

APPENDIX F – FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DRAFT EIS IN-LINE EDITS

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

4.10 Public Services and Utilities

4.10.2 Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Affected Environment

Whatcom County is currently served by 13 different fire districts and two city fire departments – Bellingham and Lynden. Those districts and departments are:

- City of Bellingham Fire Department
- City of Lynden Fire Department
- Fire District 1 – Everson, Nooksack, Nugent’s Corner
- Fire District 4 – Britton Road, Agate Bay, Van Wyck
- Fire District 5 – Point Roberts
- Fire District 7 – Ferndale, North Bellingham, Cherry Point, Point Whitehorn
- Fire District 8 – Marietta, Gooseberry Point, Bellingham International Airport
- Fire District 11 – Lummi Island
- Fire District 14 – Sumas, Columbia Valley, Kendall, Welcome
- Fire District 16 – Acme / South Fork Valley
- Fire District 17 – Sandy Point
- Fire District 18 – South Lake Whatcom, Glenhaven, South Bay
- Fire District 19 – Glacier Fire and Rescue
- Fire District 21 – North Whatcom Fire and Rescue
- Southern Whatcom Fire Authority – Formerly District 2, 6, 9, 10 serving Lake Whatcom, Sudden Valley, Lake Samish, Chuckanut, and Yew Street Road

The fire districts in Whatcom County offer Emergency Medical Services as well as fire protection services.

The City of Bellingham and Whatcom County operate the 911 emergency telephone system, called What-Comm. The initial call receiving site is located in Bellingham, and is responsible for dispatching most law enforcement agencies in Whatcom County. All fire and medical related calls are forwarded to the Fire Dispatch Center located at Bellingham Fire Department’s Broadway Street Station. The Fire Dispatch Center is responsible for dispatching all municipal fire departments and fire districts in Whatcom County. The Bellingham Police Department operates the What-Comm center and the Bellingham Fire Department operates the Fire Dispatch Center.

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Inventory of Current Facilities

The table below summarizes each fire district's available facilities:

Table 4.10-10. Fire Facilities Inventory

	Number of Stations	Fire Units	EMS Services (Y/N)	Serves UGA
City of Bellingham (Kintzele, 2014)	8	23	Y	Y
City of Lynden (Baar, 2014)	1	5	Y	Y
Fire District 1 (Preliminary Draft CFP, 2014)	2	14	Y	Y
Fire District 4 (Anderson, 2014)	3	9	Y	Y
Fire District 5 (Carleton, 2014)	2	8	Y	N
Fire District 7 (CFP 2011-2029)	7	14	Y	Y
Fire District 8 (Hewett, 2014)	2	10	Y	Y
Fire District 11 (McLane, 2014)	1	4	Y	N
Fire District 14 (Moe, 2014)	3	4	Y	Y
Fire District 16	3	-	Y	N
Fire District 17 (Petrie, 2014)	2	7	Y	N
Fire District 18 (Crowe, 2014)	2	7	Y	N
Fire District 19	1	4	Y	N
Fire District 21 - North Whatcom Fire and Rescue (Anderson, 2014 and Hollander, 2015).	9	31	Y	Y
South Whatcom Fire Authority (Ralston, 2014)	5	14	Y	Y

Note:

Fire Units include fire engines, ambulances, aid units, command staff vehicles, water tenders, aerial trucks, brush trucks, utility vehicles, pumpers, rescue vehicles, initial attack, and rescue boats.

Fire District 4 is currently managed and staffed under the direction of Fire District 21 - North Whatcom Fire and Rescue.

Fire District 8 and the City of Bellingham entered into an interlocal agreement in 2013 and the City of Bellingham now provides operational management for Fire District 8.

- Fire District 16 did not provide the number of fire units.

Source: Whatcom County Fire Marshal's Office, 2014; Whatcom County Fire Districts, 2014; BERK, 2104.

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Table 4.10-11. Fire Facilities Information

Fire Protection Provider	Average Calls for Fire and Aid Services	Total Facility Size (SF)
City of Bellingham (Kintzele, 2014)	10,568	69,462
City of Lynden (Baar, 2014)	1,300	7,750
Fire District 1 (Preliminary Draft CFP, 2014)	660	20,104
Fire District 4 (Anderson, 2014)	524	26,235
Fire District 5 (Carleton, 2014)	180	8,700
Fire District 7 (CPF 2011-29)	-	36,270
Fire District 8 (Hewett, 2014)	1,280	16,556
Fire District 11 (McLane, 2014)	55	4,100
Fire District 14 (Moe, 2014)	811	18,400
Fire District 16	130	7,312
Fire District 17 (Petrie, 2014)	165	5,000
Fire District 18 (Crowe, 2014)	160	6,000
Fire District 19	67	3,000
Fire District 21 - North Whatcom Fire and Rescue (Anderson, 2014 and Hollander, 2014)	2,687	61,282
South Whatcom Fire Authority (Ralston, 2014)	751	35,575

Notes:

- Average calls for fire and aid services are for 2011-13 unless otherwise noted below.
- Fire District 4 is currently managed and staffed under the direction of Fire District 21 - North Whatcom Fire and Rescue. Fire Districts 4 and 21 provided data for calls for a two-year average (2013-14).
- Fire Districts 5 and 17, and the City of Lynden Fire Department provided calls for fire and aid services for 2013 only.
- Fire District 8 and 11 provided data from 2012-2014. Fire District 8's 2014 data is through October 31, 2014. Fire District 11's 2014 data is projected through the end of the year.
- Fire District 19 provided data for 2013 and 2014. The 2014 data is an approximation of calls January through October of 2014, and the 2013 data is an approximation of calls for 2013.
- Fire District 8 and the City of Bellingham entered into an interlocal agreement in 2013 and the City of Bellingham now provides operational management for Fire District 8.
- Fire Districts 7 did not respond to requests for information regarding the average number of calls for fire and aid service.

Source: Whatcom County Fire Marshal's Office, 2014; Whatcom County Fire Districts, 2014; BERK, 2104.

Impacts

Level of Service Analysis

In 2011, the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan established the following Level of Service (LOS) standard for fire protection. The LOS Standard includes a response time and a Washington State Surveying and Ratings Bureau (WSRB) rating.

The WSRB assigns fire districts numeric fire protection ratings. The WSRB is funded by insurance companies to perform on-site inspections of fire districts. The WSRB analyzes average response time, water supply, communication network, schedule of fire inspections, and existing conditions of fire stations. Insurance companies use the fire protection rating to determine insurance rates on all fire insurance policies.

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Policy 4H-4

Urban levels of service for fire protection shall be a response time of 8 minutes 80% of the time when the department covering the urban area has staffed the fire station.

When the fire station is not staffed the response time shall be 10 minutes 80% of the time, or a WSRB Rating of 6.

Rural levels of service for fire protection shall be a response time of 12 minutes 80% of the time when the department covering the rural area has staffed the fire station.

When the fire station is not staffed the response time shall be 14 minutes 80% of the time, or a WSRB Rating of 8.

Staffed station shall be a fire station that is staffed 24 hours a day 7 days a week 365 days a year. Staff may be paid, volunteer, or combination of the two.

Table 4.10-12 shows the current LOS achievement by fire district in Whatcom County.

Table 4.10-12. Whatcom County 2013 Level of Service (LOS) Analysis

Fire Protection Provider	WSRB Rating*	Response Rate to Whatcom County LOS Standard	Meets County LOS	
			Urban	Rural
City of Bellingham (Kintzele, 2014)	PC 3	Urban: 2011: 96% of first alarm resources arrived within 8 minutes 2012: 100% of first alarm resources arrived within 8 minutes 2013: 100% of first alarm resources arrived within 8 minutes All City of Bellingham fire stations are staffed stations.	Yes, per response time and WSRB Rating.	N/A
City of Lynden (Baar, 2014)	PC 5	Urban: 80% of responses within 5 minutes City of Lynden Fire Department has one fire station in the City of Lynden that is staffed.	Yes, per response time and WSRB rating.	N/A
Fire District 1 (<i>Preliminary Draft CFP, 2014-2015</i>)	PC 7**	Urban: Current fire response times to the Everson and Nooksack UGAs are within the 10 minute Urban LOS standard established by the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan for unstaffed stations. Rural: Current response times to the portion of the District outside the UGAs are within the 14 minute Rural LOS standard for unstaffed stations. All Fire District 1 fire stations are unstaffed stations.	Yes, per the response time.	Yes, per the response time and the WSRB rating.
Fire District 4 (Anderson, 2014)	PC 5**	Average 2014 Response times included: 2011: 9.0 minutes 2012: 8.61 minutes 2013: 8.84 minutes Fire station 12 is staffed, Time and WSRB LOS: Station 11: WSRB rating of 5 Station 12: 8 minutes more than 80% of the time Station 13: WSRB rating of 5	Insufficient Data to Determine Yes, per the response time.	Yes, per the WSRB rating.

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Fire Protection Provider	WSRB Rating*	Response Rate to Whatcom County LOS Standard	Meets County LOS	
			Urban	Rural
		<p>Fire stations 11 and 13 <u>serve rural areas and</u> are unstaffed.</p> <p>Fire District 4 currently tracks response times by station. Because the station that Station 12 serves the UGA also serves surrounding Rural areas, it is not possible at this time to determine whether this station meets the County Comprehensive Plan's LOS standards for response times to Urban both urban and rural areas. and is staffed.</p>		
Fire District 5 (Carleton, 2014)	PC 6	<p>Rural: 100% of responses within 14 minutes</p> <p>All Fire District 5 fire stations are unstaffed stations.</p>	N/A	Yes, per the response time and the WSRB rating.
Fire District 7 (CPF 2011-2029)	PC 6**	<p>Urban and Rural: Current response times are within the LOS limits established by the County Comprehensive Plan.</p> <p>All Fire District 7 stations are unstaffed.</p>	Yes, per the response time and WSRB rating.	Yes, per the response time and the WSRB rating.
Fire District 8 (Hewett, 2014)	PC 6 5	<p>Average Response Times include:</p> <p>2012: 7 minutes and 7 seconds</p> <p>2013: 7 minutes and 10 seconds</p> <p>2014: 7 minutes and 32 seconds</p> <p>All Fire District 8 fire stations are staffed stations.</p> <p>Fire District 8 stated that they do not meet the time requirements for some of their areas, as outlined in the District's Capital Facilities Plan (CFP). However, the Fire District 8 CFP (2012) states "It is anticipated that, with the capital improvements proposed in this plan, the Fire District will be able to respond to emergency service calls and meet the Level of Service standards in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan" (p. 3).</p>	No	Yes, per the WSRB rating.
Fire District 11 (McLane, 2014)	PC 8	<p>Rural:</p> <p>2011: 84% under 14 minutes</p> <p>2012: 72% under 14 minutes</p> <p>2013: 66% under 14 minutes</p> <p>All Fire District 11 stations are unstaffed stations</p>	N/A	Yes, per the WSRB rating.
Fire District 14 (CFP 2012-2015 and Moe, 2014)	PC 8**	<p>Rural:</p> <p>2011: 8.67 minutes</p> <p>2012: 9.63 minutes</p> <p>2013: 9.93 minutes</p> <p>Rural:</p> <p><u>Fire District 14's Capital Facilities Plan 2015 shows that each fire station is within a 10 or 10-14 minute driving time from its service area. The</u></p>	Yes, per the response time.	Yes, per the <u>WSRB rating response time.</u>

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Fire Protection Provider	WSRB Rating*	Response Rate to Whatcom County LOS Standard	Meets County LOS	
			Urban	Rural
		<p><u>one exception is for property in the southern portion of the District along Mosquito Lake Road. In order to meet the LOS standard in the southern portion of the District, Fire District 14 has an auto-aid agreement with neighboring Fire District 16 for a joint response.</u></p> <p>All Fire District 14 stations are unstaffed stations <i>The District's CFP indicates: "The three District 14 Fire Stations are not manned 24-hours a day and therefore do not qualify as staffed stations. Should the station(s) become staffed on a 24-hour basis during the 20-year planning period, the Fire District will meet the appropriate LOS standard- (p. 9).</i></p> <p>Current fire response times are within the level of service standards established by the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (p.9) 10.) Capital plans show the addition of stations and equipment designed to meet the Urban LOS over the life of the capital plan.</p>		
Fire District 16	PC 8	All Fire District 16 stations are unstaffed stations.	N/A	Yes, per the WSRB rating.
Fire District 17 (Petrie, 2014)	PC 6	Rural: Average response time of 6 minutes and 40 seconds All Fire District 17 fire stations are unstaffed.	N/A	Yes, per the WSRB rating.
Fire District 18 (Crowe, 2014)	PC 6	Rural: No responses greater than 11.5 minutes. Average response time is about 7 minutes. All Fire District 18 fire stations are unstaffed.	N/A	Yes, per the response time and the WSRB rating.
Fire District 19	PC 7	The Fire District 19 station is an unstaffed station.	N/A	Yes, per the WSRB rating.
Fire District 21 - North Whatcom Fire and Rescue (Anderson, 2014 and Hollander, 2014)	PC 5**	<p>Average 2014 UGA Response times included: 2011: 9.0 Time LOS (per station that serves an UGA):</p> <p><u>Station 61: 8 minutes</u> <u>2012: 8.61 more than 80% of the time</u> <u>Station 62: 10 minutes</u> <u>2013 more than 80% of the time (WSRB Rating of 5)</u> <u>Station 63: 8.84 minutes more than 80% of the time</u> <u>Station 69: 8 minutes 80% of the time</u></p> <p>Fire stations 61, 63, and 69 are staffed. All other fire stations are- Fire Station 62 is unstaffed.</p>	<p>Staffed stations: undetermined. Unstaffed stations: Yes, per the WSRB rating. <u>response time.</u></p>	Yes, per the WSRB rating.

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Fire Protection Provider	WSRB Rating*	Response Rate to Whatcom County LOS Standard	Meets County LOS	
			Urban	Rural
		“North Whatcom Fire and Rescue currently tracks response times by station. Because the stations that serve UGAs also serve surrounding Rural areas, it is not possible at this time to determine whether these stations meet the County Comprehensive Plan’s LOS standards for response times to Urban areas.”		
South Whatcom Fire Authority (Ralston, 2014)	PC 5**	Some of the South Whatcom Fire Authority fire stations are staffed (stations 21 and 28), while other fire stations are unstaffed stations.	Staffed stations: response time is met for Urban standard (see note).	Yes, per the WSRB rating.

Note: *This is the best protection class that WSRB can give this district. Evaluating a district includes the water source, fire station staffing and equipment, and availability of water hydrants. Different addresses in the district can have different ratings, but no address can have a rating higher than the district rating (Ferrell, 2015).

** Includes Tender Credit. Communities/Districts are evaluated and recognized for Tender Credit (water hauling). This credit applies only to dwellings with no standard hydrant within 1000 ft. Does not apply to commercial properties.

Source: Whatcom County Fire Marshal’s Office, 2014; Whatcom County Fire Districts, 2014 and 2015; BERK, 21042014 and 2015; Whatcom County PDS 2015.

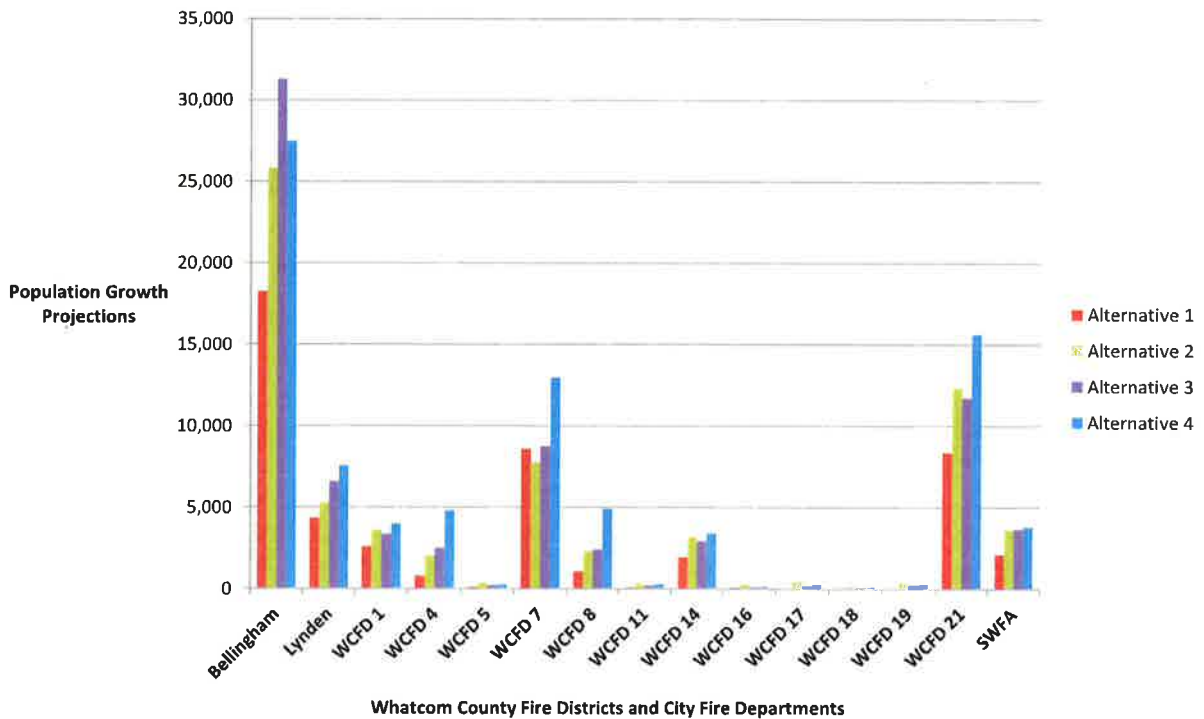
Impacts Common to All Alternatives

Development and population growth associated with the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Update will increase a demand for fire and emergency management services. Each fire district will plan individually to prepare for growth in their individual districts.

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Table 4.10-13. Net Population Growth Projections by Alternative, 2013 – 2036

Fire Protection Provider	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Bellingham Fire Department	18,262	25,845	31,302	27,497
Lynden Fire Department	4,357	5,263	6,601	7,572
WCFD 1	2,593	3,606	3,370	4,003
WCFD 4	798	2,032	2,504	4,774
WCFD 5	134	333	229	264
WCFD 7	8,607	7,785	8,749	12,960
WCFD 8	1,079	2,302	2,413	4,905
WCFD 11	100	312	215	274
WCFD 14	1,960	3,159	2,925	3,416
WCFD 16	83	274	124	145
WCFD 17	30	468	199	280
WCFD 18	40	137	97	108
WCFD 19	38	382	283	309
WCFD 21 - North Whatcom Fire and Rescue	8,396	12,330	11,748	15,640
South Whatcom Fire Authority	2,130	3,614	3,687	3,798



Source: BERK Consulting, 2014.

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Table 4.10-114. Projected Population Growth Change 2013-2036 by Alternative

Fire Protection Provider	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Bellingham Fire Department	22%	31%	38%	33%
Lynden Fire Department	34%	41%	52%	59%
WCFD 1	24%	33%	31%	37%
WCFD 4	8%	21%	26%	50%
WCFD 5	9%	23%	16%	18%
WCFD 7	38%	35%	39%	58%
WCFD 8	14%	30%	31%	63%
WCFD 11	10%	32%	22%	28%
WCFD 14	25%	40%	37%	43%
WCFD 16	5%	17%	8%	9%
WCFD 17	2%	34%	15%	21%
WCFD 18	2%	6%	5%	5%
WCFD 19	9%	90%	67%	73%
WCFD 21 - North Whatcom Fire and Rescue	27%	40%	38%	50%
South Whatcom Fire Authority	17%	28%	29%	30%

Source: BERK Consulting, 2014

Alternative 1: No Action

Under Alternative 1, the fire districts that have the highest projected population change shown in Table 4.10-14 include the City of Bellingham Fire Department (22%), the City of Lynden Fire Department (34%), Fire District 1 (24%), Fire District 7 (38%), Fire District 14 (25%), and Fire District 21 (27%).

Currently, the City of Bellingham Fire Department, the City of Lynden Fire Department, Fire District 1, Fire District 4, Fire District 5, Fire District 7, and Fire District 11, Fire District 14, Fire District 16, Fire District 17, Fire District 18, Fire District 19, Fire District 21 and the South Whatcom Fire Authority meet the Whatcom County LOS Standard.

~~Fire District 21 currently tracks response times by station. Because the stations that serve UGAs also serve surrounding Rural areas, it is not possible at this time to determine whether these stations meet the County Comprehensive Plan's LOS standards for response times to Urban areas.~~

~~Districts 21 meets the Rural standard. Whatcom County has requested that Fire District 21 start tracking response times to UGAs.~~

~~Fire District 8 does not presently meet LOS standards but is anticipated to do so with improvements outlined in their CFP.~~

Alternative 2: Historic Shares

Under Alternative 2, the fire districts that have the highest projected population change shown in Table 4.10-14 include the City of Bellingham Fire Department (31%), City of Lynden Fire Department (41%), Fire District 1 (33%), Fire District 7 (35%), Fire District 8 (30%), Fire District 11 (32%), Fire District 14 (40%), Fire District 17 (34%), Fire District 19 (90%), Fire District 21 (40%).

~~Currently, See the City discussion of Bellingham, City of Lynden Fire Department, and Fire District Districts 1, 7, 11, 14, and 17 meetmeeting the Whatcom Countycurrent LOS Standard. See policy under Alternative 1 for the status of Fire District 21., also applicable under this Alternative.~~

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Fire District 19 is unstaffed, and therefore based on its WSRB rating would meet the LOS standard. The District believes growth shares may be higher than warranted given the seasonal nature of the housing and past employment trends. Since this Alternative tests higher Rural growth levels, this presents a bookend.

Fire District 8 does not meet the Urban LOS standard presently but expects to meet it with capital improvements in their plan.

~~For more information on Fire Districts 21, see the discussion under Alternative 1.~~

Alternative 3: Multi-Jurisdictional Resolution (Resolution 2014-013)

Under Alternative 3, the fire districts that have the highest projected population change shown in Table 4.10-14 include the City of Bellingham Fire Department (38%), City of Lynden Fire Department (52%), Fire District 1 (31%), Fire District 7 (39%), Fire District 8 (31%), Fire District 14 (37%), Fire District 19 (67%), and Fire District 21 (38%).

~~Currently, See the City discussion of Bellingham, City of Lynden Fire Department, and Fire District Districts 1, 7, 11, 14, and 17 meeting the Whatcom County current LOS standard. See policy under Alternative 1 for the status of Fire Districts 14 and 21, also applicable under this Alternative.~~ Fire District 8 does not meet the Urban LOS standard presently but expects to meet it with capital improvements in their plan.

Fire District 19 is unstaffed, and therefore based on its WSRB rating would meet the LOS standard. The District believes growth shares may be higher than warranted given the seasonal nature of the housing and past employment trends. See Appendix G for additional information on potential reallocation of the Rural growth among districts.

~~For more information on Fire District 21, see the discussion under Alternative 1.~~

Alternative 4: Targeted Land Use Change

Under Alternative 4, the fire districts that have the highest projected population change shown in Table 4.10-14 include the City of Bellingham (33%), City of Lynden Fire District (59%), Fire District 1 (37%), Fire District 4 (50%), Fire District 7 (58%), Fire District 8 (63%), Fire District 14 (43%), Fire District 19 (73%), Fire District 21 (50%), and South Whatcom Fire Authority (30%).

~~Currently, See the City of Bellingham, City of Lynden Fire Department, South Whatcom Fire Authority, and Fire discussion of Fire District Districts 1, 7, 11, 14, and 17 meeting the Whatcom County current LOS Standard. See policy under Alternative 1 for the status of Fire District 21, also applicable under this Alternative.~~ Fire District 8 does not meet the Urban LOS standard presently but expects to meet it with capital improvements in their plan.

Fire District 19 is unstaffed, and therefore based on its WSRB rating would meet the LOS standard. The District believes growth shares may be higher than warranted given the seasonal nature of the housing and past employment trends. See Appendix G for additional information on potential reallocation of the Rural growth among districts.

~~For more information on Fire District 21, see the discussion under Alternative 1.~~

Mitigation Measures

Incorporated Plan Features

- A countywide coordinated LOS has been developed in conjunction with fire protection/EMS service providers, and was adopted into the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan in 2011

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- Focusing growth in existing UGAs and cities where services already exist could reduce impacts to personnel needs and maintain response times. Alternative 1 focuses growth to a greater extent in current UGA boundaries, and Alternative 3 promotes infill development in UGAs such as Bellingham and Ferndale.

Applicable Regulations and Commitments

- Implementation of adopted Fire Codes will continue for the County and cities. New development would be required to meet city and County codes, including- Fire Code and Building Code regulations regarding the provision of fire hydrants, fire flow, alarm systems, sprinklers, and emergency vehicle access.
- State trauma legislation addresses EMS response times to different demographic areas [Chapter 246-976 WAC Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Care Systems].

Other Potential Mitigation Measures

- Expanded fire and emergency medical services and public safety dispatch services should be provided as the County and cities continue to grow.
- Fire Districts and city Fire Departments should develop or update capital facility plans, especially if they provide service to an Urban Growth Area (UGA).
- Specific impacts of future development proposals should be assessed and appropriate mitigation measures imposed through the County's and cities' SEPA authority. These may include building access, right-of-way access, and other measures or resources to support rapid emergency response.
- The County and cities should consider adopting fire impact fees pursuant to RCW 82.02.050-.100, if requested by a fire district.
- Since emergency medical service provision makes up approximately 75% of all emergency response countywide, a larger number of lower cost EMS Stations could be constructed in lieu of providing full-service fire stations. By providing more of the EMS Stations in more geographically dispersed locations, fire districts could serve a larger percentage of their incident calls at a lower cost. A precedent for this model of service delivery is already in place in the County with Medic One's two county medic stations.

Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

As population and employment growth continues, the demand for fire and EMS services will increase. With mitigation, significant, unavoidable adverse impacts would not be anticipated.

