MASTER PLAN

City of Yakima
Fire Department
2025-2030

From Chief Markham:

Dear Yakima Community,

It is with great pride that I present the Yakima Fire Department Master Plan. This document represents a strategic framework to guide the future of our fire and emergency services as we strive to meet the evolving needs of our growing community.

Yakima's continued growth and development bring exciting opportunities and unique challenges. As our community expands, so too must our commitment to safety, preparedness, and resilience. This master plan is a testament to our philosophy that a fire department is not just an emergency response service, but a vital community asset—one that works proactively to protect lives, safeguard property, and support the well-being of all who call Yakima home.

The recommendations outlined in this plan are the culmination of thoughtful analysis, forward-thinking strategies, and a vision for a fire department that is prepared to meet tomorrow's challenges while honoring the dedication and hard work of our team today. It also reflects the invaluable support we receive from the Yakima community—your trust and partnership inspire us to continuously improve and innovate in service delivery.

To the dedicated members of the Yakima Fire Department: your unwavering professionalism and tireless efforts are the foundation of our success. To the residents, businesses, and leaders of this great city: thank you for your support and collaboration in building a safe and healthy, thriving, and resiliently, stronger Yakima.

Together, we will continue to strengthen our fire and emergency services, ensuring they remain a cornerstone of our community's safety and vitality.

Sincerely, Chief Aaron Markham

Acknowledgements

The consultant extends sincere appreciation to the members of the YFD, as well as to the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager of the City of Yakima, for their continued commitment to delivering high-quality public safety services to the community. Throughout the course of this assessment, department personnel were consistently engaged, professional, and focused on improving both organizational performance and community outcomes. The consultant found the process to be collaborative and constructive, reflecting a shared dedication to service. The success of this effort was made possible by the strong support of the YFD team, who provided logistical coordination, facilitated access to key personnel, and ensured that critical data and operational insights were available to inform this report.

City of Yakima Mayor and Council

Mayor Patricia Byers
Assistant Mayor Matt Brown
Leo Roy
Danny Herrera
Janice Deccio
Rick Glenn
Reedy Berg

City Manager

Victoria Baker

Yakima Fire Department

Aaron Markham, Fire Chief
Christopher Hutsell, Deputy Chief
Susie Madrigal, Administrative Assistant

-and-

The men and women of YFD who serve the community with tireless energy and professionalism

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Executive Summary

The Yakima Fire Department (YFD) Master Plan is the result of a comprehensive and collaborative planning effort between the City of Yakima, YFD leadership, department personnel, and the consulting team. This assessment draws upon an extensive review of department-provided data, peer agency comparisons, on-site observations, and in-depth interviews with stakeholders across all levels of the organization. The data utilized for this assessment is a collection of the most recent finalized data at the time of the analysis, which could be from 2023 or year-to-date data from 2024. The process emphasized transparency, operational insight, and practical recommendations to support a safe, sustainable, and high-performing fire service for the Yakima community.

Current Conditions

YFD operates in a dynamic environment shaped by the city's growth, diverse population, and evolving service demands. The department provides essential services from five YFD career-staffed stations (additonal station in Union Gap), including fire suppression, HAZMAT, and specialized rescue capabilities. A strong internal culture of service and operational flexibility underpins YFD's structure, though gaps exist in strategic planning, resource allocation, and infrastructure investment. While many foundational elements are in place, the department lacks formal planning tools, such as a current strategic plan, Standards of Cover, and a Community Risk Assessment. Staffing levels remain below peer averages placing strain on response capabilities and personnel.

Future Service Delivery

Yakima's modest but steady growth, combined with increasing call volumes and complex community needs, necessitates a more proactive approach to service delivery. As the City continues to urbanize—particularly in areas east of I-82—YFD will require enhanced capacity and geographic coverage to maintain equitable emergency response times. Building internal ALS (Advanced Life Support) capabilities, modernizing training systems, and developing community risk reduction strategies are all essential to improving public safety outcomes. The long-term sustainability of the department also hinges on systematic capital investment, robust workforce development, and expanded oversight of contracted EMS services.

Key Issues and Strategic Recommendations

Six core challenges emerged from this planning effort, which are central to YFD's future readiness:

- **Staffing:** YFD operates below recommended levels for both emergency response and support personnel. There is no formal staffing plan aligned with growth or risk.
- **Capital Planning:** The department lacks a formal, funded Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), hindering its ability to maintain, modernize, or expand facilities and fleet assets.
- **EMS Oversight:** YFD relies on a third-party provider (AMR) for all medical transport, with limited internal supervision or ALS capacity despite EMS accounting for over 70% of calls.
- **Training Deficiencies:** Training goals, policies, and infrastructure are outdated, with inconsistent compliance tracking and limited internal instructional capacity.
- **Community Risk Reduction:** Public education, prevention, and multilingual outreach are underdeveloped, limiting YFD's ability to proactively serve Yakima's diverse population.
- **Organizational Identity and Communication:** A lack of a unified vision, decentralized communications, and underutilized data systems contribute to internal fragmentation and limit public engagement.

To address these issues, this Master Plan outlines short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations across management, staffing, capital investment, EMS delivery, training, and risk reduction. Implementing these strategies will require commitment from City leadership, interdepartmental collaboration, and sustained community support.

Ultimately, this Master Plan provides a roadmap for transforming YFD into a forward-looking, resilient, and responsive agency—equipped to meet today's challenges and tomorrow's emergencies with confidence and care.

Organization Overview

City Governance & Structure

The City of Yakima operates under a "Council-Manager" form of government as outlined in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Chapter 35.18. In this structure, the City Councilmembers are elected officials who serve as the legislative branch of the city. They appoint and oversee the City Manager, who leads the executive branch. The City Council is responsible for setting city policy, adopting the budget, and supervising the City Manager. The City Manager, in turn, implements the policies established by the City Council, manages the budget, and oversees the daily operations of the city through department heads, including the Fire Chief.

The Yakima City Council consists of seven elected officials, each serving four-year terms. All seven Council Members represent specific geographic districts within the city, while one is elected at large. The Council selects a mayor from among its members. The Yakima Fire Department is one of nine city departments that deliver services and support to Yakima's residents and visitors.

Yakima Demographics

Yakima is a mid-sized city in central Washington State and growing steadily. According to Yakima Valley Trends, the city is home to approximately 99,370 people in 2024 with a modest population growth rate of 0.73% over the previous year. The city is the eleventh (11th) largest city by population in the State of Washington. The city area encompasses approximately 27.8 square miles, with an additional 17.24 square miles of potential expansion in the urban growth boundary. The city contains 38,218 (2023) homes.

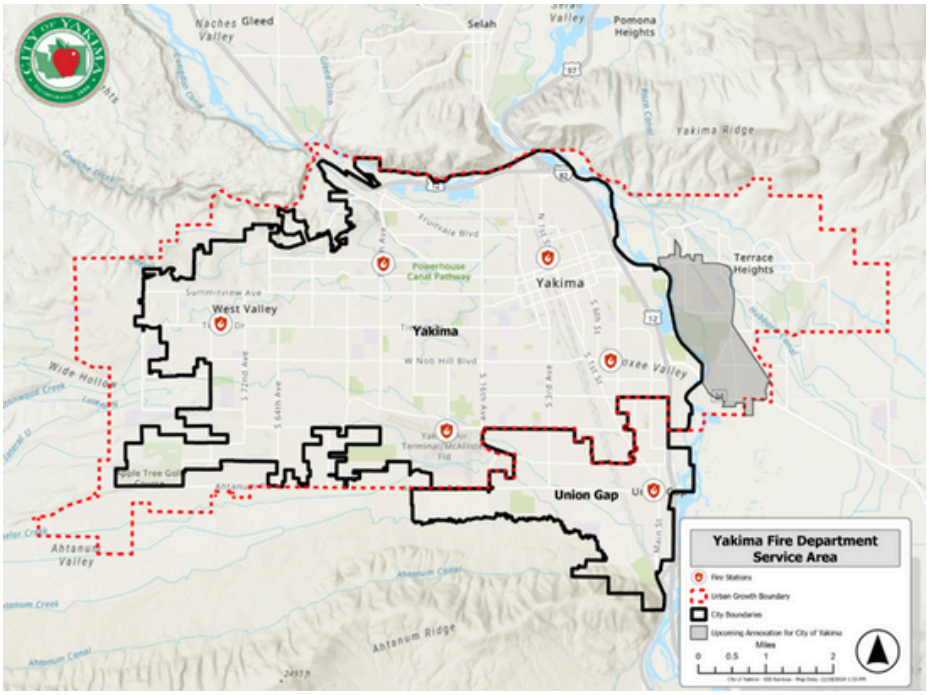


Figure 1: Yakima Fire Dept. Service Area

Yakima Fire Department Structure

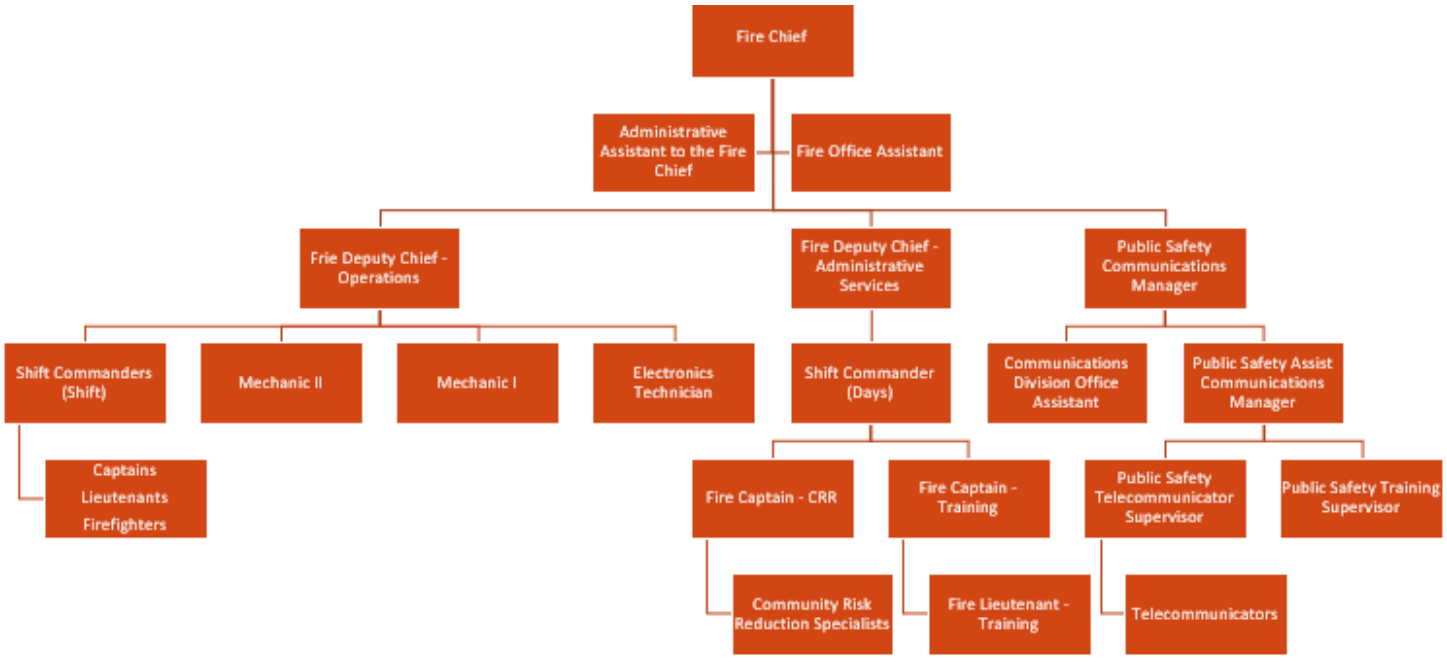
The Yakima Fire Department (YFD) was formally established in 1889 through the adoption of "Ordinance 99" by the then City Commission.

The department's headquarters is located at Station 91, situated at 401 North Front Street. The Fire Chief's role is outlined in a current position description available on the Yakima Human Resources website. The current Fire Chief, Aaron Markham, was appointed in 2018.

The Fire Chief serves as an at-will employee with the city. While the Chief has the authority to recommend hiring and termination actions to the City Manager, they are responsible for administering disciplinary actions independently, following the city's Human Resources policies and the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. The Fire Chief is supported in these responsibilities by the City Attorney for legal counsel and the Human Resources Director for personnel guidance.

As is typical in the fire service, YFD operates within a hierarchical, paramilitary structure. However, YFD differentiates its approach by maintaining a scalar hierarchy during emergency incidents while adopting a project-oriented structure for day-to-day operations.

Figure 2: YFD Organizational Chart



The organizational structure follows a similar hierarchical structure as the staffing, with two deputy chiefs overseeing the programs. Deputy Chiefs are employed under civil service rules. Program activities are assigned to various individuals across the department, regardless of rank. There are several routine program activities required to maintain emergency operational readiness and include such things as facilities, equipment, apparatus, community risk reduction, training, and special operations (specialized technical rescue, HazMat). Mid-managers are assigned these program areas, with additional, smaller projects connected to the major programs. The processes are interdependent where better and faster decisions can be made.

All suppression employees from Shift Commanders down are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. All exempt employees are covered by personnel and civil service rules of the city. The span of control in the fire department is in an ideal range for the operations branch and within industry standards at 1:5 for the Captain. The fire department has five (5) career-staffed fire stations within the city. YFD provides to the community services such as fire suppression, emergency medical services, ambulance transport services (through a county contract), specialized technical rescue, HazMat response, fire investigation, and other services as required and needed.

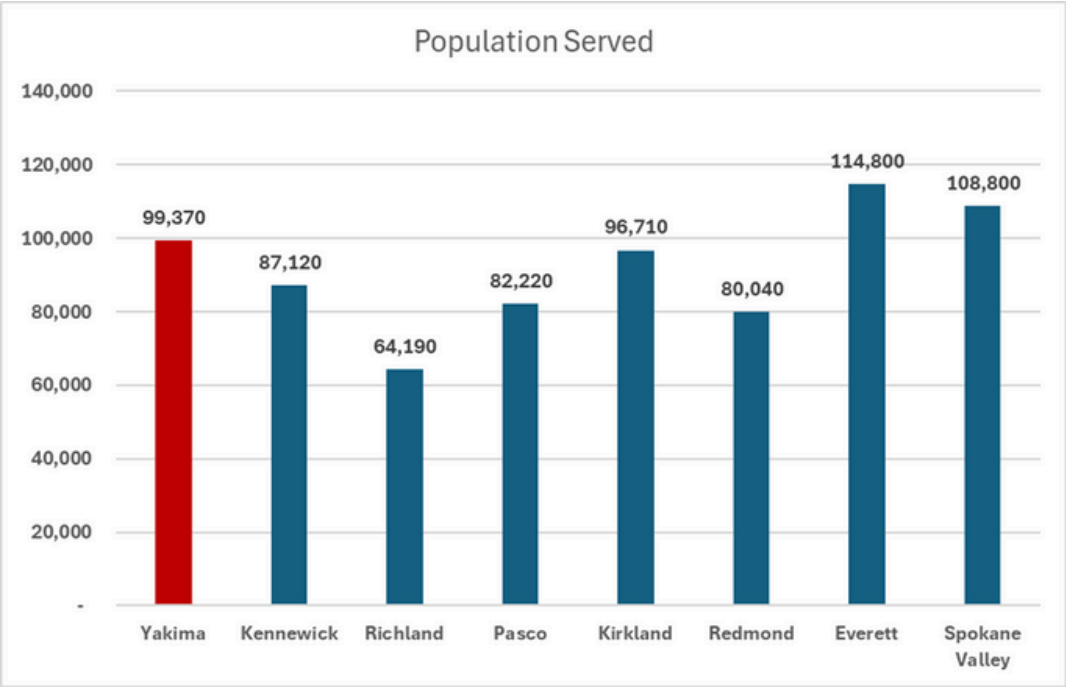
Agency Comparisons

To provide a comprehensive understanding of YFD's operations and performance, this master plan includes an agency comparison with several fire departments across Washington State: Kennewick, Richland, Pasco, Kirkland, Redmond, Everett, and Spokane Valley. These agencies were selected based on similarities in population served, geographical considerations, and comparable resources, such as the number of stations and firefighting personnel.

By analyzing metrics including total population served, service area, population density, incidents per 1,000 population, fires per 1,000 population, fire loss per capita, and EMS incidents per 1,000 population, we aim to identify trends, best practices, and opportunities for improvement. These comparisons will provide valuable context, positioning YFD to better align its services with the needs of the community while adhering to regional benchmarks.

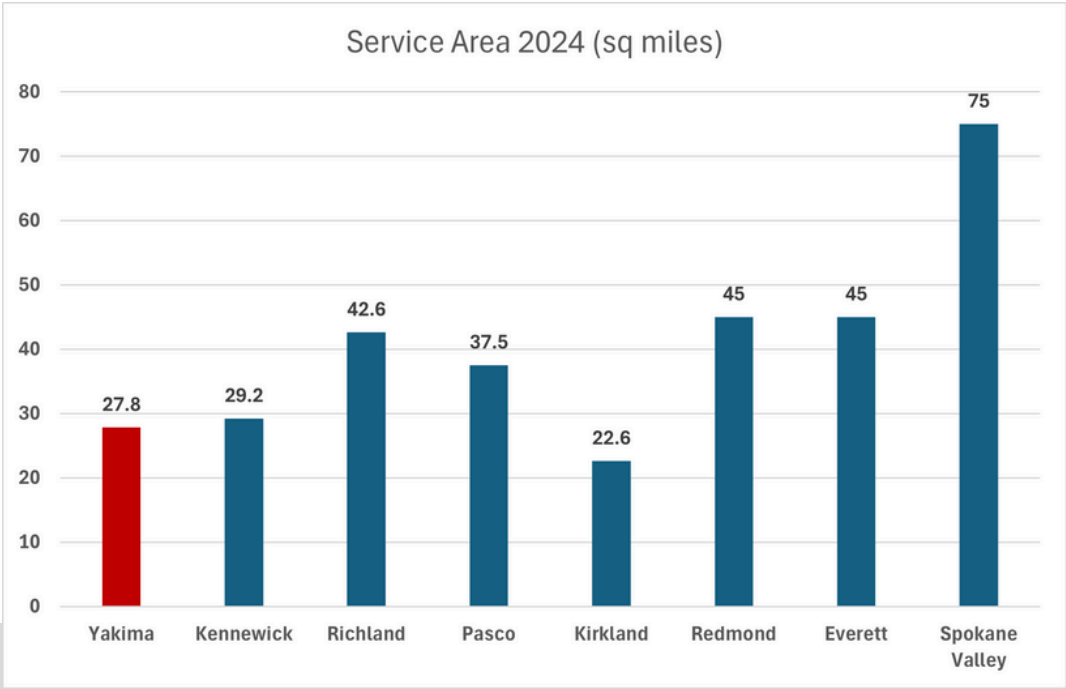
The average population served among the sampled agencies is 91,701 (2024 data), Yakima was in the middle of populations served in comparison to the other sampled agencies.

Figure 3: Population Served (2023)



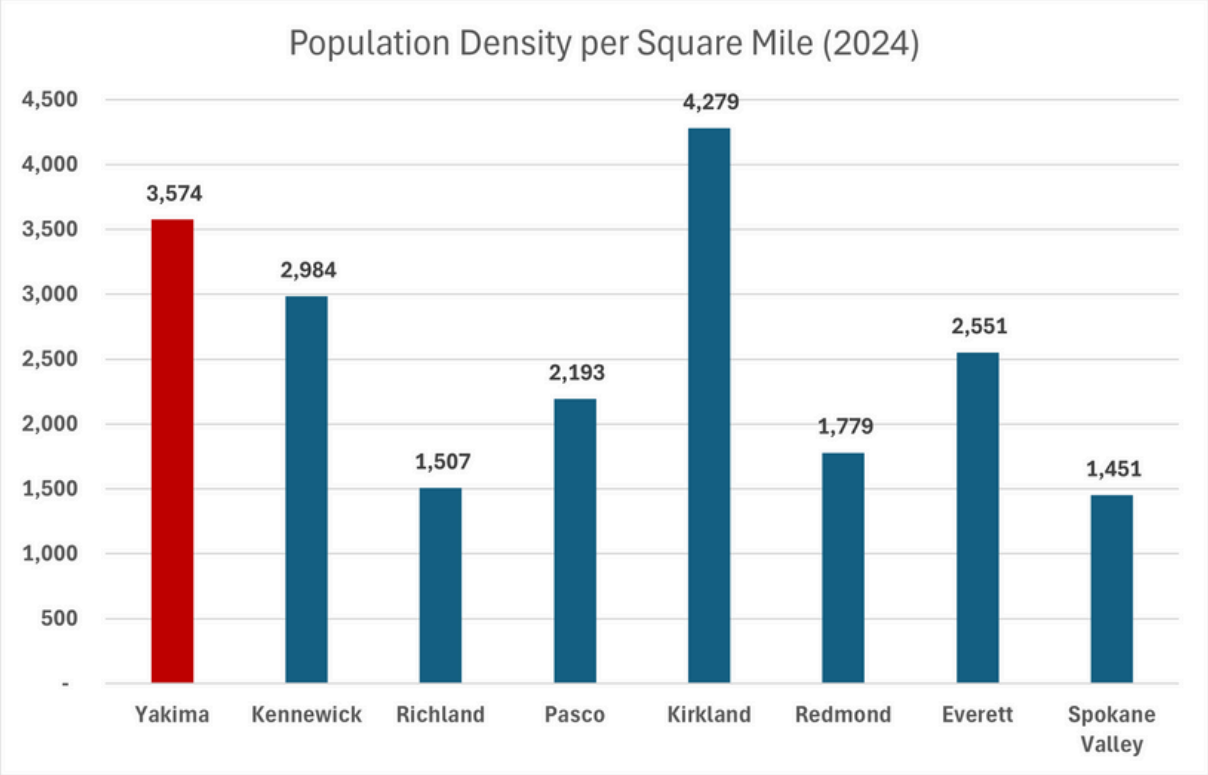
Yakima has a 27.8 square mile service area which is the 2nd smallest service area among those sampled. The total average service area among the sampled agencies was 41 square miles.

Figure 4: YFD Service Area Size



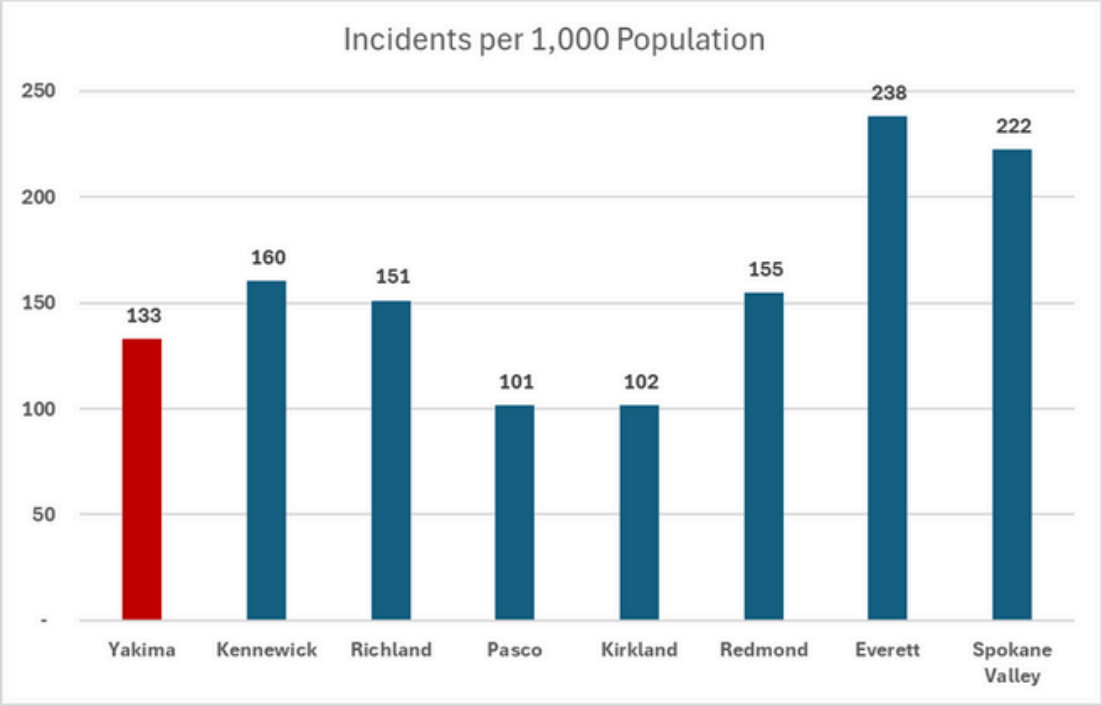
Regarding population density, Yakima stood at 3,574 persons per square mile compared to an average of 2,540 among the sampled agencies. Compared to the other agencies, Yakima is second highest in population density. Yakima's service area also includes the Yakima Air Terminal - McAllister Field which accounts for a large, unpopulated portion of the area.

Figure 5: Population Density



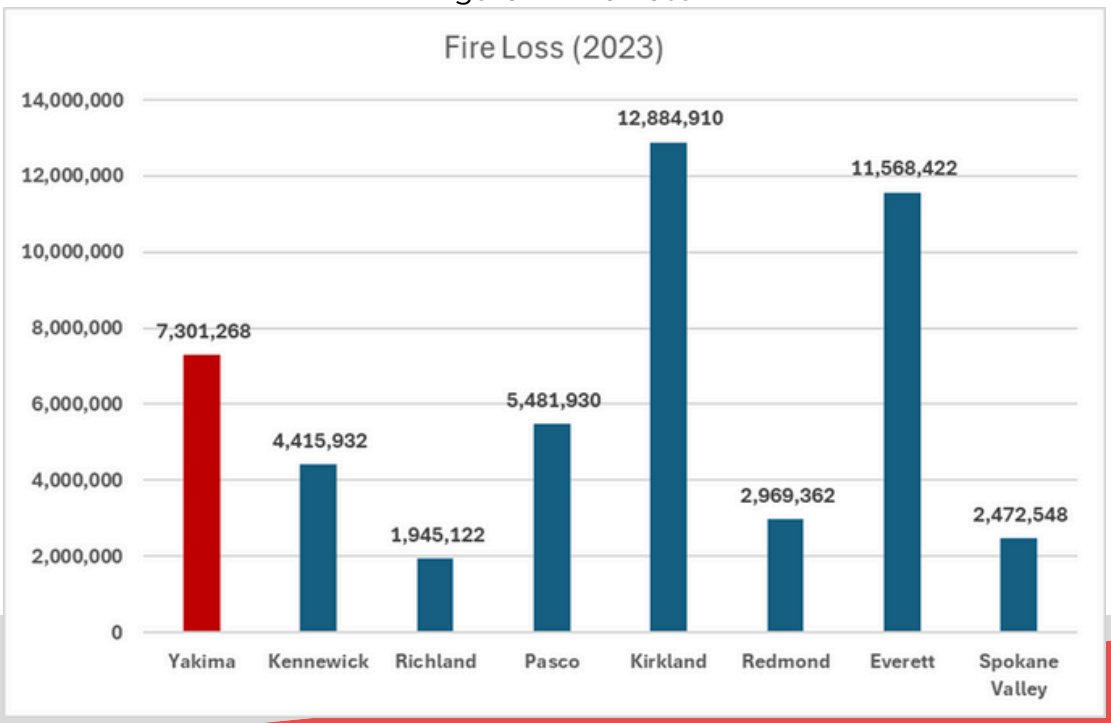
Compared to the sampled agencies, Yakima (in 2023) has just under 133 incidents per 1,000, which put it at third lowest among the sampled agencies. (Does not include EMS calls)

Figure 6: Incidents per 1,000 (2023)



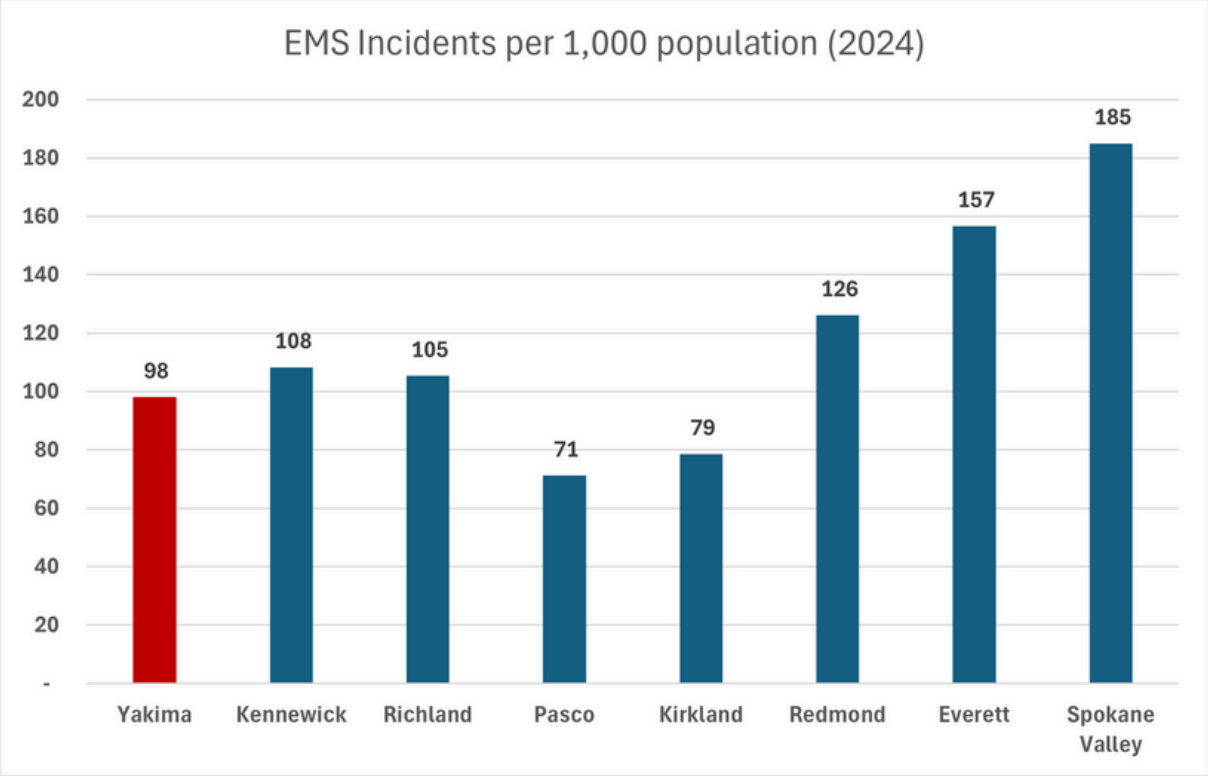
YFD experienced just over $7.3M in fire loss in 2023, which put it at third highest among the sampled agencies for that year, using data from 2023 Fire in Washington report, produced by the Washington State Fire Marshal.

Figure 7: Fire Loss



The Yakima Fire Department, through its contractual service with AMR, has the third lowest number of medical responses per 1000. This is likely due to the fact that Yakima Fire does not respond to all EMS incidents within the city based on dispatch criteria. AMR handles all EMS incidents in the city and surrounding area through a contract with Yakima County. If Yakima Fire responded to all EMS incidents, it would likely be much higher as the AMR call volume is approximately 70% higher than YFD's EMS call volume. This would increase the medical responses to third highest in the group based on estimated responses.

Figure 8: EMS Incidents



YFD Management Components

Managing emergency service agencies has always been complex, and post-COVID societal and operational shifts have added new dimensions to the challenges faced by fire service leadership. The pandemic forced agencies to rethink nearly every aspect of emergency response, from safely answering calls to maintaining safety protocols within the fire station. Living, training, and eating together during extended shifts brought heightened risks, and firefighters looked to management for leadership that balanced operational readiness with personal safety. While the immediate impacts of the pandemic have subsided, the lessons learned continue to shape fire department operations today.

Beyond the pandemic, fire departments now play a critical role in responding to behavioral health crises, often serving as first responders in situations where law enforcement engagement has been reduced due to legislative changes. This shift has placed a greater operational and emotional burden on fire personnel, requiring innovative partnerships, such as contracting out medical response services, to maintain high standards of care while managing resources effectively.

Additionally, fire departments' collaboration with law enforcement during social unrest and civil disobedience has introduced new risks and operational complexities. These responses necessitate clear strategies and a firm commitment to the safety of both personnel and the communities they serve.

Despite these evolving demands, fire service leadership must still address the enduring responsibilities of building and sustaining an effective organization. This includes refining organizational structures, setting measurable service levels, embracing advancements in technology, fostering a qualified and resilient workforce, developing staff for succession planning, and ensuring financial sustainability. This section of the report delves into these elements, emphasizing the critical balance between addressing immediate operational needs and planning for a dynamic and resilient future.

YFD Processes and Procedures

YFD operates with a reliance on regulations to guide its daily operations, complemented by a decentralized command structure that empowers firefighters to make quick and efficient decisions in the field. This approach minimizes dependency on upper management during critical incidents and enhances operational agility. While a clear chain of command exists, ensuring its effectiveness requires consistent and robust training to meet the evolving needs of the department.

YFD has a mission statement, though its level of adoption and awareness among staff is unclear, and the department lacks a formal vision statement to articulate its long-term aspirations. Values have been established in the past but were not well-received, highlighting the need for a refreshed set of guiding principles that resonate with personnel. Departmental goals are embedded within the biennial budget, which undergoes a comprehensive review every two years to align with organizational priorities.

The department's administrative policies, managed under Lexipol, are updated as needed to ensure relevance. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are also in place and currently undergoing a systematic update to enhance clarity and consistency across operations. These foundational elements underscore YFD's commitment to continuous improvement and organizational alignment, forming the backbone of its master planning efforts.

Critical Issues

Through our research process, five (5) critical issues emerged as priorities for YFD. First, ensuring adequate staffing levels to meet growing service demands and maintain operational efficiency remains a pressing challenge. Second, addressing the capital facility needs, including maintenance, upgrades, and the potential for remodeling or constructing new station locations, is essential to support the department's expanding responsibilities. Third, the department lacks a comprehensive fleet and apparatus replacement plan, coupled with the need for sustainable funding to navigate the increasing lead times for equipment construction and delivery. Fourth, the delivery of medical incident response and transport is handled by a third-party agency contracted through Yakima County. While YFD does respond to higher levels of medical incidents, there is certainly

opportunity to address the medical response in the city to provide consistent and better level of care. Fifth, while there is an inspection program and emergency response through YFD, there are other elements of a Community Risk Reduction program that are almost non-existent. These issues highlight the importance of strategic planning and resource allocation to ensure YFD's ability to serve the community effectively now and into the future.

Communications

YFD employs a variety of internal and external communication methods but faces challenges in achieving consistent and effective outreach. Internally, YFD conducts regular staff, operations, and shift officer meetings, with meeting notes recorded but not widely distributed across the department. Special directives are issued as needed, and a verbal chain of command is effectively utilized to communicate issues.

Externally, YFD relies on the City-wide newsletter and its website to share information, though the website is not actively maintained due to the absence of a dedicated Public Information Officer (PIO). The department does not have a specific communications or public outreach advisory committee, limiting its ability to proactively engage with the community. Public feedback mechanisms are available through the City's "Yak Bak" system for complaints and an online service survey on the YFD website, though formal public communication remains minimal. These gaps underscore the need for a more structured and active communication strategy to enhance both internal operations and community engagement.

YFD Records, Documentation, and Departmental Safety

YFD maintains records and documentation through a variety of systems, primarily utilizing Microsoft Office 365 applications. Financial reporting is managed by the Yakima Finance Department, while management reports are created on an as-needed basis. Weekly incident reports are distributed to City Council through the City Manager's office, and an annual report, featuring basic data, is presented to the Council and published on the YFD website. Required fire department records are maintained in retention folders with automated deletion protocols. Since June of 2024, YFD has utilized ImageTrend Elite for incident and patient care reports,

with earlier records housed in Emergency Reporting. Personnel injuries and exposures are documented in CityIce. Maintenance and testing records, including SCBA, hose, ladder, and vehicle maintenance, are managed internally or through contracted services. Additional testing, such as breathing air and gas monitor calibration, is conducted via external partnerships.

Security measures are in place across YFD facilities and systems, though some properties lack secure fencing. Offices feature mechanical or electronic key access locks, and computer systems are safeguarded by Yakima IT with controlled sleep modes, cybersecurity software, and random phishing tests for end users. Secured parking for fire and personal vehicles is only available at Stations 91, 94, and 95 (only locked at night).

Capital inventory is reviewed annually, and monetary controls are robust, with no petty cash maintained at stations. P-Cards issued to captains or higher-ranking personnel adhere to City policies, and purchasing controls are managed through a delegated authority and electronic purchase order approval process. Together, these systems and practices ensure operational integrity and accountability within the department.

Capital Assets and CIP

Maintaining well-equipped fire stations and modern apparatus is essential to sustaining an effective and reliable fire service program. YFD's capital assets, including fire stations, vehicles, and specialized equipment, are strategically distributed throughout the city to ensure comprehensive emergency response coverage. However, service accessibility to areas east of I-82 may be affected by limited crossing routes, presenting a potential challenge in response times. While the department's fire stations vary in age, they are generally in good condition, reflecting ongoing maintenance efforts and investment in infrastructure. As the city continues to grow, ensuring that capital assets remain modern, well-placed, and operationally effective will be crucial to meeting future service demands.

Facilities

At the time of this report, YFD does not maintain a formal Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) specifically for fire stations and auxiliary structures, nor has a dedicated funding mechanism been identified to support long-term facility upgrades and replacements. Without a structured CIP, the department faces challenges in systematically planning for future capital investments, prioritizing necessary improvements, and ensuring sustainable funding for critical infrastructure. While routine maintenance and repairs are performed as needed, the absence of a comprehensive CIP may hinder the ability to proactively address aging facilities, adapt to evolving service demands, and enhance operational efficiency. The following section provides a detailed assessment of each fire station and auxiliary facility, outlining current conditions, maintenance needs, and potential areas for future investment.

Station 91	
Address	401 N. Front Street
Const. Type	Masonry Wall
Opened	1974
Seismic Protection/Energy Audits	No
Auxilary Power	Yes
Condition	Good
Special Considerations	Mixed-Gender/Limited Storage
Square Footage	11,454 (Ground Floor) Basement Storage. Administrative offices on the 2nd Floor.
Amenities	
Exercise/Gym	Yes
Kitchen and Dorms	Yes
Lockers and Showers	Yes
Training and Meeting Space	No
Laundry	Yes
Security	
Sprinkler System	In Living Space Only
Smoke Detection	Yes
Security	Door Code and Promixity Fence
Apparatus Exhaust System	Yes
Units (Staffing Levels)	Engine (3) Tractor Drawn Aerial (TDA) (3) Shift Commander (1) 10 Administrative Personnel

Station 92	
Address	7707 Tieton Dr.
Const. Type	Masonry Wall
Opened	1978
Seismic Protection/Energy Audits	No
Auxilary Power	Yes
Condition	Average
Special Considerations	Mixed-Gender/Limited Storage
Square Footage	8032sf
Amenities	
Exercise/Gym	Yes
Kitchen and Dorms	Yes
Lockers and Showers	Yes
Training and Meeting Space	No
Laundry	Yes
Security	
Sprinkler System	Yes
Smoke Detection	Yes
Security	Door Code
Apparatus Exhaust System	Yes
Units (Staffing Level)	Cross staffed: Engine/Brush Truck/ UTV (3)

Station 93	
Address	511 N. 40th Ave
Const. Type	Wood Frame
Opened	1996
Seismic Protection/Energy Audits	No
Auxilary Power	OOS at this time
Condition	Good
Special Considerations	Mixed-Gender - Appropriate Storage
Square Footage	8789sf
Amenities	
Exercise/Gym	Yes
Kitchen and Dorms	Yes
Lockers and Showers	Yes
Training and Meeting Space	No
Laundry	Yes
Security	
Sprinkler System	Yes
Smoke Detection	Yes
Security	Door Code
Apparatus Exhaust System	Yes
Units (Staffing Level)	Cross-staffed: Engine/Ladder/Brush/UTV (3)

Station 94 (YKM Airport)	
Address	2404 W Washington Ave.
Const. Type	Masonry / Wood Frame
Opened	1968 (remodeled in 1988 and 2010)
Seismic Protection/Energy Audits	No
Auxilary Power	Yes
Condition	Fair
Special Considerations	Mixed-Gender - Limited Storage
Square Footage	
Amenities	
Exercise/Gym	Yes / Limited
Kitchen and Dorms	Yes
Lockers and Showers	Yes
Training and Meeting Space	No
Laundry	Yes
Security	
Sprinkler System	Yes / Living Quarters only
Smoke Detection	Yes
Security	Door Code
Apparatus Exhaust System	Yes
Units (Staffing Level)	ARFF (1), Cross-staffed: Engine/Tender/Reserve ARFF (3)

Station 95	
Address	807 E. Nob Hill Rd.
Const. Type	Masonry Wall
Opened	1974
Seismic Protection/Energy Audits	No
Auxilary Power	Yes
Condition	Good
Special Considerations	Mixed Gender / Training Rooms
Square Footage	10,939
Amenities	
Exercise/Gym	Yes
Kitchen and Dorms	Yes
Lockers and Showers	Yes
Training and Meeting Space	Yes
Laundry	Yes
Security	
Sprinkler System	Yes
Smoke Detection	Yes
Security	Door Code - Fenced Property
Apparatus Exhaust System	Yes
Units (Staffing Level)	2 Training Personnel Engine (3)

Station 90 (Shop)	
Address	2020 Fruitvale Blvd
Const. Type	Masonry Wall
Opened	1996
Seismic Protection/Energy Audits	No
Auxilary Power	No
Condition	Good
Special Considerations	3 Bay Maintenance Facility
Square Footage	9,840
Amenities	
Exercise/Gym	No
Kitchen and Dorms	Breakroom
Lockers and Showers	Shower
Training and Meeting Space	No
Laundry	No
Security	
Sprinkler System	No
Smoke Detection	Yes
Security	Door Code
Apparatus Exhaust System	Yes
Units (Staffing Level)	2 Mechanics, 1 ET

Training Tower (at Sta. 95)	
Address	807 E. Nob Hill Blvd
Const. Type	Masonry Wall
Opened	1998
Seismic Protection/Energy Audits	No
Auxilary Power	No
Condition	Good
Special Considerations	Training Tower, additional flame pad, roof props, pump pit
Square Footage	1,789
Amenities	
Exercise/Gym	No
Kitchen and Dorms	No
Lockers and Showers	No
Training and Meeting Space	No
Laundry	No
Security	
Sprinkler System	No
Smoke Detection	No
Security	No
Apparatus Exhaust System	No
Units (Staffing Level)	None

Race St. Facility	
Address	1216 Race St.
Const. Type	Masonry Wall
Opened	1958
Seismic Protection/Energy Audits	No
Auxilary Power	No
Condition	Average
Special Considerations	N/A
Square Footage	3,439
Amenities	
Exercise/Gym	No
Kitchen and Dorms	Yes Kitchen/No Dorm
Lockers and Showers	No
Training and Meeting Space	No
Laundry	No
Security	
Sprinkler System	No
Smoke Detection	Yes
Security	Door Code/Fencing
Apparatus Exhaust System	No
Units (Staffing Level)	Storage Bldg

Apparatus and Support Equipment

YFD has established an Apparatus Replacement Plan, created in 2022, which outlines a 17-year schedule for the systematic replacement of fire engines, ladder (aerial) trucks, and other emergency response vehicles. The plan initially developed as a strategic initiative in 2017, outlined 12 years as front line response, followed by 5 years as reserve, totaling a 17-year replacement schedule. However, while the plan provides a structured approach to fleet modernization, no dedicated funding mechanism has been identified to ensure its implementation. Without secured financial support, the department may face challenges in maintaining a reliable and up-to-date fleet, potentially impacting emergency response capabilities. Additionally, there is currently no formal Equipment Replacement Plan for essential support equipment, such as personal protective equipment, communications systems, and specialized firefighting tools. Although purchase intervals have been planned based on equipment type and expected lifespan, the absence of a structured replacement plan and funding mechanism creates uncertainty in the department's ability to consistently upgrade and replace critical resources. Addressing these gaps through a comprehensive capital funding strategy will be essential to sustaining the operational effectiveness and safety of YFD personnel and the community they serve.

The following tables represent the current apparatus inventory:

Station 91							
Apparatus	Type	Year	Make and Model	Condition	Min Staffing	Pump Capacity	Tank Capacity
Engine 91	1	2024	KME	New	3	1750	750
Truck 91	TDA 103'	2010	Crimson	Old	3	500	350
Rehab 90		1998	Ford	Fair			
BT 91	P/U	2024	Chevy 2500	New	1		
BT 291	P/U	2013	F-150 4x4	Average			

Station 92							
Apparatus	Type	Year	Make and Model	Condition	Min Staffing	Pump Capacity	Tank Capacity
Engine 92	1	2024	KME	New	3	1750	750
B 92	6			Average	Cross-staffed	150	400
UTV w/ Trailer		2015	Polaris	Average		15	100

Station 93							
Apparatus	Type	Year	Make and Model	Condition	Min Staffing	Pump Capacity	Tank Capacity
Engine 93	1	2013	Rosenbauer	Average	3	1750	750
Truck 93	Platform 102’	2016	Rosenbauer	Average	Cross Staffed	2000	500
B 93	6	2023	Ford F-550	New	Cross Staffed	150	400
UTV w/ Trailer		2015	Polaris	Average	Cross Staffed	15	100
Engine 90	1	2010	Rosenbauer	Average	Reserve	1750	750

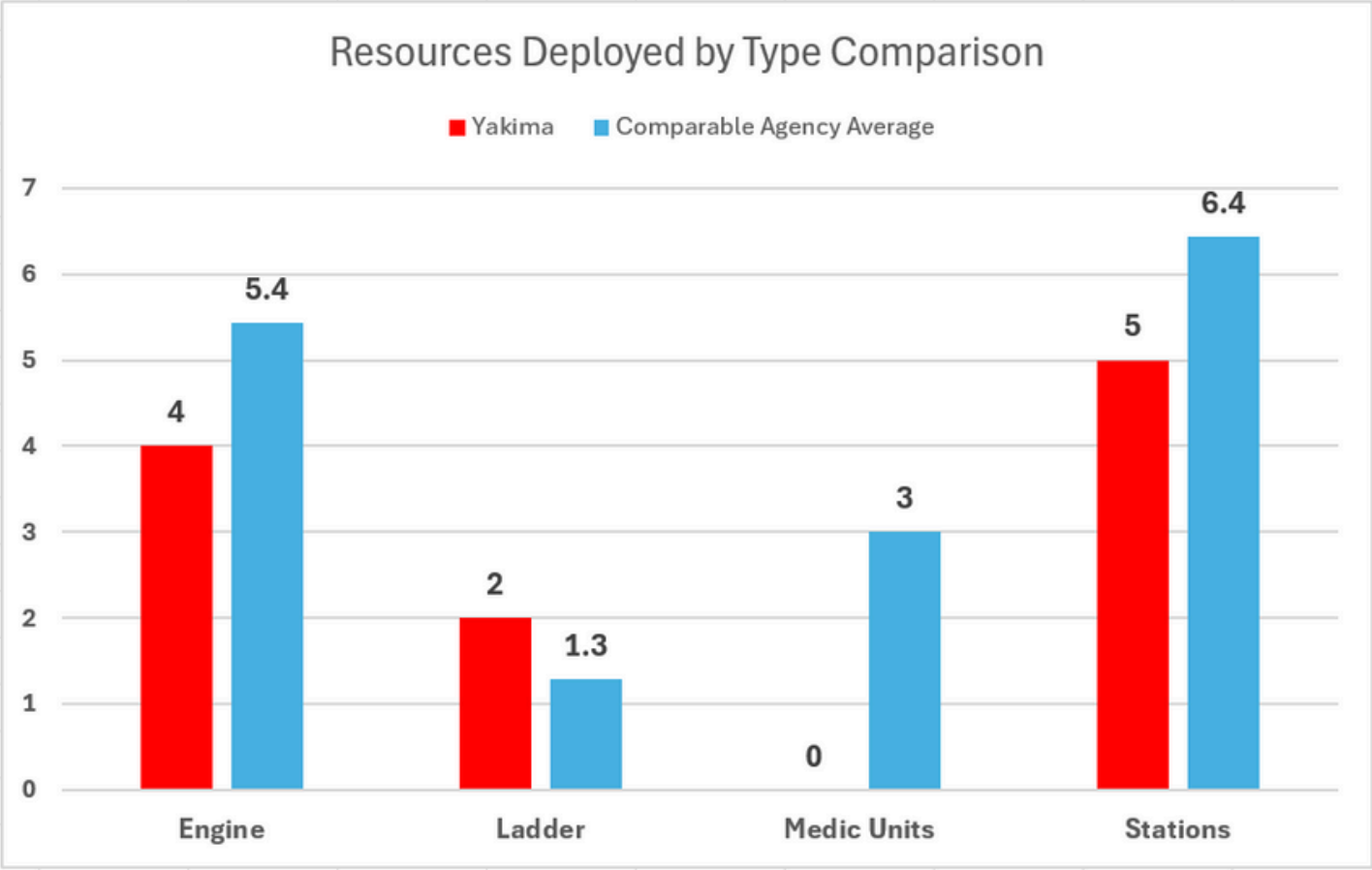
Station 94							
Apparatus	Type	Year	Make and Model	Condition	Min Staffing	Pump Capacity	Tank Capacity
Engine 94	1	2017	Rosenbauer	Average	3	1750	750
ARFF 94		2020	Oshkosh Striker	New	1		
ARFF 294		2005	Oshkosh Striker	Average	Reserve		
Tender 94	2	2002	KME	Average	Cross Staffed	1,500	2,500
Air/MCI		1999	Chevy 3500	Fair			

Station 95							
Apparatus	Type	Year	Make and Model	Condition	Min Staffing	Pump Capacity	Tank Capacity
Engine 95	1	2024	KME	New	3	1750	750
Engine 390	1	2008	Central States	Fair	Reserve	1750	750
Boat w/ Trailer	Jet	2010	Woolridge/EZLDR	Average			
Trailer			Drift Boat	Average			
TRN 90	P/U	2015	Ford F-250 4x4	Average			
TRN 290	P/U	2015	Ford F-250 4x4	Average			
TR 95	Panel Truck	1988	International - 1900	Fair			
Tow 95	SUV	2002	Chevy Tahoe	Fair			
Tow 93	SUV	2001	Chevy Tahoe	Fair			

Station 90 / Admin Staff Vehicles							
Apparatus	Type	Year	Make and Model	Condition	Min Staffing	Pump Capacity	Tank Capacity
CH 90	P/U	2023	Chevy 2500 4x4	New	Staff		
CH 290	P/U	2021	Ford F-150 4x4	New	Staff		
CH 390	P/U	2015	Ford Explorer AWD	Average	Staff		
INS 290	SUV	2015	Ford Escape AWD	Average	Staff		
INS 490	SUV	2002	Chevy Tahoe 4x4	Fair	Staff		
CPT 90	SUV	2009	Ford Escape	Fair	Staff		
C 490	SUV	2008	Ford Expedition 4x4	Fair	Staff		
BT 90	SUV	2012	Ford Expedition 4x4	Average	Staff		
ET 90	SUV	2009	Ford Escape	Fair	Electrician		
ME 90	P/U	2000	Ford F-450 4x4	Average	Mechanic		
ME - 290	P/U	2005	Ford F - 250 4x4	Average	Mechanic		
Medic 90	2	2013	Van Style	Fair	Surplus		
Medic 290	2	2016	Van Style	Fair	Surplus		
Hoe 90	Backhoe			Fair			
Bucket Truck	P/U	1993	Chevy 3500 HD	Fair	Mechanic		
Engine 290	1	2011	Rosenbauer	Average	Reserve	1750	750

The following chart shows the apparatus and station deployment comparisons with the average for comparable departments. While not all agencies deploy medic units, several do although many have them as cross-staffed with other apparatus.

Figure 10: Resource Deployment



YFD does have reserve apparatus to deploy when needed.

Staffing and Personnel

An effective emergency response system relies on its most valuable asset—people. Managing human resources well means striking a balance between making the best use of the workforce and ensuring job satisfaction. This requires a commitment to reliability, a safe work environment, fair treatment, opportunities for input, recognition of dedication and sacrifice, and pathways for growth. When these elements come together, they create a workplace where employees feel valued and motivated, strengthening the overall effectiveness of the emergency response system.

Administration and Support Personnel

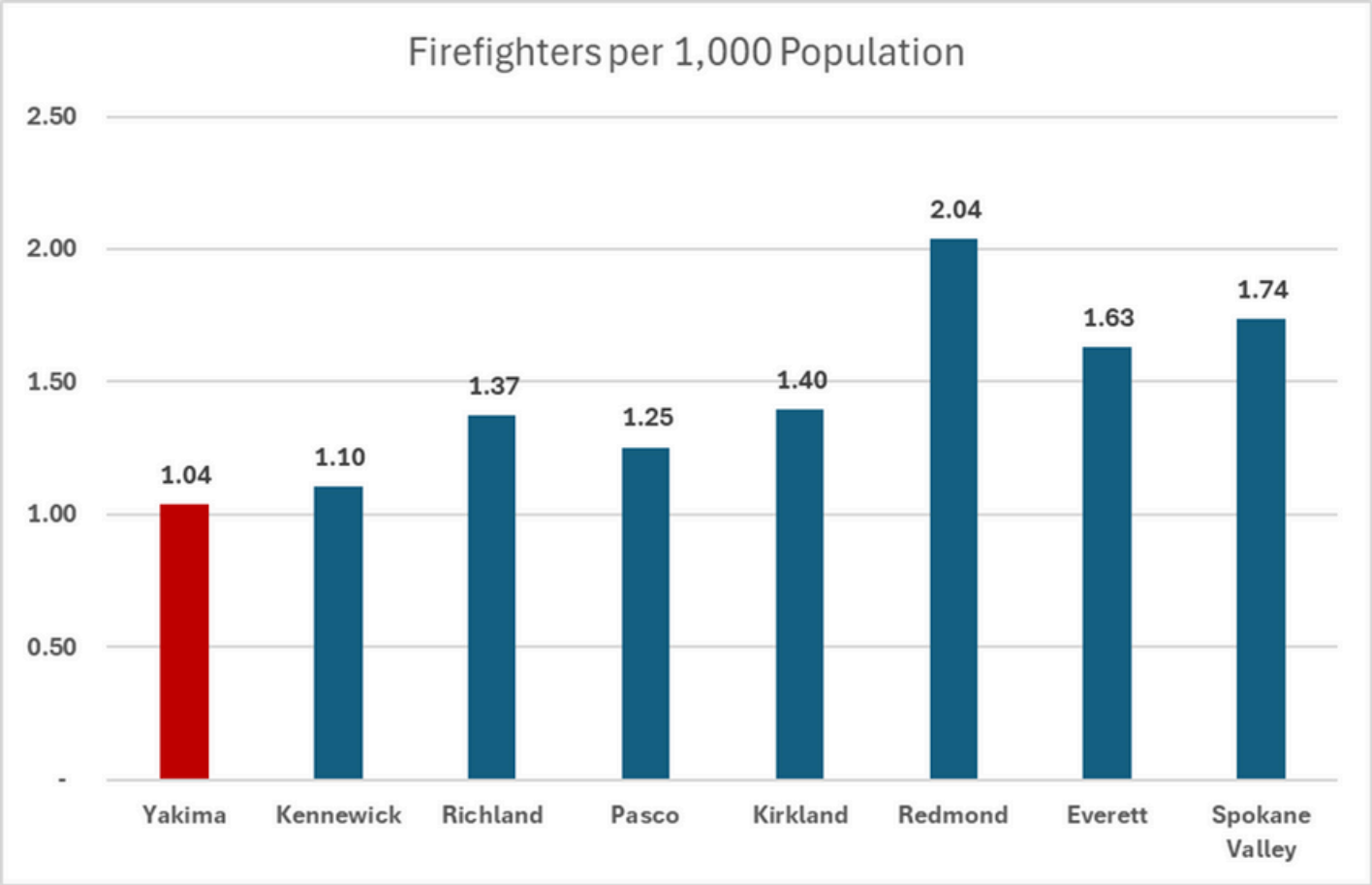
A core responsibility of fire department administration is ensuring that fiscal management, infrastructure, and support systems are effectively structured and maintained to enable the department to carry out its primary mission—responding to and managing emergencies—safely and efficiently.

As with any municipal fire department function, administrative and support services require appropriate resources to operate efficiently. This section of the staffing analysis evaluates the ratio of administrative and support personnel relative to the total workforce, comparing it to industry standards and peer organizations. An imbalance in administrative staffing—whether too high or too low—can negatively impact overall efficiency. Establishing the right proportion between administrative, support, and operational personnel is essential to sustaining a well-functioning department and achieving organizational objectives.

At YFD, administrative and support staffing, fifteen (15) employees, represents 12% for the Yakima Fire's total staff. YFD does well in providing additional support for emergency management through utilization of city civilian staff, and partnerships within the community such as Yakima County Emergency Management, as well as assignments within the fire department team. Additional public education staff as well as an EMS officer to administer and monitor EMS contracts are recommended.

YFD has the lowest number of firefighters per 1,000 population (per capita). Administrative functions for YFD are housed at Station 91, an active downtown station with administrative offices on the second floor. In this location, administrative staff maintain a connection to emergency response staffing at Station 91, as well as close proximity to Yakima City Hall and the general public.

Figure 11: Firefighters per 1000



Emergency Response Staffing

Ensuring an adequate number of professionally trained emergency responders is essential for maximizing the effectiveness of apparatus and equipment during incident response. Insufficient staffing at an emergency scene reduces operational effectiveness and increases the risk of injury to both responders and the public. It can also lead to negative outcomes, such as greater fire damage or adverse medical results.

The first 15 minutes of a fire suppression effort are critical in determining the overall outcome. The ability of firefighters to operate effectively during this period directly impacts incident resolution. This principle applies across fire suppression,

rescue, and emergency medical situations. To control a fire or provide effective patient care, critical tasks must be completed within specific timeframes. YFD is responsible for ensuring that responding units can perform these tasks promptly, efficiently, and safely. Achieving this requires multiple actions to occur simultaneously rather than sequentially.

Firefighter staffing is a critical issue at both the state and national levels, with discussions primarily focused on ensuring the safety of firefighting personnel and the broader community. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) establishes staffing standards, often measured as "fire personnel per 1,000 residents" or "minimum staffing per company." These standards provide guidance on maintaining effective response capabilities. The most immediate concern is ensuring that response teams are adequately staffed to arrive quickly to an emergency and carry out their assigned tasks efficiently, minimizing risks and mitigating the impact of incidents.

Another challenge in operational staffing is maintaining the capacity to respond to large-scale incidents while simultaneously handling multiple emergencies. In some communities, the per capita number of incidents is increasing, particularly medical emergencies that require fewer personnel but can still strain overall response capabilities. Ensuring sufficient staffing levels is essential to maintaining comprehensive emergency services without compromising effectiveness.

The number and type of tasks that must be performed simultaneously during fires and other major emergencies determine the minimum staffing levels needed for an effective response. When there are not enough personnel to carry out these critical tasks at the same time, the incident commander must prioritize and complete them in sequence rather than concurrently. This delay in mitigation efforts can negatively impact the outcome, leading to increased fire damage and greater overall losses. Ensuring adequate staffing is essential for executing a coordinated response and minimizing the impact of emergencies. Improving “cover plans” for simultaneous incidents was a recommendation to YFD from the Washington State Ratings Bureau (WSRB).

Personnel Management

Fire service operations personnel statewide typically work 24-hour or 48-hour shifts. Under federal labor regulations, they can work up to 53 hours per week before overtime pay is required. However, these hours can be averaged over a designated period rather than a single week. Employers have the flexibility to establish an averaging period ranging from 7 to 28 days, with most fire departments in the Northwest utilizing cycles of 24 to 28 days. These periods, known as Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) cycles, include scheduled off-duty days, commonly referred to as Kelly Days, which help manage work hours and ensure compliance with labor regulations. YFD provides 14 Kelly Days per year. Additionally, there are no requirements for call-back, residency, or standby duty.

YFD operates on a 48/96 shift schedule, with personnel working 48 hours on duty followed by 96 hours off. This schedule results in an average of 49.54 duty hours per week, which remains below the 53-hour threshold for overtime eligibility.

Service Delivery and Performance

Training

Training is the backbone of any fire department, ensuring that firefighters are prepared to respond effectively and safely to emergencies. For YFD, ongoing training is essential to maintaining operational readiness, enhancing firefighter safety, and improving service delivery to the community.

Firefighting is an inherently dangerous profession that demands continuous skill development in areas such as fire suppression, rescue operations, hazardous materials response, and emergency medical services. Consistent training not only aligns YFD personnel with national fire service standards but also fosters teamwork, decision-making, and adaptability under high-stress conditions. By prioritizing training, the department strengthens its ability to protect lives and property while ensuring that firefighters remain physically, mentally, and technically prepared for the challenges they face.

General Competencies

YFD operates under nationally recognized training standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA), the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC), and the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). These standards guide the department's training programs to ensure firefighters meet essential competencies and remain prepared for emergency response.

In 2024, YFD conducted 9,861 hours of training, with 7,111 of those hours dedicated to fire-related training and 1,034 hours to EMS training, involving 87 personnel. Training encompasses multiple specialized areas, including special rescue, rope, and water rescue, with 12 certified HazMat technicians on staff. The department is also certified in vehicle extractions and provides defensive driving training through the Washington Fire Chief's EVIP (Emergency Vehicle Incident Prevention) program.

Recruit Academies are held two to three times annually in partnership with Kittitas Valley Fire & Rescue (KVFR) and Sunnyside Fire Department. These academies ensure a pipeline of well-trained personnel, though continuing education beyond recruit-level training is not formally outlined.

Accountability procedures, (stored on CityICE and Lexipol, are outdated which reduces their effectiveness) incident command structures, and safety measures are in place, ensuring a structured training environment. However, training policies and procedures are outdated and stored on City ICE and Lexipol, which reduces their effectiveness in guiding current training needs. Additionally, company training programs were cited as deficient in the WSRB rating.

Training Methodology and Execution

YFD uses a combination of in-house and online lesson plans, with 70% of training delivered through structured lesson plans, while the remainder is research-based or instructor-led. Training sessions include night drills for ladders and multiple-company operations, daily interstation (multi-company) drills, and annual multi-agency training with Selah, West Valley, East Valley, and Highland departments. Additionally, FAA-mandated disaster drills are conducted at required intervals to meet requirments

A probation manual outlines manipulative skills training, aligning with WSP IFSAC skill sheets. While annual training hour requirements exist, the Training Division struggles to enforce compliance, requiring additional pressure to ensure completion. Training hours are currently tracked in ERS, but there is an identified need to transition to ImageTrend.

One notable gap in training is pre-fire planning, which has not been conducted or addressed for some time. This omission presents a potential risk in ensuring readiness for large-scale incidents.

Operations and Performance

Safety is a fundamental part of YFD training, with safety briefings conducted before every drill. Post-incident reviews, including hot washes at both company and department levels, follow policy. Training for probationary firefighters and recruits is established and adhered to, ensuring foundational skills are properly instilled.

Administration and Budget

The Training Division is led by a Training Captain but lacks formally identified training goals and objectives. Among the staff, 40% of firefighters are certified as Instructor 1, and there is only one Instructor 2. While an annual training report is

produced, it typically lacks actionable recommendations, limiting its impact on improving training effectiveness.

Although mandatory training requirements are defined by WAC and emphasized in Recruit Academies, there is no structured continuing education program for ongoing firefighter development. The department operates on an annual $50,000 training budget, which must cover all training needs, including facility maintenance and instructional resources.

The training facility is aging, dating back to 1978, with the training tower built in 1997. There is a shortage of office space and storage for training materials, further straining training operations.

Facilities and Resources

While YFD has adequate training grounds, many training props are outdated or out of service. The car prop needs updating, and a below-grade prop is rarely used. The Kidde live fire prop is out of service due to outdated technology, reducing live fire training capabilities.

Classroom facilities are in fair condition but require upgrades to chairs, carpet, HVAC, and technology. Video simulation resources are inadequate, with no modern simulation tools available due to repeated budget cuts. The department maintains IFSTA training manuals, ensuring reference materials are accessible.

Record Keeping and Documentation

The Training Captain maintains digital records of individual certifications, but the transition from ERS to ImageTrend remains incomplete. There is currently no plan for digitizing training records, leading to sporadic record-keeping by company officers and personnel. The absence of a centralized system makes training tracking inconsistent, placing additional burdens on the Training Division, officers, and firefighters. Moreover, YFD lacks an inventory of training equipment, further complicating resource management and replacement planning.

Community Risk Assessment

Code Enforcement, Inspection, and Public Education

YFD enforces a range of modern fire and building safety codes, including the 2021 editions of the International Fire Code (IFC), International Building Code (IBC), Washington State Fire Code, NFPA standards, and ANSI-IKECA C-10. Local fire code provisions are further governed by the Yakima Municipal Code.

New construction inspections and plan reviews for fire and life safety are the responsibility of the City of Yakima Building Department. These are conducted without direct consultation from YFD. All new construction permits are reviewed and signed off by the Building Department, and fees are dictated by the Yakima Master Fee Schedule. YFD does not participate in new construction inspections or associated reviews but maintains responsibility for inspections of existing occupancies, including classification and risk-based prioritization for special hazard occupancies. Storage tank inspections are not currently offered by the department.

The department has implemented a Knox Box program for secure emergency access and relies on the Yakima Water Department to manage hydrant flow records.

General Inspection Program

YFD conducts annual inspections of high-hazard occupancies but does not currently operate a self-inspection program for lower-risk occupancies, though such a program is under consideration. Violations identified through inspections are handled administratively via the City of Yakima's Building Codes Division, without escalation to municipal court or a hearing examiner.

Inspection records are maintained digitally using ERS, with a migration to ImageTrend currently underway. Three YFD personnel are dedicated to managing the inspection program. Inspection fees are established in the City's Master Fee Schedule.

Fire Safety and Public Education

YFD does not currently offer a structured public education program to address key topics such as how and when to call 911, exit drills, smoke and carbon monoxide alarm education, fire safety in the home, injury prevention, fire extinguisher use, or elder care. CPR classes are not provided, though firefighters may perform basic health checks like blood pressure readings for walk-in visitors at fire stations. The availability of public safety materials is minimal and primarily limited to brochures, with limited content provided in Spanish.

Fire Cause Determination

Fire origin and cause investigations are conducted by YFD's shift investigators, who also address arson cases. These personnel are members of the regional Fire Investigation Team (FIT), certified through the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI), providing additional resources and inter-agency collaboration for complex incidents.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

An effective EMS system involves many different agencies, organizations, and the public working together to provide rapid recognition, notification, response, treatment, and transport to those in need of immediate medical attention.

Generally, most EMS systems include at least system access and dispatch components, first response, ambulance transport, and definitive hospital care. The addition of a trained public component has improved patient outcomes.

Medical Direction & Control

Prehospital medical care systems include emergency assets (trained personnel on appropriate emergency vehicles with proper equipment), strategically deployed, arriving promptly to provide the most appropriate care for the sick and injured, with transportation to the nearest or most appropriate medical facility for further treatment. Often lost in this process is the role of medical control by physicians specifically trained in the management of pre-hospital medical care.

In Washington State, physicians are selected by the Washington State Department of Health upon recommendation for certification by the local medical community and local emergency medical services and trauma care council. The physician selected is referred to as the Medical Program Director (MPD) for their county and oversees the pre-hospital medical system within that county. In addition, the MPD provides supervision of medical personnel. This can be done online (paramedics have direct phone or radio access to an emergency physician in real-time for permission to conduct certain medical procedures) or offline (paramedics conduct certain medical procedures based on pre-established patient care protocols).

In Yakima, the Medical Program Director (Dr. Kevin Eric Hodges) and the Yakima County EMS and Trauma Care Council have established offline medical control through standing orders and patient care protocols, most recently adopted in June 2019. Doctor Hodges also provides medical chart reviews, case reviews, and continuing medical education for field technicians. Dr. Hodges is Board Certified in Emergency Medicine and is assisted by an Administrative Assistant and an MPD Assistant/Paramedic Instructor who manages quality assurance programs on

behalf of Dr. Hodges for the pre-hospital agencies in the county. The MPD conducts quarterly crew meetings to discuss contemporary issues, state-of-the-art procedures and practices, and to maintain ongoing engagement with the field personnel.

EMS is the single most uniformly operating section of the Yakima County fire departments, primarily because they are combined under the Yakima County Emergency Medical Services Department and under a single MPD for the County. Organized as a private, non-profit organization, the Council works with the Washington State Department of Health, hospitals, pre-hospital EMS providers, airborne medical transport, and other regional healthcare partners to develop and enhance the EMS and trauma care system.

Quality Assurance & Quality Improvement

A Quality Assurance & Quality Improvement program exists in Yakima County Emergency Medical Services Department. According to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), quality assurance (QA) measures compliance against certain necessary standards, typically focusing on individuals, whereas quality improvement (QI) is a continuous improvement process focused on systems. YFD's QA/QI process is coordinated by a QA/QI Committee of field personnel. The process includes a lessons-learned approach to post-incident analysis and medical case reviews. These are conducted monthly. Case reviews include the involvement of the QA/QI Committee, the MPD, and the Deputy Fire Chief. QA/QI results are published in regular reports, and in particular for certain cardiac arrhythmias (STEMI), cardiac arrests, and strokes.

Clinical Skills & Continuing Education

Each member of the Yakima Fire Department participates in the Ongoing Training and Evaluation Program (OTEP) to maintain their certifications and keep skills at a high level throughout the year. These training opportunities are offered internally and some externally within the region. Continuing education and OTEP are provided through Yakima County Emergency Medical Services Department.

Members who participate present their record of attendance, which is filed electronically in the YFD records management system and with Yakima County's 9th Brain system, as intubation, airway management, and intravenous access, are routinely performed by intermediate and advanced (paramedic) medical technicians. Success rates and multiple attempts are

tracked, and remedial training or testing is provided if necessary.

EMS Staffing, Operations and Administration

All YFD employees, except for five administrative staff members, are certified as basic EMTs; an additional six personnel are EMT Intermediates. EMT is the minimum level of medical training for all operational personnel. There are 6 members of the department with intermediate level EMS skills. These are individuals certified as EMT-IV techs and able to perform tasks beyond basic life support, including administering certain medications, managing advanced airways, and providing basic cardiac monitoring.

Staffing for medical calls is done by the assigned engine or ladder company with three personnel and a private ambulance provider with two personnel, either two EMT's or a paramedic and EMT depending on call severity and unit availability.

In the comparable agencies there are one or more administrative staff that directly supervises the EMS program. There is no direct supervision of the EMS program in the YFD. This is problematic in that 70% of the responses are EMS related and all involve direct contact with the citizens of the community. In addition, the city is provided ambulance service by a private provider that has contractual requirements that must be monitored and met. While monitoring of this contract is done by the Yakima County Emergency Medical Services Department, the majority of the calls occur within the city of Yakima. A EMS Officer would also serve as the required HIPPA compliance officer to review and redact and ensure the identity of the requester. They would also act as the exposure control officer to assist individuals exposed to the body fluids of others.

EMS Logistics

Logistics and support services for EMS represent a labor-intensive process requiring good policies and attention to detail. The procurement and distribution of EMS supplies is also an important behind-the-scenes practice that needs hands-on work and meticulous record keeping. Filling the demand for logistical services is a constant necessity in any organization and vital to ensure the operational readiness of the agency. A significant amount of the YFD EMS officers' time is consumed with logistics duties.

Contracted Ambulance Service Delivery

Yakima County contracts with a private 3rd party provider for Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) services and patient transport with American Medical Response (AMR). YFD relies on this provider to respond to all medical calls within the city in ten minutes or less to 90% of the calls. The current contract also exempts the ten minute response time within Zone 1 as follows:

- Concurrent response
- Declared disaster
- Multiple units to the same call - only first unit counts
- Response location errors
- Response location change
- Cancelled request
- Response delayed by accident
- Third response delayed by accident
- Hospital on diversion status
- 20 minutes or greater wait time at a hospital
- Declared MCI, disaster, or pandemic
- Reduced or upgraded response.

The City of Yakima accounts for approximately 50% of the calls that AMR responds to within Yakima County; however, it doesn't appear to be providing strong oversight of contractual compliance within the city. Granted, there are numerous exemptions for meeting the response time goals, the contract essentially allows for "self-reporting" by AMR. As an example, for a city with the population of Yakima, three calls within 20 minutes is not unusual. The current contract allows AMR not to meet response times goals when there are three or more calls within 20 minutes. In looking at the comparable information in this report there are significantly higher numbers of transport units in 6 of the 7 agencies. Spokane Valley uses a AMR supported model similar to Yakima's, the other 6 agencies staff agency owned ambulances.

- Kennewick – 5 transport units
- Richland – 6 transport units
- Pasco - 5 transport units
- Kirkland - 6 transport units
- Redmond - 7 transport units
- Everett - 7 transport units
- Spokane Valley - Unknown

In comparing the Spokane Valley model to the Yakima system there is one large difference. In the Spokane Valley model many of the agency's have Paramedics on staff to allow for ALS level of care upon the fire agencies arrival. In looking at the Spokane Valley comparable they respond to medical emergencies with nine Engines and two Ladders. Eight of their Engines are staffed with paramedics and provide ALS services. The additional engine and two ladders are staffed as ALS when staffing permits. On incidents where the closest Engine or Ladder does not have a Paramedic on board, and the patient requires a higher level of care, an ALS (Advanced Life Support/Paramedic) unit will respond as well. If transport to the hospital is required, a private ambulance operated by American Medical Response will also respond.

There are two reasons Yakima should be moving to a model similar to Spokane Valley. The first reason is patient care. In many cases the fire department will arrive before the ambulance. If the patient is having a true medical emergency then Advanced Life Support should begin right away. Yakima should begin hiring only paramedic trained firefighters and offering to provide paramedic training to existing staff. They should also begin to equip all engines and ladders with ALS equipment.

The second reason is the stability of the current transport provider. A quick search of the internet shows many occasions that AMR has chosen to remove themselves as the transport provider because the business model was not working. While the current contract has some protection for the county and city, training and equipping enough paramedics is a lengthy process and the lack of ALS provider has serious consequences.

In summary, YFD operates within a well-structured countywide EMS system, but there are significant gaps in direct supervision, staffing, and long-term sustainability of service delivery. With over 70% of emergency responses involving EMS, the department must elevate its operational oversight, enhance internal capabilities through paramedic staffing, and modernize its response model. Strengthening clinical leadership, ensuring accountability in contracted ambulance services, and investing in ALS capacity will be essential to improving patient outcomes and ensuring the resilience of Yakima's EMS system into the future.

HAZMAT

Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) response is a critical function of modern fire departments, designed to protect life, property, and the environment from the release of dangerous substances. These materials may include chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear agents that pose immediate or long-term risks to health and safety. In Washington State, the evolution of HAZMAT services began in earnest during the late 1980s, when increasing industrial activity, transportation of chemicals, and the presence of legacy waste sites—particularly around the Hanford Nuclear Reservation—prompted the state to formalize regional response teams. The Washington State Patrol was designated as the lead agency for statewide hazardous materials response, coordinating with local fire departments, emergency management, and environmental agencies. However, lead agencies can be changed through resolution during specific emergencies. Today, many fire departments in Washington maintain varying levels of HAZMAT capabilities, ranging from operations-level first responders to specialized technician-level teams, often integrated into regional or mutual aid frameworks. These services ensure a coordinated and effective response to chemical spills, industrial accidents, and potential threats to public health.

In the Yakima region, the need for HAZMAT services is shaped by a diverse industrial and agricultural economy, major transportation corridors, and proximity to legacy waste sites. Interstate 82 and multiple freight rail lines carry a steady flow of commercial goods, including hazardous materials, through the valley. Additionally, Yakima's thriving agricultural sector relies on chemicals for crop production, storage, and processing—introducing risks of accidental releases or spills. While Yakima is not home to a designated state HAZMAT team, the Yakima Fire Department maintains technician-level HAZMAT response capabilities and works closely with regional partners and the Washington State Patrol in the event of major incidents. Continued coordination, training, and equipment upgrades are essential to ensure preparedness for potential chemical exposures, transportation incidents, or large-scale industrial emergencies that may affect the health and safety of residents and the environment.

Personnel and Training

The department's personnel certifications reflect a moderate-to-advanced capacity in HAZMAT operations. While there are currently no personnel certified

at the Awareness level or in Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) response, YFD maintains over 90 Operations-level certified responders and 10 Technician-level certified personnel. The department also has 8 HAZMAT Incident Command (IC) certified staff and 10 certified HAZMAT Safety Officers, supporting the command and safety oversight functions necessary for higher-level response operations. The team trains quarterly and can assemble for Level A entry within approximately 90 to 120 minutes.

Regional Coordination and Response Readiness

Yakima Fire Department is not currently a member of a regional or state HAZMAT team and has no formal mutual aid agreements for HAZMAT response in place at this time. However, discussions are underway with regional partners, including the City of Sunnyside and the Yakima Training Center (YTC), to explore coordinated mutual aid or joint team development. Strengthening these partnerships will be critical in improving response capacity for large-scale or multi-jurisdictional HAZMAT incidents, especially given the geographic size and industrial scope of the Yakima Valley.

Improving HAZMAT readiness in Yakima will require a coordinated investment in training, equipment oversight, and regional partnerships. Given the industrial and agricultural risks present in the valley, establishing a more robust, scalable, and integrated HAZMAT response framework will be essential to safeguarding public health and environmental safety.

Specialized/Technical Rescue

Modern fire departments must be equipped not only to handle fires and emergency medical calls but also to respond effectively to a wide range of low-frequency, high-risk incidents requiring specialized expertise. Technical rescue services encompass operations such as confined space rescue, high-angle rope rescue, trench collapse, structural collapse, swift water rescue, and vehicle or machinery extrication. These incidents often involve complex environments, specialized equipment, and advanced training beyond the scope of standard fire service operations. In communities like Yakima—where industrial facilities, transportation networks, and geographic features increase the potential for such emergencies—the ability to respond to technical rescue scenarios is a critical component of public safety and firefighter readiness. Establishing and sustaining these capabilities requires ongoing investment in personnel training, equipment, inter-agency coordination, and planning to ensure safe and timely rescue operations in the most challenging environments.

Confined Space Rescue

Confined space rescue involves the extrication of individuals from spaces not designed for continuous occupancy, such as tanks, vaults, tunnels, or industrial pits. These environments often contain hazardous atmospheres or limited access, requiring highly trained personnel and specialized equipment. YFD provides confined space rescue capabilities and maintains personnel trained in these operations across all shifts. While minimum staffing standards are not yet formalized, efforts are underway to ensure that confined space expertise is present in all station assignments. YFD's partnership with the Yakima Training Center (YTC) helps support operational readiness through shared planning and training alignment.

Rope Rescue

Rope rescue operations are used in high-angle or vertical environments where traditional access is impossible, such as cliffs, towers, or multi-story buildings. These rescues require precision rigging, mechanical advantage systems, and fall protection techniques. YFD provides rope rescue services and integrates trained personnel throughout its operational shifts. Although no formal minimum staffing exists, the department is actively working to embed rope rescue capabilities

within each station. Collaboration with YTC provides added structural support and opportunities for joint training to maintain technical proficiency.

Trench and Structural Collapse Rescue

Trench and structural collapse rescues are among the most complex and dangerous technical rescue operations, involving unstable soil, damaged infrastructure, or collapsed buildings. These incidents demand rapid shoring, scene stabilization, and extrication tactics under hazardous conditions. YFD maintains operational capability in both trench and structural collapse rescue, with trained personnel distributed across shifts. While a standardized minimum staffing model is not yet in place, YFD is focused on assigning technical rescue competencies across its stations and strengthening coordination with YTC for response planning and simulated collapse scenarios.

Vehicle and Machinery Rescue

Vehicle and machinery rescue, often referred to as extrication, involves the safe removal of victims trapped in vehicles, agricultural equipment, or industrial machinery. These rescues require hydraulic tools, stabilization devices, and an understanding of mechanical systems. YFD provides vehicle and machinery rescue services with trained staff available across its operational shifts. The department is working to ensure all stations have consistent capabilities and is leveraging its relationship with YTC to enhance operational structure, training, and mutual support for these frequent yet technically demanding incidents.

Surface Water Rescue

Surface water rescue focuses on rescuing individuals from lakes, rivers, irrigation canals, and other surface-level water bodies. These operations demand swimmer safety, throw bag techniques, and often boat deployment, depending on access and current strength. YFD offers surface water rescue as part of its technical response program. Personnel trained in this discipline are distributed among crews, though formal minimum staffing guidelines are still in development. The department's commitment to station-level readiness and its partnership with YTC help maintain a foundational capacity to respond to water-based emergencies within the Yakima area.

Administration of the Technical Rescue Program

YFD currently administers its technical rescue program without a dedicated line-

item budget, which poses limitations for sustained investment in training, equipment upgrades, and program expansion. Despite this, YFD ensures that personnel receive Rescue 3 International certification—a recognized standard for water, rope, and confined space rescue. This training foundation reflects a commitment to high-quality, discipline-specific technical rescue practices within each station. Collaboration with YTC provides added structural support and opportunities for joint training to maintain technical proficiency.

Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) for each discipline are under development, built around Rescue 3 standards to ensure consistency, safety, and operational clarity. In addition to these discipline-specific SOGs, YFD is working on program-wide procedures to establish a unified framework across all aspects of technical rescue service delivery. The department also maintains compliance with OSHA regulation 1910.146 by documenting all annual confined space entries and keeping accurate records of all life safety ropes, ensuring accountability and adherence to national safety standards.

Operations

Operationally, YFD supports its technical rescue program with a maintained resource list specific to technical rescue incidents. This includes personnel qualifications, response capabilities, and equipment inventories. While the department's equipment levels align with its current service delivery expectations, some of the gear is outdated and in need of replacement or modernization to meet evolving standards and ensure responder safety.

YFD conducts periodic internal evaluations of the technical rescue program to assess readiness, identify gaps, and guide future improvements. However, the absence of dedicated funding, combined with aging equipment, may limit the department’s ability to maintain and elevate technical rescue services over time. Continued development of operational guidelines, formal evaluation mechanisms, and resource planning will be essential to ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of this high-risk, high-skill component of YFD’s emergency response mission.

Fire Department Planning

The fire service generates a significant amount of data through both daily emergency response and long-range preparedness activities. However, like many departments across the country, YFD has opportunities to more fully analyze and apply this information to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency. Data-driven decision-making is essential for setting priorities, allocating resources, and planning for the future. While planning functions—such as strategic, operational, and continuity planning—are critical to the success of any fire department, they are often pushed aside by the immediate demands of day-to-day operations. Without intentional focus, this gap in planning and evaluation can lead to missed opportunities or even critical failures when systems are stressed.

There are many resources available for sound planning:

- Response Performance Planning (Standards of Cover; RCW 35.103)
- Community Risk Assessment (CRA) Planning (Standards of Cover; YFD-developed stand alone CRA)
- Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Planning (FD-developed stand alone CRA)
- Community Growth Planning (Master Plan, Growth Management Plan)
- Target Hazard Response Planning (Tactical Planning)
- Resources Planning:
    - Staffing (Master Plan, Growth Management Plan, projections for retirements, recruitment, promotions)
    - Equipment (projections for replacement and acquisition)
    - Facilities (Master Plan, Growth Management Plan, Capital Improvement Planning; development projections, land acquisition, construction, expansion)
    - Financial (Master Plan, revenue and expense projections)
- Succession Planning (identify key leaders within YFD)
- Organizational Planning (strategic plan, goals and objectives implemented)

Response Performance Planning

Effective emergency response planning starts with understanding the community, evaluating available resources, and setting clear performance goals. This helps residents know what to expect from their fire department and gives decision-

makers a realistic view of its capabilities and limitations. While fire departments can do this work in-house, it's time-consuming and often overlooked.

A Standards of Cover is a national best practice that combines risk assessment with performance planning. It outlines staffing needs, resource placement, and service level objectives to ensure safe and effective responses to fires, medical calls, and special rescues.

In Washington, RCW 35.103 requires most fire departments to establish and report performance metrics—like turnout time, response time, and ambulance arrival—annually in a public meeting. While this provides a framework, it doesn't replace the need for local leaders to make informed, cost-effective decisions about fire service levels.

After a review of the previous years data, it is obvious that additional review and training of report writing and documentation is needed. The ability to accurately report on activities and past responses provides a trend analysis to predict future incidents. The lack of a formalized incident review program for incident reporting has allowed incomplete data to be processed and stored. Due to this, the trend analysis can be lacking in predicting future trends and planning. With the upcoming transition from the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) to the National Emergency Reporting Information System (NERIS), there is an opportunity to re-engage personnel and enable processes to gather accurate data to help in the trend analysis. Washington State is scheduled for a full transition from NFIRS to NERIS as of January 2026.

Community Risk Assessment Planning

Fire departments have a responsibility to understand the risks in their communities—and not just in general terms. These risks need to be clearly defined and measured. While there are different ways to evaluate risk and consequence, most models boil down to a combination of how likely something is to happen and how severe the outcome would be.

Once those risks are identified, it's up to the department and community leaders to determine what level of risk is acceptable, weighing the cost of mitigation against the potential impact of not acting. After that, risks should be prioritized—ideally through data and trend analysis rather than instinct or past assumptions. A

structured, formula-based approach helps keep the process objective and focused on what truly matters.

Community Risk Reduction Planning

Community Risk Reduction (CRR) is about identifying local risks and using a coordinated approach—through emergency response, prevention, and public education—to reduce their impact. While not a new concept, CRR brings structure and strategy to efforts fire departments have long supported, such as inspections, fire prevention, and outreach.

Each CRR plan is unique to its community, and even within a single department, risks can vary significantly from one station area to another. Factors like housing types, demographics, and transportation routes all play a role. A solid CRR program focuses efforts where they're needed most.

By involving firefighters, staff, and community partners, departments can build a culture that values prevention as much as response. Over time, this approach won't just be good practice—it will be expected by the public and elected officials.

At its core, CRR starts with a community risk assessment and leads to targeted strategies that reduce the likelihood or impact of emergencies. There are several resources available at the National Fire Academy to assist an agency with development of a CRR program. These resources should be explored for implementation at YFD.

Community Growth Planning

Fire department master planning should align closely with how a community is growing. For Yakima, that means looking at land use and zoning, understanding current fire department capabilities, and projecting where and how emergency response demand will increase over time. Under Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA), cities like Yakima are required to plan for future growth in a deliberate way, using comprehensive plans tied to zoning and land use. Additionally, the Yakima Comprehensive Land Use plan has a section tied to fire department planning. This allows the city—and the fire department—to anticipate where development will occur and plan for the population increases that come with it.

Target Hazard Response Planning

High-risk facilities in a community often come with predictable challenges—and those challenges should be addressed before an incident ever occurs. For buildings identified as target hazards, it's critical that crews are familiar with the risks they pose, as well as the features that can support a tactical response—like fire separation walls, suppression systems, or site access points.

Developing pre-incident plans or tactical worksheets for these facilities helps crews operate more effectively under pressure. These plans should be easily accessible on scene and used regularly in training to reinforce familiarity. When possible, crews should use discretionary time to walk through these buildings, discuss potential scenarios, and build a shared understanding of how to respond. For more complex facilities, detailed site-specific plans should also be developed and stored electronically so they're available to incident commanders during major events or to training staff for tabletop exercises. Proactive planning like this reduces surprises on scene and supports a more coordinated, effective response.

Resource Planning

Staffing

- Determine the minimum number of personnel needed per shift—by rank, certification, and assignment location—to meet operational needs. This should align with response time goals, critical task requirements, alarm assignments, and any applicable city policies or labor agreements. A Standards of Cover that includes a critical task analysis for each major risk type will help define the resources needed to handle anticipated emergencies. Staffing targets should also reflect performance goals established under RCW 35.103 and take into account any minimum staffing provisions outlined in collective bargaining agreements.

- When planning staffing levels, it's important to account for both scheduled and unscheduled leave. Scheduled leave should be managed evenly throughout the year to maintain consistent shift coverage. Unscheduled leave —such as sick time, disability, or FMLA—should be reviewed using historical data to identify trends and average usage. Factoring this into overall leave projections helps determine an appropriate leave factor to apply when assigning personnel to shifts. This approach allows for more accurate staffing

plans and helps limit overtime by ensuring enough personnel are available to meet daily operational needs.

Apparatus and Equipment

Fire department apparatus must be fully operational and reliable 100% of the time when called upon for emergency response. This level of performance demands rigorous, ongoing maintenance to ensure that each unit functions as intended — every time. As expected, this is a costly but essential undertaking.

To guide agencies in managing apparatus lifespans, NFPA 1911: Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Emergency Vehicles provides recommended benchmarks. According to this standard:

- Apparatus should remain in front-line service for no more than 15 years
- They may be kept in reserve status for up to 10 additional years
- As stated in Annex D: "Apparatus not manufactured to applicable NFPA standards or over 25 years old should be replaced"

Facilities

As staffing and apparatus planning evolves, it is essential to assess whether existing facilities can support projected growth. Facility condition and capacity are critical elements in fire department planning — particularly because these structures serve as critical infrastructure that supports community resiliency during and after major disasters. Any remodels or additions to existing stations should also incorporate seismic upgrades where appropriate.

Many older fire stations were not designed to accommodate the size and specifications of modern fire apparatus. When evaluating facilities, key architectural elements should be assessed, including:

- Apparatus bay width, height clearance, depth, and angle of departure from the ramp
- Crew accommodations, including sleeping quarters and restrooms
- ADA accessibility
- Energy efficiency and potential for LEED certification

- Overall facility condition, including:
  - HVAC systems
  - Roof condition
  - Apparatus ramp surfaces (e.g., cracking, potholes)
  - Bay drainage
  - General building systems and safety

Future station planning should be aligned with community growth initiatives, such as the local Comprehensive Plan or Master Plan. GIS mapping of travel times, particularly to proposed annexation areas or newly developed corridors, can help determine optimal locations for future stations. Securing property in these areas before development occurs is often more cost-effective and allows time for planning.

In general, call volume growth should serve as the primary trigger for initiating new station construction. To stay ahead of demand, station construction should begin at least one year prior to reaching identified call volume thresholds. Similarly:

- New apparatus should be ordered at least a year in advance of station opening
- Personnel hiring and training should occur in advance to ensure crews are shift-ready when the station and apparatus go live

This proactive approach ensures that staffing, equipment, and facilities come online in alignment — allowing departments to meet increasing community needs without service disruption.

Financial Planning

Effective planning is essential to securing funding for fire department priorities — whether those involve ongoing staffing costs, periodic replacement of apparatus and equipment, or infrequent capital investments in facilities. A Fire Chief who leads with detailed, data-informed planning and collaborates with allied departments and agencies makes the department's needs clear, credible, and actionable. Strong partnership with the Finance Director is especially critical in this process.

While developing the expense side of the financial plan is relatively straightforward, aligning those expenses to limit budget spikes and dips requires thoughtful staging and long-term vision. The real challenge often lies in identifying revenue strategies to fund these costs — a decision space that ultimately rests with elected officials. When the fire department's financial plan is comprehensive, transparent, and outlines the risks of inaction, it strengthens the Fire Chief's position and increases the likelihood of policy and funding support.

A best practice in the industry is to ensure the fire department — and broader public safety needs — are included in the City's Capital Facilities Plan and long-term financial forecasts. This positions the agency to better anticipate growth-related challenges and provides a framework for contingency planning if revenue projections fall short.

In addition, maintaining a healthy emergency reserve fund provides a critical safeguard against unexpected fiscal downturns, such as those caused by economic recessions or revenue shortfalls. Long-term stability in fire and emergency services depends not only on operational readiness, but also on strategic financial resilience.

Succession Planning

Nationwide, the fire service has been slow to adopt formal succession planning, despite its well-established importance in other sectors. In the private sector, succession planning is standard practice — particularly when the knowledge, skills, and leadership of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) are vital to organizational success. The same principle applies in the public sector, including fire service leadership roles.

Developing a robust succession plan ensures continuity of leadership, preserves institutional knowledge, and prepares the organization to adapt effectively to future challenges. Key steps in building a succession plan include:

- Identify critical positions, functions, systems, and skillsets essential to agency operations
- Define critical success factors for each key role
- Assess performance levels — past, present, and expected

- Identify and categorize gaps (by urgency, impact, and time horizon: short-, medium-, or long-term)
- Develop an ideal candidate profile, informed by the agency's needs and future goals
- Assess internal candidates for their potential to meet these criteria
- Establish a structured mentoring or development plan for identified successors

It is essential that the current Fire Chief or executive leader supports the succession plan, unless the organization intends to pivot in a new strategic direction. If a significant change in direction is planned, an outside advisor — such as a policymaker or loaned executive — may be necessary to serve as a coach or mentor during the transition.

Additionally, potential successors should be clearly informed whether they are being groomed for an automatic promotion or if the position will be filled through a competitive process. Transparency in expectations supports trust, morale, and long-term organizational health.

Organizational Planning (Workforce)

An organizational work plan serves as the department's strategic roadmap, typically covering a three- to five-year period. It guides the entire organization toward a shared set of goals and priorities. The planning process should include voices from across the department to ensure all major perspectives are represented. Everyone should feel like they had a seat at the table, even if indirectly.

A common first step is to invite all members to complete an anonymous survey that includes a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. These responses are summarized and given to the planning team ahead of any workshops.

Ideally, external stakeholders—especially community members—are also engaged through a facilitated forum where they can share their expectations of the department. Their input helps ground the planning team in real community needs. The planning workshop should be used to define the department's mission, vision,

and values; identify key trends from the SWOT; and develop strategic initiatives, goals, objectives, timelines, and assigned responsibilities. Timelines should be spaced out across the life of the plan to maintain a manageable workload and long-term momentum. Once finalized, the plan should be shared with all personnel, reviewed regularly, and updated annually to stay relevant and actionable.

ARFF - Airport

McAllister Field known as the Yakima Air Terminal (YKM), is a public airport in the southwestern part of Yakima. Owned by the City of Yakima, it is used for general aviation and commercial air service. Yakima is served by one scheduled passenger air carrier Alaska Airlines with service to Seattle/Tacoma International Airport and two non-scheduled carriers Sun Country Airlines and Xtra Airways. Sun Country Airlines operates charter flights to Laughlin, NV and Xtra Airways operates charter flights to Wendover, NV. This airport is in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems for 2011–2015, which called it as a primary commercial service airport.

Facilities and Aircraft

McAllister Field covers 825 acres at an elevation of 1,099 feet above mean sea level. It has two asphalt runways: 9/27 is 7,604 by 150 feet (2,318 x 46 m) and 4/22 is 3,835 by 150 feet (1,169 x 46 m).[1] The Yakima Air Terminal is equipped with a contract Air Traffic Control Tower, operated by SERCO under a contract with the FAA. The tower operates daily from 0600 to 2200.

In 2022, the airport had 35,588 aircraft operations, averaging 97 per day, composed of 80% general aviation, 10% military, 7% air taxi and 3% airline. 133 aircraft were based at this airport, 106 single-engine, 15 multi-engine, 5 jet, 6 helicopters and 1 glider.

The airport is home to Cub Crafters, a manufacturer of light sport and light utility aircraft. The airport has one full-service fixed-base operator (FBO), McCormick Air Center, which provides hangar leasing, aircraft rental, flight instruction, and fuel. The airport has an aviation museum known as McAllister Air Museum.

Yakima Air Terminal is designated as the primary diversion site for flights unable to reach Seattle–Tacoma International Airport. In December 2023, an Airbus A330 on an international Delta Air Lines flight from London Heathrow Airport landed at Yakima due to heavy fog in the Seattle area. It was the largest commercial airliner to land at the airport; due to the lack of customs facilities, passengers were processed by officials who arrived from Western Washington by car.

Yakima has been proposed as a potential reliever airport for the Seattle area by local officials.

In 2020, the Yakima Air Terminal/McAllister Field (YKM) updated their Airport Layout Plan (ALP) to include obstruction data obtained from an Airport Geographic Information System (AGIS) survey. As part of the ALP update, the 2015 Airport Master Plan report was updated to reflect current information with an up-to-date aviation demand forecast through 2040. The updated forecast demand was then incorporated into updated facility requirements, an updated alternatives analysis, and updated capital improvement program. The scope for this project did not include an updated terminal building analysis or noise analysis.

Airport Forecast (2015 Airport Master Plan, updated 2020)

	2018		2025	2030	2035	2040
Enplaned Passengers	73,300		81,600	87,200	91,800	92,600
Commercial	7,422		8,660	9,310	9,990	10,630
General Aviation	30,217		31,980	33,310	34,690	36,160
Military	1,850		1,810	1,810	1,810	1,810
YKM-based Aircraft	131		150	157	163	173

Source: Total operations as reported by ATCT (hours of operation 0600-2200 daily). Forecast – Mead & Hunt, Century West Engineering

Comparing the projected enplanements between the above forecast and what the FAA reports show a steady decrease in passenger traffic at the airport. The impact of that decrease on the ARFF staffing model will be discussed later in this section.

Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Services (ARFF)

While ARFF services are required for airport operations, there are benefits to collocating ARFF, EMS, and fire services in an on-site facility. For the airport, co-location offers more emergency resources within a shorter response time. For the department, YFD personnel can gain insights that are critical to deconflict airport procedures during firefighting operations. For the City, there are cost-sharing benefits. Requests for ARFF services and response activity at the airport have remained relatively flat.

ARFF Five-year Service Calls

ARFF Service Calls				
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
7	10	14	15	8

Adequacy of Current ARFF Response Capability at Yakima Air Terminal

The ARFF facility is southwest of the passenger terminal building of the airport. The dual-use facility allows firefighters to serve YKM and the surrounding community. This is accomplished with three bays opening onto the airfield, and two bays opening into the city street. Four YFD firefighters staff the ARFF station 24 hours a day. However three of the four respond to calls off YKM leaving one firefighter to staff the ARFF truck in the event of an emergency on the air field. The facility has two ARFF dedicated trucks, each providing the necessary 500 pounds of dry-chem and 1,500 gallons of water required for an Index B response. The two ARFF units dedicated to the airport are all ARFF 94, a 2020 Oshkosh Stryker vehicle and ARFF 294, a 2005 Oshkosh Styker. Due to its age, the latter serves as the backup vehicle.

Airport Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) Building

The Yakima airport maintains an ARFF Index A, upgradable to Index B capabilities. Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 139 requires that the location of the

Airport Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) building be placed where personnel can respond to the midpoint of both runways within 3 minutes of an aircraft incident. The existing ARFF building (Station 94), is located between the Airport Terminal and the Airport Administration building. This facility houses both airport ARFF equipment as well as the City of Yakima's structural fire equipment and is staffed by YFD, who responds to both aircraft and structural fires. Due to the dual function of the facility, the fire jurisdiction of this station is determined by the building's location. As noted earlier, the terminal area has limited developable space for vehicle parking and terminal building expansion. The Station 94 site could be redeveloped to support the terminal facility needs, including future terminal expansion or additional vehicle parking for rental cars, employees, and passengers. Options to relocate Station 94 while meeting all FAR Part 139 requirements and supporting the City's structural fire response will be evaluated as part of the alternatives analysis.

The station was originally constructed in 1968 with 3 bays. In 1988 a dayroom and kitchen was added. In 2010 it was added on to again to provide bunk rooms. It is unclear when the two additional bays were added to serve the city side of the station. It's in moderate to poor condition and undersized for modern ARFF and structural apparatus. There is no separation between the airport side of the station and the city side of the station so anyone entering the station is in fact entering the secure side of the airport. We will discuss all facilities in a separate chapter however this facility is probably very high on the list of replacements needed. In addition to its condition the area around an airport fire station is used to stage incoming non-airport responders including fire and EMS apparatus. As these units are not familiar with airport operations they usually need to be escorted onto the movement areas.

Fire Protection Water

The 2000 terminal renovation drawings site plan shows a 6-inch fire service that connects to the city branch main upstream of the domestic service and enters the building in the basement northeast mechanical room. The fire service to the terminal also feeds fire hydrants in the terminal area and is arranged in a loop around the entry drive. Two fire hydrants are fed from the loop with underground isolation valves and are located at the east and west ends of the entry drive. Fire hydrants were not observed on the secure airside of the site. The building fire

service has an integral pumper fire department connection on the building's north face and is in good condition. It appears to transition to a 2½-inch backflow, 3-inch main just after it enters the building. The 6-inch fire service should be adequate to provide fire sprinklers the building given the 105-pound-per-square-inch (psi) pressure indicated at the incoming service. However, the present 3-inch branch appears undersized for present coverage and future growth.

Hydrant availability is fairly good on the North and East sides of the airport. There are also some hydrants on the South side, however the travel distance is longer. There doesn't appear to be any hydrant access directly from a taxiway on the west side of the airport.

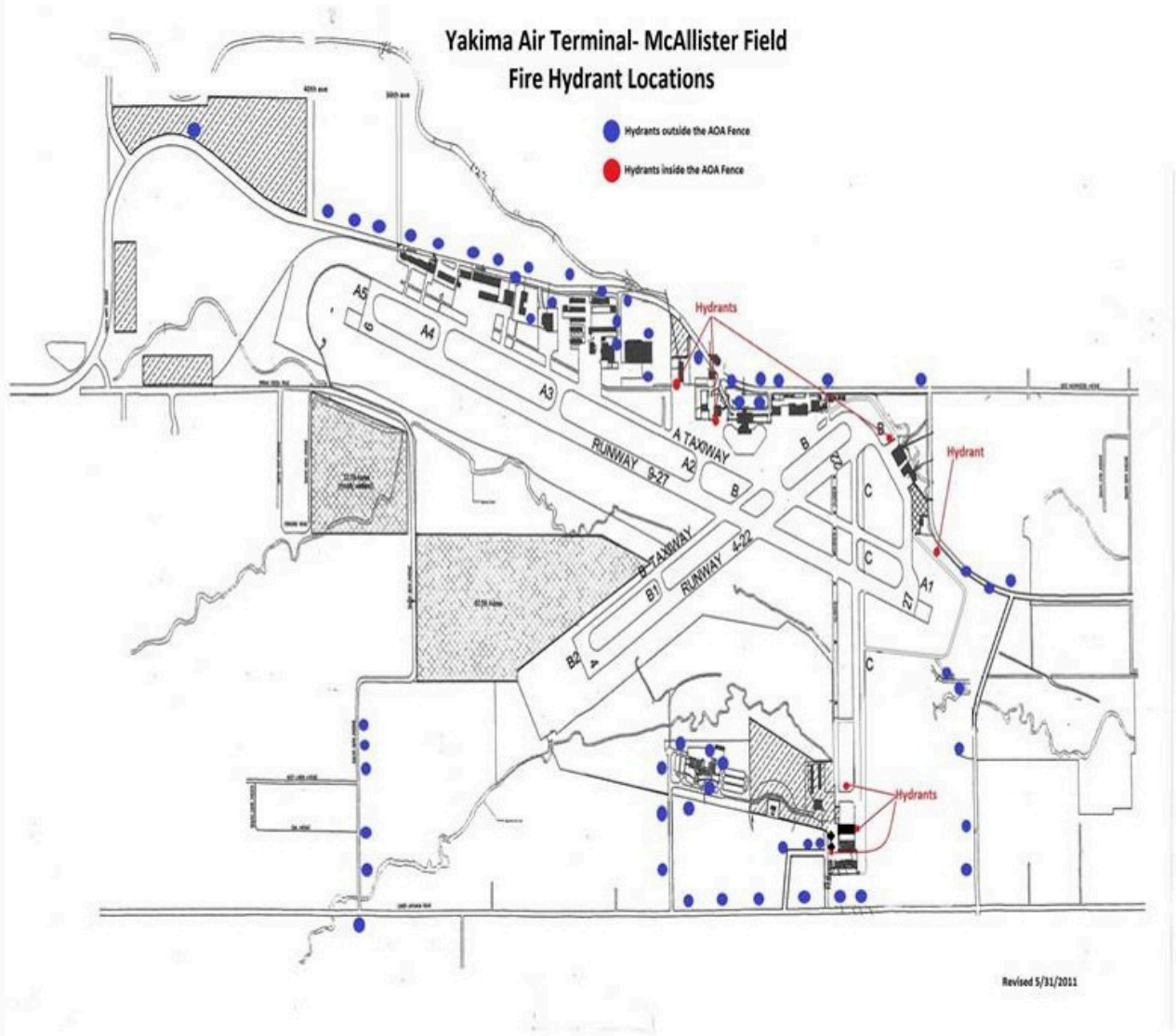


Figure 12: Source: 2015 Airport Master Plan and 2020 ALP Update and Airport Emergency Plan.

AFFF Transition

Aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) is a type of foam that fire departments use to fight liquid-based fires (those started by oil, gasoline, or other flammable liquids). AFFF is highly concerning because it contains PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances). PFAS are toxic chemicals known to negatively impact human health and do not easily break down in the environment, waterways, wildlife, or human bodies.

- PFAS are linked to negative health impacts in humans, including cancer.
- AFFF is a leading cause of PFAS contamination in drinking water.

As of 2018, Washington passed the Toxics in Firefighting law, which restricts the sale, manufacture, and use of AFFF for fire training in Washington. Ecology is working to implement an AFFF collection and disposal program to help fire departments in Washington safely collect, remove, and dispose of their AFFF stockpiles.

The FAA will provide guidance to airport operators on MILSPEC F3 issues falling within the FAA's regulatory purview. For issues that are outside of its authority, the FAA will identify industry best practices as such practices become available. Examples of items that are outside of the agency's authority include the following:

- Aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) vehicle cleaning procedures
- Acquisition of temporary vehicles during the cleaning process
- State environmental regulations for AFFF and MILSPEC F3
- Allowable amounts of residual PFAS in ARFF vehicles after the cleaning process
- Storage/destruction of AFFF after transition
- Fire suppression systems at airport hangars

In 2018, the Legislature passed the Toxics in Firefighting law which restricts AFFF in Washington. AFFF can no longer be manufactured, sold, or used for fire training. AFFF is still allowed for emergencies and actual fires that require it, until an alternative is found.

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2024, including a per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) replacement program for airports to replace current PFAS-

containing firefighting foams with nonfluorinated alternatives that meet the same industry standards for performance.
The PFAS replacement program for airports will both reimburse the costs of equipment replacement incurred after Sept. 12, 2023, and provide grants to eligible airports moving forward.

On January 6, 2023, the DoD published a new fluorine-free foam (F3) military specification (MILSPEC) to comply with the requirements for the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Navy set forth by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY2020 NDAA). The next step is for foam manufacturers to submit their F3 agents for qualification by DoD. Once DoD certifies that a foam meets the new MILSPEC, it will be added to the Qualified Product List. The FAA considers the foams on the Qualified Product List as acceptable for satisfying the regulatory requirements of part 139.
The Qualified Product List (QPL) for the Department of Defense's (DoD) MIL-PRF-32725 Fluorine-Free Foam (F3) includes:

- SOLBERG 3% MIL-SPEC SFFF: The first F3 product approved for use at Part 139 airports
- Avio®F3 Green Mil 3%: A synthetic fluorine-free foam concentrate for crash rescue operations at military and civilian aviation facilities.

As of this writing other products and vendors may also be on the approved list.
This is a quote from the FAA Aircraft Firefighting Foam Transition Plan, May 2023:

It is critical that ARFF departments fully understand the differences between the AFFFs and the new MILSPEC F3s. While both foams are very effective, training must be adjusted to emphasize the differences in MILSPEC F3 performance in extinguishing Class B, liquid fuel spill fires. AFFF products extinguish fuel spill fires in three ways: (1) the foam blanket suppresses the combustible fuel vapors, (2) the water cools the fire, and (3) the fluorinated surfactant drains from the foam bubbles and creates a film between the foam and fuel layers. This film helps the foam blanket travel across the fuel spill and reseal itself when the foam blanket has been broken. Even when the foam blanket has degraded, the film from the fluorinated surfactant continues to provide vapor suppression. 9 | Page FAA Aircraft Firefighting Foam Transition Plan, May 2023 MILSPEC F3s lack the fluorinated surfactant, and therefore do not have the film forming properties of AFFFs. As a result, MILSPEC F3s suppress the fire in only two ways: cooling it with water and suppressing vapors with the foam blanket. Without the film formation, the mechanical structure and maintenance of the foam blanket become a critical aspect to the success of the fire suppression. When a foam blanket is disturbed by a firefighter or passenger traversing through it or a fire hose being pulled through it, no resealing occurs, as it does with AFFF. The disturbance of the foam blanket has the potential to create a breakthrough burn. Therefore, new tactics or techniques should be provided to firefighters to help them prevent this phenomenon. FAA guidance on MILSPEC F3 implementation will focus on four main areas, as described below: application tactics and techniques, foam blanket management, responder training information.

Airport Emergency Plan

The Airport Emergency Plan (AEP) is very thorough and covers virtually all types of hazards. In review of the plan there are some minor deviations in ICS terminology and practices that could be aligned with normal ICS practices in the next review. One area that needs further examination is that of the Airport Managers role. The current plan has the manager as a Unified Commander with the fire or law enforcement IC. The Airport Manager should fill the role of Agency Administrator. In that role he would provide strategic direction to the Incident Commander(s) and also be able to look at the big picture in and around the airport and not be focused on just mitigating the emergency as an Incident Commander should be doing.

The other area of the plan that is a little confusing is the role of the Administrative Assistant – Security, Leases and Projects. Many of the duties and functions assigned to that individual would normally be handled by the ICS Logistics section or Finance section. This plan seems to have this individual doing most of those two ICS sections during an incident. It is suggested that this position follow the role of an Incident Business Advisor (IBA). In that role they would have oversight of activities in the Logistics section as well as the Finance section.

Washington Surveying & Rating Bureau

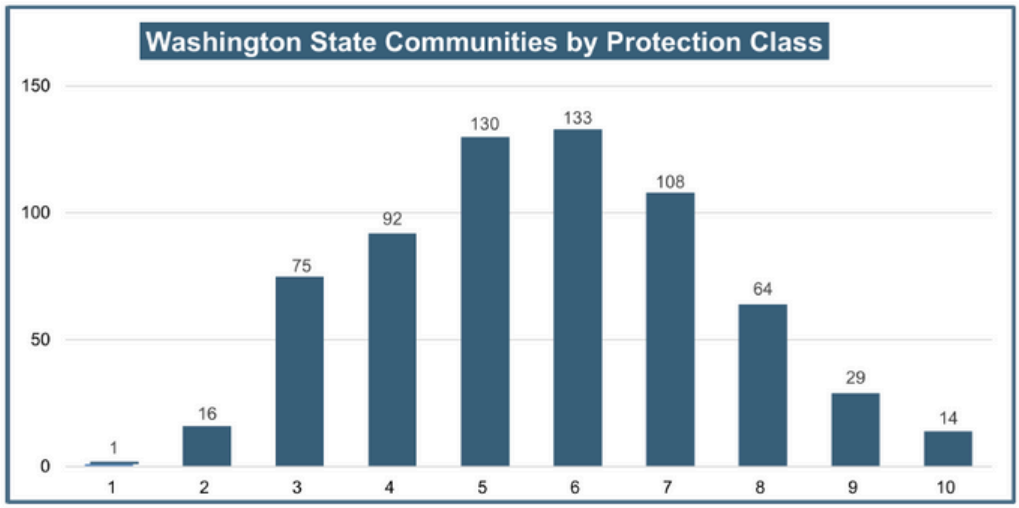
The Washington Surveying & Rating Bureau (WSRB), "...is an independent, not-for-profit organization operating in the public interest, and the criteria used to evaluate communities is approved by the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner, the state's insurance regulator." The WSRB develops evaluations of community risks as it relates to property loss potential, resulting in a Public Protection Classification. The primary purpose of these evaluations is to provide insurance companies with a better understanding of property risk from fire and natural disasters. In addition, the intent is to help insurance consumers feel confident that their fire insurance premiums are fair. It also helps communities understand how they can improve their fire-defense capabilities and building code effectiveness.

There are four main areas the evaluation concentrates on:

- **Fire Department** (40% of rating) includes station distribution, staffing levels, equipment, and personnel training.
- **Water Supply** (35% of rating) includes water flow capacity, fire hydrant location, and maintenance.
- **Emergency Communications System** (16% of rating) includes dispatching system, staffing, and training.
- **Fire Safety Control** (9% of rating) includes fire code and building code enforcement, fire investigations, and public fire education programs.

The evaluation is conducted using a criteria schedule with point values assigned for consistency. To earn full credit for an item, a community must meet the criteria described in the schedule. If the community does not meet all the requirements, credit is deducted, depending on the importance of the item and the degree of deviation. Through this rating, each community is rated on a scale of 1 through 10, where 1 indicates exemplary fire protection capabilities, and 10 indicates the lack of capabilities, if any, that are sufficient for insurance credit. In other words, the lower the rating, the better the protection, resulting in lower insurance premiums for properties protected in the community.

Figure 13: Protection Class Communities



The Protection Class produced by WSRB's evaluation is the overall Protection Class for the community, not the Protection Class for all the properties located in the community. Buildings and property located within the community are eligible for the Protection Class of the community, but not better, if they meet the distance-to-fire-station and applicable fire hydrant requirements. If these requirements are not met, the building will receive a different Protection Class than the Protection Class of the community.

Protection Class Maintenance

Given that Yakima is at the mid-range of the PPC 3 (2.60, rounded to three), it requires intention and a continuous improvement mindset to protect the current class 3 rating or even improve it. Further, the WSRB points out that if improvements are made to one category that outpaced the others, deficiency points are given. This method ensures that improvements are even across all four categories to the extent possible. The point system employed by the grading schedule is a deficiency point system with zero being the best score (100% credit).

Areas identified as being awarded less than 80% of the eligible credit are areas of deficiency that warrant focused evaluation. A cost-benefit analysis should be carried out for each of these areas. If the deficiency points to be reduced or eliminated in those circumstances are low relative to the cost of improvement, those areas may be intentionally set aside in favor of larger returns on the investment. Those areas awarded less than 80% of the eligible credit that warrant consideration are listed under each of the four areas of evaluation, which follows:

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Ladder Trucks in Service

Number of Reserve Ladder Trucks. One reserve is required for every five in service ladder trucks. YFD has two ladder trucks and should have a ladder truck in reserve. This can be partially accomplished by an interlocal agreement with other agencies in the region to share a single reserve ladder truck. Twenty deficiency points can be eliminated.

Department Staffing 52% credit received

There must be six firefighters on duty for each of the required engine and ladder companies. Only personnel who participate in actual structural firefighting operations will be credited. Personnel staffing ambulances or other units serving the general public may be credited depending on the extent to which they are available for firefighting duties. Three call and/or volunteer firefighters will be considered equivalent to one on-duty firefighter. Call or volunteer firefighters may not exceed half the required staffing of required companies. If adequate records of response are not kept, credit may be limited to one on-duty for each six call or volunteer firefighters. Call or volunteer firefighters working defined shifts at fire stations may be considered equivalent to on-duty firefighters. Response of firefighters on automatic aid apparatus will also be considered in this item.

Department staffing is slightly higher than the total number of personnel required to respond to a moderate risk structure fire (2,000 square foot, 2-story residence). As long as Yakima maintains a staffing minimum of three per apparatus it will be difficult to obtain any additional credit. Automatic aid companies can be included in the count, which improves the potential shift staffing levels. There are 192 deficiency points that can be eliminated.

Company Training 57% credit received

A minimum of 20 hours of structural firefighting training per firefighter per month is required, with reductions allowed in the number of hours based on the certification levels of firefighters. A concerted effort to increase training in structural firefighting hours per person per month or in certifying personnel to Firefighter II (reducing to 10 hours) will improve the credit awarded for training. This element is part of a group of elements that fit under the heading, “Training.” There are 39 deficiency points that can be eliminated (57% credit received).

Officer Training

One of the most common deficiencies in most fire departments is a structured officer development and training program. To really be effective, officer training needs to be done simultaneously with all officers invited, which leads to officers off-duty coming in on overtime. The current WSRB report shows 0 credit for officer training. Officer training either isn't happening or isn't being documented. An officer development and training program should be developed and budgeted. Aspiring firefighters that want to be officers should be allowed to attend but since it is not part of their current job duties they may not be eligible for pay for attendance. YFD received the full 15 deficiency points for this area.

Pre-Fire Planning

YFD has elements of a pre-fire planning process, but it is not complete and is not formal. Adopt and implement the NFA Quick Action Plan process as an agency or develop a formal pre-fire planning process for buildings or infrastructure that poses an unusual hazard consistent with NFPA 1620. While there are only 5 deficiency points that can be eliminated, this is an important program to implement and is a recommendation in the body of this report.

Cover Plan

A cover plan that assures appropriate units are dispatched when first due units are out of service can be accomplished thru automatic aid agreements and proper programing of the CAD data base. Mutual aid agreements don't meet this requirement as they rely on communications between an appropriate officer of each the receiving and sending agency to agree on a response. An appropriate cover plan makes filling the response "automatic" and reduces the time delay of mutual aid. While not a lot of points, 10 deficiency points, this is fairly easy to accomplish and benefits all signatures to the agreement.

Fire Operations <u>68% credit received</u>

This score is an average of the percentages awarded for shift staffing, engine and ladder company unit staffing, and training. Implementation of improvements in these areas will improve the score in this category. There are 104 deficiency points that can be eliminated.

Delays in Response.

YFD was only 21 points deficient in this area which was probably driven by climatic conditions that the proposed annexations east of Interstate 82 could have

significant impact in the next rating. There are only two overpasses YFD can respond through from the current station locations into the East Valley area. If units were to encounter a blockage on their chosen route, their response would be considerably delayed. If, or when, the city moves ahead with East Valley annexations, provisions must be made to have units from YFD or an agency located east of the interstate to be first due on scene in the annexed area. There are 100 deficiency points assigned to the area and a failure to properly cover the annexed area could result in many more deficiency points.

WATER SUPPLY

Hydrants – inspection and Condition 48% Credit received

Hydrant inspections must occur annually, including proper operation. Flow tests must be conducted every five years. Hydrants should be marked for available flow and accessible. Incomplete records caused deficiency points in this area. There are 104 deficiency points that can be eliminated.

Maintenance 61% credit received

This item evaluates the frequency of visits to and inspections of water system components other than hydrants. Regular visits and inspections allow for timely maintenance and repair of components. Water system components including wells, pumps, water tanks and reservoirs, pressure regulating, altitude, float control and isolation valves shall be regularly inspected. There are 78 deficiency points that can be eliminated.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

Building Construction

This item evaluates the building where the communications center is located. The communications center should be in fire-resistive, separate buildings without internal or external exposures. YFD received 18 deficiency points for the center building construction. Most of those deficiency points come from being in a shared facility and not having total area separation within the building. It would not be practical to do such an extensive renovation to the current facility.

Security

Communication center security includes restricted access, security of doors and

windows, and the vulnerability of the areas surrounding the center. By not allowing parking immediately adjacent to the exterior walls and lack of bullet resistant windows are probably the easiest items to improve here. YFD only received 40% credit for security.

Supervision

All components of the primary dispatch circuit shall be monitored for integrity, including transmitters, repeaters and primary and secondary power. Fault conditions detected shall acuate an audible and visual trouble signal to the telecommunicators on duty. YFD received no credit for circuit supervision and received 20 deficiency points. This is a critical item and should be addressed prior to the next rating.

Dispatch Circuits

The communication center must have separate primary and secondary dispatch circuits for transmitting alarms. Maximum credit is obtained when: dual circuits are provided, circuits are supervised, there is an automatic switchover to a secondary circuit, and all components of the system are owned by the communications center. In most communications centers radio usually provides the primary circuit, which is the case in Yakima. A secondary circuit that is employed is through IP (internet protocol), which sends dispatch information through internet-enabled station receivers is becoming industry standard. This IP-based system should be the primary circuit and radio should be the failover if IP goes down. This IP circuit must be owned by the communications center. Efforts should be made to develop a truly independent IP based primary dispatch circuit. This element received no credit.

Training

Telecommunicators must successfully complete a comprehensive training program prior to active employment. The training program should be a minimum of 480 hours and include both general and specific dispatch procedures. General dispatch procedures should be at least 240 hours, and specific fire dispatch procedures should also be at least 240 hours. In addition, at least 40 hours of continuing education for each telecommunicator should be administered annually. This amount can be reduced to 30 hours if personnel are certified as Telecommunicator I and to 24 hours if personnel are certified as Telecommunicator II. There are 50 points in this area and YFD received 64%

credit. Since the dispatch center is supervised by YFD, efforts should be made to develop a training plan that meets this requirement.

FIRE SAFETY CONTROL

Fire Marshal

The Fire Marshal shall oversee fire code enforcement. The Fire Marshal shall have 10 or more years of code enforcement experience, be certified as a Fire Marshal and receive at least 16 hours of fire-code-related continuing education per year. The current Yakima Fire Marshal appears to meet the WSRB requirements.

Fire Plan Review

Review of plans for fire code compliance must be done by experienced, certified personnel. The plan reviewer shall have 5 or more years of plan review experience, be a registered design professional (licensed professional engineer), and receive at least 16 hours of plan review-related continuing education per year. The plan review department needs to have adequate staffing to ensure comprehensive plan reviews. The City of Yakima is meeting this requirement. The City currently has 2 full-time fire plan reviewers. Efforts should be made to ensure the plan reviewers have all the WSRB required certifications and continuing education.

Inspection of Fire Code Permits

New and renovated occupancies requiring a fire code permit must be inspected prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy. Fire Inspectors shall be certified with 5 or more years of experience in inspections and receive at least 16 hours of fire inspection-related continuing education per year. Adequate department staffing levels must be maintained to ensure comprehensive inspections.

Fire Code Inspections of Existing Occupancies

Fire Code Inspections of existing occupancies shall be conducted. The frequency of inspections will be evaluated using Table 7 in the Protection Class Grading Schedule (as provided by WSRB in a separate document). YFD, at a minimum should inspect high hazard occupancies annually, and medium hazard occupancies every two years. Low hazard occupancies are not regularly inspected. Fire Code Inspectors should be certified with 5 or more years of experience and receive a minimum of 16 hours of

fire inspection-related continuing education per year. Staffing levels must be sufficient to ensure comprehensive inspections. The City of Yakima is likely meeting this requirement except for years of experience. Employee retention can aid in alleviating this issue.

School and Adult Programs

School programs should include age-appropriate subjects for all students, pre-school through 12th grade. Adult education should include programs for all segments of the adult population in the community. The Yakima Fire Department is not meeting this requirement at any level and is 100% deficient. The WSRB will look at a 5 year history of this program. The city is missing an opportunity to meet the public in a non-emergent manner and have a dialogue about YFD's role and what value it brings to the community.

Fire Investigations

Fire investigations must be done to determine the cause and origin of all fires. Fire investigators shall have 5 or more years of experience, be a commissioned law officer, be certified as a fire investigator, and receive at least 16 hours of fire-investigation-related continuing education per year. In addition, sufficient staff levels are required to ensure adequate response to fires, and all fires should be reported to NFIRS. All reported fires within the City of Yakima are investigated at the company officer level as required by law. Those fires (e.g. structural) that meet damage or occupancy criteria are investigated by certified fire investigators within the fire department. The WSRB requires all fires to be investigated by a fire investigator. YFD is meeting this requirement except for years of experience and the investigators being commissioned law officers. This problem remedies itself with time and commissioning of fire investigators and through employee retention.

Building Code Enforcement

Current building codes must be adopted and effectively enforced. The score for this item is based on the current Building Code Class of the community. For the WSRB to consider that building codes are effectively enforced, the City must be able to provide at least 1 full-time Fire Safety Inspector per 1,000 buildings that fall within the moderate to high hazard classification. The city should evaluate the number of low, moderate, and high hazard occupancies and assure the number of qualified inspectors does not exceed a work load of over 1,000 buildings per inspector annually.

Fiscal Review of Current Conditions

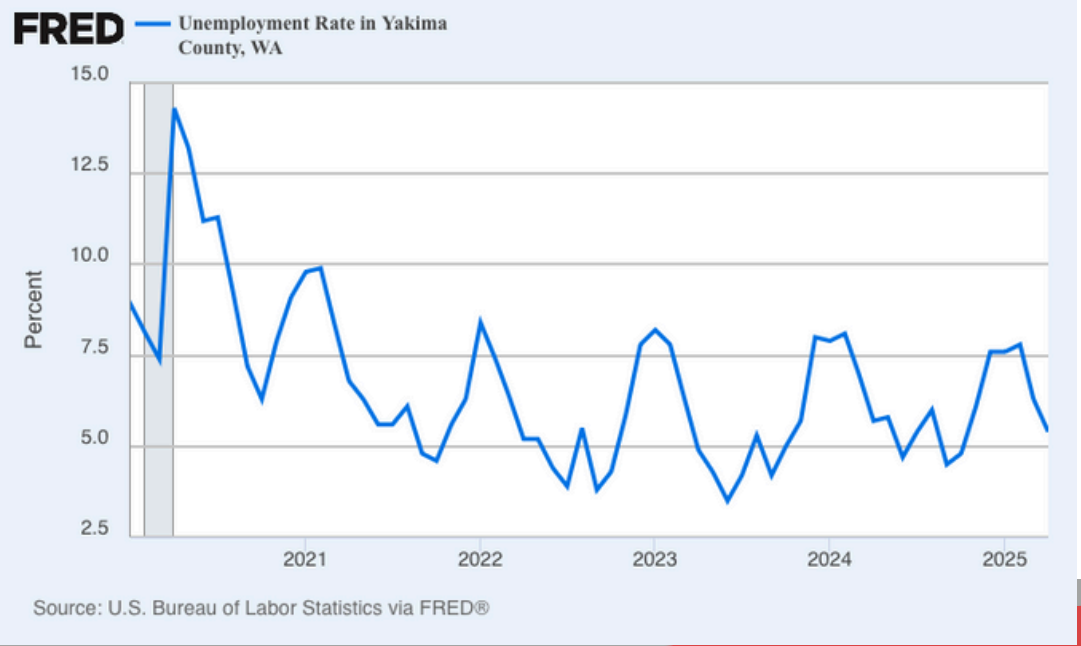
This section examines the financial factors that influence YFD's ability to deliver services. It begins by looking at countywide trends in unemployment and housing, city population growth, and construction valuation to provide context for the broader economic environment. It then provides an overview of the City of Yakima's overall fiscal health, including its primary revenue sources. Following that, it analyzes YFD's specific revenues and major expenses. This financial assessment informs a projection of the department's funding outlook in relation to anticipated community growth.

City Economic Context

Economic data for Yakima County indicates that the unemployment increases brought on by the 2020–21 pandemic are now in recovery—and returning to a normal cyclical pattern.

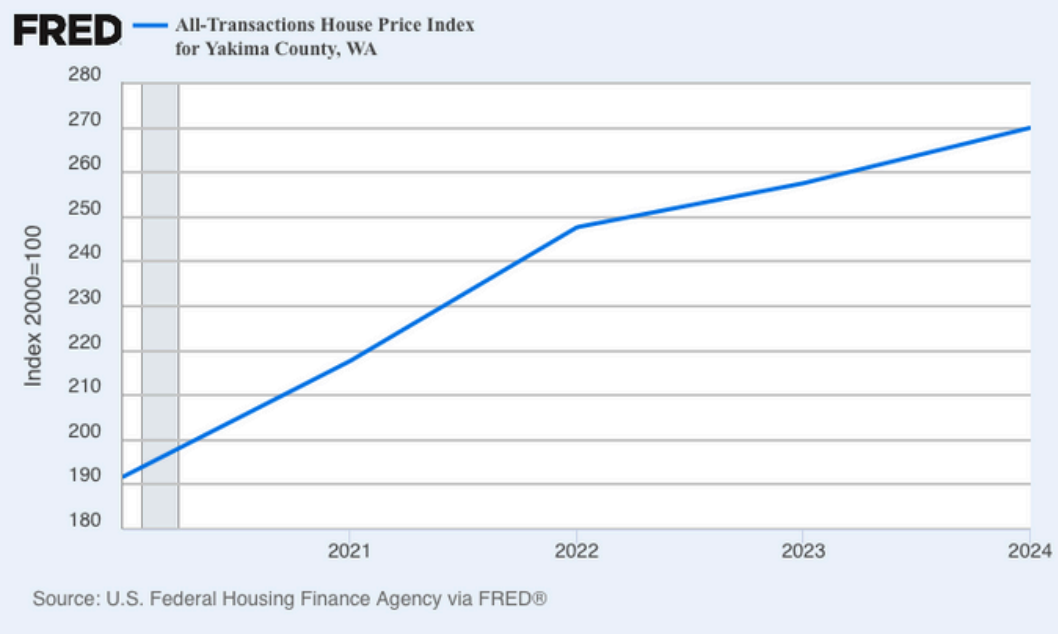
The figure below illustrates unemployment trends in Yakima County from January 2020 through January 2025. Historically, civilian unemployment has reached its lowest point each August and peaked around February—patterns typical before the pandemic. This seasonal fluctuation is largely due to the county's strong reliance on agricultural employment. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which shut down much of the economy from mid-March 2020 through April 2021, disrupted this cycle. Since then, unemployment rates have been steadily declining, signaling a gradual return to pre-pandemic patterns.

Figure 14: Yakima County Unemployment, 2020-2025



The following figure highlights a strong upward trend in median home sales prices in Yakima, reflecting robust growth in the local housing market. Since January 2020, when the median home price was just over $190,000, values have climbed to approximately $270,000—a remarkable increase of over 40%. This surge in housing costs signals continued demand and investment, as well as overall confidence in Yakima's residential market.

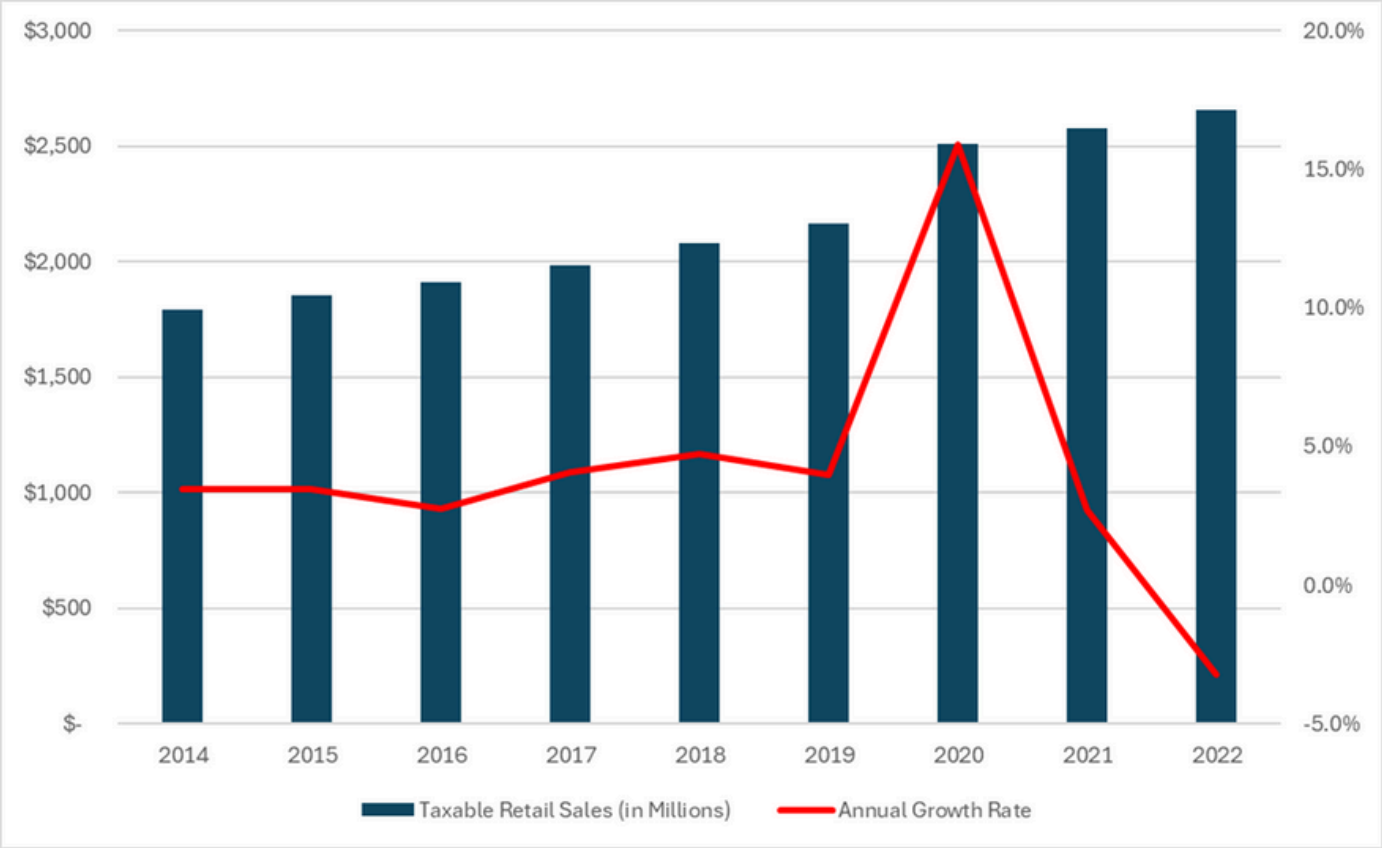
Figure 15: Yakima County Median Home Sales Price, 2020–2024



The Washington State Department of Revenue tracks taxable retail sales (TRS) data for cities across the state, offering a useful indicator of private sector vitality within a community. Year-over-year changes in TRS reflect broader trends in economic activity and shifts in the local tax base. For the City of Yakima, this data helps illustrate the scale and trajectory of local economic engagement.

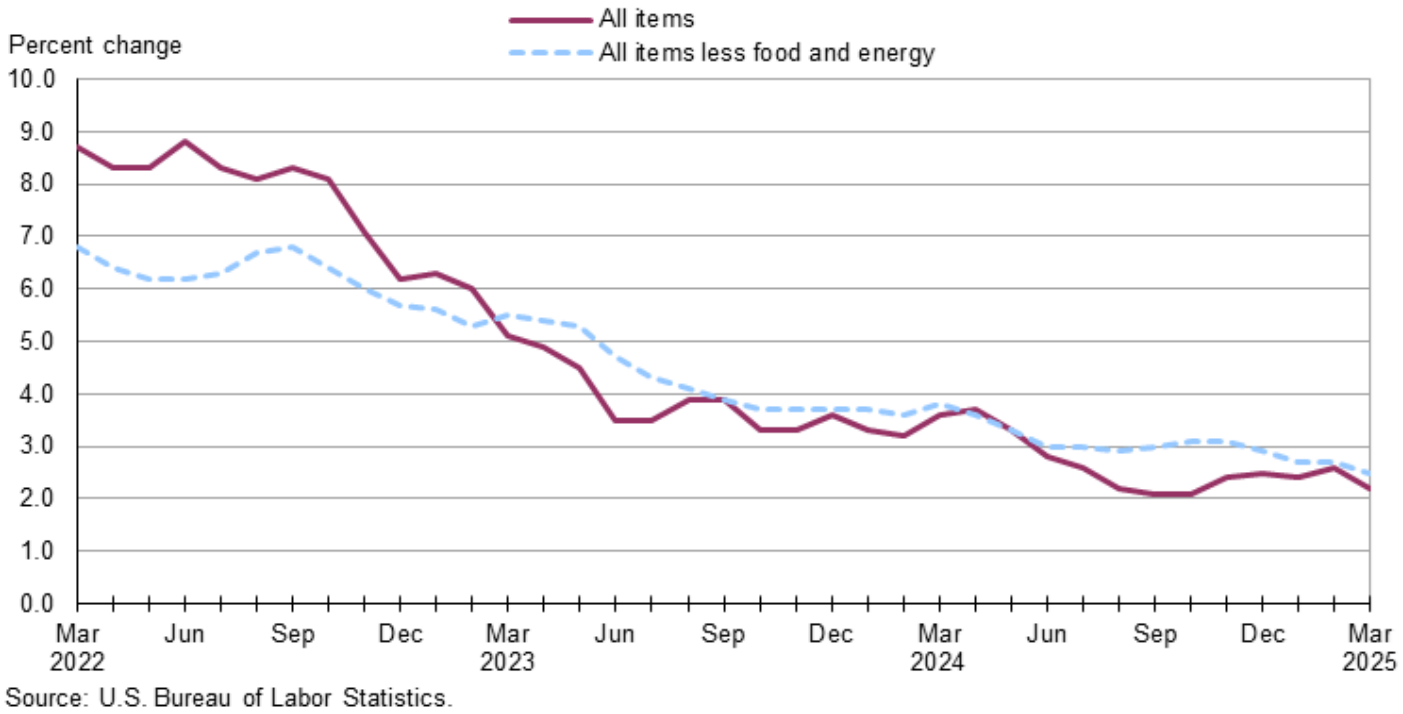
The following figure displays total annual TRS from 2014 through 2022, the most recent full year available. Notably, TRS experienced its highest rate of growth between 2019 and 2020. However, growth slowed in the years following the pandemic, reflecting a more moderate pace of economic recovery.

Figure 16 : Yakima Taxable Retail Sales & Annual Growth Rate



The next figure shows recent changes in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the West Region. As of April, prices were up 0.5% from the previous month and 2.1% higher than one year ago. Over the past year, the cost of food went up 3.6%, while energy prices actually dropped by 5.7%. When looking at all items except food and energy, prices rose 2.5% over the year. Overall, inflation in the region has stayed positive from 2022 to 2025, showing steady but moderate increases in the cost of living.

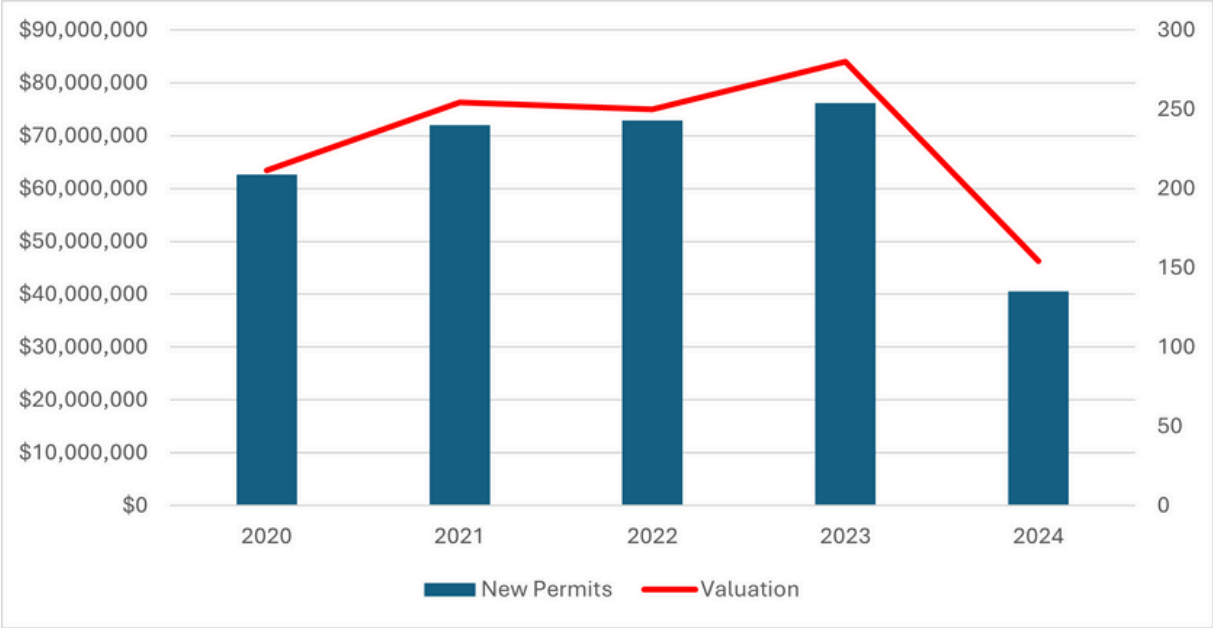
Figure 17: Inflation Trend – All Items: West Urban CPI-U



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The following figure shows the new construction assessed value compared to the taxable new construction added to the property tax rolls. The new construction value rose steadily since 2020 but experienced a drop off in 2024. The taxable value of new construction reflects the trends in new construction. From a fire department standpoint, all new construction, whether taxable or not, adds to the risk inventory of buildings to protect and increases call volume potential for the life of the buildings.

Figure 18: New Construction & Taxable New Construction



Historical Revenues and Expenses

The following is a review of historical revenues and expenses in the fire department to help identify relevant financial trends, strengths, and weaknesses, and to inform the financial footing of the YFD going forward. The historical review helps illustrate how YFD funds its services—where the money comes from and where it goes.

Revenue Trends

YFD derives its revenue from the city general fund, which receives its revenue from a variety of sources, such as property taxes, sales taxes, and utility taxes. Since YFD does not provide ambulance services its ability to augment the revenue stream is limited.

The following figure provides information on revenues by type from 2019–2024 (actual).

Figure 19: YFD Associated Revenue

Revenue	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
EMS Levy	1,422,877	1,666,702	1,657,433	1,781,561	1,908,177	2,886,297
Union Gap Contract	1,924,844	1,884,155	2,396,877	1,913,102	2,014,003	2,117,015
Capital Reserve	187,938	140,559	153,000	138,573	165,676	173,225
Reimbursements	581,559	644,620	534,861	593,623	675,913	779,227
Total Revenues	4,117,218	4,336,036	4,742,171	4,426,859	4,763,769	5,955,764

Expense Trends

YFD's largest operating expense is personnel costs, followed by supplies and services. In 2023, personnel costs represented just over 88 percent of total budgeted operating expenses for YFD. In comparison, full-career fire departments in Washington have 80% of their expenses attributable to personnel costs.

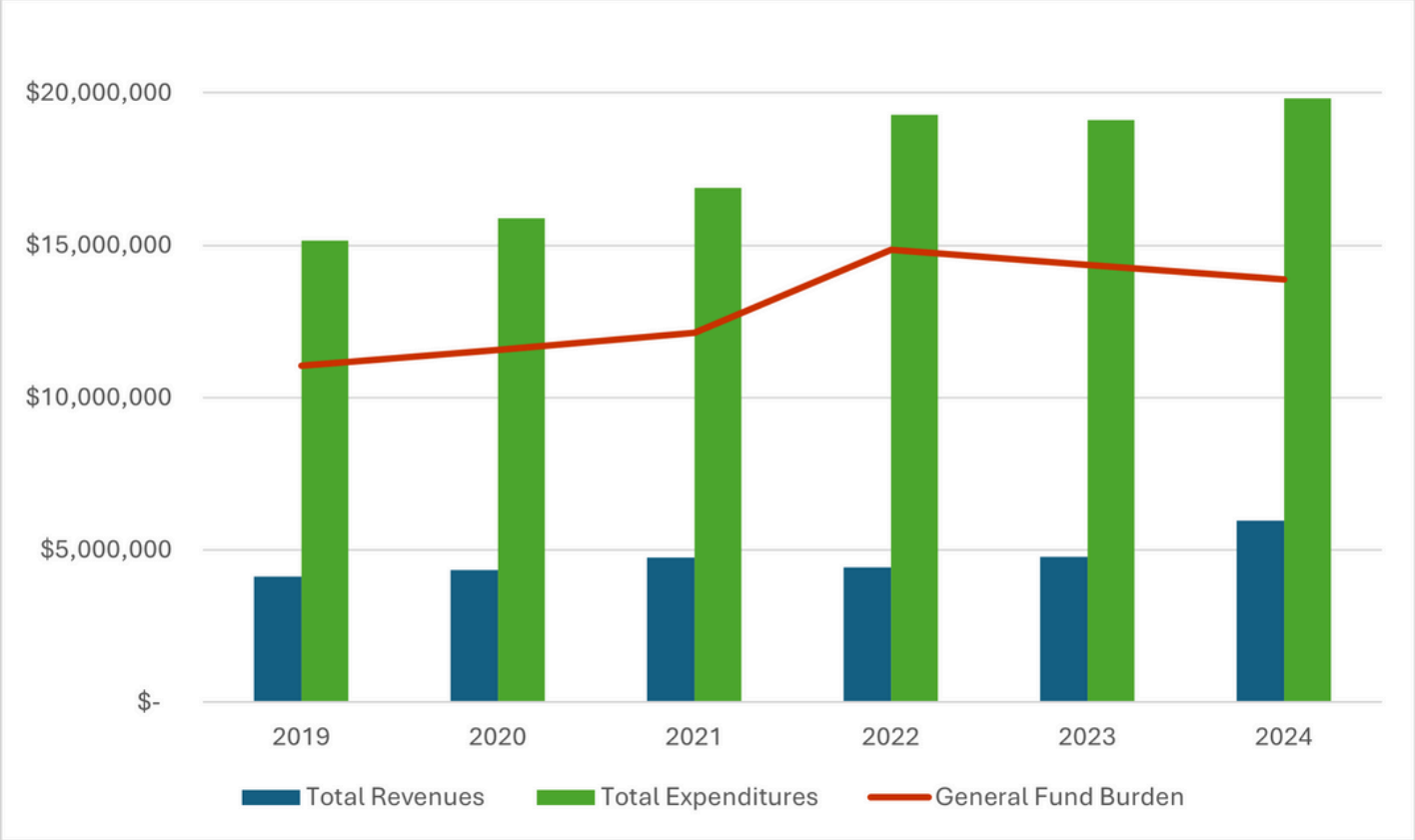
The following figure provides information on expenditures by type from 2019–2024 (2024 data is estimated):

Figure 20: YFD Associated Expenses

Expenditures	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Salaries and wages	10,298,263	10,374,564	10,866,461	12,330,655	12,417,872	12,554,640
Personnel Benefits	3,143,675	3,182,926	3,312,342	3,496,587	4,489,187	4,264,972
Operating Supplies	253,581	413,495	359,300	359,197	448,334	407,700
Professional Services	1,040,388	1,416,779	2,050,660	2,811,840	1,489,021	2,240,824
Capital	77,498	262,758	95,625	83,386	69,912	202,921
Debt Principal	289,527	214,378	162,278	162,278	170,439	138,789
Debt Interest	59,991	28,105	29,954	29,954	21,636	13,906
Total Expenditures	15,162,923	15,893,005	16,876,620	19,273,897	19,106,401	19,823,752

When deducting the expenses generated by YFD from its revenue, the remaining balance becomes the financial burden for the City of Yakima. The following figure illustrates the revenue offset from YFD's expenses, with the City of Yakima shouldering the unfunded expense balance from the general fund. The trend shows a gradual growth in general fund reliance in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 followed by a steady decline in reliance on the general fund in 2023 and 2024.

Figure 21: YFD's General Fund Burden



YFD will always rely upon the general fund for support, but YFD continues to leverage revenues it can generate to place a lighter burden on the city in general than might otherwise be required. Of course, if expenses go up disproportionately to the revenue YFD generates (as it did in 2022), the general fund burden becomes heavier for the city.

Future System Demand Projections

The Yakima Comprehensive Plan provides a clear roadmap for how the city intends to grow, offering both the Fire Department and City leadership a valuable tool for planning future service and resource needs. With that guidance in place, YFD has the opportunity to scale its services gradually and strategically—matching growth with incremental investments in personnel, infrastructure, and equipment.

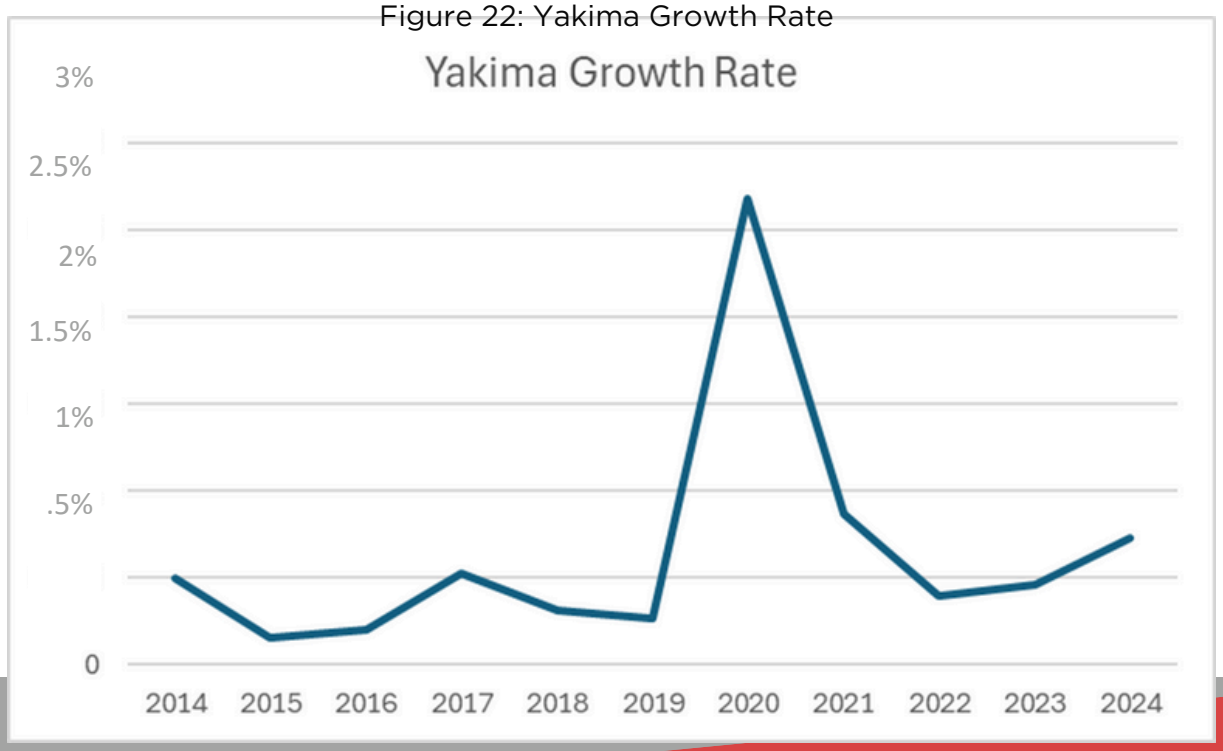
However, as detailed in the Service Delivery and Performance section, YFD's current resources are already stretched. Even modest growth will increase service demands and further strain the system unless proactive steps are taken.

The City of Yakima has experienced steady, if at times uneven, population growth. The current Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2017, projects that Yakima will grow from a baseline of 93,413 in 2016 to 110,577 residents by 2040—an increase of over 17,000 people.

Population Growth History and Projection

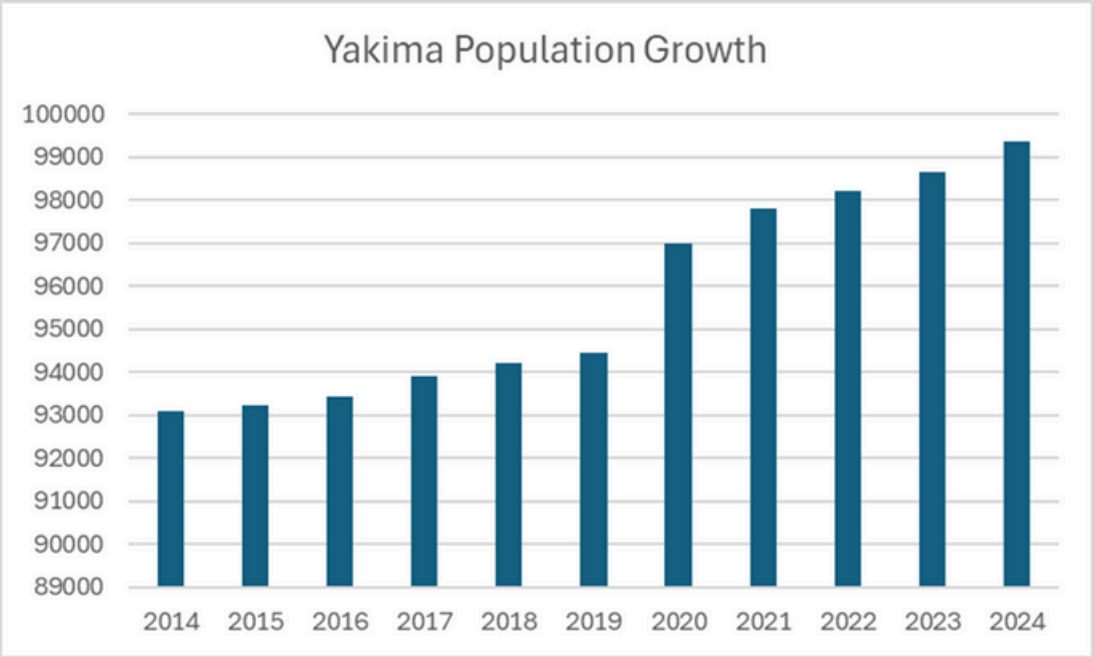
While recent growth trends were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, population gains have resumed, though at a slower pace. From 2023 to 2024, Yakima grew by just 0.73%. Although modest, this upward trend reinforces the need for deliberate planning to ensure YFD is equipped to meet future service demands. Growth rate increases in 2020 can be attributed to annexation activity.

Figure 22: Yakima Growth Rate



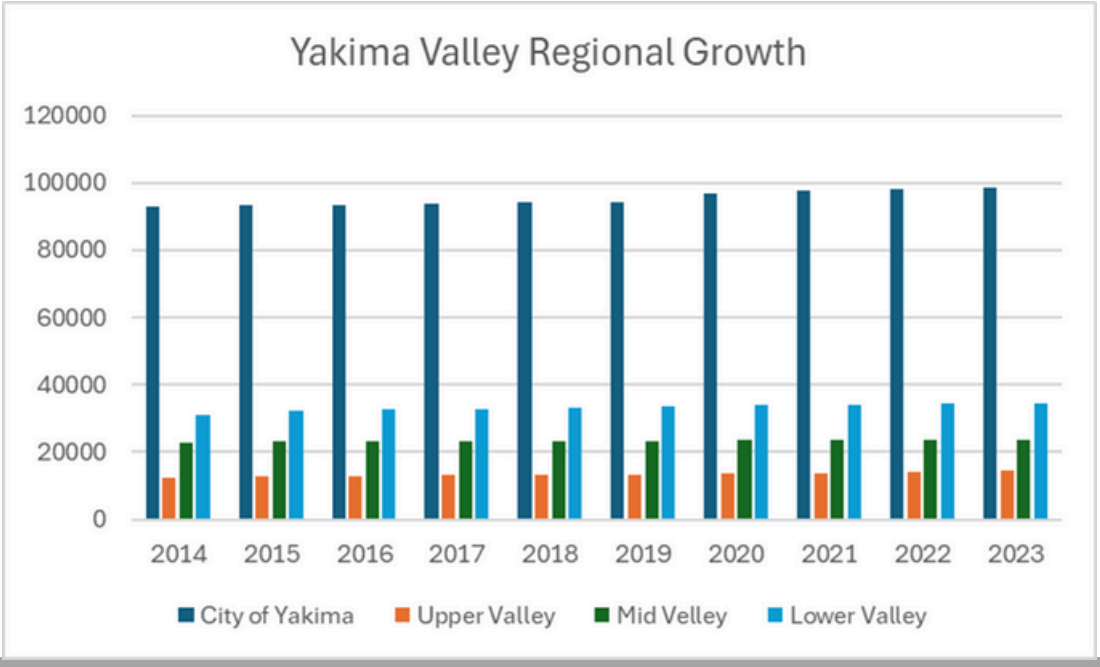
Annual population growth is shown as follows:

Figure 23: Yakima Historic 10-year Growth



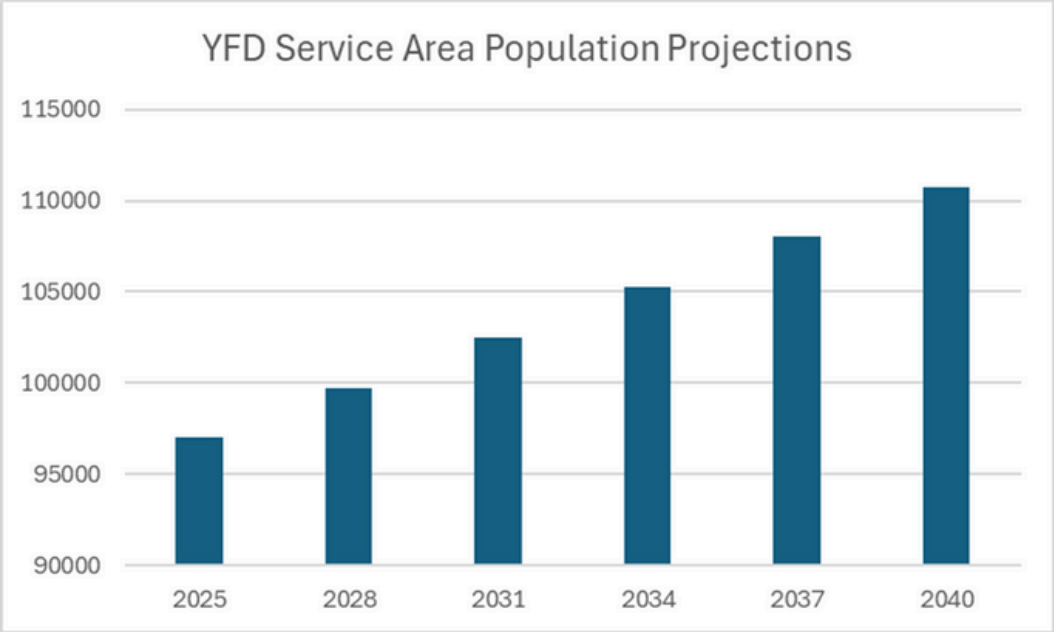
This increase shows a year over year steady increase, with an average annual rate of 0.07% percent. Over the last 10 years, the city has grown 6.4 percent. The rate of growth in the Yakima Valley is also growing, with Yakima growing at a similar rate to other populated areas of Yakima County.

Figure 24: Yakima Valley Regional Growth



The Comp Plan anticipates that Yakima will reach a population of 110,577 in the next ten years (2040), increasing by 17,167 residents. If the projected growth is linear, the following figure depicts an estimated progression of population using the last ten years and the projected 2040 population from the comprehensive plan in three-year increments. The incremental growth is based on the annual median growth over the last decade.

Figure 25: YFD Service Area Population Projections



Comprehensive Plan and YFD

The Yakima Comprehensive Plan provides a clear picture of where and how the city intends to grow—and it confirms that Yakima has more than enough land capacity to meet and even exceed its projected population targets. In fact, the plan notes that the City has enough land capacity to accommodate nearly twice the allocated population. While most of the future development can occur within the existing city boundaries, the City may consider strategic annexation in areas where it makes sense.

The plan identifies key areas of future development, including Downtown Yakima, the Cascade Mill Site, the Congdon properties, and the North 16th/SR 12 corridor. These locations represent a mix of infill, revitalization, and long-term investment potential—all of which could place added pressure on fire and EMS services, particularly if redevelopment occurs at higher densities or introduces new residential and commercial uses.

Demographics

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of July 2024, Yakima's largest ethnic group is Hispanic or Latino at 47.6%, closely followed by individuals identifying as , White (non-Hispanic or Latino),which make up 43.7% of the population. Other races and ethnicities make up the remaining percentage.

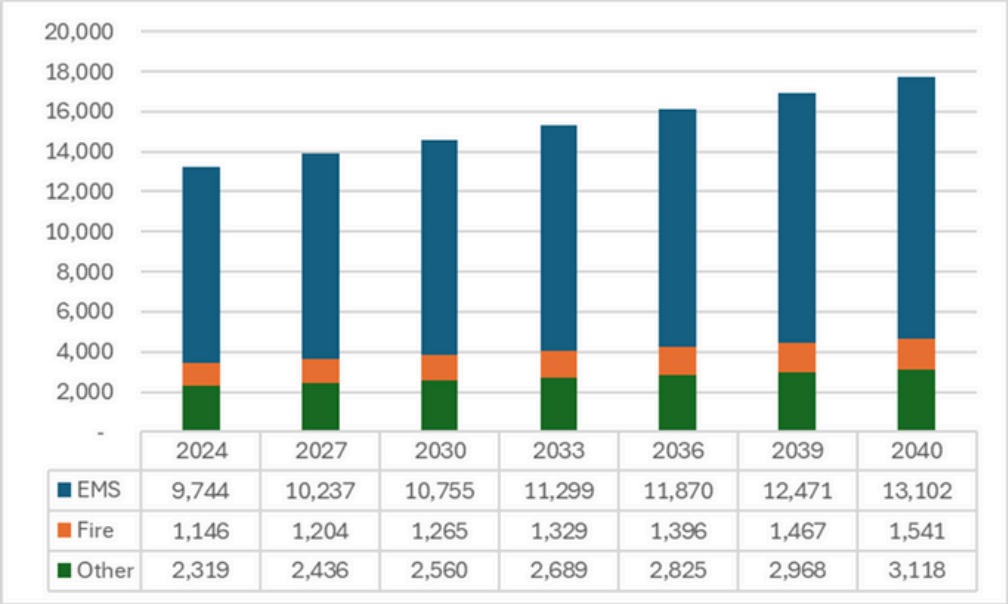
These demographic realities underscore the need for Yakima Fire Department personnel to have, at minimum, basic conversational Spanish-speaking abilities. The ability to communicate effectively during emergencies—especially in households where English may not be the primary language—can directly impact the speed and quality of care.

In addition to ethnic diversity, Yakima's population is aging. As of 2024, 16.3% of the population is over age 65, a figure that's expected to grow as the "silver tsunami" continues—referring to the aging of the Baby Boomer generation. This shift will likely result in increasing demand for emergency medical services, including transport. While overall population growth has remained relatively flat since 2020, demographic changes alone—particularly age and health-related needs—will continue to drive EMS call volume upward.

Fire Service Demand Projections

Based on the past 5 years of call volume, which is a 5% median increase per year, in spite of a population growth of only .073%, the demand for services is outpacing the annual growth rate. With 132.92 calls per 1000 population in 2024 compared to 116.2 calls per thousand in 2020, the demand for services is greater than the population growth rate.

Figure 26: Projected Service Demand



	2024	2027	2030	2033	2036	2039	2040
EMS	9,744	10,237	10,755	11,299	11,870	12,471	13,102
Fire	1,146	1,204	1,265	1,329	1,396	1,467	1,541
Other	2,319	2,436	2,560	2,689	2,825	2,968	3,118

Fires of all types demonstrated the lowest rate of increase. This reflects a national trend and can be attributed to improvements to building codes and fire prevention over the last several decades. EMS is expected to be the dominant factor affecting service demand. Other incidents, including alarm sounding and service calls not involving actual fires or medical incidents, are predicted to increase partly due to the increased installation of these systems and properly coded public assist calls.

While the projections follow a linear path of growth, community growth and its associated service demand rarely align with strict linear progression. However, it is reasonable to conclude that the small growth projections in the comp plan will have a direct impact on the fire department service demand. YFD will remain challenged to keep up with the increased service demand as the city grows.

Performance Measures and Targets

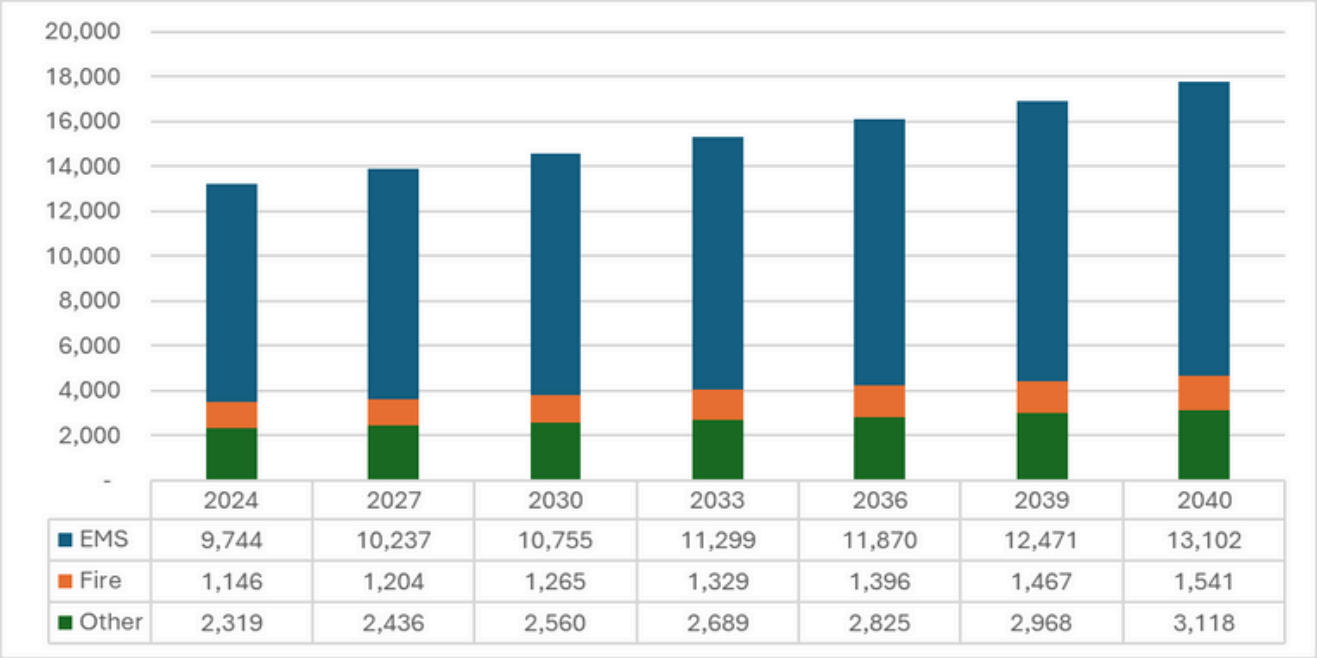
As YFD is seeing increasing demand for service and rising operational complexity, developing clear and data-informed performance standards is critical for guiding future decisions. These standards are not intended as inflexible mandates, but rather as aspirational targets that should help YFD align staffing, apparatus deployment, and response time expectations with the evolving needs of the community. Grounded in national best practices but tailored for local application, these performance measures provide a structured way to assess service delivery and inform continuous improvement.

Incident Volume and Demand

The demand for fire and emergency medical services in Yakima is projected to rise steadily over the next 15 years, driven by both population growth and increasing complexity of service needs. In 2024, YFD expects to respond to approximately 13,200 calls for service. By 2040, that number is projected to reach nearly 17,800—a 35% increase. The majority of these calls—over 74%—will be related to emergency medical services (EMS), followed by fire-related incidents and other calls such as false alarms, rescues, or public assistance.

This upward trend in incident volume reinforces the importance of scalable service delivery models and strategic resource deployment. While current demand levels may be manageable within existing constraints, projected growth highlights the need for a flexible framework that can support periodic re-evaluation and adaptation of staffing, deployment zones, and response procedures.

Figure 27: Call Volume by Incident



	2024	2027	2030	2033	2036	2039	2040
EMS	9,744	10,237	10,755	11,299	11,870	12,471	13,102
Fire	1,146	1,204	1,265	1,329	1,396	1,467	1,541
Other	2,319	2,436	2,560	2,689	2,825	2,968	3,118

Staffing Standards

Each type of emergency requires a specific level of on-scene staffing to safely and effectively carry out operations. YFD aligns its staffing goals with NFPA 1710 and other relevant guidelines, while adjusting targets based on current resources and anticipated growth. For example, a full initial response to a structure fire ideally includes 15–17 personnel, while EMS responses typically require a minimum of two EMTs, with long-term aspirations to include a paramedic for advanced life support delivery. Technical rescue and hazardous materials incidents necessitate specially trained teams, often requiring cross-staffing and regional collaboration.

Incident Type	Minimum Staffing	Reference
Structure Fire (1st Alarm)	15-17 Personnel	NFPA 1710 §5.2.4
EMS - BLS	2 EMTs	Local SOG
EMS - ALS	2 EMTs + 1 Paramedic (goal)	WA DOH/Industry Standard
HAZMAT	6 Technicians (initial)	NFPA 472/1072
Technical Rescue	6-8 (cross-trained personnel)	NFPA 1006 / FEMA Guidance

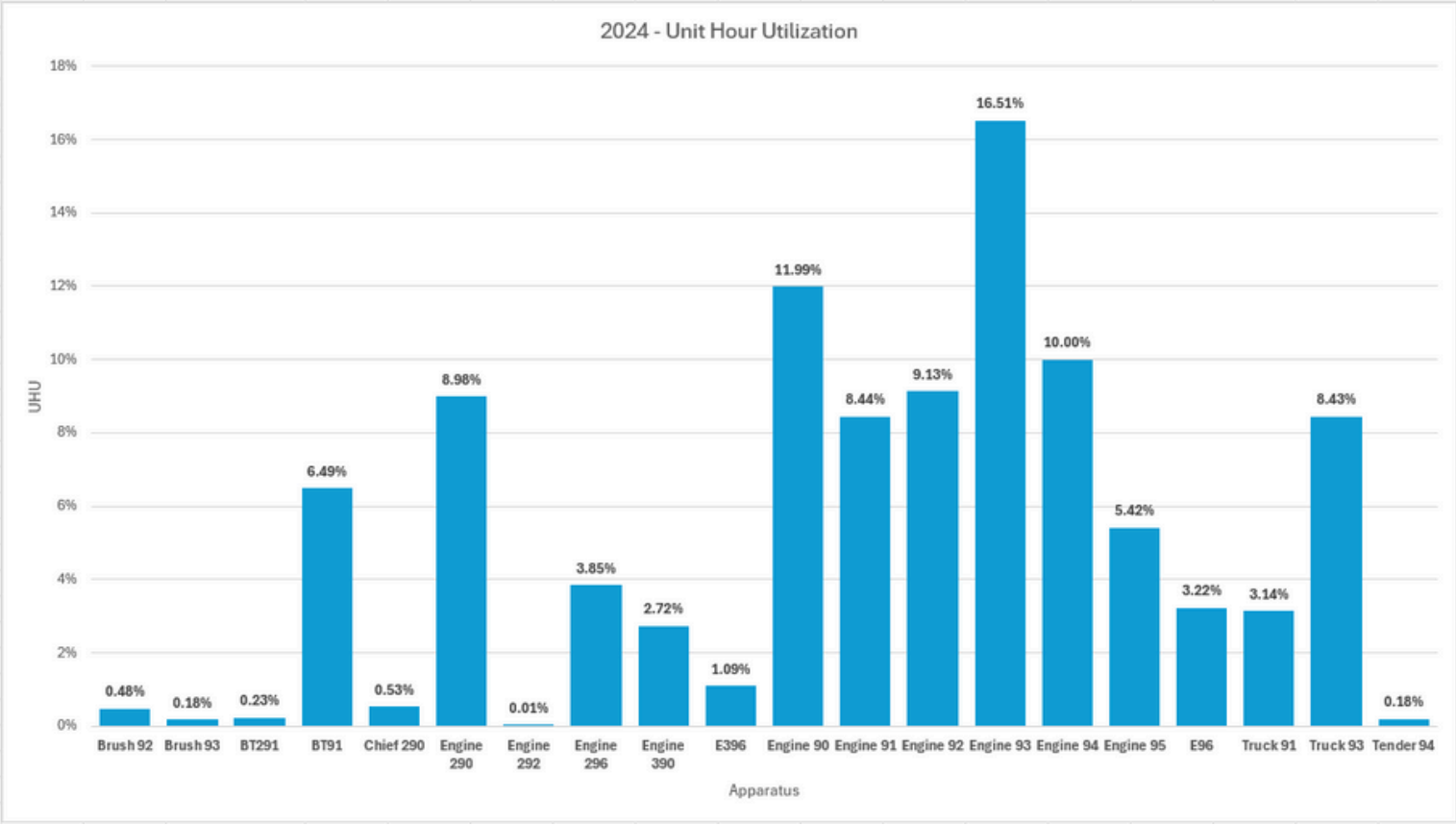
Apparatus Deployment Models

YFD uses standardized apparatus assignments to ensure appropriate equipment and support arrives on scene quickly and in the right sequence. Structure fires typically require four engines, one ladder truck, and a Shift Commander. EMS calls are typically handled by AMR through the closest available ambulance unit with additional support for high-acuity patients. Special operations incidents such as HazMat or wildland fires follow scalable models that balance risk, availability, and mutual aid agreements.

To ensure that the right resources arrive quickly and in the proper sequence, YFD should continue standard apparatus assignments for each type of incident. For structure fires, a full response should include four engines, one truck, and a Shift Commander. EMS responses should be handled by the closest available engine or medic unit, supplemented by ALS resources if the call type or acuity warrants. HazMat incidents and technical rescues, though less frequent, require specialized units that should be pre-designated with support from a minimum number of engines or trucks.

Data from current apparatus deployment, particularly the uneven UHU rates, suggests a need to refine geographic station coverage and unit availability to better match projected demand. Over time, this may require facility expansion, reallocation of frontline units, or adjustment to shift schedules to accommodate peak service periods.

Figure 28: Unit Hour Utilization



Typical apparatus assignment, defined by NFPA and general industry standards, is as follows:

Incident Type	Recommended Apparatus Assignment
Structure Fire	3 Engines, 1 Truck, 1 Shift Commander, EMS Support
Wildland Fire	1 Brush Unit, 1 Engine, Mutual Aid
HAZMAT	HAZMAT Unit, 1 Engine, 1 Shift Commander
Technical Rescue	Rescue Unit, Support Engine or Truck

Each emergency type carries a distinct risk profile and operational complexity, requiring targeted on-scene staffing levels. YFD's recommended staffing targets should reflect both industry standards and local response realities. For instance, structure fires ideally involve 15–17 personnel on the first alarm response, in alignment with NFPA 1710. Basic EMS calls require a minimum of 2 EMTs, with the long-term goal of integrating paramedics to deliver Advanced Life Support (ALS) capabilities on more critical calls.

Special operations, including hazardous materials and technical rescues, should be staffed with teams of 6–8 highly trained personnel. These incidents may also draw upon cross-staffed or regionally supported units, depending on severity and scale. By defining these staffing targets as "should" rather than "must," YFD can allow for operational flexibility while setting clear service delivery benchmarks.

Response Time Objectives

Time is a critical variable in emergency response, often determining life or death outcomes. YFD should strive to meet performance targets across four core benchmarks: call processing time, turnout time, travel time, and total response time. Based on NFPA 1710 and similar standards, YFD should aim for:

Time Segment	Target Time	Reference
Call Processing (Dispatch)	≤ 60 seconds	NFPA 1221 / 1710
Turnout Time (Day/Night)	≤ 60 / 80 seconds	NFPA 1710
Travel Time (Urban)	≤ 4 minutes (90% of calls)	NFPA 1710
Total Response Time (Urban)	≤ 6–7 minutes (90%)	Industry Best Practice

These benchmarks serve as operational targets, not fixed requirements. Geographic realities, staffing levels, and traffic patterns may affect whether these times are consistently achieved. As YFD evaluates future annexations or population centers (e.g., growth in North 16th/SR 12 or the Cascade Mill site), GIS-based response modeling should be used to refine travel time expectations by zone and call type.

YFD continually tracks its operational performance to ensure effective and timely emergency response. One key measure of service delivery is response time compliance, which reflects how quickly units arrive on scene after a call is received. In alignment with national benchmarks established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1710), YFD monitors its response metrics to assess compliance and identify areas for improvement. The following section presents YFD's recent response performance data compared to these industry standards, providing insight into the department's current service levels and operational efficiency.

Data shown below depicts the average time and percentage of compliance, respectively, for turnout, travel, and response to meet the 90th percentile for all calls out of each YFD fire station in the most recent six months (late 2024):

Figure 29: Response Time Distribution

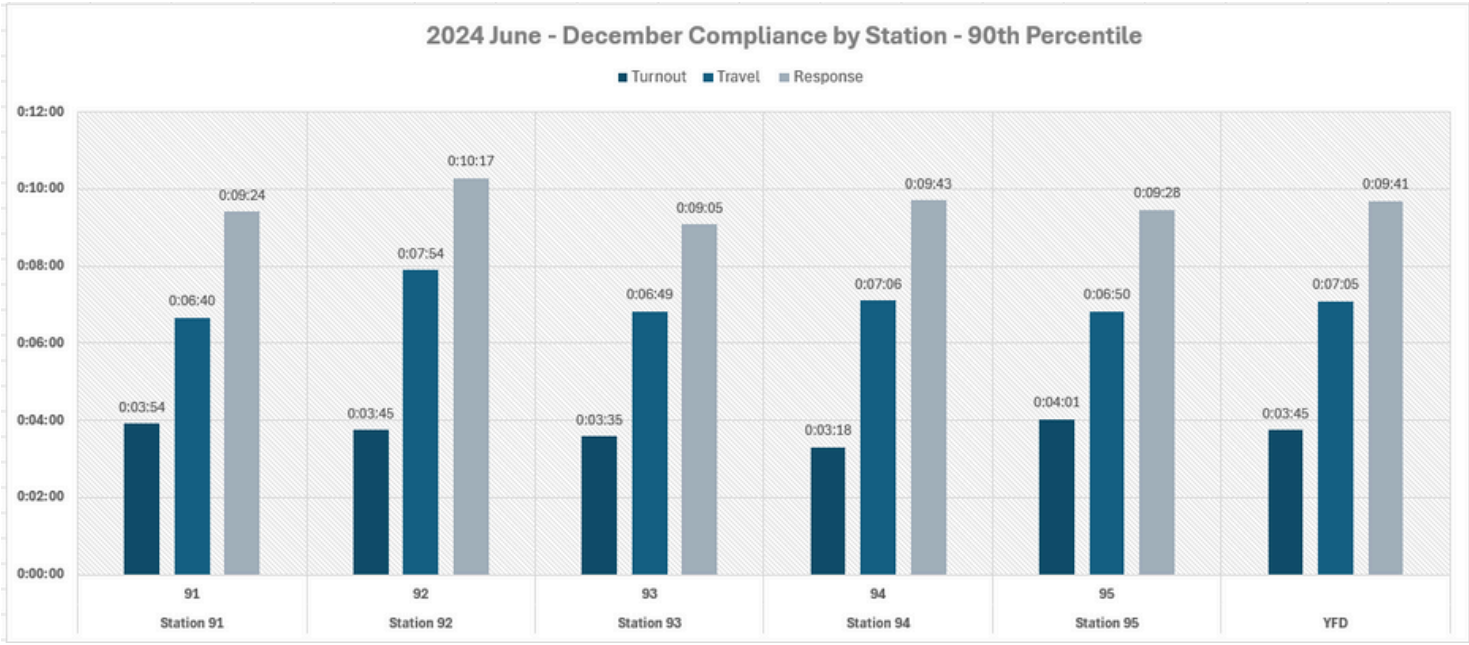
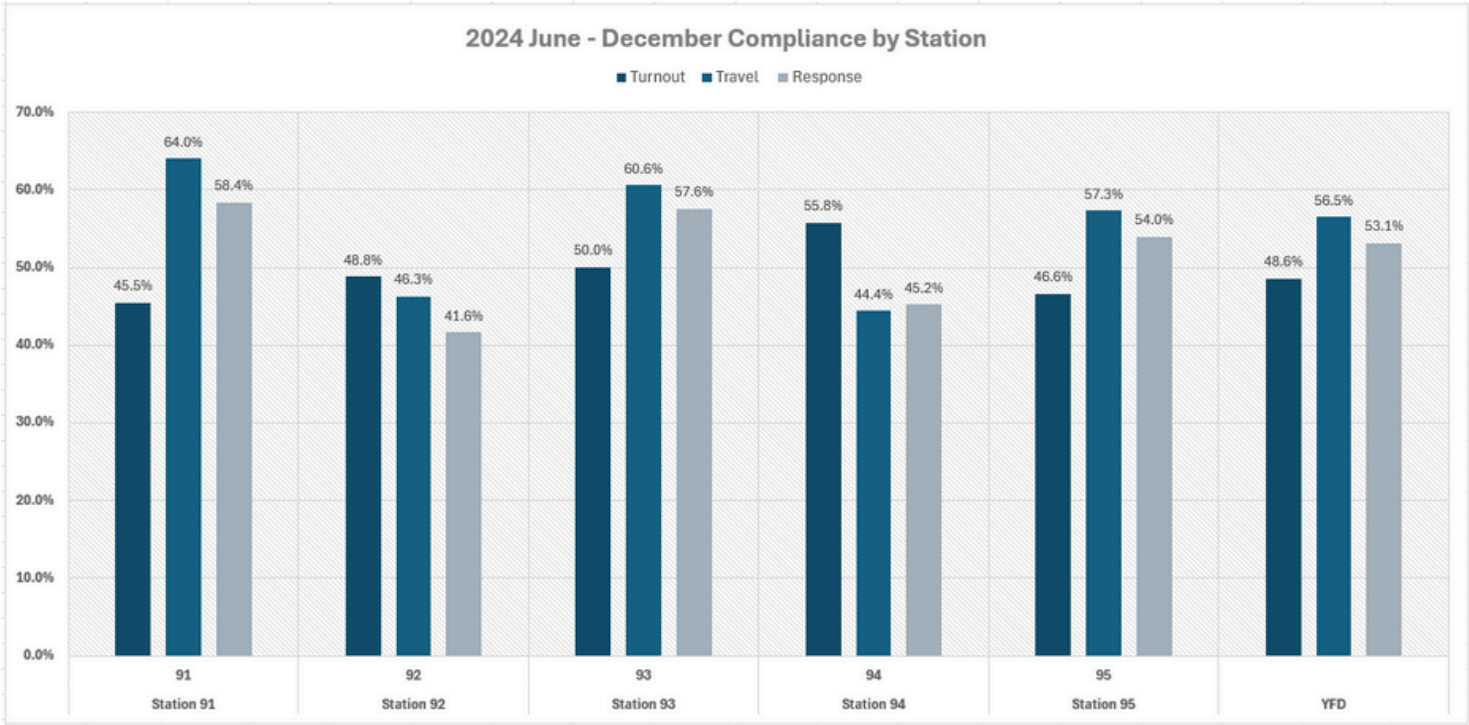
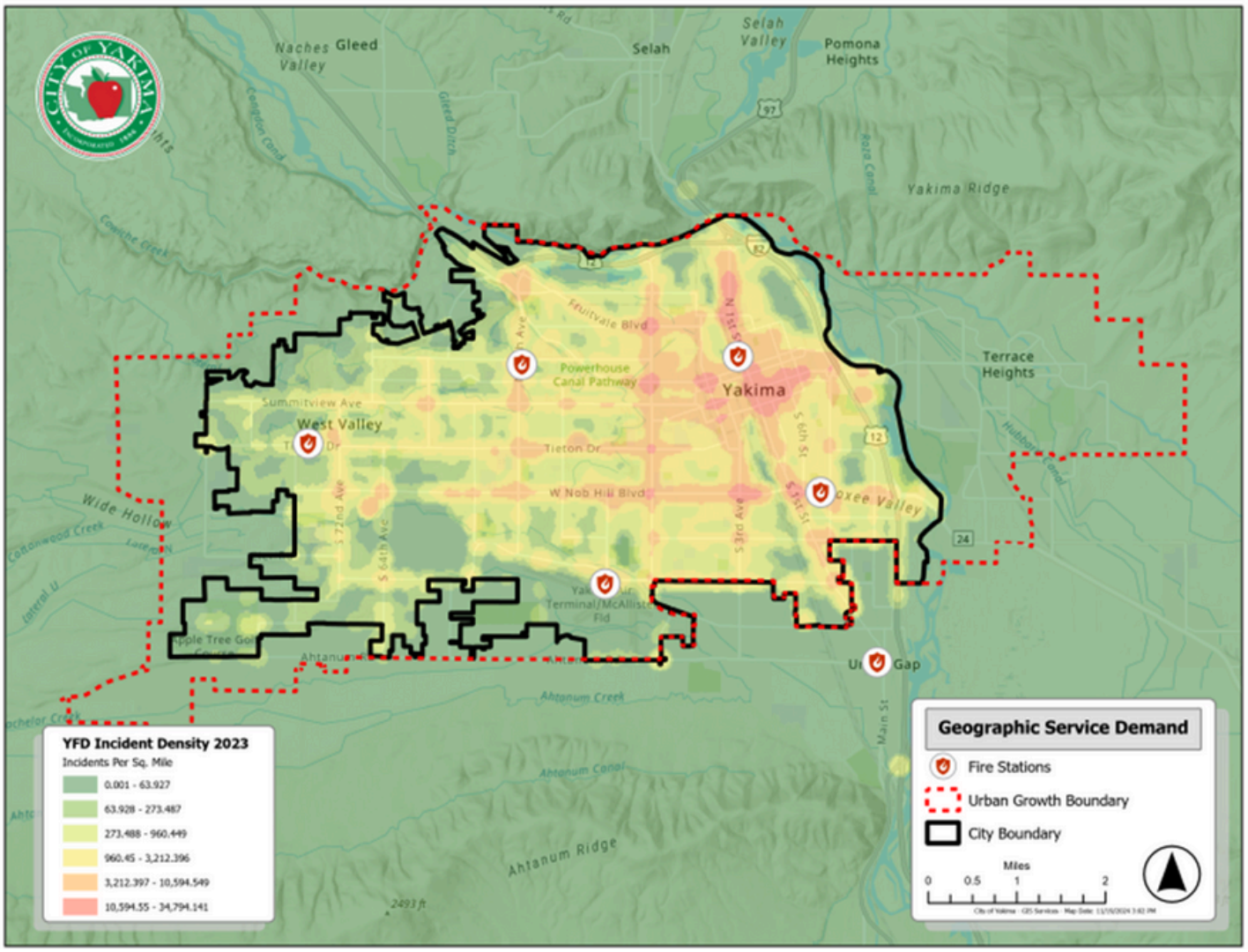


Figure 30: Percentage of Response Time Compliance



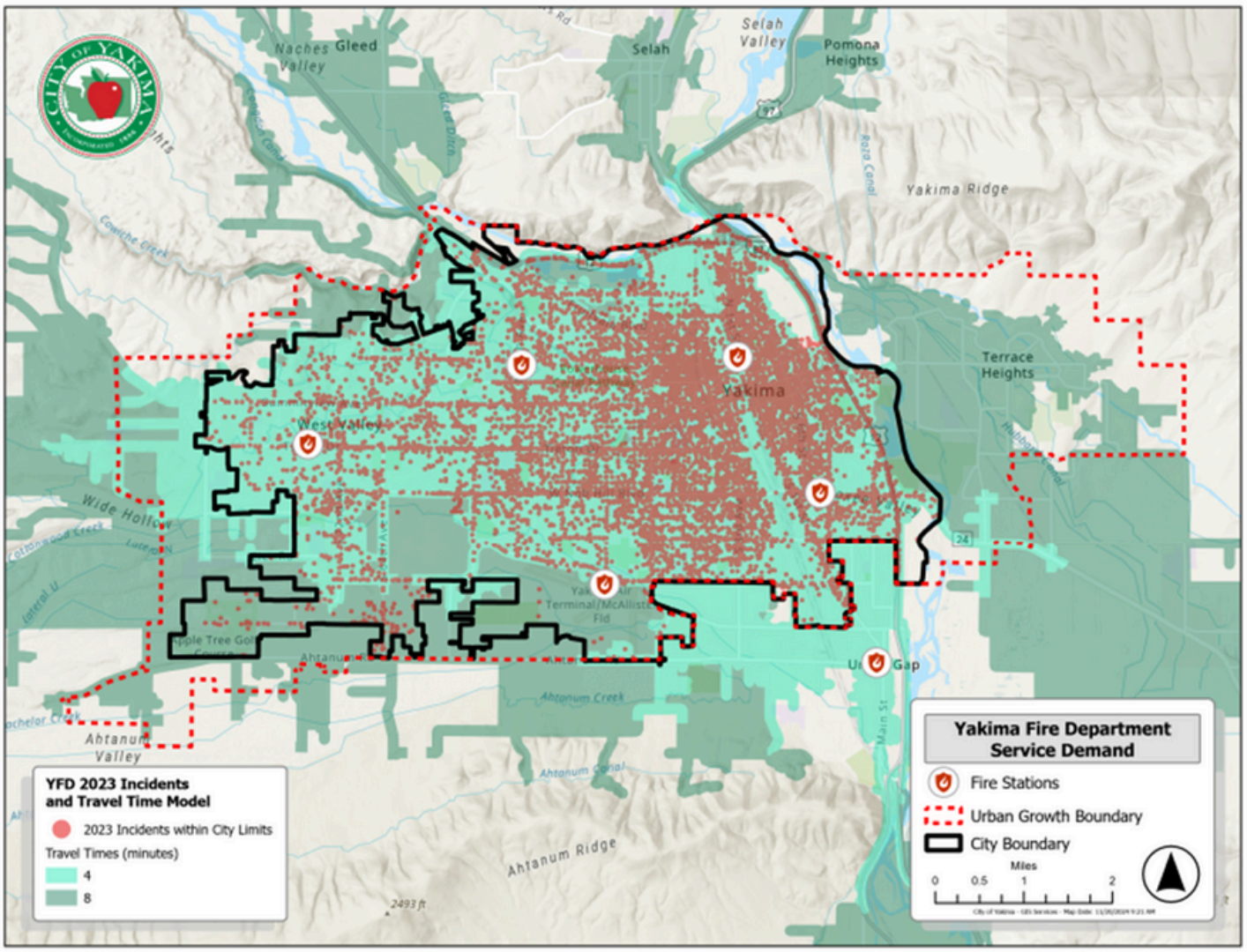
This map shows the incident density throughout the city. It confirms that the highest call volumes occur in the most densely populated portions of the city.

Figure 31 - 2023 YFD Incident Density



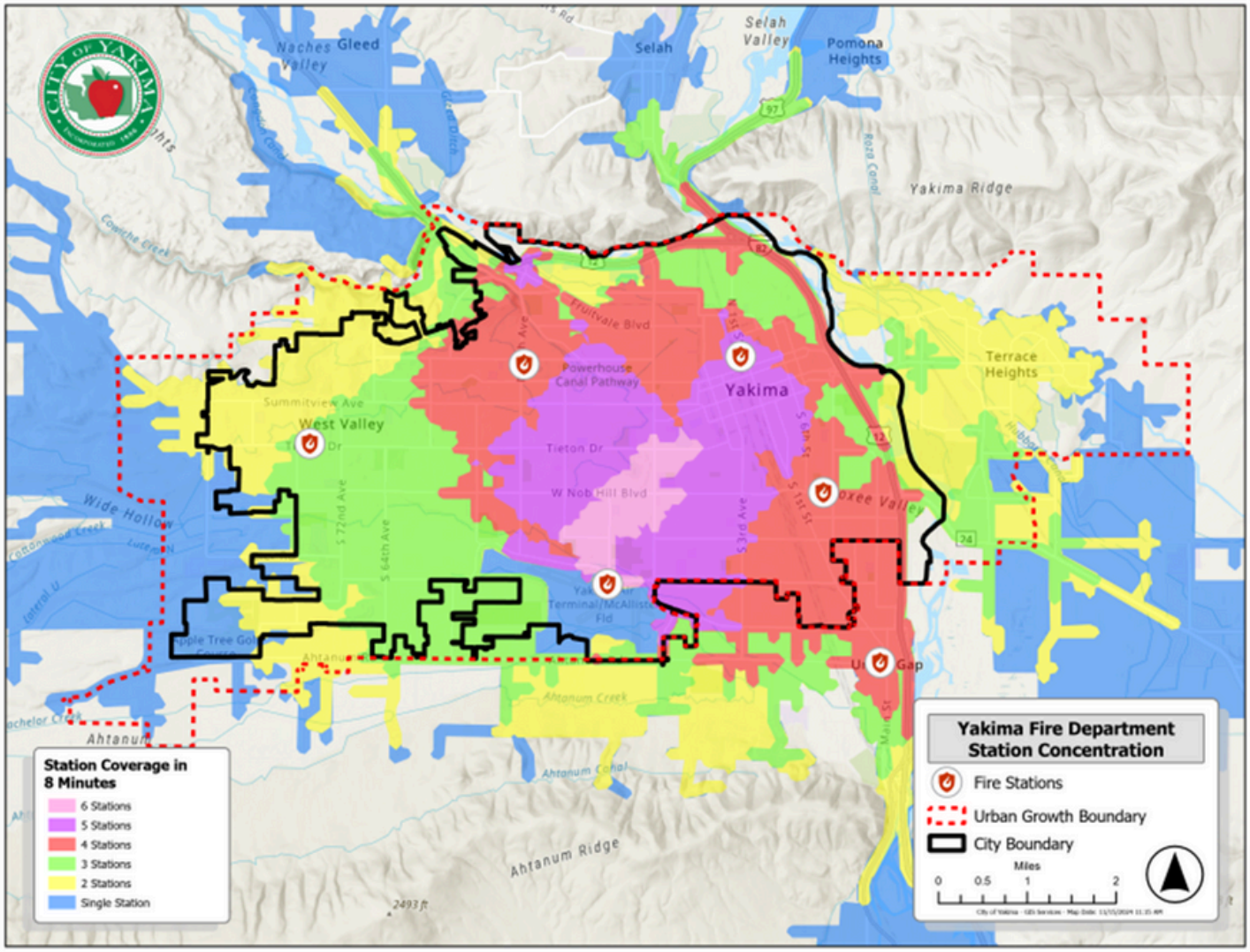
The figure below shows that most of the incidents occur within the four minute response area. While actual response times fall short of that, it is mainly due to concurrent call volume or apparatus not being available at the closest station.

Figure 32: 2023 Incidents and Travel Time



Call response time can be reduced with cooperation from other fire stations/units withing YFD. The map below shows the number of stations that can arrive within 8 minutes for an incident. There is only a small central area that all 6 station units can arrive within the 8 minutes. The east and west end fall to either 2 or 3 stations arriving within the 8 minutes, which falls short of the NFPA standards for a residential structure fire.

Figure 33: 8 Minute Station Coverage



Growth in the community, annexations of new land, and future station location can alleviate long response times, as well as the reliance on utilizing additional stations/units to respond to concurrent calls.

Measuring and Managing Performance

Rather than simply tracking compliance, YFD should use performance standards to guide resource decisions, budget prioritization, and community reporting. A departmental dashboard—updated annually—should visualize key metrics like UHU, incident volume by type and zone, and response time reliability. Gaps in service or resource strain should be clearly identified and paired with corrective action plans.

Additionally, integrating feedback from the community and peer benchmarking will support a culture of transparency and adaptive learning. Performance standards should be reviewed and updated at least every three years, or sooner in the event of major operational changes such as new station construction, population shifts, or significant increases in call volume.

Looking Ahead

Implementing and refining performance standards is a long-term commitment. In the short term, YFD should establish baseline data and begin formal tracking. Over time, performance metrics can be incorporated into budget development, staffing models, and facility planning. As Yakima grows and changes, these standards will provide a foundation for adaptive, responsive, and accountable public safety services.

YFD Issues and Recommendations

YFD plays a critical role in protecting life and property across a diverse community. This assessment was conducted to identify systemic challenges and opportunities for improvement across all facets of department operations—from staffing and training to capital planning, emergency medical services, and community engagement.

While YFD demonstrates strong commitment and foundational capabilities, the department faces structural, strategic, and operational gaps that limit its long-term effectiveness and adaptability. This section outlines key findings and provides actionable recommendations to enhance departmental resilience, responsiveness, and alignment with modern best practices in fire service delivery.

To effectively prioritize and sequence improvements across the Yakima Fire Department, recommendations are grouped into short-, medium-, and long-term categories based on their cost, complexity, and implementation timeline. This phased approach allows the department and City leadership to act immediately on low-cost, high-impact opportunities while planning for more resource-intensive investments over time.

Short-Term Priorities

These are low-cost, high-impact actions that can be implemented quickly using existing personnel, equipment, and budget. They typically involve policy updates, procedural improvements, staff assignments, and basic training or administrative actions that require minimal new funding.

Medium-Term Priorities

These initiatives require moderate financial investment and planning. They may involve additional staffing, procurement of vehicles or specialized equipment, or the expansion of current programs. Medium-term priorities typically take 1–3 years to implement and often require inclusion in future budget cycles.

Long-Term Priorities

These projects require significant capital investment, interdepartmental coordination, and long-range planning. Long-term priorities include facility replacement or relocation, major infrastructure upgrades, and strategic expansion of department capabilities aligned with projected community growth. These

efforts may take 3–10 years to fully realize and require dedicated funding mechanisms.

Management Components – Findings and Recommendations

Effective fire department leadership relies on a strong organizational foundation—anchored by a clear vision, strategic planning, and operational alignment. YFD demonstrates a commitment to service but faces several management-level challenges that limit its long-term effectiveness and internal cohesion. Gaps in vision, workforce planning, infrastructure readiness, and communication systems must be addressed to support the department's evolving role in public safety and community trust.

YFD faces several foundational challenges that impact its effectiveness and long-term sustainability. Key issues include the lack of a clear vision and organizational identity, inadequate workforce planning and succession strategies, and insufficient capital and fleet planning. Communication gaps—both internally and with the public—limit transparency and engagement, while fragmented data systems and inconsistent security measures reduce efficiency and increase risk. These gaps collectively hinder the department's ability to operate cohesively, plan strategically, and adapt to growing service demands.

Strategic Recommendations for Management Components

Short Term

Rebuild and Communicate Organizational Identity

- Facilitate an inclusive process to develop a formal vision statement and refresh mission and core values with full staff engagement.
- Launch a communications strategy that embeds these elements into onboarding, evaluations, and daily operations.

Implement Workforce Planning and Succession Strategy

- Conduct a comprehensive staffing assessment linked to call volume and population trends.
- Develop a succession plan and leadership pipeline to ensure continuity and staff development at all levels.
- Invest in employee wellness and resiliency initiatives, especially for those responding to behavioral health emergencies.

Medium Term

Establish a Multi-Year Capital Improvement Plan

- Create a detailed, YFD-specific Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that includes facilities, apparatus, and equipment needs with projected timelines and costs.
- Pursue diverse funding sources, such as grants, voter-approved bonds, and regional partnerships to support infrastructure improvements.

Modernize Data Systems and Security Protocols

- Transition to an integrated data management platform to unify personnel, training, asset, and incident reporting systems.
- Conduct cybersecurity and physical security audits to assess vulnerabilities and develop mitigation strategies, including secure access, surveillance, and fencing.

Long Term

Strengthen Communication Infrastructure

- Hire or contract a Public Information Officer (PIO) to oversee communications, media, and web presence.
- Develop an internal and external communications plan with scheduled briefings, content strategy, and crisis communication protocols.
- Form a community engagement or advisory group to support transparency, trust, and department storytelling.

Capital Assets and CIP – Findings and Recommendations

Capital assets—including fire stations, apparatus, and critical equipment—are essential to the YFD's ability to deliver timely and effective emergency services. However, the absence of a formal, long-range Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and limited alignment with citywide growth trends expose the department to operational inefficiencies, delayed response coverage, and increased maintenance costs. Strategic and sustainable capital planning is urgently needed to ensure YFD's infrastructure supports future service demands, workforce needs, and public safety expectations.

YFD lacks a formal Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), limiting its ability to strategically address facility maintenance, upgrades, and expansion. Without a long-term funding mechanism, critical infrastructure improvements remain underprioritized. Additionally, current station locations may not align with growth and service demand—particularly in areas east of I-82 where access is limited. While an Apparatus Replacement Plan exists, it is unfunded, and there is no structured plan for replacing essential non-vehicle equipment, leading to reactive and inconsistent procurement.

Strategic Recommendations – Capital Assets and Capital Planning

Short Term

Secure and Diversify Capital Funding Sources

- Work with City leadership to identify sustainable funding mechanisms such as:
  - Capital reserves or general fund allocations
  - Impact fees from development
  - Voter-approved bonds or levies
  - State and federal grants (e.g., FEMA AFG, SAFER)
- Incorporate capital planning into the City's budgeting and capital facilities planning cycles.

Medium Term

Develop a Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

- Create a formal multi-year CIP for facilities and capital assets, identifying current needs, priorities, estimated costs, and project timelines.
- Ensure the CIP includes provisions for both facility maintenance and new infrastructure aligned with growth and service projections.

Conduct a Service Coverage and Station Location Study

- Complete a geospatial analysis of station locations and response times to identify underserved areas, particularly east of I-82.
- Use findings to prioritize future station siting, facility upgrades, and possible relocations based on response equity and efficiency.

Create a Formal Equipment Replacement Plan

- Develop a structured plan for tracking inventory, defining replacement cycles, and estimating future costs for all essential equipment.

- Include an annual review and update process to adapt to evolving technology, safety standards, and operational needs.
- Integrate the equipment plan into the overall CIP for a coordinated approach to capital asset management.

Align Capital Planning with Organizational Strategy

- Link all capital projects to departmental strategic priorities, such as firefighter safety, operational readiness, and fiscal sustainability.
- Engage key stakeholders—including internal staff, finance personnel, and elected officials—in the capital planning process to ensure ownership, transparency, and accountability.

Staffing, and Personnel – Findings and Recommendations

The effectiveness of the YFD depends heavily on the quality of its training systems, the strategic allocation of personnel, and its ability to adapt staffing models to meet changing demands. While foundational systems are in place, key gaps exist in training structure, workforce planning, emergency medical operations, and community risk alignment. These issues, if unaddressed, risk compromising readiness, safety, and long-term sustainability.

The Yakima Fire Department faces significant operational challenges related to training, staffing, and community risk alignment. Its training program lacks clear goals, updated policies, and consistent enforcement, while facilities, props, and instructor capacity are outdated or insufficient. Staffing models are imbalanced and unclear, with administrative levels exceeding averages and no documented benchmarks for station coverage or emergency response aligned with NFPA standards. The department's medical response role relative to its EMS partner is ambiguous, and internal work groups lack structure and accountability.

Additionally, the absence of a formal Community Risk Analysis (CRA) limits the effectiveness of risk reduction efforts, and current language access programs do not adequately serve Yakima's diverse population.

Strategic Recommendations – Staffing and Personnel

Short Term

Modernize and Structure the Training Program

- Move all YFD members to IFSAC standard for FF1, FF2, and Officer 1 and 2 to reduce WSRB required training hours.
- Update all training policies and platforms; define training objectives and certification requirements for leadership and specialty roles.
- Finalize the transition to Image Trend for training documentation and develop a digital inventory and tracking system for all training equipment.
- Reestablish clerical or administrative support for training operations and invest in facility upgrades, simulation tools, and updated training props.
- Reinstitute regular pre-fire planning as part of training and integrate findings into tactical drills.

Clarify EMS Roles and Strengthen Oversight

- Define the roles and responsibilities of YFD versus AMR for both routine and multi-incident scenarios.
- Establish internal oversight of EMS performance and coordinate response protocols to ensure effective, shared accountability.
- Develop ILS and ALS capabilities within YFD to assure continuity of service should AMR cancel the current contract.

Formalize Internal Work Group Governance

- Develop charters, leadership roles, and performance measures for all internal work groups and ensure cross-rank participation to strengthen operational decision-making.

Enhance Cultural and Language Capacity

- Expand the Spanish language program with formal training, certification, and community-facing materials.
- Review and improve language incentive structures to attract and retain bilingual personnel.

Evaluate Shift Configuration and Fatigue Management

- Reassess the impact of the 48/96 shift model on wellness and performance, and ensure compliance with FLSA standards through proactive use of Kelly Days and scheduling tools.

Medium Term

Conduct a Comprehensive Staffing Assessment

- Benchmark YFD's administrative, operational, and emergency staffing against NFPA standards and peer agencies.
- Develop a station-by-station staffing model showing minimum, maximum, and ideal levels based on risk type, call volume, and growth forecasts.

Implement a Community Risk Analysis Program

- Launch a structured CRA to identify and prioritize local hazards and at-risk populations.
- Use CRA findings to guide CRR strategies, staffing allocations, and public education campaigns.

Service Delivery and Performance

Findings and Recommendations

Training is the foundation of operational readiness and firefighter safety. While the YFD demonstrates a clear commitment to maintaining high training standards and partnerships with neighboring agencies, several systemic gaps currently limit the effectiveness, consistency, and future-readiness of the department's training program.

YFD's training program faces significant structural and resource limitations that hinder its effectiveness and sustainability. Training policies are outdated and lack alignment with current operational needs, while the absence of formal goals or a continuing education program limits long-term skill development. Record-keeping is fragmented due to an incomplete transition to Image Trend, and the department lacks a centralized system for tracking certifications. Aging facilities, outdated equipment, and the loss of clerical support further strain the program. Additionally, compliance with training requirements is inconsistent, pre-fire planning is neglected, and limited instructional capacity—coupled with a constrained budget—restricts the department's ability to modernize and grow its training capabilities.

Strategic Recommendations – Service Delivery and Performance

Short Term

Modernize Training Policies and Develop Strategic Goals

- Update training policies and procedures to reflect current operational needs and national standards.
- Establish formal training goals, objectives, and key performance indicators to guide and evaluate the program annually.

Implement a Comprehensive Continuing Education Program

- Develop a structured continuing education program that supports firefighter advancement, skill refreshment, and specialization.
- Incorporate pre-fire planning, leadership development, and scenario-based training as ongoing components.

Complete Transition to Centralized Record-Keeping

- Expedite the migration from ERS to Image Trend for training documentation.
- Develop and maintain a centralized digital record system for tracking certifications, hours, and training history for all personnel.

Improve Accountability and Compliance

- Develop a progressive discipline procedure for those that fail to meet required training hour requirements
- Strengthen enforcement of annual training hour requirements through company officer oversight and automated tracking systems.
- Reinstate and emphasize pre-fire planning as a critical training and operational tool.

Expand Internal Instructional Capacity

- Develop Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) through outside training experience and provide encouragement for them to share that knowledge.
- Support and incentivize additional staff to become certified as Instructor I and II.
- Leverage experienced personnel to mentor and assist in delivering high-quality, consistent training across shifts and specialties.

Medium Term

Review and Adjust the Training Budget

- Evaluate and increase the annual training budget to match modern instructional demands, facility needs, and regional benchmarks.
- Explore external grant funding (e.g., FEMA AFG) for facility upgrades, live fire props, and instructional technology.

Long Term

Invest in Facility and Equipment Modernization

- Prioritize upgrades to classroom environments and simulation capabilities, including modern video and digital fireground simulation tools.
- Repair or replace key training props (e.g., car prop, Kidde live fire unit) and inventory existing equipment to plan for replacements.
- Reestablish clerical support to relieve administrative workload on the Training Division.

Community Risk Assessment – Findings and Recommendations

A robust Community Risk Assessment (CRA) identifies local hazards, vulnerable populations, and opportunities for risk reduction through prevention, education, and strategic resource deployment. For YFD, the absence of key fire prevention policies, outreach programs, and multilingual engagement tools limits its ability to proactively reduce risk and build community
resilience. Strengthening YFD's prevention, education, and inspection capacity is essential to ensuring equitable safety outcomes citywide.

YFD faces notable gaps in community risk reduction, prevention, and outreach. Lack of involvement in construction plan reviews limit the department's influence on fire safety in new developments. Fire prevention efforts are further constrained by the lack of a self-inspection program for low-risk occupancies and no participation in storage tank inspections. Public education remains underdeveloped, with no structured programs for fire safety, CPR, or first aid training. Additionally, limited access to multilingual materials—particularly in Spanish—hampers the department's ability to engage effectively with Yakima's diverse community.

Strategic Recommendations – Community Risk Assessment

Short Term

Integrate YFD into Development Review

- Formalize YFD's role in reviewing new construction and tenant improvement plans to ensure early incorporation of fire safety measures and code compliance.

Establish a Self-Inspection Program

- Launch a self-inspection initiative for low-risk businesses, freeing up department resources while expanding fire prevention reach and encouraging business owner engagement.

Offer Community CPR and First Aid Training

- Introduce basic life support training as part of a broader community risk reduction strategy, delivered through public workshops and events.

Expand Multilingual Outreach

- Develop and distribute fire safety and emergency preparedness materials in Spanish and other common local languages to promote equitable understanding and participation.

Explore Storage Tank Inspection Capability

- Assess the feasibility of bringing storage tank inspections in-house or partnering with state or regional agencies to improve hazard awareness and regulatory alignment.

Medium Term

Build a Comprehensive Public Education Program

- Design and fund a community-wide outreach program addressing fire safety, emergency preparedness, and injury prevention—targeted especially toward schools, senior facilities, and underserved neighborhoods.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – Findings and Recommendations

YFD currently lacks internal oversight of its Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program, with no designated EMS Officer to manage quality control, HIPAA compliance, exposure tracking, or performance monitoring. Despite EMS accounting for over 70% of total calls, these responsibilities remain unassigned, leaving critical operational gaps. YFD relies entirely on a private ambulance provider, American Medical Response (AMR), for transport and ALS services, yet oversight of this contract appears limited—even though the City of Yakima represents approximately half of the countywide EMS call volume. The department's ALS capacity is also minimal, with only six EMT Intermediates and no paramedics on staff, limiting the ability to provide advanced care when fire crews arrive before AMR. By contrast, comparable agencies maintain greater in-house ALS capability. While Yakima County's EMS system benefits from strong medical direction, ongoing training, and quality assurance led by the Medical Program Director, YFD's EMS logistics and recordkeeping remain fragmented and labor-intensive, lacking centralized systems or dedicated support. This dependence on a single transport provider, combined with insufficient internal capacity and oversight, presents a significant vulnerability in Yakima's current EMS response model.

Strategic Recommendations – EMS

Short Term

Strengthen Contract Oversight of AMR

- Establish formal performance monitoring and reporting requirements for AMR, including independent audits and real-time data sharing with YFD.
- Reevaluate contract exemptions to better reflect operational realities and ensure accountability.

Enhance Public-Facing Medical Education

- Expand YFD's community risk reduction efforts to include CPR and basic first aid training for the public as part of EMS outreach and community resilience.

Medium Term

Emergency Medical Services Contract Monitoring

- Create and fill an EMS Officer position responsible for:
  - Oversight of clinical operations and EMS training (OTEP).

- QA/QI tracking and case review participation.
- Contract compliance monitoring for AMR.
- HIPAA oversight and exposure control contact.

Modernize EMS Logistics and Data Systems

- Centralize EMS supply tracking, procurement, and distribution under the EMS Officer or dedicated support role.
- Streamline EMS training record management and integrate clinical performance metrics into department dashboards.

Long Term

Transition Toward ALS Capability in Fire Units

- Begin hiring paramedic-trained firefighters and offer paramedic training to existing personnel.
- Gradually equip all engines and ladders with ALS equipment to support early advanced care prior to AMR arrival.

Explore Long-Term Transport Alternatives

- Analyze the feasibility of fire-based transport options or regional shared-service models in light of AMR's long-term viability concerns.
- Consider a phased approach to building transport capacity, beginning with ALS engine companies and expanded partnerships.

HAZMAT – Findings and Recommendations

YFD plays a vital role in protecting the community from hazardous materials (HAZMAT) incidents, including industrial spills, chemical exposures, and emerging threats such as terrorism-related events. However, several gaps in personnel certification, mutual aid coordination, equipment readiness, and training frequency limit the department's current capacity to
respond effectively to high-risk HAZMAT scenarios. Addressing these vulnerabilities is essential to improving readiness, safeguarding first responders, and ensuring timely, coordinated response to complex emergencies.

Not all fire fighters are trained to Operations-level HAZMAT responders, meaning not all personnel are trained to recognize and report hazardous materials incidents—a critical first step in safe and effective response. No YFD personnel are certified in Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) response, creating a

preparedness gap in the event of a terrorism-related chemical event. YFD is also not integrated into a regional HAZMAT response team and has no formal mutual aid agreements in place, potentially delaying assistance during large or complex incidents. While the department has obtained a variety of HAZMAT tools, the absence of a verified equipment inventory introduces uncertainty about deployment readiness. Response times for Level A incidents currently range from 90 to 120 minutes, which may be insufficient during time-sensitive emergencies. Additionally, training occurs only on a quarterly basis, which is likely inadequate for maintaining proficiency in the highly specialized skills required for Technician- and Level A-level response.

Strategic Recommendations – HAZMAT

Short Term

Conduct a Comprehensive Equipment Inventory

- Finalize a full inventory of all HAZMAT response equipment, assess condition and serviceability, and develop a maintenance and replacement schedule.
- Enhance Training Frequency and Simulation: Increase hands-on training frequency to bi-monthly or monthly, and include full-scale exercises with external partners to test command, communications, and deployment procedures.
- Reduce Deployment Time: Evaluate staffing, alert protocols, and equipment staging to reduce Level A team assembly time for time-critical incidents.

Medium Term

Establish a Dedicated Budget Line for HAZMAT

- Create a dedicated and recurring budget to support HAZMAT training, equipment replacement, and program expansion.

Expand Personnel Certification

- Increase training to ensure all suppression personnel attain Awareness-level certification. Consider expanding Technician- and WMD-level certifications to strengthen depth of response.

Strengthen Mutual Aid Agreements

- Formalize mutual aid and automatic response agreements with surrounding jurisdictions (e.g., Sunnyside, Yakima Training Center) and explore joining a regional HAZMAT consortium or Washington State response zone.

Pursue Grant Funding:

- Seek federal and state grants to support certification, training, equipment, and interoperability initiatives—particularly in underserved rural and agricultural areas.

Specialized Technical Rescue - Findings and Recommendations

YFD demonstrates a strong commitment to delivering specialized technical rescue services across a wide range of low-frequency, high-risk incidents. These services—spanning rope rescue, trench collapse, confined space, vehicle extrication, and surface water rescue—are critical to protecting life and property in a community with industrial facilities, varied topography, and active transportation corridors. However, sustaining and expanding these capabilities requires greater operational structure, dedicated resources, and formalized planning.

YFD's technical rescue program faces several foundational challenges that limit its effectiveness and long-term sustainability. The program operates without a dedicated budget, lacks formal staffing standards, and relies on aging equipment in need of replacement. While Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) are in development, they are not yet fully implemented, and administrative oversight is informal, with no defined leadership structure. Strong collaboration with the Yakima Training Center enhances training opportunities, but the partnership is not formally integrated into mutual aid or response protocols. Additionally, the program lacks a structured evaluation process, making it difficult to track progress or plan strategically for future needs.

Strategic Recommendations – Specialized Technical Rescue

Short Term

Finalize and Standardize SOGs

- Complete development of all discipline-specific SOGs using Rescue 3 International guidelines.
- Implement a department-wide review and training process to ensure familiarity and consistency in application across crews.

Formalize Interagency Coordination

- Strengthen and formalize partnerships with YTC and other regional agencies through joint training calendars, mutual aid agreements, and shared response protocols.
- Identify opportunities for regional resource sharing and cost efficiencies.

Define Program Leadership and Administrative Oversight

- Assign a Technical Rescue Program Coordinator (existing or new position) to oversee program operations, training, budget, and interagency coordination.
- Consider forming a technical rescue advisory team to assist with planning, evaluation, and innovation.

Medium Term

Establish a Dedicated Budget Line for Technical Rescue

- Create a dedicated and recurring budget to support technical rescue training, equipment replacement, and program expansion.
- Explore potential grant funding (e.g., FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants) to offset capital equipment costs.

Develop and Implement Minimum Staffing Standards

- Formalize minimum staffing guidelines for each discipline of technical rescue to ensure consistent on-shift capabilities across all stations.
- Integrate these standards into shift assignments, training rosters, and station planning.

Implement Structured Program Evaluation and Strategic Planning

- Develop a technical rescue program plan outlining goals, staffing targets, equipment needs, and performance metrics over a 3–5 year horizon.
- Incorporate annual program reviews and after-action debriefs to identify operational improvements and training gaps.

Long Term

Modernize Technical Rescue Equipment

- Conduct a full inventory and condition assessment of current technical rescue equipment.
- Replace or upgrade aging gear to ensure safety and compliance with evolving NFPA and OSHA standards.
- Maintain an updated and accessible equipment tracking system to support ongoing maintenance and readiness.

Fire Department Planning – Findings and Recommendations

Proactive planning is essential to the long-term effectiveness, resilience, and credibility of fire departments. YFD has access to numerous planning frameworks—from performance standards and risk reduction to equipment and financial forecasting—but faces significant gaps in execution. Many planning tools remain underutilized or incomplete, reducing the department's ability to operate strategically and prepare for growth.

YFD faces significant challenges in planning, resource forecasting, and strategic alignment. Despite collecting large volumes of operational data, there is no formal system for applying it to long-term decision-making. Key planning tools—such as a current strategic plan, Standards of Cover, Community Risk Assessment, and Community Risk Reduction strategies—are either incomplete or missing. Resource and facility planning lack structure, and capital needs are not tied to growth trends or formal forecasts. Financial planning is limited, with no dedicated emergency reserve or long-term budget modeling. Additionally, the department has no formal succession plan, and organizational values and mission are not consistently embedded in operations. These gaps result in a reactive planning posture, limiting the department's ability to adapt proactively to evolving service demands and community expectations.

Strategic Recommendations – Fire Department Planning

Short Term

Establish a Data-Driven Planning Framework

- Formalize the use of data in decision-making, including performance metrics (RCW 35.103), response times, and incident trends.
- Create a dashboard or centralized tool for ongoing analysis of key operational indicators.

Complete and Operationalize Planning Documents

- Finalize and adopt:
  - A Standards of Cover for deployment and performance planning.
  - A Community Risk Assessment (CRA) to define and prioritize local hazards.
  - A Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Plan tailored to station service areas.
- Use these plans to direct staffing, apparatus placement, and outreach priorities.

Formalize Succession Planning

- Identify key leadership and technical roles, assess potential successors, and develop mentoring and development tracks for future leaders.
- Clarify internal promotion pathways versus competitive recruitment to foster transparency and trust.

Institutionalize Planning Practices

- Assign responsibility for planning to a designated Planning Officer or team within the department, reporting to the Deputy Fire Chief.
- Conduct annual reviews and updates of planning documents to ensure relevance and implementation progress.
- Create a public-facing summary of planning initiatives to build accountability and community trust.

Medium Term

Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Strategic Plan

- Facilitate a strategic planning process that includes internal staff and external stakeholders.
- Define and align YFD's mission, vision, core values, and 3–5 year strategic initiatives with clear timelines, responsibilities, and measurable goals.

- Focus on implementation of the recommendations of the Master Plan.

Integrate Resource and Capital Planning

- Create a multi-year resource plan that aligns staffing, apparatus, and facilities with population growth and service demand.
- Develop apparatus replacement policies based on NFPA 1911 and WSRB guidance.
- Incorporate facility condition assessments and seismic evaluations into a Capital Improvement Plan.

Link Fire Department Plans to Community Growth

- Collaborate with City planning to map future station locations using GIS, growth forecasts, and travel time modeling.
- Secure property for future stations in advance of development and begin planning one year before anticipated call volume thresholds.

Establish Financial Planning and Reserve Policies

- Work with the Finance Department to develop a long-term financial plan covering operations, capital assets, and personnel costs.
- Advocate for YFD's inclusion in the City's Capital Facilities Plan and maintain a department-specific emergency reserve fund.

Airport Rescue Fire Fighters (ARFF) – YKM Airport

Yakima Air Terminal (YKM), also known as McAllister Field, serves as a vital transportation and emergency management asset for the Yakima region. While it maintains essential air service and ARFF capabilities, there are growing operational challenges due to outdated infrastructure, limited commercial activity, shifting regulatory requirements, and emerging environmental standards. To ensure long-term readiness, safety, and community value, YKM must modernize its facilities, review emergency service models, and align its planning documents with federal and local standards.

The Yakima Air Terminal faces growing operational and infrastructure challenges that impact both fire protection readiness and airport functionality. Passenger enplanements have significantly declined, prompting the need to reassess ARFF staffing and financial models. Station 94, built in 1968, is outdated, undersized, and inefficient as a dual-use facility, lacking clear separation between city and

airport operations. Current staffing practices limit ARFF compliance with FAA Index B standards, while terminal fire protection infrastructure remains uneven, especially on the airside. The airport has not yet fully transitioned from PFAS-based foams to fluorine-free alternatives, which require updated tactics and training. Emergency planning is robust but deviates from ICS best practices in key assignments, and recent planning documents fail to assess critical ARFF facility needs. As SEA-TAC's designated diversion airport, Yakima's lack of customs services, mutual aid coordination, and surge capacity highlights vulnerabilities in accommodating large aircraft or mass arrival events.

Strategic Recommendations – ARFF

Short Term

Reevaluate ARFF Staffing Model

- Conduct a detailed staffing study based on actual aircraft operations, ARFF Index needs, and mutual aid assumptions. Explore alternative staffing models or rotating coverage that optimize personnel while maintaining FAA compliance.
- Factor decreasing enplanements into cost-sharing and service delivery evaluations.
- Prepare for Diversion Events
- Develop a formal large aircraft diversion response protocol, including:
- Customs and Border Protection coordination
- Ground support and passenger handling strategies
- Mass notification and interagency mutual aid planning.

Medium Term

Update the Airport Emergency Plan (AEP) to Align with ICS

- Redefine the Airport Manager's role as Agency Administrator, responsible for strategic oversight rather than direct command.
- Assign ICS roles such as Logistics and Finance to trained personnel or designate an Incident Business Advisor to oversee those functions.
- Schedule recurring AEP tabletop exercises to test the updated structure.

Include Station 94 and ARFF Planning in Future ALP/Master Plan Updates

- Ensure that future planning documents (ALPs, Terminal Area Plans, and Airport Master Plans) formally assess ARFF needs, facility condition, and site-specific constraints.

- Incorporate ARFF service delivery metrics and building condition scores in prioritization of capital investments.

Long Term

Replace or Relocate Station 94

- Undertake a comprehensive facility assessment and site evaluation for replacing Station 94. Design the new facility to:
  - Separate airport and city-side operations (ensuring airfield security compliance)
  - Accommodate modern apparatus
  - Provide responder staging areas for mutual aid units
  - Free up land for potential terminal or parking expansion

Modernize Fire Protection Infrastructure

- Upgrade the fire loop and internal branch lines in the terminal area to meet future terminal expansion and modern code requirements.
- Expand hydrant coverage on the airside and perimeter to allow more efficient access for suppression units.

Accelerate PFAS Transition Planning

- Begin immediate planning for the retrofitting or replacement of ARFF foam systems to MILSPEC F3.
- Train YFD personnel on updated firefighting tactics using fluorine-free foams, including foam blanket management and suppression limitations.
- Coordinate with Ecology and FAA to participate in the PFAS disposal and reimbursement programs.
- Strengthen Position as Regional Reliever Airport
- Collaborate with regional and state transportation planners to position YKM as a viable reliever airport for Puget Sound air traffic.
- Identify infrastructure investments and federal funding sources needed to support this strategic role.

Glossary of Terms

AEP: Airport Emergency Plan

- A comprehensive, FAA-required document that outlines procedures for responding to emergencies at or near an airport. It includes coordination with mutual aid agencies and protocols for various scenarios.

ALP: Airport Layout Plan

- A scaled drawing depicting existing and proposed facilities at an airport, including runway layouts, taxiways, aprons, terminal areas, and land use plans. Required for FAA approval and planning.

ALS: Advanced Life Support

- A higher level of pre-hospital care provided by paramedics, including cardiac monitoring, IV therapy, medication administration, and advanced airway management.

AMR: American Medical Response

- A private ambulance service provider that delivers emergency and non-emergency medical transport services across the U.S., including contracts with municipalities.

ARFF: Airport Rescue Fire Fighter

- Specialized firefighters trained to respond to aircraft emergencies, fuel fires, and mass casualty incidents specific to airports and aircraft.

Automatic Aid

- Assistance dispatched automatically by contractual agreement between two or more fire departments or jurisdictions to specific types of incidents, typically first alarm structural fires. It differs from mutual aid in that it is pre-programmed and automatic.

BLS: Basic Life Support

- Pre-hospital care provided by EMTs, including CPR, bleeding control, splinting, and basic airway management. It does not involve advanced interventions like IVs or medications.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

- A multi-year plan outlining scheduled major capital expenditures (e.g., apparatus, stations, infrastructure) including funding sources and timelines.

Community Risk Assessment (CRA)

- A systematic evaluation of the hazards, threats, and vulnerabilities in a community to guide resource deployment, prevention programs, and emergency response planning.

Community Risk Reduction (CRR)

- A proactive approach that integrates emergency response, prevention, education, enforcement, and engineering to reduce risks and enhance community safety.

Effective Response Force (ERF)

- The minimum number of personnel and apparatus needed to effectively respond to and manage a given incident. Defined by agencies such as the NFPA, WSRB, or local policies and risk assessments.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

- A system that provides emergency medical care, encompassing everything from emergency dispatch to treatment and transport of patients.

Emergency Vehicle Incident Prevention (EVIP)

- A training program that educates emergency vehicle operators on safe driving techniques to reduce crashes and liability.

Fire Investigation Team (FIT)

- A group of trained personnel responsible for determining the origin and cause of fires, often collaborating with law enforcement and insurance companies.

Growth Management Act (GMA)

- A Washington State law that requires cities and counties to develop comprehensive plans to manage population growth, urban development, and environmental protection.

HAZMAT: Hazardous Materials

- Substances that pose a risk to health, property, or the environment, requiring specialized training and equipment to handle incidents safely.

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

- A federal agency focused on improving access to healthcare services, especially in underserved and rural areas.

IBC: International Building Code

- A set of standardized regulations for building construction and safety, adopted by jurisdictions to ensure uniform building practices.

IAAI: International Association of Arson Investigators

- A global professional association dedicated to fire investigation training, standards, and certification.

IFC: International Fire Code

- A model fire code adopted by jurisdictions to regulate fire prevention and protection measures in buildings and facilities.

IFSTA: International Fire Service Training Association

- A publisher and organization that develops training materials and curricula for fire service personnel.

Medical Program Director (MPD)

- The licensed physician responsible for medical oversight of EMS protocols, training, and performance within a jurisdiction or agency.

Military Specification (MILSPEC)

- A standard used by the U.S. Department of Defense to ensure products and services meet specific performance criteria for military use.

Mutual Aid

- Emergency assistance provided by neighboring agencies upon request. It is not automatic and typically occurs after the host jurisdiction requests additional support. Governed by signed agreements.

National Emergency Reporting Information System (NERIS)

- A federal system for collecting, analyzing, and sharing emergency response data across jurisdictions.

National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)

- A standardized system used nationwide for reporting fire and emergency incidents. Managed by the U.S. Fire Administration.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

- A nonprofit organization that develops consensus-based codes and standards to reduce fire and related hazards. Known for publishing NFPA 1710, 101, and 13 among others.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

- A federal agency responsible for enforcing workplace safety and health regulations in the United States.

Ongoing Training Evaluation Program (OTEP)

- A continuing education framework for EMTs and paramedics to maintain certification through regular skill and knowledge assessments.

Out of Service (OOS)

- A status indicating that a unit, apparatus, or equipment is temporarily unavailable for emergency response due to maintenance, staffing, or mechanical issues.

Peak Demand Unit

- A unit (typically EMS) staffed during high call volume hours to relieve pressure on 24/7 units. These are strategically deployed based on call data.

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

- A group of human-made chemicals used in fire-fighting foam and industrial applications. They are environmentally persistent and pose health concerns.

Public Information Officer (PIO)

- The individual responsible for communication with the media and public during routine and emergency operations. Often a liaison for incident command.

RCW: Revised Code of Washington

- The compilation of all permanent laws now in force in the state of Washington.

SOGs: Standard Operating Guidelines

- Internal documents that provide guidance to fire department personnel on consistent operational procedures during incidents.

Standards of Cover

- A comprehensive planning document that outlines the deployment and performance expectations for emergency services based on risk, geography, and population data.

Taxable Retail Sales (TRS)

- The total value of retail sales subject to state and local sales tax, often used as an economic indicator or funding base for public services.

Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)

- A measure of how much time a fire or EMS unit is actively engaged on calls compared to the total time it is available.

Units Due

- A predetermined list of apparatus and personnel assigned to respond to specific incident types, alarms, or areas.

WAC: Washington Administrative Code

- The set of rules adopted by state agencies to implement the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau (WSRB)

- An independent organization that evaluates fire protection capabilities in Washington communities for insurance rating purposes.

Yakima Training Center (YTC)

- A U.S. Army training facility near Yakima, WA, used for military and emergency services training exercises.