



Fire Services

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The Cost Share Committee met on 10/14/14 and agreed to by consensus the following three recommendations:

Item #1: Cost Share Percentages

Cost Share percentages (County Fire Tax District and Municipal responsibility) should be established using the criteria and weighting listed in the table below. The committee believes that this weighted multi-variable calculation when applied to all eight cost shares will fairly, equitably, and defensibly reflects the cost of providing fire service. All data sources are available from a central data source on an annual basis; thus, the calculation can easily be replicated and updated.

Committee Alternative	
Area	7.5%
Valuation	20.0%
Heated Square Footage	7.5%
Service Demand	35.0%
Population	30.0%

Rationale behind using this weighting is provided below (in weighted priority order).

Service Demand- This is a direct measure of workload, which corresponds directly with required resources. Service demand captures all human and structural activity, whether it is driven by residential, commercial/industrial, or transportation corridors.

Population- Population estimates are frequently used for governmental cost allocations, and this factor is well understood to correlate with both risk and service demand as protecting human life is the highest priority of both fire and medical first response.

Valuation- This factor is used to capture risks and service drivers not fully captured in the aforementioned variables. It is important to reflect the importance of commercial facilities, which do not have a population, but do represent economic importance, daytime “population” from employees, and activity which creates service demand within the formula. Additionally, this factor reflects the risk of loss of property tax base.

Heated square footage- In addition to people, fire departments primarily protect structures. This variable represents the risk driven primarily by the size of the structure, regardless of taxable or market value. While some square footage in the county is unheated, but still needs to be protected, this data source represents the best proxy that County staff and ESCI have been able to identify. However, total square footage would be a preferable replacement should a credible central data source be identified.

Area- Total area does not correspond as closely with service demand as the higher weighted variables above. However, there is value in assigning a lower weight to area in combination with service demand, population, and valuation. This is because total coverage area does impact station location and resource coverage requirements.

Item #2: Update Cycle

The cost share percentage should be recalculated using the most recent data every three years, to ensure cost share agreements reflect changes in service needs.

Item #3: Heated Square Footage Data

The committee would like to replace heated square footage with total square footage, if County staff is able to identify a central data source that could be used for the purposes of the cost share calculation.