, the City of Fairbanks approved 46 sworn officer positions, the same number as approved for 2016.⁵ In one-on-one interviews with police leadership, staff indicate a cooperative and helpful relationship with authorities from both Ft. Wainwright and Eielson to mitigate and address any issues in local areas or establishments most frequented by military personnel.⁶

⁵ <http://www.fairbanksalaska.us/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/2017-City-Capital-Budget.pdf>

⁶ Interview with Fairbanks City Police leadership on 10/17/2017

Potential Needs and Gaps

- **Recruitment and Retention** – Similar to concerns of fire protection and EMS leadership, senior law enforcement officials in the FNSB report challenges with recruiting and retaining new officers. Specific barriers include:
 - Most senior staff interviewed view the current Tier 4 retirement offered to new hires by the SOA’s Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) as a poor incentive to help retain staff.
 - The City of Fairbanks has experienced significant recruiting and retention challenges, as the City’s insurance package is a deterrent and unattractive for potential recruits.
 - Recruitment for the Alaska State Troopers has continued to be a challenge. There are several openings, but no applicants. Additionally, there is the reality of a decreased State of Alaska budget for additional positions.
- **Training Costs** – For Alaska State Troopers, it costs approximately \$190,000 per trooper for basic training. Other public safety organizations have similar startup training costs. These high training costs, coupled with unsuccessful retention of new recruits, has a long-term impact on organizational capacity, including resource allocation at the local and state level in public agency recruitment efforts.
- **Capacity and Ability to Serve Additional Population**
 - The City of North Pole Police Department staff indicate they are handling their current case load with the existing staffing, noting that larceny crimes were on the rise. An increase in the population related to the F-35 Beddown would likely mean

increased calls for accident assistance on the Richardson Highway, adding to North Pole Police workload.

- The 25 “D” Detachment Alaska State Troopers have regional responsibilities that sometimes take them outside FNSB boundaries, reducing available sworn staff to respond to calls in the borough.



Credit: University of Alaska Fairbanks – Community and Technical College

Emergency Management

Existing Conditions

The Borough provides non-areawide emergency management services through the FNSB Emergency Management Office. The Emergency Management Office is charged with coordination and integration of all activities necessary to build, sustain and improve Borough government and resident capabilities to prepare for, respond to, recover from or mitigate against disasters. They maintain and implement the 2015 FNSB Emergency Management Plan.⁷ The 2015 Plan does not include the cities of Fairbanks or North Pole, nor the military installations, all of which have their own plans.⁸

FNSB emergency events within the last ten years have included:

- Localized surface flooding - 2008 (declared a disaster by President George W. Bush), 2014, 2016
- Groundwater flooding - 2014, 2015, 2016
- Fire - 2009, 2011, 2013
- Windstorms with widespread power outages - 2013 (declared a disaster by President Barack Obama), 2015, 2016

Longstanding threats and potential civil emergencies in the borough include:

- Earthquake potential of up to 7.0M, could result in widespread damage to critical infrastructure and housing. Several areas are prone to liquefaction and there are many poorly constructed commercial and residential facilities in the area.
- Flooding, even with the Chena Flood Control Project, remains a consistent threat to borough residents and properties.

- Winter high wind events (Chinook Winds) associated with a rapid temperature increase and rain falling on frozen surfaces appear to be becoming more frequent. These events create areawide power outages due to falling trees and precarious driving and pedestrian travel conditions.⁹

Potential Needs and Gaps

Currently, there is a fractured approach to emergency management. Each municipality has an independent plan, and has received related emergency management training. However, there is a lack of formal coordination between entities. Although staff have received training, a unified approach for implementation is missing. Many key emergency management functions are the responsibility of the State of Alaska departments. Several main roads are the sole responsibility of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. The Department of Health and Human Services has the Public Health Powers for the borough, except for the military bases. With multiple jurisdictions involved, there is a significant need to formalize how communities coordinate and implement emergency plans, including how best to prioritize and allocate resources, including personnel, during a disaster.

⁷ Fairbanks North Star Borough Emergency Management web site (<http://www.co.fairbanks.ak.us/eo/Pages/EM.aspx>) accessed 7/5/2017

⁸ Communication with David Gibbs, Director of FNSB Emergency Operations, 12/21/2017

⁹ Communication with David Gibbs, Director of FNSB Emergency Operations, 10/31/2017

Fire Marshal

Existing Conditions

There is only one State of Alaska Deputy Fire Marshal dedicated to the northern region of the state. The Deputy Fire Marshal has statewide enforcement (fire investigation, building inspection), engineering (building plan review), and education (fire accreditation, standards and training) duties that include the FNSB. Some deferred jurisdictions within the borough, like the City of Fairbanks, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks, perform their own fire investigations and fire code enforcement, except the university when a fatality is involved.

Building inspections for fire code compliance are generally handled for all buildings where high occupancies are expected such as auditoriums, churches, schools, etc. Building plan review for commercial and residential buildings (with four units or more) are handled by the State Fire Marshal’s Anchorage office. The expected turnaround time for standard building reviews is two weeks or more. Plans submitted for review during the winter months generally allows builders to start construction immediately upon arrival of summer, according to the Deputy State Fire Marshal.¹⁰

Potential Needs and Gaps

With only one fire marshal serving the northern region, there is not enough capacity to inspect the high volume of new construction (an average of 248 units per year in FNSB over the past five years – see housing focus area for more details), let alone the large number of older, poorly constructed and fire-prone homes in the FNSB. Approximately 40-45 percent of the current housing stock was identified as “poor quality” through the Borough assessor “condition based on effective date” and “condition

based on quality grade” tools. Additionally, older, and even some newly constructed residential and commercial facilities, have poorly designed and maintained driveways and road access that prevent public safety service delivery.

The biggest issues are lack of borough-wide building and fire codes. Through the FNSB Community Planning Department, the Borough could enforce those codes and could seek deferred authority to enforce regulations adopted by the State Fire Marshal. See the Planning and Zoning focus area for more detail on challenges related to the lack of a borough-wide building codes, and a potential strategy to address that challenge.

Animal Control

Existing Conditions

The primary mission of FNSB Animal Control is public safety oriented – rabies control and animal bite prevention. To achieve that mission, Animal Control provides animal shelter and care, and enforces Borough animal-related ordinances with 17 full-time staff and multiple part-time and other employees.



¹⁰ Communication with Kyle Carrington, Deputy Fire Marshal, 11/1/2017

Shelter/Care – Core duties include:

- Caring for domestic animals at the shelter, providing a clean, safe environment.
- Housing for impounded animals and those waiting for adoption or being held in quarantine or protective custody. Via its success in advertising and securing homes for sheltered animals through social media, the shelter has not had to euthanize any healthy dogs or cats due to space constraints since 2010.
- Offering rabies clinics at cost.

Enforcement – The enforcement group, comprised of five officers, conducts the following core activities:

- Responds to complaints of loose, aggressive, barking, sick or injured animals.
- Patrols for stray animals and investigates neglect or cruelty.

Borough Animal Control does not respond to wildlife issues; this is the purview of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G).

Potential Needs and Gaps

- The FNSB has not had any significant problems with domesticated animals. However, with the incoming F-35 population, there may

be an increased demand for services, due to lack of animal control services on Eielson and Ft. Wainwright. Additionally, there may be a need for increased facility size if more animals are brought in by military families rotating out of Alaska. Many times, a new destination will not allow domestic pets without a prolonged quarantine period, so many military families bring animals into the shelter for local adoption.

- Replacement of the current Animal Control Facility, an older and difficult-to-maintain building, has been identified by the Borough as an immediate future need. The Borough has developed a cost estimate for a new facility. However, funding is questionable given the Borough's current fiscal challenges. Additionally, the facility was never designed to care for and shelter exotic birds, reptiles and other animals, which comprise an increasing number of animals surrendered to the facility. If this trend continues, an upgraded or new facility should address this need.



Credit: Fairbanks North Star Borough

PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGIES – WHAT ARE OUR RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS FOR MEETING ANTICIPATED GAPS?

Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

PS1. Form a mayoral task force to evaluate how the Borough forms, staffs and offers incentives to the volunteer fire and rescue departments.

The task force should determine how to continue the viability of the volunteer fire services in a unified manner and recommend solutions for volunteer recruitment and retention. The viability of the current volunteer network should be evaluated with capacity to provide fire protection and EMS services for a population of 110,000 by 2030 (see Growth Projections focus area for detailed population projections). Specific strategies for task force consideration are outlined below.

PS2. Conduct a detailed analysis of need, location of fire stations and ambulances, and identify optimal positioning.

PS3. Consolidate local fire and rescue departments and/or consolidate administrative functions:

- a. Combine service agreements to allow for more effective and efficient resource allocations. For example, for the North Pole area, it would be advantageous to residents, and to volunteer fire and EMS providers, to place ambulances from the City of North Pole fleet in North Star Volunteer Fire Department stations closer to residences and areas of potential need.
- b. Reduce the cost of equipment and materials, through cooperative purchase agreements.
- c. Jointly develop volunteer recruitment packages and coordinate recruitment of new volunteers.
 - i. Incentivize volunteers. For example, today FNSB offers up to \$10,000 in property tax exemptions for both fire and EMS volunteers. Together, fire departments could make this system more robust to include a “compensation paid on call” arrangement, or some form of stipend for participating as a volunteer.

A direct excerpt from a 2015 Borough Memorandum on “Fire Service/Legally Available Options” summarizes this strategy as:

“Option 1: Consolidated management of fire and EMS (in hour or contractor) within existing geographic boundaries. This option would retain existing geographical service area boundaries while consolidating all existing contracts for fire and EMS into one or more larger management areas.”

PS4. Combine fire and EMS service areas into one large service area.

Keep geographical sub-regions, but contract with fewer organizations for delivery of services.

A direct excerpt from a 2015 Borough Memorandum on “Fire Service/Legally Available Options” summarizes this strategy as:

“Option 2: Consolidation with elimination of existing fire service area geographical boundaries and possible expansion of existing boundaries short of a non-areawide power with in-house or contracted management.”

PS5. Establish more sustainable funding for existing and/or consolidated fire departments

911

PS6. Fill vacant dispatch positions and add a .5 FTE to adequately address call volume related to the incoming F-35 population

Law Enforcement

PS7. Consider joint recruitment practices aimed at developing attractive incentive packages and identifying quality recruits for the region.

PS8. The State of Alaska should explore and implement new methods of retaining Alaska State Troopers.

“ The expansion of mutual aid agreements to solve jurisdictional challenges should be considered. Operational decision that focus on protecting and saving lives should supplant decisions to keep EMS responders within jurisdiction boundaries. In its basic form; the closest qualified EMS unit is dispatched to the incident. ”

- 2011 Comprehensive Review of
FNSB EMS



Photo by Agnew::Beck

PS9. Explore new methods of compensation for public safety employees to increase recruitment and retention.

Emergency Management

PS10. Develop and actively test a more coordinated and unified disaster management plan.

- a. Creation of an areawide multi-jurisdictional incident management team.
- b. Plan for high wind and freezing rain events, and other hazards not currently included in the Borough's 2015 Plan, or City of Fairbanks, North Pole, or military installation plans.
- c. Resource prioritization - The plan should identify a set of criteria for distributing supplies across the borough in a time of crisis.
- d. Financial considerations - The plan should answer these questions:
 - Who will pay for disaster-related resources and services? What about residents outside of the cities?
 - In some instances, there will be a lag between when the crisis happens and when financial resources are available to address the issues. How will available funds be applied? Post-disaster, what criteria will be used to strategically apply financial resources?

Fire Marshal

PS11. Fire inspectors should have a role in subdivision approvals to address quality of commercial, industrial and residential construction.

PS12. Request deferred fire marshal authority to employ an inspector within each fire department.

- a. Employ an inspector within each fire department ("Inc."), potentially mitigating current and future issues with quality of construction and access to properties.

See Planning and Zoning focus area for a related strategy to develop and implement borough-wide building and construction standard.

Animal Control

PS13. Develop a master memorandum of agreement with Fort Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base to provide animal control services.

PS14. Construct a new animal shelter.

PS15. Update the Borough's 2015 Emergency Management Plan to include actions for shelter and care of domesticated animals during major borough-wide emergency events

