

**SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
WYOMING CITY COUNCIL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

1155 28th Street SW, Wyoming, MI 49509

Thursday, July 18, 2013, 7:00 p.m.

Joint Meeting of the Council and Commissions of the
Cities of Grand Rapids, Kentwood and Wyoming

- 1) Call to Order - Mayor Jack Poll
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance
- 3) Roll Call
 - a) City of Wyoming – City Clerk Isakson
 - b) City of Kentwood – City Clerk Kasunic
 - c) City of Grand Rapids – City Clerk Parks
- 4) Presentation of Joint Police Report
- 5) Presentation of Joint Fire Report
- 6) Discussion Regarding Appointment of Study Groups for Each Service
- 7) Public Comments
- 8) Comments by Council Members and Commissioners
- 9) Adjournment

RESOLUTION NO. _____

JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF WYOMING,
CITY OF KENTWOOD AND CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
TO CREATE EXPLORATION WORK GROUPS
AND A JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE

WHEREAS:

1. The City of Wyoming, City of Kentwood and City of Grand Rapids (the Cities) retained ICMA Consulting Services to conduct a study of each community's individual police and fire service operations and then a review of the potential of establishing joint police services and joint fire services that could serve the three cities.
2. The Phase I studies of each community's police and fire service operations have provided actionable items that are being implemented.
3. ICMA Consulting Services presented its findings and recommendations regarding the potential of establishing joint police services and joint fire services that could serve the three cities on July 18, 2013.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Cities establish an initial public comment period on the ICMA reports that opens July 18, 2013 and shall remain open until November 30, 2013.
2. That the Cities establish a Police Exploration Work Group consisting of the Police Chief of each community and one member appointed by the Police Chief, City Manager/Deputy City Administrator of each community or their designee, supported by staff of each community.
3. That the Cities establish a Fire Exploration Work Group consisting of the Fire Chief of each community and one member appointed by the Fire Chief, City Manager/Deputy City Administrator of each community or their designee, supported by staff of each community.
4. That the Cities establish a Joint Steering Committee consisting of the City Manager/Deputy City Administrator of Grand Rapids, Kentwood and Wyoming and a member of the City Commission or Council of each community.
5. That the Police Exploration and Fire Exploration Work Groups and the Joint Steering Committee provide a recommendation to the Cities assembled in joint session in January of 2014.
6. That all resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict herewith shall be and the same are hereby rescinded.

Moved by Councilmember:

Seconded by Councilmember:

Motion Carried Yes
 No

Resolution No. _____

[07/18/13]
[HI]

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the City Council for the City of Wyoming, Michigan at a special session held on July 18, 2013.

Heidi A. Isakson, Wyoming City Clerk

Resolution No. _____

Final Report

Consolidation Assessment of Police Services

Grand Rapids, Michigan
Kentwood, Michigan
Wyoming, Michigan
2013

ICMA CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY MANAGEMENT



Submitted by:
ICMA Center for Public Safety Management
International City/County Management Association
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

Background

About ICMA

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is a 100-year-old, nonprofit professional association of local government administrators and managers, with approximately 9,000 members located in 28 countries.

Since its inception in 1914, ICMA has been dedicated to assisting local governments in providing services to its citizens in an efficient and effective manner. Our work spans all of the activities of local government: parks, libraries, recreation, public works, economic development, code enforcement, brownfields, public safety, and a host of other critical areas.

ICMA advances the knowledge of local government best practices across a wide range of platforms including publications, research, training, and technical assistance. Our work includes both domestic and international activities in partnership with local, state and federal governments as well as private foundations. For example, we are involved in a major library research project funded by the Bill and Linda Gates Foundation and we are providing community policing training in El Salvador, Mexico and Panama with funding from the United States Agency for International Development. We have personnel in Afghanistan assisting with building wastewater treatment plants and have teams in Central America conducting assessments and developing training programs for disaster preparedness working with SOUTHCOM.

ICMA Center for Public Safety Management

The ICMA *Center for Public Safety Management* (ICMA/CPSM) is one of four Centers within the ICMA's U.S. Programs Division, providing support to local governments in the areas of police, fire, emergency medical services (EMS), emergency management, and homeland security. In addition to providing technical assistance in these areas, we also represent local governments at the federal level and are involved in numerous projects with the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

ICMA/CPSM is also involved in police and fire chief selection, assisting local governments in identifying these critical managers through original research and the identification of core competencies of police and fire managers and by providing assessment center resources.

Our local government technical assistance includes workload and deployment analysis, using operations research techniques and credentialed experts to identify workload and staffing needs as well as best practices. We have conducted approximately 140 such studies in 90 communities ranging in size from 8,000 population Boone, Iowa, to 800,000 population Indianapolis, Indiana.

Thomas Wieczorek is the Director of the Center for Public Safety Management. Leonard Matarese is the Director of Research & Project Development for the Center.

ICMA Center for Public Safety Project Contributors

Thomas J. Wieczorek, Director

Leonard A. Matarese, Director, Research & Project Development

Dov N. Chelst, Senior Quantitative Analyst

Priscila Monachesi Kale, Quantitative Analyst

James Gabbard, Senior Public Safety Consultant

James E. McCabe, Senior Public Safety Consultant

Paul E. O'Connell, Senior Public Safety Consultant

Lydia Bjornlund, Senior Editor

Contents

- Background i**
 - About ICMA..... i
 - ICMA *Center for Public Safety Management* i
 - ICMA Center for Public Safety Project Contributors..... ii
- Executive Summary 5**
- Methodology 7**
 - Data Analysis..... 7
 - Interviews 7
 - Focus Groups 7
 - Document Review..... 7
 - Operational/Administrative Observations..... 7
 - Implementing the Report’s Recommendations..... 7
- Overview 9**
 - Forms of Consolidation 9
 - Community and Stakeholder Concerns 10
 - Comparative Performance Benchmarks 13
- Department Values 18**
- Operations 19**
 - Investigations..... 27
 - Communications 33
 - Training 34
 - Office of Professional Standards..... 37
 - Records Management..... 37
 - Property Management..... 38
 - Fleet Maintenance 38
- Facilities 39**
- Legal 41**
- Process..... 42**
- Summary 48**

Executive Summary

ICMA was commissioned to review the operations of the Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD), the Kentwood Police Department (KWPD), and the Wyoming Police Department (WYPD). While the analysis covered all aspects of these departments' operations, a particular focus was on identifying appropriate staffing given the agencies' workloads, community demographics, and crime levels.

ICMA utilized operations research methodology to analyze the workload of each department and compared workload to staffing and deployment levels. We reviewed each department's organizational design to determine whether the various functions of the police agency were staffed appropriately.

The study incorporated several distinct phases: data collection, interviews with key police and administration personnel, on-site observations of the job environment, data analysis, comparative analyses, alternatives and recommendations, and submission of the written report and oral briefings.

Based on the assessment of each police department and comparison of their operations, it is ICMA's conclusion that consolidation of the police functions and/or departments of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming is possible. From a functional consolidation standpoint, the investigative and support components of the three organizations can be collapsed into one. Functional consolidation would result in one investigations division, one training division, one special response team, one vice division, etc. that would be responsible for providing police services to the three communities as a whole. Consolidation of the patrol function, however, should be contemplated only based on a full merger of the three departments into one metropolitan police agency.

After a thorough review of operations in each department, ICMA contends that a merged police department is also possible. This report discusses the specific elements of a new consolidated organization. For a merged department, ICMA recommends a staffing level of 1 chief, 3 deputy chiefs, 6 captains, 16 lieutenants, 48 sergeants, and 318 police officers. This level of staffing would translate into personnel cost savings of approximately \$10 million over the current staffing levels in the three separate departments. Additional economies of scale can be achieved by consolidating functions, streamlining operations, reducing redundancy, centralizing administrations, and managing demand.

ICMA recommends that a deliberate and transparent process be used to evaluate this assessment and to plot the course for next steps. ICMA strongly recommends a full, public examination of this report; the creation of a police commission to oversee the consolidation; and the creation of a merger task force to assume responsibility for overseeing the myriad details and processes associated with police department consolidation. Lastly, it is strongly recommended that an exhaustive search be undertaken to identify and appoint a police chief charged with making consolidation happen.

ICMA staff thanks the city and police administrations of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming for their assistance in completing this project. In particular, ICMA commends City Managers Greg Sundstrom and Curtis Holt, Deputy Administrator Rich Houtteman, and Police Chiefs Kevin Belk, Richard Mattice, and James Carmody for their enthusiasm and cooperation with ICMA staff regarding documentation requests and the overall project.

Methodology

Data Analysis

This report utilizes numerous sources of data to support conclusions and recommendations for the consolidation analysis. Information was obtained from the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, Part I Index, crime and police officer head counts, and numerous sources of internal information, including data mining from the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system for information on calls for service (CFS).

Interviews

The study relied extensively on intensive interviews with sworn and civilian personnel from all three agencies. On-site and in-person interviews were conducted with all division commanders regarding their operations. Similarly, the Police Benevolent Association representatives were also interviewed to get an understanding of the labor-management.

Focus Groups

A focus group is an unstructured group interview in which the moderator actively encourages discussion among participants. Focus groups generally consist of eight to ten participants and are used to explore issues that are difficult to define. Group discussion permits greater exploration of topics. For the purposes of this study, focus groups were held with representatives of the departments.

Document Review

ICMA consultants were furnished with numerous reports and summary documents by the departments. Information on strategic plans, personnel staffing and deployment, evaluations, training records, and performance statistics were provided to ICMA.

Operational/Administrative Observations

Over the course of the evaluation period, the ICMA team conducted numerous observations of general patrol, special enforcement, investigations, and administrative functions. ICMA representatives engaged all facets of department operations from a “participant observation” perspective.

Implementing the Report’s Recommendations

ICMA’s conclusions and recommendations provide a blueprint for both the city and police administrations. The city administration should have periodic meetings with police department personnel and other stakeholders to ensure that ICMA’s recommendations are implemented. It is strongly recommended that the police chief identify and task one individual with responsibility for implementing these recommendations. This person should establish a liaison with the chief of police and should be given the authority and responsibility to effectuate the changes recommended. This includes ensuring the recommendations are executed in a timely fashion and evaluating the department’s progress every six months for efficiency, effectiveness, and performance.

All of ICMA's recommendations are practical and sensible and should be implemented by the cities within a reasonable period of time. If the cities desire, ICMA can provide a service to periodically review, monitor, and reevaluate their progress and ensure that the recommendations are implemented properly. If the police administration continues to have difficulty implementing the recommendations, ICMA can assist with implementation.

Overview

Consolidation of police services is a fairly common practice in U. S. police organizations. In 1845, the New York Police Department (NYPD) was formed through the consolidation of several smaller police departments, becoming the first major metropolitan police department in the United States. Over the next fifty years, twenty-three town and village police services were consolidated into what is now known as the NYPD. There are many more recent examples of local governments utilizing consolidation to cope with population growth, revenue changes, or legislative and regulatory acts.

During the 1960s and 1970s several major commissions—including the 1967 President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (1971), the Committee for Economic Development (1972), and the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973)—shared views on police consolidation. These reports summarized the importance of shared or pooled services to accomplish some or all of the following goals: (1) reducing duplicate efforts, specifically in neighboring communities with similar crime problems; (2) providing services that smaller jurisdictions lack the resources to provide; (3) enabling specialized training, career development, lower attrition rate, and improved morale for personnel; and (4) providing departments and the communities they serve with enhanced technical capabilities based on shared equipment. These same reports acknowledged the political challenges associated with shared services, particularly the loss of autonomy at the local level.

Forms of Consolidation

During the economic recessions in the 1970s and 1980s, many local government considered consolidation as a way to maintain optimum service levels for residents during periods in which revenues were declining. In many states, most notably Michigan and Florida, some local governments adopted a public safety model that combined police and fire personnel into one force and cross-trained them to perform both fire and police jobs. The public safety model is just one of many options for consolidation. In February 2012, the U. S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services issued a report reviewing some of the ways communities across the United States have consolidated services.¹ The study illustrates that many communities across the United States have been able to adopt methods of consolidation that assist each community’s specific budgetary needs and still deliver effective services to residents.

One option, as discussed above, is a *functional consolidation*, in which two or more agencies combine specific units such as communications, crime labs, or special weapons and tactics teams. This approach is utilized in Will County, Illinois, where thirty-seven municipalities have combined services to form one major crime reduction force. Another approach is *regionalization*, in which a number of agencies combine to police a wider geographic area. One example of this is the Northern

¹ Jeremy M. Wilson and Clifford Grammich, “Police Consolidation, Regionalization and Shared Services: Options, Considerations, and Lessons Learned from Research and Practice,” *BOLO* (February 2012). http://cops.usdoj.gov/Publications/e1211_bolo.pdf.

York County (Pennsylvania) Regional Police Department, which has provided police services for two boroughs and six townships for nearly forty years. *Metropolitan departments*, created when two or more agencies serving overlapping jurisdictions join together, are quite common in the United States, particularly with larger urban cores surrounded by neighboring, small municipalities. In addition to the NYPD, Nashville, Tennessee; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Indianapolis, Indiana all have metropolitan police departments. Other forms of consolidated and shared services include *city-county mergers*, *contracting by smaller jurisdictions* with larger ones, and *local mergers*.

One form of consolidation is not better than another. The key question is to consider which option is most appropriate for the communities concerned. During our study of the Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming police departments, the ICMA team assessed the opportunities and feasibility of functional consolidation of various elements of the departments, as well as a full merger of the agencies into a metropolitan department. Our conclusion is that either functional consolidation or the merger into a metropolitan department offer the best opportunities to save money, streamline operations, and improve efficiency without negatively impacting the level of service delivery to any of the communities.

Community and Stakeholder Concerns

Any form of consolidation can be an unsettling process. Numerous stakeholders will have important concerns about consolidating services with other communities. Where feasible and appropriate, this report attempts to identify and address these concerns as part of the assessment process. Research on consolidation of police services indicates that consolidation offers many positive benefits, such as greater capacity and flexibility to respond to crime, traffic, and quality-of-life issues. Consolidation also offers employees greater career opportunities and communities a chance to save money without cutting services.

On the negative side, consolidation may mean a loss of control over department operations, particularly for smaller communities. There may also be confusion about how to contact the police and a loss of identification with the local police.

Local government and police department leaders need to weigh carefully both the positive and negative factors of consolidation and the implications for their communities.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police has published a report that highlights many of the major concerns that communities have with respect to consolidation of police services.² In general, citizens want to know how consolidation has fared in other locations. ICMA reviewed these concerns to offer an assessment of the impact consolidation would have on these various elements in Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming. Following are ten major concerns associated with consolidation and a brief response describing ICMA's assessment of each issue. The report contained herein explores many of these issues in depth and seeks to provide all three communities with a workable assessment of the various options and recommendations about how these issues might be handled.

² *Consolidating Police Services: An IACP Planning Approach* (Alexandria, VA: 2003).

1. Would the new agency move in a new direction philosophically? Should it?

In this case, the three departments are similar in policing style and approach, so moving in a new direction philosophically is neither necessary nor desirable.

2. What would happen to the police department citizens now know?

The police department would not be radically different. It would have a different name, but the officers would be the same and the department would be managed and equipped similarly. Citizens would likely discern no major difference.

3. Who would manage the new department?

ICMA recommends that a new chief be selected to run the new department. Of course, the current chiefs would be eligible for the position, but a thorough search would be conducted to find the most qualified and experienced person possible to serve as the new chief.

4. Who will make the key decisions about the consolidation process, and how will the process be designed to ensure that stakeholders have a role in decision making?

ICMA recommends that a police commission be established to handle these issues. At a minimum, all stakeholders should be identified and invited to participate in the process, which should be made as public and transparent as possible.

5. Would the quality of service provided residents rise or fall, and would consolidation lead to duplication of services?

To the greatest extent possible, service levels would remain the same. Duplication of service is unlikely; redundant systems and operations would be eliminated to achieve the same service levels at reduced costs to citizens.

6. Would consolidation cause taxpayer costs to increase or decrease?

In the short term, there will likely be additional costs needed to support the merger. Reconciling labor agreements, for example, may mean that some one-time or short-term expenses will be incurred. However, in the long term, consolidation should result in substantial cost savings for each community.

7. Is consolidation generally viewed as the best use of tax dollars?

Elected officials and city administrators have an obligation to provide the best possible services at the lowest cost to the public. Consolidation is viewed as an excellent way of achieving these competing goals. It is not a panacea for all issues with respect to policing, but it is a viable alternative to make the delivery of police services more efficient. This document and ongoing planning are important parts of achieving these benefits.

8. Would the seniority and job assignments of officers and civilian employees be protected?

This is one of the items that need to be negotiated between the various employee organizations involved in the consolidation process. In general, consolidation seeks to recognize and protect the standing of all employees involved. However, the specific dynamics of the process make it impossible to answer this question definitively.

9. Would promotional opportunities increase or decrease?

For the officers in the smaller agencies, career opportunities would increase. For employees in the larger agency, there would be more competition for assignments and promotion.

10. What contractual issues might arise when two or more distinct agencies combine?

There are numerous labor agreements in place for various ranks and titles of employees. Each agreement has different provisions, covers different aspects of work-life, and has different time periods. This is one of the greatest challenges associated with consolidation. Wages, benefits, and work schedules are just a few of the many issues that these contracts cover, and each one, item by item, would need to be considered carefully. The leaders of the agencies must work together and with the city administrations to resolve these important issues successfully.

This report cannot answer every question in detail with regard to consolidation. The process will likely uncover hundreds of administrative, legal, and operational issues that need to be explored fully and resolved before a successful consolidation is achieved. This report raises these issues, offers recommendations where possible on how to handle them, and most importantly, outlines the feasibility of merger opportunities in the Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming communities and the major issues the communities will face with regard to these opportunities.

Comparative Performance Benchmarks

When considering consolidation of police services, it is important to examine the performance of the individual agencies. Whether full consolidation or functional consolidation is being considered, understanding the relative performance of each organization is an important first step.

Organizational performance is a complex concept, with various dimensions. It is often misinterpreted or narrowly construed as being comprised of one or two simple variables. In reality, there is no single measure that properly describes the effectiveness of a police department. It is more appropriate to consider a range of factors and a diversity of measures that reflect properly the contribution that a department is making to the public safety of a community. Often these efforts are reported in annual reports, as these documents seek to reconcile the stated mission of the department with the various activities and accomplishments that happen throughout the year.

In a 2004 article “Police Performance Measures,” Mark Moore and Anthony Braga argue that six general measures are appropriate to evaluate the performance of a police agency. According to Moore and Braga, a police department should: (1) reduce crime; (2) hold offenders accountable; (3) reduce the fear of crime and promote security; (4) encourage public-centered crime defense programs; (5) improve traffic safety; and (6) provide essential emergency services.³ From a strategic management perspective, each of these six broad areas of police responsibility should be part of the police mandate and be measured so that plans and tactics can be created to achieve success in each area.

Some of the six areas described by Moore and Braga are easier to measure than others. Crime rate is reported periodically to the FBI through the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, but police departments recognize that this is not a completely accurate measure of the rate of crime in a community. Fear of crime, on the other hand, is almost never calculated, but rather is inferred by the rate of crime. This is an error in reasoning, however, as the most victimized group of citizens (young people) are often the least in fear of that victimization. Thus, even the most intuitive and widely accepted performance indicators suffer challenges to their validity and measurement.

Instead of abandoning the pursuit of accurate and precise performance measures that create categories of performance, it is essential that police organizations take the most commonly available measures in their totality and used them to create an overall impression. This then leads evaluators to conclusion (albeit imprecise) of whether an organization is high performing or low performing.

Table 1 looks at the Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming police departments across numerous performance indicators. Where possible, a performance benchmark is provided to demonstrate the relative success of the department compared to the benchmark. These benchmarks come from various sources.

³ Mark H. Moore and Anthony A. Braga, “Police Performance Measurement: A Normative Framework,” *Criminal Justice Ethics* 23: 1 (Winter/Spring 2004): 3-19, available at <http://www.publicpolicy.umd.edu/uploads/cms/faculty/reuter/CCJS%20720/Moore.pdf>.

TABLE 1: Comparative Performance Benchmarks

	Grand Rapids	Kentwood	Wyoming	Benchmark
Personnel				
Population	188,040	48,707	72,125	
Sworn Officers	298	66	87	
Chief	1	1	1	
Deputy Chief	0	1	0	
Captain	6	0	2	
Lieutenant	16	0	5	
Sergeant	33	10	11	
Police Officer	241	54	67	
Officers per 100,000	159	142	121	190
Civilian Personnel (FT)	81	13	13	
Ratio Sworn to Civilian	3.7:1	5.1:1	6.7:1	4.4:1
Crime and Traffic				
Part 1 Offenses—Total	9,405	1,767	1,816	
Violent Offenses	1,645	208	230	
Property Offenses	7,760	1,559	1,586	
Overall Crime Rate	5,002	3,628	2,519	3,203 (MI)
Violent Crime Rate	859	438	320	490 (MI)
Property Crime Rate	4,501	3,286	2,199	2,713 (MI)
NIBRS Group A Clearance Rate	18.8%	30.8%	33.6%	22.7%
Traffic Accidents	6,787	1,069	1,674	282,075 (MI)
Fatalities	12	2	6	868 (MI)
Injuries	1,197	277	388	51,672 (MI)
Traffic Injury Rate (per 100,000)	636	577	538	523 (MI)
Budgeting				
Operating Budget	\$45,849,941	\$10,234,800	\$14,978,490	
Overtime Expense	\$1,869,277	\$241,000	\$611,314	
OT % of Total	4.1%	2.4%	4.1%	5.0%
Police Spending per Capita	\$243	\$210	\$206	\$216-\$256
Spending per Part I Offense	\$4,875	\$5,792	\$8,248	\$6,702
Spending per Officer	\$154,000	\$155,000	\$172,000	\$135,000 ⁴
Deployment and Demand Management				
Patrol Allocation (% of total sworn)	55.5%	63.6%	57.5%	60%
Saturation Index				60.0
February Weekdays	32.8	19.0	36.8	
February Weekends	38.4	23.0	42.6	
August Weekday	42.2	20.0	44.3	
August Weekends	42.8	20.0	54.7	
Ratio of Police Officers to Sergeants	7.8 : 1	5.4 : 1	6.1 : 1	8 : 1
CFS per 1000 residents	400	321	500	400-1,000
CFS Response Time (minutes)	15.5	16.5	15.8	15.0
Priority 1 Response Time	10.0	12.1	10.0	5.0
CFS Service Time (minutes)	42.0	36.3	42.9	30.0
CFS Units	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.6

⁴ The \$135,000 benchmark is derived from a report on Local Police Departments published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2007. The report separated agencies by population served and the amount shown in this table was selected based upon the populations of the communities being studied. It was not indexed for inflation or labor market.

This “scorecard” provides a glimpse of the performance of the three agencies in the areas of personnel staffing, crime, traffic, budgeting, deployment, and demand management. While there are many possible performance data points to consider, it is ICMA’s contention that the areas shown in the table offer a reasoned and practical overview of the relative performance of the three organizations along key performance domains.

Personnel

As shown in Table 1, all three departments are staffed similarly, and each is staffed at levels below the benchmark. The GRPD employs 298 sworn officers, which translates into 159 officers per 100,000 residents. The KWPD employs 66 sworn officers for a ratio of 142 officers per 100,000 citizens, and the WYPD employs 87 officers for a ratio of 121 officers per 100,000 citizens. The benchmark in this category is 190 officers per 100,000, which is the national rate for communities of similar size across the nation. It must be stressed at this point the ICMA does not recommend officer-to-citizen ratios as useful measures for making staffing decisions. This issue is discussed at length in the individual reports on police operations. However, this variable is a useful measure to paint a picture of relative staffing levels across the three organizations.

The three agencies rely to a different extent on civilianization. Sworn officer to civilian staffing ratios indicate that the WYPD has considerably fewer civilian employees compared to GRPD and KWPD; the WYPD civilianization rate is also lower than the reported benchmark. Typically, many civilian employees make their way into police department ranks via the communications function in the department. With the recent transition of the communications function from WYPD to GRPD, there is less need for civilians in this area. In addition, civilian employees are often the first to be impacted by budget reductions. The combination of these two factors is likely to reduce the number of civilians in each organization.

From a consolidation perspective, the use and deployment of civilian personnel provides a valuable opportunity to save money and streamline service delivery. Careful consideration is given to the deployment of these individuals later on in the document.

Crime and Traffic

Crime statistics show that the three communities face a disparity in levels of crime. The GRPD serves a larger urban demographic, which is reflected in the higher crime rates for Grand Rapids. The benchmarks provided are the average total crime rate, violent crime rate, and property crime rate for the state of Michigan. GRPD has a higher crime rate than the state average, KWPD is on equal footing with the state average, and the WYPD is lower than the state rates in both violent and property crime.

The National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) clearance rates show a slightly different picture across agencies. The NIBRS Group A clearance rate is calculated as the number of offenses reported compared to the number of offenses cleared. “Cleared” is defined as when a person or persons are arrested for an offense or it is closed by some exceptional means. There are numerous factors that go into clearing crime, such as the number of reported crimes, the caseload of the investigators responsible for follow-up, and the like. As can be seen in Table 1, the GRPD has an 18.8 percent clearance rate, the KWPD has a 30.8 percent clearance rate, and the WYPD has a 33.6

percent clearance rate. The data here indicate that KWPD and WYPD are well above the benchmark of 22.2 percent, while the GRPD is slightly below the benchmark.

From a traffic safety perspective, it appears that all three departments see higher rates of injury than the statewide per capita traffic injury rate. With 626 traffic injuries per 100,000, the GRPD's traffic injury rate is about 21 percent higher than the state rate. KWPD and WYPD are also higher than the state rate, but more on par with each other and very close to the average.

Budgeting

Analysis of the three agency budgets and financial benchmarks indicates excellent management in these areas. All three departments are either on par or below the benchmark on spending on police services per capita, and they are below the expected percentage of overtime expense as a portion of the total budget. The combination of these two measures shows sound financial management on the part of the cities and the police departments. Spending per Part I Crime is high in WYPD, but this is a reflection of the low crime rate and not a reflection of excessive spending. All three agencies spend slightly more than the benchmark of \$135,000 per officer, but this is undoubtedly a reflection of the cost of living in the three communities as compared with other communities in the state and nation.

Deployment and Demand Management

In all three agencies the response to calls and high-priority calls takes longer than expected. Greater examination of performance in this area is warranted. In particular, ICMA recommends scrutiny of the communications process.

All three departments do an excellent job "triaging" calls for service to limit the number of "nonpolice" calls to which police respond. The GRPD responds to 400 calls for service per 1,000 residents, the KWPD responds to 321, and the WYPD responds to 500. These figures show the agencies have an aggressive call screening process and excellent management of public emergency demand.

A look at patrol allocation, however, points to differing conclusions. The GRPD and the WYPD are almost mirror images of each other. Overall saturation index and patrol staffing in GRPD and WYPD are almost identical, and this suggests that the deployment and utilization of officers in this function are organizationally equivalent. The KWPD, on the other hand, shows an underutilized patrol function, which would indicate conditions on patrol in KWPD are slightly less challenging than GRPD and WYPD.

Conclusions Regarding the Comparative Benchmarks

Taken in totality, the comparative benchmarks presented above permit three important conclusions.

- First, each organization is well managed. Staffing levels are lower than otherwise expected, and financial expenditures are lower than average.

- On all measures of outcome performance (crime and traffic safety), all three departments demonstrate excellent performance.
- The patrol deployment in each department is similar, with effective call management but slightly long CFS processing times. There is somewhat uneven patrol allocation and saturation between the three departments.

The challenges and obstacles presented by consolidation, either functional consolidation or a full merger, are minimized when effective management structures are in place. It is difficult for a smoothly running organization to subsume a poorly performing one. Worse still is when multiple, poorly performing organizations are consolidated. The best possible climate for consolidation is when the organizational conditions within each department to be merged are sound and performance is high. ICMA contends that this is the situation in Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming. Overall, the performance data suggest that these are three high-performing and well-managed organizations.

The GRPD, KWPD, and WYPD are in excellent condition from an organization-managerial perspective.⁵ Economic conditions have forced each organization to make some painful choices over the past several years, but based upon the performance data examined, the most difficult decisions have already been made. The organizations have adapted to conditions, and their performance remains high. The same organizational proficiency that enabled each organization to manage in a difficult climate and continue to perform efficiently and at a high level will permit successful consolidation, whatever form it takes.

This important conclusion must be kept in mind when evaluating the various recommendations in this report. ICMA contends that each organization gets high marks in management and performance. Yes, there are improvement opportunities recommended, but overall the three departments should be commended for their accomplishments in difficult times.

⁵ For more information, see ICMA Police Operations Reports written for each agency in 2012.

Department Values

Simply stated, all three of these departments are highly performing agencies. Each has experienced significant cuts to their budgets and personnel in recent years, and each has adopted a fiscally conservative operational mindset that will help them meet fiscal challenges in the future.

The mission statements of these agencies are consistent. The various goals of each agency, as reflected in annual reports and various internal documents, vary from department to department, but that is to be expected. What is of critical importance is the fact that all three departments presently have the ability to maintain and effectively use a performance-based system of management. If any one of these departments lacked the capability for this proactive form of management, full or partial consolidation of services would be unduly complicated and perhaps not even feasible.

From a management standpoint, each of these departments presently has a sense-and-respond capability that enables them to detect subtle changes in the internal and external work environments. Each can determine where and when police services should be delivered and whether and to what extent their efforts are bearing fruit. The three departments all conform to generally acceptable standards of performance for U. S. police agencies; therefore, any merger or consolidation efforts will be facilitated by the overall quality of these departments. From an interoperability standpoint, the three departments are functioning in a similar manner.

Since the departments share a performance-based culture, there are no obvious obstacles to consolidation in terms of conflicting organizational cultures or philosophies of policing. Police officers or managers from any one agency should be able to coordinate with those of the other agencies with minimal adjustments or direction. Officers from all three agencies appear to perform all essential duties described by the *Statewide Job Analysis of the Patrol Officer Position* developed by the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards.⁶ While internal policies and procedures vary from department to department, the overall operational philosophies of GRPD, WYPD, and KWPD are surprisingly consistent.

ICMA fully recognizes that each of these departments has spent many years forging strong bonds with their respective communities. We therefore do not want to suggest that all police departments are fungible or to minimize the adjustments that will necessarily need to be made in connection with community relations. Indeed, if strong opposition arises to any merger or consolidation of services, it is likely to come from the community. It is therefore critical to keep the public fully informed whenever the issue of merger or consolidation is addressed.

In other parts of the country, when one or more police departments have merged a great deal of emphasis has been placed on continuity and maintaining an identity for police personnel assigned to distinct communities. Should a decision be made to merge, those implementing the process

⁶ See MCLES, <http://www.michigan.gov/mcoles/0,4607,7-229-41624---,00.html>.

should make a significant effort to preserve and direct the important community service functions currently performed.

Operations

ICMA contends that functional consolidation of services or a complete merger into a metropolitan police department are both viable options for the GRPD, KWPD, and WYPD.

This section of the report discusses the various operational elements of police service delivery and, where feasible and appropriate, offers recommendations for consolidation. It must be reiterated that the three departments are performing well individually. The recommendations offered here are based upon the assumption of “what’s possible” given the crime, traffic, and quality-of-life issues in the three communities within the context of the organizational dynamic of each department. The approach seeks to eliminate duplication of services and activities, make functions less specialized, and streamline processes to the greatest extent possible.

Each major element of police operations is discussed: patrol, investigations, support, and administration. In each section functional consolidation is explored. The culmination of the assessment is the design of the a new Metropolitan Police Department, as illustrated in Table 2 on the next page.

TABLE 2: Metro Police Department–Table of Organization

	Chief	Deputy Chief	Captain	Lieutenant	Sergeant	Patrol Officer	Total
<u>Administration:</u>							
Executive	1						1
Support Division		1	1		1		3
Public Information				1	1	1	3
Office of Professional Standards				1	3		4
Information Technology				1		2	3
Special Services					2	8	10
Training				1		6	7
Communications							
Special Events				1	1	2	4
Property						3	3
Subtotal Administration	1	1	1	5	8	22	38
<u>Investigations Division:</u>							
Administration		1	1				2
Criminal Investigations				3	6	36	45
SRT				1	3	24	28
Vice				1	4	18	23
Special Investigations					1	10	11
Intelligence						1	2
Subtotal Investigations		1	1	5	15	90	112
<u>Patrol Division:</u>							
Administration		1	1				2
Service Area Alpha (North/West)			1	2	8	60	71
CPO Alpha					1	8	9
Service Area Bravo (South/East)			1	2	8	60	71
CPO Bravo					1	8	9
Service Area Charlie (KW/WY)			1	2	8	60	71
CPO Charlie					1	8	9
Subtotal patrol		1	4	6	27	216	242
Total	1	3	6	16	50	328	392

This organization is based on a policing philosophy that embraces a generalist approach and collapses activities to the lowest possible point. It also stresses the importance of community policing and seeks to provide the organizational capacity to respond to the organized community.

The resulting organization is also a hybrid of the best practices of the GRPD, KWPD, and WYPD; a concerted effort was made to retain these practices while maximizing efficiency.

Patrol

Consolidation of patrol operations in the three communities is viable, but it is **not** recommended that patrol consolidate its functions without a full merger of the three departments.

Police Patrol operations are considered the backbone of any police department. Patrol is the most visible part of the department to the community and the division that has the most contact with the community. Having three separate departments but one consolidated patrol function would create confusion for the public and the participating departments.

Any consolidation of patrol operations should be viewed as central to the merger of the three departments. With this fundamental assumption in mind, patrol operations can be consolidated. The approach takes the “best” of the three cities and consolidates them into one integrated patrol model. This integrated patrol model is based on current demand for services and on the recommendations made in the three separate operational studies of the individual departments.

At this point it is important to introduce the principle recommendations regarding patrol operations presented in the three operational studies. Understanding these recommendations is the first step in consolidation.

Grand Rapids:

- Collapse geographic organization of patrol from four service areas to two. Each new service area would be commanded by a captain.
- Staffing in the patrol division with 161 total sworn personnel, with 120 of those officers assigned to patrol shifts.

Kentwood:

- Reduce the number of officers on patrol to twenty-eight.
- Add a supervisory position to one shift.
- Add a command level supervisor to patrol operations.

Wyoming:

- Reconfigure the inefficient patrol schedule.

Common:

- Create a committee to examine call for service demand to determine how to decrease the number of calls receiving a police response.

The current patrol staffing in the three cities is illustrated in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Current Patrol Deployment^a

	GRPD	KWPD	WYPD
Deputy Chief	0	1	0
Captain	4	0	1 ^b
Lieutenant	2	0	2
Sergeant	16	6	6
Officer	124	36	44
Officers per Shift–Day	7 ^c	5 ^d	7
Officers per Shift–Night	10	9	8

^a Does not include community service officers or lieutenants assigned as Watch Commanders.
^b One captain oversees both patrol and investigations.
^c Number of officers per service area.
^d Deployment varies by time of day and day of week.

Shift Length

The three departments employ three different patrol staffing plans. In general, there are no “superior” tour lengths or rotations, but there are advantages and disadvantages of various staffing plans. The approach used here is to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs.

The GRPD utilizes 12-hour tours. Because this length of tour provides for the greatest number of days off for officers, they generally prefer this option. Still, there are some downsides. The shifts are long, and fatigue sometimes sets in at the end of a 12-hour shift or on the last work day in a series of scheduled days. Scheduling is relatively easy with 12-hour tours. The day is evenly divided into two 24-hour rotations; as one rotation works, the other is off. There are problems with this division of labor, however, due to the fact that the four shifts needed to cover a 24/7 rotation have little or no interaction with one another. Because there is no overlap of the shifts in this rotation, accommodations must be made in start and end times to ensure continuous patrol coverage.

The KWPD and WYPD use 10-hour tours. The 24-hour cycle of the day makes the implementation of 10-hour shifts more challenging. The challenge and the greatest potential of the 10-hour schedule rests in the ability to capitalize on the overlapping shifts. Used correctly, the 10-hour shift offers numerous advantages. A recent study published by the Police Foundation reports that 10-hour tour offered the most positive characteristics and was more advantageous than both 8-hour and 12-hour shift schedules.⁷ Police departments that leverage the 10-hour work schedule to their advantage report positive feedback in both operational effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

The KWPD does an excellent job staffing the 10-hour shift schedule. The KWPD maximizes the overlap in the natural 10-hour configuration to staff more officers during the busiest times for calls

⁷ Police Foundation, “The Shift Length Experiment: What we know about 8-, 10-, and 12-hour shifts in policing,” (Washington, DC: 2012).

for service, with fewer officers when call volume decreases. By using four shifts of officers, with start times staggered throughout the day, the KWPD aligns officer availability with CFS volume.

The KWPD similarly staffs up during the busiest days of the week. The combination of these two actions results in more officers working at the busiest days and times and fewer officers working when the demand for their services decreases. The design and implementation of the KWPD 10-hour shift schedule are impressive, and ICMA recommends that it be used as the model for patrol coverage in a consolidated department.

The WYPD's 10-hour shift schedule is far less efficient. The WYPD uses three shifts of officers and has shift overlaps at awkward times during the day. The overlap requires the department to deploy twice as many vehicles, to put two officers in each patrol unit, or to have officers sit idle during the overlap times. Any of these scenarios is inefficient.

The WYPD also has one day each week (Thursday) on which every officer is scheduled to work. This permits the department to conduct training on this day, but this benefit is at the expense of aligning patrol resources to the level of service demand—again, an inefficient use of resources. Regardless of whether police resources are consolidated in the three cities, the WYPD should revisit its patrol shift schedule to find a better solution.

In totality, the best method of shift deployment under a consolidated department would be the KWPD shift schedule. Appendix A presents a model of the 10-hour shift schedule as it might be used in a merged department.

ICMA recognizes that labor agreements are impediments to unilaterally changing tour length among GRPD personnel to accommodate a schedule with 10-hour tours. However, this item should be high on the list of the items for negotiation during the legal process of consolidation so that the merged department can adopt a deployment modeled on the current schedule used by the Kentwood Police Department.

Demand Management

In each of the operational reports developed for the three departments ICMA recommended that a committee be formed to explore service demands. While each department does a good job managing CFS volume, it is essential that all three departments convene to establish CFS response criteria and protocols. For example, a merged department needs to examine each and every procedure to standardize how calls for service are handled. Instead of three sets of policies and procedures, one combined set needs to be created.

The group set up to consolidate the various patrol policies should also examine CFS demands. During the process of consolidating response policies and procedures, the CFS committee should identify ways to eliminate (or reduce) the number of calls for service handled by the merged patrol force. For instance, ICMA recommended that each individual department scrutinize its response to burglar alarms. Merging patrol operations (and departments) would present an excellent opportunity to reduce the response to this major CFS category. As the organizations realign, workload demands placed on the "old" departments can be scrutinized to create a streamlined and more efficient patrol function with lower CFS volume and a more efficient workload.

Service Area Concept

The GRPD organizes patrol operations into service areas commanded by a captain. ICMA believes this geographic organization offers great potential for a merged department and should be the model for patrol staffing (and other operational staffing) moving forward. In the operations analysis of the GRPD conducted by ICMA, several issues were raised with the current staffing of the service areas, and recommendations were offered to improve this model.

ICMA recommended that the four current service areas in Grand Rapids be collapsed into two. The current alignment in the GRPD calls for one captain to manage each area. A service area currently encompasses approximately 45,000 residents and is staffed by 1 captain, 0.5 lieutenants, 4 sergeants, and approximately 35 police officers (42.5 total staff). It is ICMA's contention that the supervisory span of control and overall population coverage of the existing service areas are too narrow. ICMA recommended in the GRPD report that a merger of the four areas into two would broaden the command of the captain and better align the second-highest rank in the department with a greater level of responsibility for sworn officers and geographic area.

Collapsing four areas into two and properly aligning staff permit an interesting opportunity from a merger perspective. The staffing, population covered, and command responsibilities from the merged GRPD service area model could be applied to the area covered by the KWPD and WYPD. These two departments could merge patrol operations and reorganize as a service area similar to the reorganization in GRPD. The combination would result in three service areas rather than the existing four areas in the GRPD and the entire patrol operations in Kentwood and Wyoming.

Community Policing

In addition to the "normal" staffing of patrol operations, each department assigns officers to community policing duties and responsibilities. Police organizations around the country struggle to implement community policing. The competing demands of "traditional" police work (reactive response to crime and calls for service) often leave little time and resources for "community" policing activities. Thus, in philosophy, a department might be committed to community policing, but there may be little in the way of actual community policing because of competing demands on resources.

The GRPD has community police officers assigned to each service area, and the implementation and overall management of its community policing program is impressive. The GRPD does an excellent job balancing the competing demands and has developed what appears to be an effective way of implementing community policing in a challenging environment.

According to the GRPD organizational chart dated September 2011, community police officers are assigned as follows: three CPOs in the North District; one sergeant and seven CPOs in the South District; three CPOs in the East District; and four CPOs in the West District. In addition to general enforcement duties, these officers are responsible for responding to long-term community problems and act as liaisons between the department and citizen groups in their service area. All twelve funded neighborhood organizations have a CPO assigned; officers are also assigned to work with active informal organizations as well.

The KWPD also has a dedicated community policing function. The KWPD's Community Services Bureau consists of one sergeant; six police officers (three community officers and three traffic officers); and three nonsworn employees (code enforcement, volunteer coordinator, and police cadet). Three officers are assigned as neighborhood officers with one each assigned to the three patrol districts. The organization and output of the Community Services Bureau are impressive. The neighborhood officers provide a wide array of police services to the Kentwood community. Officers act as liaisons to Kentwood schools, provide support to more than seventy organized community groups, administer the department's crime prevention program, conduct the Metro HS and Citizens' Police Academies, and sponsor the National Night Out and Toys-for-Tots programs. They also provide enforcement and directed patrol to the Kentwood community.

In July 2011 the WYPD created a unit staffed with community service officers (CSOs). The scope of the department's CSO program and the breadth of the CSOs' responsibility to the community are impressive. CSOs partner with various community groups; attend community meetings, job fairs, and community events; and engage in a community-oriented policing style. The three CSOs are generally organized around the geographic patrol response areas.

ICMA recommends that patrol operations in a merged police department prominently feature a community policing function. Integrating a community policing or community services component into standard patrol operations is essential. ICMA recommends that a cadre of community policing personnel be included within patrol operations. The functions of the unit would be identical to the activities and initiatives identified above, and the officers would have geographic responsibility and establish relationships with organized communities. The merged department must recognize that the duties and responsibilities of the various community policing units is critical to sound police operations. Each new service area, therefore, should be staffed with a community policing team led by a sergeant who would report to the service area commander. The teams would also provide support to patrol officers during times of peak demand from heavy CFS volume.

Patrol Management

ICMA recommends that a position of deputy chief of patrol be created to ensure proper management of the three new service areas and efficient delivery of police services to the Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming communities. The deputy chief of patrol would report to the chief of police and would be responsible for coordinating and commanding patrol services in the merged department. The deputy chief should be assisted by a captain, who would act as his or her principal advisor and representative. Having a deputy chief of patrol would ensure that the department responds appropriately to calls for service and meets the demands of the broader community. The deputy also would be charged with coordinating crime reduction, crime prevention, traffic control, and community service strategies in the merged department.

Overview of Patrol Consolidation

Consolidation of patrol operations for GRPD, KWPD, and WYPD is viable. ICMA recommends that deputy chief and captain positions be created, and the positions be charged with overall responsibility for providing patrol coverage to the three communities. Patrol should be organized in three geographic service areas, with each service area under the command of a captain and staffed with two lieutenants, eight sergeants, and sixty-four police officers. In addition, each service area

should have a community policing team comprised of one sergeant and eight police officers. The community policing teams would conduct proactive police enforcement and community policing activities and serve as liaisons between the department and organized communities. The overall organizational chart of patrol operations in the merged department is illustrated in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Staffing of Merged Patrol Operations⁸

	Deputy Chief	Captain	Lieutenant	Sergeant	Patrol Officer
Command	1	1			
Service Area Alpha (GR North/West)		1	2	8	60
CPO Alpha				1	8
Service Area Bravo (GR South/East)		1	2	8	60
CPO Bravo				1	8
Service Area Charlie (KW/WY)		1	2	8	60
CPO Charlie				1	8

Table 5 compares the staffing requirements for merged patrol operations from Table 4 with existing staffing of the Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming police departments to illustrate staffing differences.

TABLE 5: Patrol Staffing Comparison: Existing vs. Proposed⁸

	Existing				Proposed				Change
	GRPD	KWPD	WYPD	Total	Command	SA Alpha	SA Bravo	SA Charlie	
Deputy Chief	0	1	0	1	1				0
Captain	4	0	1	5	1	1	1	1	-1
Lieutenant	2	0	2	4		2	2	2	+2
Sergeant	17	7	7	31		9	9	9	-4
Patrol Officer	124	36	44	204		60	60	60	-24
CPO/CSP	17	3	3	23		8	8	8	+1
Total	164	47	57	268	2	80	80	80	-26

As can be seen in Table 5, merging patrol operations results in a staff savings of twenty-six sworn officers. Additionally, combining departments and service areas creates a more efficient, streamlined, and standardized organizational model to deploy resources. Capitalizing on the best shift schedule, minimizing CFS demand through collaboration and scrutiny of existing response requirements, improving span of control, strengthening command positions, and leveraging existing community policing initiatives culminate in an optimal patrol model for Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming. This model streamlines the organization, creates positions to improve

⁸ The models shown in tables 4 and 5 do not include a Watch Commander position as currently deployed in the GRPD.

management, and reduces positions to eliminate waste and inefficiency. The result is a better organized and more efficient structure in terms of both staffing and deployment, service delivery, and overall cost.

Investigations

The discussion of investigations includes several main components: forensics and crime scene investigations, vice and special response, and intelligence.

Forensic Services

The consolidation of forensic services should be given serious consideration and study. All three departments would benefit from a consolidated operation. The goal of this consolidation would be to reduce costs to the participating agencies and to increase the number of successful investigations. The numerous benefits that would accrue to the departments include.

- The departments would not be competing with one another to attract and retain qualified personnel.
- Crime scene technicians would receive similar training opportunities and be subject to the same rules, regulations and protocols. This would result in consistent handling of crime scenes and evidence gathering and processing.
- There would be additional personnel available for major crime scene investigations that require responses to more than one crime scene. The crime scene technicians would also be available for complicated lengthy investigations.
- The crime scene personnel would have unified supervision, which would promote consistent operations and responses.
- In a consolidated group, crime scene personnel could work closely together, thus facilitating information exchanges that would undoubtedly result in an increase of successful investigations.
- Crime scene personnel could rely on each other to verify their identifications of fingerprint evidence without having to consult other departments.
- By having more personnel on hand for investigations, a consolidated operation would help to reduce the need for overtime.

Consolidation of forensic services would require only one office facility, allowing for the elimination of the other two office facilities. ICMA recommends that the Grand Rapids forensic office and crime laboratory be retained as the main operations facility.

Response time by technicians from the downtown Grand Rapids police station to outlying areas would be an issue of concern; these response times should be monitored for at least six months to a year after consolidation takes place. If response times prove to be a problem, the organization should consider an alternative. For example, crime scene investigators could be assigned to be

mobile in selected patrol areas, or work from an office facility located in a high-incident area staffed during peak hours. This location could be an office at either the Wyoming Police Department or the Kentwood Police Department.

All three agencies were able to provide data from the years 2009 and 2010 regarding the number of police crime scene responses and other activities conducted by the forensics units. Each agency records different activities in their daily operations, which makes comparison difficult, but the statistics can be used to get an overall sense of the volume of work.

In 2009 the city of Wyoming Police Department crime scene technicians responded to or handled 1,107 calls; there were four crime scene technicians on staff. Thus, each technician responded to an average of 277 calls. In 2010 the city of Wyoming Police Department crime scene technicians responded to or handled 889 calls; during the year there were four crime scene technicians on staff. Thus, in 2010, each technician responded to an average of 222 calls. In 2009 the city of Kentwood Police Department crime scene technicians responded to 160 calls for vehicle accident photos and processing of actual crime scenes. The total number of calls for service handled in 2009 was 802. There were two crime scene technicians on staff during the year. In 2010 the city of Kentwood Police Department crime scene technicians responded to 95 calls for vehicle accident photos and processing of actual crime scenes. The total number of calls for service handled in 2010 was 928. There were two crime scene technicians on staff during this year. These statistics include administrative tasks such as fingerprinting individuals for the Kent County Court. The court shares the police building. In 2009 the city of Grand Rapids Police Department crime scene technicians responded to and handled 6,048 calls; there were seven technicians on staff. Thus, each technician responded to an average of 925 calls. In 2010 the city of Grand Rapids Police Department crime scene technicians responded to 5,648 calls; again, there were seven crime scene technicians on staff. That means each technician responded to an average of 806 calls in 2010.

The data show that crime scene responses by the three cities are different. A meaningful recommendation for consolidation of service would require more in-depth study of . Also, some circumstances have changed or are in flux. For example, the city of Wyoming no longer processes vehicles from which items have been stolen, a decision made in 2009 that likely accounts for the reduction in responses by the crime scene technicians.

The city of Kentwood has two crime scene technician positions, but one of the positions has been vacant for some time, and the other technician has just recently resigned. In the absence of crime scene technicians, the KWPD has assigned this responsibility to detectives or road officers. The department also can call upon other agencies to assist in the event of a major crime that would require extensive crime scene investigation.

A crime scene technician can handle a case load of between 600 and 800 calls annually. It is estimated that approximately 10 percent of calls are other investigative activities, not responses to crime scenes.

The Wyoming Police Department indicates that a crime scene technician on its forensic services staff responds to between 200 and 300 calls for service annually. The winter months are less busy,

so there is some downtime, but increased activity during the summer requires technicians to run from call to call with little extra time or availability.

After reviewing the data obtained from the departments and interviewing members of each department’s forensic units, it appears that these three departments would likely benefit from a consolidated forensic operation. Due to the fact that all three of the departments assign different duties to their crime scene personnel it is difficult to compare the information and make accurate comparisons to actual work being done within the organizations. A detailed study of all three operations and work assignments would be required prior to making a final decision. ICMA would recommend a study to determine the workload of each participating agency so the number of positions needed to handle the workload can be determined, to determine the cost of consolidation to the partnering agencies, and to determine if consolidated operations would improve successful outcomes of the investigations.

Table 6 shows the positions currently budgeted for forensic operations and the maintenance of property and evidence within the three departments. The property and evidence management positions are shown in the table due to the fact that in most agencies these staff members are part of the forensic/crime scene units and are often cross-trained to perform both the crime scene technician duties as well as property and evidence management.

TABLE 6: Budgeted Staff, Forensic Services, and Property/Evidence Management

	GRPD	KWPD	WYPD	Total
Crime Scene Technician	7	2	4	13
Latent Print Examiner	2	0	0	2
Forensic Supervisor	1	0	0	1
Property/Evidence Management	2	1	0	3
Total	12	3	4	19

ICMA does not recommend the consolidation of the property and evidence operations for the individual departments. The logistical issues that this effort would require makes this undesirable.

Detective/Investigations Consolidation

The cities of Grand Rapids, Wyoming, and Kentwood have shown that they are willing to participate and to share investigative services with one another. The three chiefs of police work well together and realize the importance of combining forces when it is necessary and is mutually beneficial. To his credit, the Kent County Sheriff also has shown a willingness to participate in multi-agency operations with the cities. The relationships that have resulted from working together have made law enforcement much more effective throughout Kent County. The investigative commitments made by the agencies participating in joint operations has led to significant reductions in robbery, burglary, auto theft, larcenies from autos, and aggravated assault. Statistics recorded from 2007 through 2011 indicate reductions in all of the categories of crime mentioned.

It is obvious that there has been tremendous value placed on mutual cooperation by all of the four agencies. The Grand Rapids Police Department, the Wyoming Police Department, and the Kentwood Police Department have taken the concept of mutual cooperation to a level that is often talked about but is rarely achieved.

Table 7 shows current staffing levels in the investigative and vice operations for Grand Rapids, Wyoming, and Kentwood.

TABLE 7: Current Investigative/Vice Positions

	GRPD	KWPD	WYPD	TOTAL
Investigators	46	8	11	68
Supervisors	8	1	4	15
Subtotal Investigations	54	9	15	83
Officers, Vice	14	2	0	16
Supervisors, Vice	4	1	0	5
Multi-Agency Operations	4	1	2	7
Total Sworn	72	13	17	106
FT Civilian, Investigations	0	1	0	0
FT Civilians, Vice	1	0	0	1
Total Civilians	1	1	0	2

Table 8 represents anticipated staffing levels for a combined Grand Rapids, Wyoming, and Kentwood investigative and vice operation.

TABLE 8: Staffing for Combined Investigative Operation

	SA Alpha	SA Bravo	SA Charlie	Total
Lieutenant	1	1	1	3
Sergeant	2	2	2	6
Major case team	4	4	4	12
General case team	8	8	8	24
MET	1	1	1	3
MFIT	1	1	1	3
CATT	1	1	1	3
Total Sworn	18	18	18	54

For the purposes of discussion, the three cities would be divided into three service areas. In each service area, there would be the following staff:

- One lieutenant, who would be service area commander for investigations
- Two sergeants, who would be service area supervisors

- Four investigators/detectives assigned to major investigations
- Eight investigators/detectives assigned to general case investigations.

Nine special duty officers will be needed to fill positions in what are now specialized multi-agency investigative units. Each of the three service areas will contribute three officers to fill one position in three specialized units. These units are the Metropolitan Enforcement Team (MET), the Metropolitan Fraud and Identity Theft Unit (MFIT), and the Combined Auto Theft Team (CATT). The remaining multi-agency units will be eliminated and any work assignments or responsibilities from these units will be assumed by the general case or major case investigators/detectives. In addition two officers will be assigned by the GRPD to the FBI Violent Crimes Fugitive Task Force.

The implementation of this investigative force would require fifty-four officers and supervisors for the three service areas. There are currently eighty-three officers and supervisors assigned to investigative duties in the cities of Wyoming, Grand Rapids, and Kentwood. These numbers do not include vice unit supervisors or investigators. It also would be necessary to supply one civilian support person for each service area unit to handle administrative duties.

ICMA recognizes that these proposed changes are significant and should not be undertaken without input and review of each of the department. If these changes are adopted the assignments and responsibilities will undoubtedly need to be adjusted to address unforeseen needs and new circumstances.

Vice Investigations

The Grand Rapids Police Department's vice unit is an important factor in a consolidation plan. Its well-trained and experienced cadre of investigators and well-equipped facility make this operation central to a combined vice-related investigations unit with Wyoming and Kentwood. The current GRPD staffing level would remain in place, adding personnel from the KWPD and WYPD to handle the investigative requirements created in the third service area.

The unit would combine all of personnel in the GRPD vice unit with two Wyoming officers currently assigned to the countywide drug unit and one sergeant and two officers in the Kentwood Special Investigations Unit consisting of one sergeant and two officers. Table 9 represents the proposed staffing levels for combined vice operations.

TABLE 9: Staffing for Combined Vice Operations

	GRPD	KWPD	WYPD	TOTAL
Investigators	14	2	2	18
Supervisors	4	1	0	5
Total Sworn	18	3	2	23
FT Civilians	1	0	0	1

Thus, the vice operations unit would be staffed with:

- One lieutenant assigned as the unit commander
- Four sergeants assigned as unit supervisors
- Eighteen officers assigned to investigations
- One full-time civilian office assistant

The consolidation of the vice units and the withdrawal from specialized units would require some difficult choices. These multi-agency investigative units have been effective and their efforts have resulted in significant reductions in criminal activity. However, in these difficult economic times the challenges of budget reduction translates into reductions in personnel. This requires managers to be thoughtful and creative in planning for the future. It will require support from the community, elected officials, and the police organizations themselves.

All three police departments have a culture of service. There has been a willing attitude within these agencies to go beyond what is required. This culture was feasible when the economy was strong, but the economic reality in Kent County over the past few years has severely impacted the ability of law enforcement and other public safety services to continue providing a wide range of investigative services. The public has a right to excellence in police services and undoubtedly will continue to receive this service, but budgetary restraints and reductions make it necessary to review and realign expectations with fiscal reality. Put simply, some of the investigative services that have been conducted in the past may not be feasible in the future.

Special Response Team

The GRPD has a tactical unit known as the Special Response Team (SRT). This unit is commanded by a lieutenant and consists of two sergeants and sixteen officers. The SRT has a “patrol focus” and its members perform a variety of law enforcement functions within assigned service areas in addition to tactical response and support. In 2010 the unit executed 188 high-risk warrants, made 308 felony and 1,036 misdemeanor arrests, issued 1,102 traffic citations, conducted more than 1,500 field interrogations, and provided dignitary protection. The SRT commander reports directly to the chief.

In general, the SRT is a valuable asset to the GRPD. The level of training and the level of activity produced are impressive. This small cadre of officers and supervisors undoubtedly contributes to the overall effectiveness of the department and the overall quality of life in Grand Rapids.

ICMA recommends that this unit be expanded in a consolidated department to create additional capacity to serve the new service area. Under consolidation, ICMA recommends that the SRT receive one additional sergeant and eight additional police officers. The additional SRT personnel could be obtained from the KWPD and WYPD. The new SRT thus would consist of:

- One lieutenant
- Three sergeants
- Twenty-four police officers.

The new unit would continue the hybrid patrol/tactical/support functions the GRPD SRT currently performs.

ICMA notes again that these departments could choose to combine resources and personnel for this function alone, without any further consolidation of police services. A consolidation or shared services arrangement of this type is practical and easily accomplished, due to the nature of the SRT/SWAT function.

In light of more burdensome training requirements for tactical response/SWAT personnel (promulgated at the state and national levels) and escalating costs associated with maintenance of such a team, ICMA strongly recommends a shared service or merged unit arrangement for this function. Each department already has a cadre of highly trained officers who have performed this function.

Intelligence

ICMA recommends that an intelligence function be added to the newly merged organization. Consisting of one sergeant and two police officers, the new unit would be responsible for collecting information and developing actionable intelligence for the department to identify crime trends and hotspots, develop and manage informants, and provide investigative support to criminal and vice investigations.

Communications

The consolidation of communication services by Grand Rapids and Wyoming and the contracting of communication services by Kentwood with the Kent County Sheriff are significant operational and organizational changes for the four departments involved. The consolidation of these services has created two independent communication operations. This consolidation has created two public safety answering points that will offer system redundancy. These two systems will be able to back one another up during emergency situations or other unforeseen system failures.

The city of Grand Rapids and the city of Wyoming's merging of emergency dispatch operations is an example of what can be accomplished when jurisdictions cooperate with one another. The forward thinking of the two cities is to be commended. Both agencies agreed that the primary goal of the merger of the two systems was to improve service delivery and to reduce costs. The future plan for two identical systems located in the Grand Rapids Police Department and in the Kent County

Sheriff's Department will offer further enhancements of the systems. The systems will be able to seamlessly communicate with one another and will offer redundancy that could become a model for other communities to note.

Since the Grand Rapids–Wyoming merger in September 2010, the Grand Rapids Communications Bureau has worked diligently to upgrade and improve emergency communication services. The merger of the two systems required much consideration and study. Decisions relating to staffing, equipment, supervision, policy development, shift scheduling, and implementation were given diligent consideration. The managers and members of the communications bureau all agree that the system is working as planned. The system and its operations continue to be monitored and reviewed, and system managers do not hesitate to take actions that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the system.

ICMA would not recommend any changes in the operation of the system at this time. Due to the recent implementation of the system there is insufficient data available to draw any conclusions. ICMA analysis team members did note a very positive attitude exhibited by management and the operations personnel. There is a commitment to make certain that this merger is successful.

The city of Kentwood Police Department contracts its communications operations to the Kent County Sheriff's Department. These two departments should also be commended for their cooperation and forward thinking. The ICMA analysis team visited the Sheriff's Communication Center and observed that it is well equipped. The equipment and operation are similar to that of Grand Rapids. The staff and supervisors in the facility were knowledgeable and very professional.

The decision by Kentwood to join the county communication system has reduced costs and improved efficiency and effectiveness. The strong professional relationship between the Grand Rapids Police Department and the Kent County Sheriff's Department adds much to the communications between all of the county's emergency responders.

The fact that there are two systems of the type and size of these operations is another important factor in providing backup for one another. The redundancy of the two public safety answering points has made communications very reliable for the agencies that participate in the systems.

Training

Training is one of the most essential functions of any police organization. All police departments must have the capacity to deliver high-quality training to officers of all ranks. This includes mandatory recertification training in areas such as firearms, vehicle operation, HAZMAT, etc.; in-service instruction on a variety of topics for both sworn and nonsworn personnel; executive development; and field training for probationary sworn personnel.

While every police department would undoubtedly prefer to have its own stand-alone training unit, it is possible to obtain high-quality instruction by means of collaborative programs. One such program is the West Michigan Criminal Justice Training Consortium (WMCJTC). Organized in 1993 in conjunction with Grand Valley State University, WMCJTC membership is currently composed of seventy-two law enforcement agencies. It is funded by agencies pooling 35 percent of their annual Public Act 302 training dollar distributions. Departments can send personnel to a variety of off-site

training programs and/or host consortium training on site. Outside facilitators and trainers (such as local prosecutors or victim advocates) also can be enlisted by a participating organization, as necessary.

The question therefore arises as to whether GRPD, KWPD, and/or WYPD require a fully-developed training unit. All three departments have adequate field training programs and provide access to a broad array of in-house and off-site training programs.

It has been ICMA's experience that the primary responsibilities of the individual designated as the training officer often is simply to schedule and record the training of department personnel. ICMA suggests that such administrative duties are more properly performed by nonsworn administrative staff. A uniformed member of the service at a supervisory rank should have authority to ensure that such scheduling and record keeping is conducted properly, but the day-to-day administrative duties and responsibilities can be performed by civilian personnel. Sworn personnel should be reserved for the delivery of instruction. As previously noted, civilian instructors may also be invited on site from time to time.

The maintenance of accurate and complete training records is an essential part of police operations. Beyond the obvious record-keeping function, this information can be used as a key performance metric for gauging the performance of the entire organization. For that reason, one ranking member of the service should be designated as a department's primary training officer. This individual should be charged with the periodic review of department records concerning vehicle pursuits, department vehicle accidents, use of force and weapon discharges, arrest reports, and the like to determine whether any training or equipment issues need to be addressed. This provides an essential feedback loop in the department's internal communication and management processes. The training officer also should attend and actively participate in command staff meetings and should view ongoing operations through the lens of training, identifying opportunities for retraining and/or the development of new lessons. The designated training officer should also develop and monitor the department's annual or multiyear training plan. Specific training goals and objectives should be set and monitored via the department's training plan and annual reports.

Of the three departments considering consolidation, the GRPD has the most fully developed training program. The lieutenant who serves as that department's chief training officer is extremely well qualified and is involved in virtually all of the agency's operations. The lieutenant and the training unit also work very closely with that city's risk manager and office of human resources. Both the quality and quantity of instruction being delivered by the GRPD is well above average compared to national standards. This training unit should be viewed as a model for other police agencies.

ICMA recommends that the training operations of all three departments be combined into one, comprehensive training platform based on the GRPD program. ICMA suggests that the three departments do so, regardless of whether a full merger of two or more departments takes place.

Under the proposed restructuring, the KWPD and the WYPD would continue to have one sworn officer (preferably a supervisor) serve as its chief or primary training officer. That individual would be supported by nonsworn personnel responsible chiefly for scheduling and recording in-house

and off-site training. Within the WYPD, this would free up a sergeant or lieutenant, who can then be reassigned to other duties.

In order to ensure continuity and a certain sense of *esprit de corps*, each department would continue to use its own cohort of instructors as a primary source of instruction. Curriculum and instruction would be coordinated by the GRPD training unit and instruction would take place at various locations in and around the three departments. Training bulletins would be generated as necessary from the central training unit.

Instructors with particular expertise would rotate among all three departments and utilize currently available resources and facilities. Officers from all three departments would periodically report to the GRPD main training facility for specialized instruction. All instructors would be supervised and supported by the GRPD training unit, which would also coordinate a train-the-trainer or training seminar program, as necessary. The combined training unit also would be charged with the development, scheduling, and delivery of in-service instruction to nonsworn personnel. A comprehensive executive development program for sworn and nonsworn supervisors should be developed, preferably by building upon current efforts such as the Grand Rapids Leadership Institute.

The proposed combined training unit would be comprised of:

- One lieutenant to serve as director of training
- Four members of a training unit housed at the GRPD
- Two training officers, one at the KWPD and one at the WYPD
- An array of certified trainers from all three departments who are qualified to deliver training on a variety of topics.

In light of the additional burdens being placed upon the GRPD's training unit under the proposed restructuring, ICMA strongly recommends that the unit be relieved of the responsibility of performing background checks. This function is more properly performed by nonsworn personnel or investigators.

All three departments would work with the director of training (the GRPD lieutenant) to develop and monitor a comprehensive annual or multiyear training plan. Each department also should have the opportunity to set its own distinct training goals and objectives, as long as the goals are set collaboratively, conform to the overall training plan, and are monitored actively by the training officers of the respective departments.

As noted elsewhere in this report, any shared service agreement or merger of this type would necessarily entail a full review of collective bargaining agreements and work schedules. As training days are typically set according to the schedules of officers, any proposed merger of this type is likely to result in significant alteration to work and training schedules. ICMA does not view this as an insurmountable obstacle. It is strongly recommended that the three departments immediately begin to explore these issues and work together to determine how this can be accomplished.

Regardless of whether two or more of these departments engage in a complete merger, ICMA recommends that the training function should be combined into one comprehensive training platform.

Office of Professional Standards

In the event of merger, ICMA recommends creation of an office of professional standards (OPS). This unit would be staffed by one lieutenant and three sergeants, would report directly to the chief, and would perform a variety of integrity control, audit, and inspections duties.

In the event of merger, this office would be chiefly responsible for reviewing, reconciling, and revising the department manuals, rules, and regulations. It would then regularly review and revise those regulations and procedures, as necessary.

The OPS would also:

- Receive, review, and investigate internal and external complaints against members of the service.
- Track and report the number and type of referrals made by records clerks and/or supervisors for incomplete or inaccurate record entries.
- Develop and use an early warning system to support the internal affairs function.
- Track all department vehicle accidents, not just “officer-at-fault” incidents, (if only for retraining purposes).
- Develop, document, and follow a program of systematic and random audits and inspections of critical operations (calls for service response and dispositions, property receipt and safeguarding, line of duty and sick leave, etc.). One ranking officer should be designated to plan, conduct, and regularly report the results of such audits and inspections. This individual also would perform regular checks or audits for proper case/call dispositions.
- Develop a formal system for monitoring sick time and detecting and responding to sick leave abuse. The OPS should also track all off-duty employment performed by sworn personnel.
- Periodically perform citizen satisfaction surveys.
- Perform employee background investigations.

Records Management

In the event of merger, all three of the departments should convert to one standard records management system (RMS). It is recommended that the RMS system currently in place at the GRPD be used going forward.

ICMA recognizes that such a conversion process can be technically challenging and time consuming. The conversion must therefore be carefully planned and monitored by an internal technology task force comprised of sworn and nonsworn members of each department, who would be chiefly responsible for guiding the conversion efforts. The costs and inconvenience of conversion can be offset by the benefits of uniformity of practice and a potential savings of annual licensing fees.

Property Management

In the event of merger, ICMA recommends that one electronic property management system be used to record the receipt, control, and disposition of property (including weapons, narcotics, currency and miscellaneous items). One individual (sworn or nonsworn) should be designated as overall property manager and one property clerk should be assigned to each field location (that is, to each department's headquarters).

Fleet Maintenance

Regardless of whether any merger takes place, the three departments should explore the possibility of combining their fleet maintenance operations. ICMA believes that considerable savings could be realized by combining resources and reducing redundancies in this area.

Facilities

The cities of Grand Rapids, Wyoming, and Kentwood have excellent police facilities. All three facilities are modern, up-to-date buildings that were designed to meet the operational and support needs of these organizations for many years to come. Each facility has ample space for current operations, as well as additional free space that could be put to further use.

Grand Rapids

The Grand Rapids Police Department headquarters is located in the center of the downtown business district. It occupies a high-visibility location that offers two entrances (Fulton Street and Monroe Street). The Fulton Street entrance is an “employee only” entrance and Monroe Street has public access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. During business hours Monday through Friday, a sworn officer is posted at a kiosk inside the police facility at the Monroe Street entrance. During non-business hours this entrance is monitored by camera and two-way speaker to the front desk.

The building has 54,870 square feet of parking and office facilities within the parking level. There are five additional floors with 34,117 square feet on each level for offices, training facilities, meeting rooms, workout rooms, evidence/property storage, forensic laboratory facilities, and a very large communications center. There are also 346 lockers for male personnel and 105 lockers for female personnel.

Due to the size of the building and its central location there is no current need for substations or district offices. This building can best be described as an excellent facility that meets the needs of the police officers, civilian employees, and the public. The police facility adds much to the well-being of police department employees and their ability to perform at a very high level.

Although the Grand Rapids Police Department has an excellent police facility, its current layout and design needs to be reevaluated. Twenty-four-hour access should be curtailed, and the ground floor of the building needs to be reconfigured. The reconfiguration should include closing the Fulton Street entrance to public access and limiting contact at this entrance to “call” access only. Direct public access to the headquarters should be eliminated by having a waiting room with communication to the main desk area (during business hours) or communications division (during non-business hours). Also, the GRPD should cease staffing a sworn officer at the kiosk. Public access should be curtailed to normal business hours, with after-hours access changed to emergency services only. The front-desk area should be relocated from its current position to a position across the main lobby facing Monroe Street. This area should then be reconstructed to provide physical security measures to the police interns and records personnel that serve the public.

Kentwood

The Kentwood Police Department headquarters building was opened in 2002. The building contains 41,032 square feet of work space. There are sixty-four public parking spaces with four additional handicapped spaces. There are fifty-four parking spaces for police vehicles and seventy-three parking spaces for civilian personnel with two additional handicapped spaces. The lobby and

front desk area is fully secured. Video cameras are positioned appropriately around the headquarters building to provide surveillance of both exterior and interior locations.

It should be noted that there is a court facility (the district court) housed within the KWPD headquarters building. Court security is performed by court officers. The court operation and the police operations work well together with no issues of concern.

The Kentwood Police Department headquarters is a modern, well-equipped facility with spacious, comfortable areas for use by personnel and the public. The men's locker room has ninety-two full-size lockers and the women's locker room has thirty-one full-size lockers. There is a large training room that is suitable for the training of large groups and Compstat-like meetings, whereby representatives from all units (the entire organizational chart) can regularly meet to review timely and accurate performance data and engage in joint problem solving activities. The detective bureau appears to have sufficient space for its operations, including a large conference room and both "hard" and "soft" interview rooms. Interview rooms are equipped with audio recording devices. The headquarters facility includes an exercise room and adequate locker facilities and break rooms.

Wyoming

The Wyoming Police Department has a modern, well-designed police facility in an excellent location. The building contains 54,000 square feet of space situated on 4.5 acres. The public parking lot contains 200 spaces, with an additional 45 parking spaces in the rear of the facility for police vehicles. The building contains space that is available for use by the public for gatherings and public meetings. The building was constructed to accommodate a maximum 225 employees.

Recommendation:

Under a merged department model, ICMA recommends retaining the GRPD facility (with the modifications recommended) as the headquarters of the new department. Careful consideration needs to be given to the remaining facilities. They are both in excellent condition, are well maintained, and have ample space to accommodate additional resources.

Under the proposed merger recommendation, the police operations in Kentwood and Wyoming would be consolidated into one service area, and only one facility will be needed to serve that area. In terms of location, it appears that the police headquarters in Kentwood would be a better choice to house the new service area. Additional analysis is needed before this critical decision is made, however. Community feedback, distribution of calls for service, and crime trends need to be examined carefully before a decision can be made with regard to closing either the Kentwood or Wyoming police headquarters. In any event, it is also recommended that a substation be staffed during normal business hours in the community that closes its police facility in order to handle community issues and concerns. ICMA recommends that this issue be part of the public hearing and stakeholder discussions that are a necessary part of the implementation plan for any change.

Legal

There are a host of legal issues that need to be analyzed thoroughly before any attempt is made to merge or consolidate police services in these communities. ICMA strongly recommends that each city engage counsel to identify and analyze all pertinent legal issues. ICMA offers no legal opinions or advice in this regard.

From past experiences, however, ICMA notes that there are two primary issues of concern in this regard. First, the communities must ensure that any proposed merger or consolidation does not violate local, state or federal law. For example, a merger of police agencies might adversely affect pension rights or individuals currently in the process of being hired or trained, including recently hired police officers who are still on probation.

Another important issue is the existence of multiple collective bargaining agreements. Each of these agreements, for both sworn and non-sworn personnel, must be reviewed carefully to determine what obstacles, if any, they present for merger or consolidation. ICMA has not performed such an analysis prior to making the recommendations in this report.

ICMA does not suggest that one or more legal obstacles exist, but simply recommends that careful legal analysis be undertaken on the behalf of the cities and all stakeholders.

Process

The orderly transition of consolidating three agencies into one or the functional merger of specific units of the three agencies can be a difficult undertaking. There are no hard-and-fast rules for achieving successful consolidation. Each community would undoubtedly have different experiences and could expect both positive and negative influences during the process of change. There are three ingredients that offer the best possible conditions for a smooth consolidation process: (1) motivated stakeholders; (2) open and transparent communication; and (3) empowerment. While there are no guarantees, if the process involves *motivated stakeholders*, with *open and transparent lines of communication*, and an *empowered agent of change*, the most advantageous outcomes will be possible.

The process outlined below builds on the experiences of other communities that have consolidated police operations, as well as theories regarding organizational change. Again, there are no “cookie-cutter” approaches to this process. Each community has different needs, experiences, and perspectives. The major elements discussed incorporate the ingredients of managing successful organizational change. The process outlined below also offers flexibility for each of the communities and departments involved to customize the process to suit its own unique circumstances.

In general, the process follows the planning approach and relies on a thorough assessment of the issues, developing the specifics of the consolidation, and recommendations for implementation and evaluation of the entire process. And although there is no one correct method, a successful process will follow a deliberate and identifiable order undertaken in a step-by-step manner. If the obstacles in one step of the process are too great and indicate consolidation is not viable, then the process should be discontinued. If, however, the adopted process is successful at identifying and resolving issues that arise, then continuation through the model is recommended until consolidation, either functional or merger, is achieved. The following steps are offered as a process model to achieve consolidation:

1. Assess options and opportunities.
2. Involve stakeholders in examination and discussion.
3. Conduct public hearings.
4. Decide whether to continue exploring the issue, and if yes, whether a functional or merger is appropriate.
5. Organize for a functional consolidation or merger. The process will vary considerably depending on which process is selected:
 - a. If a functional consolidation is appropriate, organize a functional consolidation team for planning and implementation.

- b. If a merger is appropriate, form a police commission with oversight authority and hire a police chief to carry out the vision.

Each of these steps is discussed in more detail below.

Assessment

This report and the individual police operational and data analysis reports prepared by ICMA should serve as the basis for assessing consolidation. ICMA's analysis shows that either functional consolidation or full merger is a viable alternative for the delivery of police services in the Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming communities. This report details numerous opportunities for functional consolidation of services. The ICMA team concludes that consolidation can provide both operational and financial efficiencies and can potentially contribute to better service delivery for the citizenry.

Stakeholder Examination/Discussion of Assessment

The next step in the consolidation process is to vet fully the recommendations contained in this report as well as the individual operational and data analyses for each agency. This assessment review should be undertaken at several levels:

City/police administrative review: A series of roundtable or group dialogues must be held with all key stakeholders in the city and police department administrations. These sessions will allow all impacted parties to review and discuss the various elements of each report and the recommendations related to consolidation. Participants should discuss the specifics of each as well as the impact the various recommendations will have on the organization and its operations. These sessions should be held individually within each level of city government (separate police department sessions and city government sessions); jointly between the administrations of each city; and then collectively with all three city administrations and police departments. After a full exploration of the issues and recommendations, a decision can be reached about whether to continue down the road toward consolidation.

Public review/input: Once the cities and departments agree to embark on a consolidation effort, all primary stakeholders should have an opportunity to have input. Employee labor groups, department employees, elected officials, and business and community groups should be given the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed consolidation plan and provide their recommendations in support of or opposition to the plan.

Public Notice and Hearings on Proposed Consolidation Plan

Community input and support are essential parts of this process and will be critical to the success of the overall consolidation, whichever form it takes. After stakeholder review and discussion, the consolidation plan should be offered for public review. A series of public hearings should be convened to allow citizens an opportunity to hear from city and police administrators about their intent with regard to consolidation, review the report, ask questions, and/or voice their support of or opposition to the plan. There is no minimum or maximum recommended number of meetings; however, each community should have ample opportunity to voice their concerns about the consolidation plan under consideration.

Making the Decision: Functional vs. Merger vs. Status Quo

After the internal agency discussions, review and critique by organized groups of stakeholders, and an exhaustive public examination of the issues, it should be abundantly clear whether or not consolidation is viable.

It is important to note that just because an independent assessment concludes that consolidation is *potentially* viable does not mean that it is *actually* viable. It will be the voice and support of the stakeholders involved that will bring potential viability into reality. Without the support of key stakeholders, consolidation will be problematic. These important first steps in the process will allow decision makers the ability to frame the issues correctly and make the conclusion to continue or discontinue the consolidation process.

Armed with a thoroughly understood assessment of the consolidation option, and with the support of motivated stakeholders, the decision can be made to engage in a functional consolidation of services, or embark on a full consolidation of the three departments.

Functional Consolidation: Empower a Functional Consolidation Team

If key stakeholders decide not to fully consolidate the three departments but want to consolidate some of their functions, a consolidation team should be created. The role of this team is to identify, discuss, and resolve the issues that arise from the consolidation process.

The team should have as many participants and working groups as necessary to complete the tasks at hand. At a minimum, a high-ranking member of each department should be designated as its principal representative on the consolidation team. In all likelihood, this would translate into a captain from the GRPD and the WYPD and the deputy chief from the KWPD.

These three individuals would shoulder the primary responsibility to oversee the consolidation of functions, units, and/or services and report directly to their respective chiefs on the progress of their efforts. Additionally, these representatives would have the authority to create working groups or subcommittees to execute consolidation.

For example, if investigative services were designated for consolidation, the three principal representatives would be responsible for the ultimate outcome, but much of the logistics and planning could be handled by detectives/investigators assigned to the individual units being consolidated. This approach achieves two important goals: (1) it provides a high level of executive oversight on the entire process, and (2) it provides an opportunity for the personnel that will be affected the most by consolidation an opportunity to participate in the process. In addition, the people responsible for doing the work after consolidation would have input into the process and have an opportunity to design the new unit and parameters of service from the onset of a unit's creation.

Merger: Form a Police Commission with Oversight Powers

An entirely different process is necessary if the decision is to conduct a full consolidation of the three agencies. If the cities and departments choose to merge the departments, a police commission

should be established to oversee the process and provide oversight and governance of the newly formed organization.

There are a variety of ways to create a commission, but successful commissions share several important characteristics . First, the commission must be made up of members who are willing, able, and qualified to serve in this capacity. Members should be nominated by the city administrations, and the nominees confirmed by the mayors of each community. There are numerous permutations of staffing levels, selection processes, length of tenure, and strength of oversight that exist among police commissions in the United States. In general:

- Each community should be given representation
- Each major stakeholder group should be given an opportunity to nominate a member
- The entire body should have an odd number of members
- Term lengths should be identified and finite
- Hiring disciplinary and general oversight authority should be given to the new commission
- Internal governance should be decided by the initial member body itself and not imposed by the community. This includes selecting the chair.

What follows is a suggestion for the merger of GRPD, KWPD, and WYPD that would meet the general criteria above. Each community would be represented by three police commissioners, for a total of nine commissioners. Each member would be appointed by the mayor of their respective city for a three-year term, with the possibility for one additional term, for a total of six years of service. Each year a “class” of commissioners would be appointed, with one member from each community being appointed. Each year the commission would choose a chairperson from the nine appointed commissioners. The police commission should be given a budget and a staff, and be given the power to hire and fire police officers, conduct internal investigations, hold disciplinary and oversight hearings, and determine overall policies of the consolidated department. Its first order of business would be to select a new police chief to lead the consolidated department.

Police Chief Selection

Selecting a new police chief is the most important step in the entire consolidation process. Either of the incumbent chiefs would make excellent candidates for this new position. However, they must be considered part of a broader search for a chief that will be that critical agent of change to ensure success. Without an innovative and dynamic leader the potential for success will be seriously compromised. In order to lead this new department, a successful police chief will need the following qualities:

Managerial stewardship: The new police chief will need to evaluate the performance of the department using various methods, including metrics, outcomes, leadership team feedback, community feedback, return on investment, etc. The chief also need to align procedures and processes with best practices and use technology as appropriate to improve departmental

productivity and performance. Finally, the chief will need to monitor human resources and legal processes and procedures to ensure compliance with best practices, laws, and standards. This would include working with unions, evaluating staff, making promotional decisions, resolving grievances, and so forth.

Operational readiness/emergency action: The chief will need to ensure that the department is positioned to respond to and handle a wide range of law enforcement activities, including patrol, investigations, and security, as well as other emergency situations such as natural and manmade disasters and related security concerns. The chief's job includes coordination and collaboration across various private and/or public agencies. Again, the chief should ensure that consideration is given to incorporating best practices and current technology for equipment and processes, as appropriate and feasible.

Community Relations: The police chief is a public figure and will need to actively interact with the community in emergency and nonemergency situations. An effective chief maintains routine contact with community leaders; seeks out opportunities to interact with the community on an informal and/or formal basis (attending neighborhood meetings, implementing community outreach programs such as community policing, prevention programs, etc.); and seeks feedback from the community on service provided and ways to enhance service. The chief will play an important role in representing the department publicly in times of crisis.

Team leadership: The police chief needs to interact with command staff on a regular basis to guide, develop, and inform and to ensure that the leadership team manages others in a manner consistent with the departmental goals, tone, and vision. To this end, the chief will actively encourage communication and sharing of ideas among leadership team.

Government relations: The police chief needs to ensure that local government (elected and/or nonelected) officials are kept informed and up to date on departmental activity and serves as the liaison with these entities during emergency and nonemergency situations.

Strategic leadership: As the department's leader, the police chief sets the tone and vision. The chief needs to work to ensure that these are translated into day-to-day actions (e.g., policies, procedures, attitude, and comportment) and that there is a linkage between the strategic direction and the operational and administrative functions. The chief will model leadership behaviors and instill confidence in stakeholders and employees regarding the overall tone and direction of the department. The chief needs to ensure that the department is prepared to meet the needs of the future.

Budget and financial management: The chief will need to identify priorities for budget consideration and oversees the acquisition and use of resources in a fiscally sound manner and ensures that financial decisions are aligned with the local government entity and the community. This may involve seeking additional sources of revenue as needed and appropriate (e.g., financial assistance through grant writing at local, state, and federal levels, joint projects with other law enforcement agencies.)

Building upon all of these essential qualities, the chief of the new organization will need to balance the proud traditions of the past from each department, while simultaneously charting a course into the future. The new department will be leaner, less specialized, and more centralized. As the new department gains its identity, providing quality service and being open to citizen feedback will be important to success. The tension between the “old ways” and the “new ways,” combined with the competing demands from the internal and external communities in the region, will make the new chief’s position challenging. Due diligence must be exercised in this area and a thorough search conducted in order to find the right candidate that can meet these competing demands.

Charge new Police Chief with Mandate to Consolidate Agencies

With the new police chief identified, selected, and hired, the work of implementing the consolidation can begin. The new chief should be given enough time to:

- Study the ICMA assessment and understand the demands that will be placed on the department.
- Assemble a staff to manage the implementation process. This staff would include legal, labor, financial, operational, and logistics members. The chief will also need to receive input from the key stakeholders in the process.
- Create an implementation plan of action and deliver this plan to the three communities, along with a timeline and identification of major obstacles with proposed solutions.

The chief should then be tasked with creating an implementation plan to move the consolidation from assessment to reality.

Summary

Consolidation of police functions and/or departments with the Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming police departments has potential. Based upon the assessment of each organization it is our conclusion that they are well managed and highly performing organizations; this makes consolidation possible.

From a functional consolidation standpoint, each investigative and support component of the organizations can be collapsed into one for all three departments. There can be one investigations division, one training division, one special response team, one vice division, etc., that would be responsible for providing those police services to the three cities. Patrol consolidation, however, should only be contemplated with a full merger of all three departments into one metropolitan police agency.

It is also recommended that a deliberate and transparent process be embraced to evaluate this assessment and plot the course for the next steps in the process. ICMA strongly recommends a full public examination of this report, the creation of a police commission to oversee the consolidation, and creation of a merger task force that is responsible for the actual implementation of the hundreds of details and processes associated with the consolidation. And lastly, it is strongly recommended that after an exhaustive search, a police chief be identified and charged with making consolidation happen.

Final Report Fire Department Consolidation

Cities of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming, Michigan

July 2013



FIRE/EMS

OPERATIONS

C E N T E R F O R P U B L I C S A F E T Y M A N A G E M E N T

Submitted by:

ICMA Center for Public Safety Management
International City/County Management Association
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002

ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

Background

About ICMA

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is a 100-year-old, nonprofit professional association of local government administrators and managers, with approximately 9,000 members located in 28 countries.

Since its inception in 1914, ICMA has been dedicated to assisting local governments in providing services to their citizens in an efficient and effective manner. Our work spans all of the activities of local government: parks, libraries, recreation, public works, economic development, code enforcement, brownfields, public safety, and a host of other critical areas.

ICMA advances the knowledge of local government best practices across a wide range of platforms, including publications, research, training, and technical assistance. Our work includes both domestic and international activities in partnership with local, state, and federal governments, as well as private foundations. For example, we are involved in a major library research project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and are providing community policing training in El Salvador, Mexico, and Panama with funding from the United States Agency for International Development. We have personnel in Afghanistan helping to build wastewater treatment plants and have teams in Central America conducting assessments and developing training programs for disaster preparedness working with SOUTHCOM.

ICMA Center for Public Safety Management

The *ICMA Center for Public Safety Management (ICMA/CPSM)*, one of four centers within ICMA's U. S. Programs Division, provides support to local governments in the areas of police, fire, emergency medical services (EMS), emergency management, and homeland security. In addition to providing technical assistance in these areas, we also represent local governments at the federal level and are involved in numerous projects with the U. S. Department of Justice and the U. S. Department of Homeland Security.

ICMA/CPSM also is involved in police and fire chief selection, assisting local governments in identifying these critical managers through original research, the identification of core competencies of police and fire managers, and assessment center resources.

Our local government technical assistance includes workload and deployment analysis, using operations research techniques and credentialed experts to identify workload and staffing needs and best practices. We have conducted approximately 140 such studies in 90 communities ranging in size from 8,000 population (Boone, Iowa) to 800,000 population (Indianapolis, Indiana).

Thomas Wiczorek is the Director of the Center for Public Safety Management. Leonard Matarese is the Director of Research & Project Development.

Methodology

The ICMA Center for Public Safety Management team follows a standardized approach to conducting analyses of fire, police, and other departments involved in providing services to the public. We have developed this standardized approach by combining the experience sets of dozens of subject matter experts in the areas of police, fire, and EMS. Our collective team has more than one hundred years of conducting research in these areas for cities in and beyond the United States.

The reports generated by the operations and data analysis team are based upon key performance indicators that have been identified in standards and safety regulations and by special interest groups such as the International Association of Fire Chiefs, International Association of Fire Fighters, Association of Public Safety Communication Officials International, and through the Center for Performance Measurement of ICMA. These performance measures have developed following decades of research and are applicable in all communities. For that reason, comparison of reports will yield similar reporting formats, but each community's data are analyzed on an individual basis by the ICMA specialists and represent the unique information for that community.

The Public Safety Management team begins most projects by extracting calls for service and raw data from a public safety agency's computer-aided dispatch system. The data are sorted and analyzed for comparison to nationally developed performance indicators. These performance indicators (e.g., response times, workload by time, multiple-unit dispatching) are valuable measures of agency performance regardless of departmental size. The findings are shown in tables and graphs organized in a logistical format. Due to the size and complexity of the documents, a consistent approach to structuring the findings allows for simple, clean reporting. The categories for the performance indicators and the overall structure of the data and documents follow a standard format, but the data and recommendations are unique to the organization under scrutiny.

The team conducts an operational review in conjunction with the data analysis. The performance indicators serve as the basis for the operational review. The review process follows a standardized approach comparable to that of national accreditation agencies. Prior to the arrival of an on-site team, agencies are asked to provide the team with key operational documents (e.g., policies and procedures, asset lists, etc.). The team visits each city on-site to interview fire agency management and supervisory personnel, rank-and-file officers, and local government staff.

The information collected during the site visits and through data analysis results in a set of observations and recommendations that highlight strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the organizations and operations under review. To generate recommendations, the team reviews operational documents; interviews key stakeholders and observes physical facilities; and reviews relevant literature, statutes and regulations, industry standards, and other information and/or materials specifically included in a project's scope of work.

The standardized approach ensures that the ICMA Center for Public Safety measures and observes all of the critical components of an agency, which in turn provides substance to benchmark against localities with similar profiles. Although agencies may vary in size, priorities, and challenges, there are basic commonalities that enable comparison. The approach also enables the team to identify best practices and innovative approaches.

In general, the standardized approach adopts the principles of the scientific method: We ask questions and request documentation upon project start up; confirm accuracy of information received; deploy operations and data analysis teams to research each unique environment; perform data modeling; share preliminary findings with the jurisdiction; assess inconsistencies reported by client jurisdictions; follow up on areas of concern; and communicate our results in a formal, written report.

ICMA Project Contributors

Thomas J. Wieczorek, Director of ICMA Center for Public Safety Management

Leonard A. Matarese, Director of Research & Project Development

Joseph E. Pozzo, Senior Manager for Fire and EMS

Dov N. Chelst, Ph.D., Director of Quantitative Analysis

Dan Kleman, Senior Associate, Project Lead

Donald James, Associate

Jeff Hadley, Associate

Gerry Hoetmer, Senior Associate

Gang Wang, Ph.D., Quantitative Analyst

Priscila Monachesi Kale, Quantitative Analyst

Sarita Vasudevan, Quantitative Analyst

Olga Abramovich, Quantitative Analyst

Michelle Kesling, Quantitative Analyst

Lydia Bjornlund, Senior Editor

Contents

Background	i
About ICMA	i
ICMA Center for Public Safety Management	i
Methodology	ii
ICMA Project Contributors	iii
Executive Summary.....	1
Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations.....	1
Organizational Review	5
Grand Rapids Fire Department.....	5
Kentwood Fire Department.....	6
Wyoming Fire Department.....	7
Consolidation Analysis	8
The Consolidation Plan.....	8
Fire Station Location and Operation	9
Staffing.....	18
Emergency Medical Services	19
Quality Management.....	20
EMS System Design	20
Scope of Practice	20
Response Configurations.....	21
Governance	22
Board Composition and Powers.....	24
Administration.....	24
Budget	25
Sun setting Provisions	26
Funding.....	26
Functional Consolidation.....	28
Police/Fire Consolidation	30

Outcomes/Benefits/Next Steps	33
Key Performance Measures	33
Variables to Consolidation	37

SECTION I: Executive Summary

This report is the result of analyses of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) department operations within the cities of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming, Michigan. This report offers specific discussion, recommendations and alternatives for the cities regarding consolidation of fire services, and can also provide a benchmark in their delivery of fire and emergency medical services.

During our study, we analyzed performance data provided by the three fire departments and undertook a firsthand review of the departments' operations. This report seeks to identify ways the departments can improve efficiency while maintaining effectiveness for the communities they serve. The recommendations may be adopted in whole, in part, or rejected. However, ICMA recommends that specific objectives should be aligned with the recommendations and assigned to a specific individual and that a reporting/report card process be used to deliver input to the jurisdictions' administrators and elected officials.

In the preparation of this report, information gathering, observation, and analysis were conducted in separate phases. The initial phase focused on the collection and analysis of large amounts of response data. This data was obtained from compiling all calls for service for the Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming fire departments over a twelve-month period. This initial phase also included compiling a host of other materials, including organizational charts, strategic and operational plans, financial data, and so forth, in preparation of the first site visit.

The second phase included two site visits to each city by members of the ICMA Center for Public Safety Management team. The team observed fire department and support operations, interviewed city and fire department staff, toured fire facilities, evaluated apparatus and equipment, and toured each locality for a windshield observation of community risk.

The team then analyzed the data and information it had gathered to prepare separate Operations and Data Analysis reports for Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming. Each report addressed a wide range of issues germane to these cities that affect fire and emergency medical service delivery: governance, administration, financial performance, fire operations, EMS operations, apparatus, fire prevention, training, communications, and relationships with unions and other organizations. Each report also included a list of specific recommendations for improving fire and EMS delivery for that city.

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

In 2009 the cities of Grand Rapids and Wyoming began to explore the possibility of consolidating their fire departments. Discussion later expanded to include the city of Kentwood. The cities worked together on consolidation models making significant progress, and had reached understanding on many of the elements. ICMA was brought in to examine concepts and assist the communities in making further progress together.

To assess the consolidation plan under consideration by the cities, the team collaborated to analyze the findings and recommendations of the three individual city reports in

conjunction with the work that the staff of the three cities had undertaken to consider fire department consolidation. The aggregate result is this report on the feasibility of consolidation of the three departments. A summary of the recommendations from that consolidation report are provided below.

The following recommendations are based on best practices and careful analysis of the data and recommendations developed for the individual reports submitted to each of the cities of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming, and the staff consolidation report.

1. Full consolidation is judged to be the best alternative for each of the three cities and will improve service to residents of all three communities and yield efficiencies in aggregate costs. The cities should pursue the full consolidation of the three fire departments.
2. The staff work completed by the three cities in 2009 and 2010 represents a solid basis for the consolidation. The proposed course of action should be followed along with ICMA recommendations.
3. Consolidation of the three fire departments would result in an estimated annual savings of \$7.2 million when compared to the combined budgets of three individual departments. \$1.3 million is identified in a staff proposed consolidation of the three departments, and \$5.9 million is identified by ICMA.
4. The fire organization outlined in the staff proposal for consolidation is consistent with best practices in the fire service. This should serve as the basis for consolidation, but the plan also should incorporate ICMA recommendations, and where applicable to a consolidated department, the recommendations in the three separate city reports including having the private ambulance provider as the response agency for all calls except the most serious medical.
5. ICMA recommends the staff consolidation plan should be amended to include only the 16 fire stations (12 traditional and 4 staffed during identified peak call volume time periods). This represents a reduction of 5 fire stations from the 21 stations that are proposed. The 16 fire stations would deploy fewer total apparatus and would be staffed by fewer personnel. These recommended changes would result in an estimated annual savings of \$5.9 million, and would make the consolidation plan staffing level consistent with the sum of the staffing outlined in the three separate city reports, which are 256.
6. Demand-based/peak load staffing should be an integral part of the staffing plan for the consolidated department in recognition that calls for service is not dispersed uniformly throughout the 24 hour workday.
7. The paid on-call systems in use in the Kentwood and Wyoming fire departments should be integrated into the staffing plan for the consolidated department.

8. The consolidated department should consider the use of part-time employees to increase the flexibility in staffing in order to accommodate peak demand without adding unnecessary cost.
9. Any reduction in personnel resulting from the establishment of the consolidated fire department should be accomplished only through attrition, not through a reduction in force.
10. The EMS service delivery models proposed in the staff consolidation report and in the ICMA individual city reports related to medical priority dispatch and a greater reliance on having the private ambulance provider handle most calls without the involvement of fire-rescue personnel, represent best practices and should be adopted by the consolidated department.
11. The consolidated fire department should adopt a medical priority dispatch system and train all operational personnel to the level of EMT, so that it will provide efficient and effective emergency medical services designed to respond personnel and equipment of the consolidated department to only the most serious medical cases.
12. A new fire authority should be established to oversee the consolidated fire department, but it should not be given taxation power. Rather, the combined elected officials of the three cities should maintain control over funding.
13. West Michigan Fire Rescue Authority should be adopted as the official name of the consolidated department.
14. The authority should have a three-person governing board consisting of one elected official from each of the three cities.
15. The board should meet at least monthly during the initial consolidation and quarterly thereafter. Specific responsibilities should include approving the proposed fire department budget and developing and updating a strategic plan for the department.
16. The West Michigan Fire Rescue Authority should be housed within the city of Grand Rapids for administrative purposes.
17. All three cities should be actively involved in fire chief appointment decisions. The chief executive officers in Grand Rapids, Wyoming, and Kentwood should interview candidates and jointly make a recommendation to the board of the fire authority, which would then have the authority and responsibility for the final selection of the new fire chief.
18. The annual budget for the consolidated department should be recommended by the authority board and approved by all three city councils.

19. There should be a sunset review of the consolidated fire department within ten years of its adoption.
20. Funding for the consolidated fire department should be provided through a shared formula adopted by the three city councils that is based on a modification of the original cost allocation plan, which would place a greater value on the difference in risk between the three cities.
21. Funding for the merged organization should be phased in over a seven-year period with a guarantee that for the first three years no city would be required to pay more than it was paying for fire service in its current budget year. Changes would be phased in over the next four years in accordance with the adopted formula.
22. While full consolidation of the three departments is the recommended course of action, in the event that plan is not adopted, the three cities should pursue functional consolidation of specialized services, including training, hazard material response, and technical rescue.
23. Services that are combined as a result of functional consolidation would be best administered by the Grand Rapids Fire Department.
24. If functional consolidation is pursued, it should be funded by a ten-year interlocal agreement whereby Wyoming and Kentwood contract for services from the city of Grand Rapids.
25. If full fire department consolidation is not carried out, the city of Wyoming should pursue further analysis of a possible merger of police and fire departments utilizing the public safety officer concept.
26. The three city councils should adopt April 30, 2013, as the deadline for deciding whether to proceed with consolidation. Upon approval, the cities should establish a clear timeline for implementation.

These recommendations are discussed further in the body of this report. The report begins with an overview of the three fire departments and then offers discussion of the consolidation plan developed by the staff from the three cities. The report provides suggestions for modifications, and offers advice and recommendations from ICMA regarding consolidation of the three cities. Following discussion of full consolidation of the three fire departments, the report focuses on less desirable alternatives, including the functional consolidation of training and special services for the three cities and the possibility of a combined police/fire department in Wyoming.

SECTION II: Organizational Review

Grand Rapids Fire Department

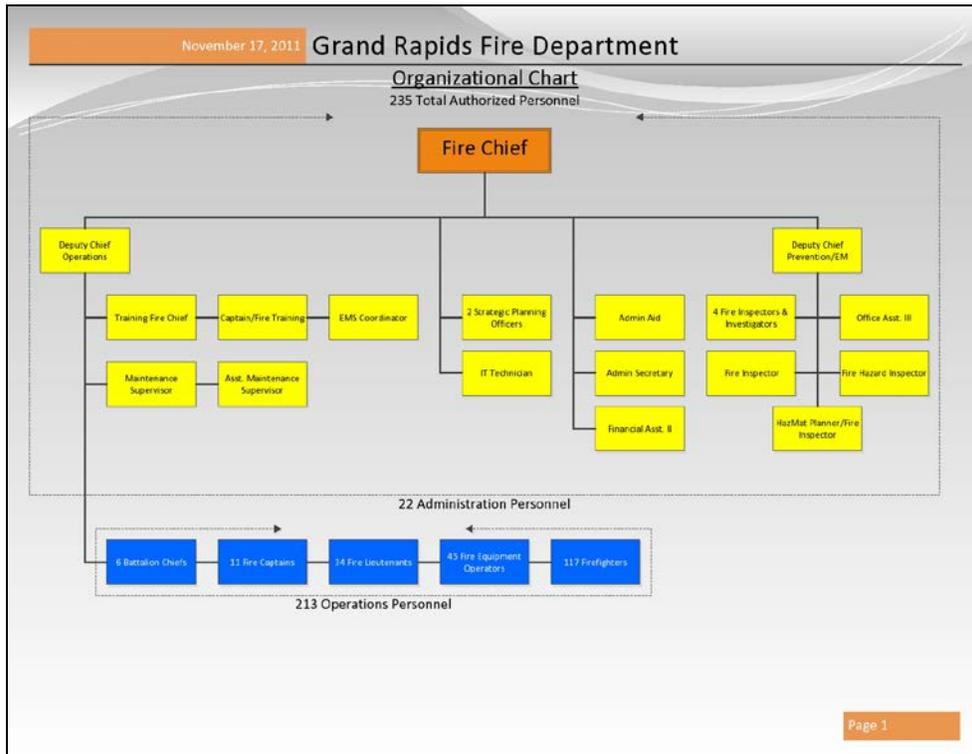
The Grand Rapids Fire Department operates as a department of the city of Grand Rapids, which, with a population of over 188,000, is the second-largest city in Michigan. The fire department serves an area of 45.3 square miles.

The fire department was established by city ordinance in 1850. A fire chief serves as the head of the department and reports to the city manager in a council-manager government.

The current fire chief, Laura Knapp, is a career professional who moved up through the ranks of the Grand Rapids Fire Department. The deputy fire chiefs and others in managerial positions have similar records of long-term service in the department and moved into increasingly responsible positions.

The department's formal organization chart reflects an authorized strength of 235 positions. A hierarchical chart and a functional chart build on the standard chart and help to further visually communicate the relationships among positions. Figure 1 illustrates the organizational structure of the Grand Rapids Fire Department.

FIGURE 1: Organization Chart, Grand Rapids Fire Department



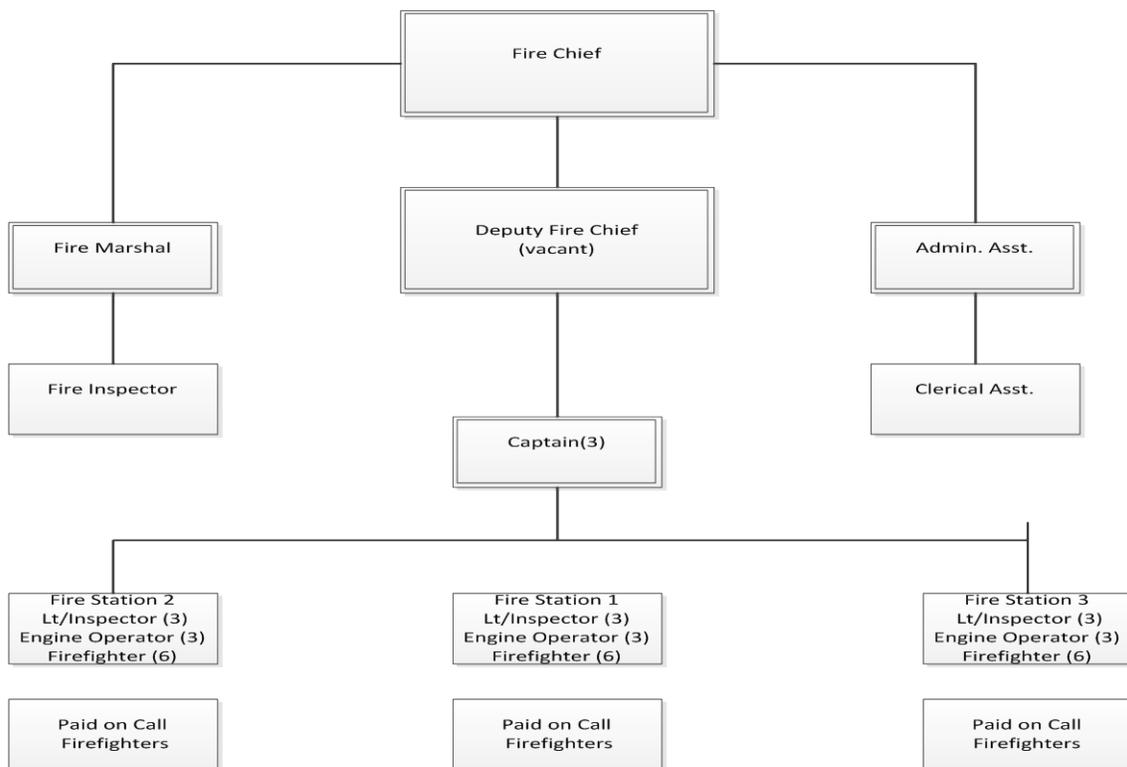
Kentwood Fire Department

The city of Kentwood operates under a mayor/council form of government in which the fire chief reports directly to the mayor. The city of Kentwood was incorporated in 1967; the Kentwood Fire Department began full-time operations in 1991. The Kentwood Fire Department is a combination department with full-time and paid on-call personnel. The Kentwood Fire Department serves a population of 48,707 in an area of 22.5 square miles.

The Kentwood Fire Department is led by Chief Brent Looman who was appointed in July 2011. Looman previously served as the department's fire marshal. The administrative staff consists of a fire marshal, a fire prevention officer, and an executive administrative assistant. The deputy chief's position is currently vacant.

The department's formal organization chart reflects the authorized strength of the department at thirty-nine fire suppression positions, four administrative officers, and respective civilian support personnel (Figure 2). Fire suppression personnel operate out of three fire stations utilizing a three-platoon system; a captain oversees the day-to-day operations of each of these platoons. The department also uses paid on-call fire personnel who are dispatched when needed to augment full-time firefighters. There are currently ten paid on-call personnel available.

FIGURE 2: Organization Chart, Kentwood Fire Department



Wyoming Fire Department

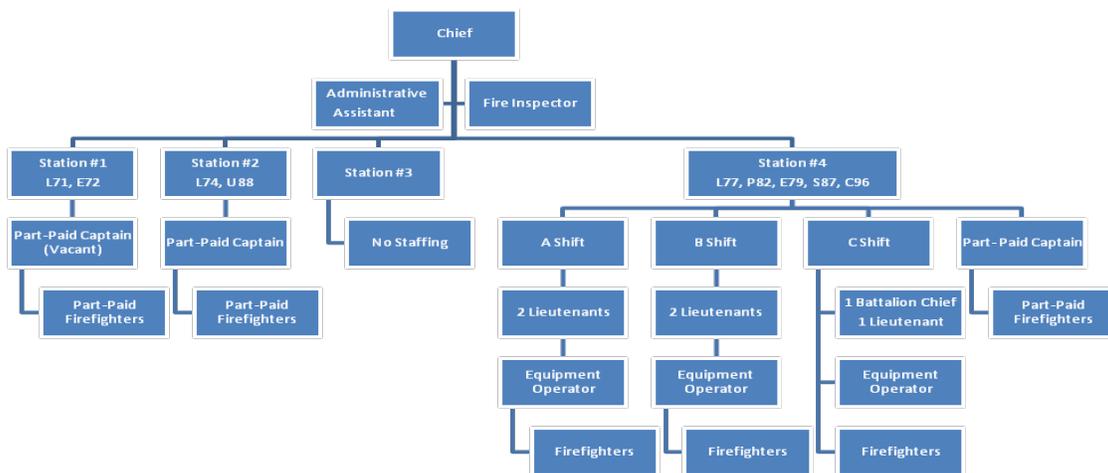
The city of Wyoming has a resident population of 72,125 living in 24.64 square miles. In 1959, Wyoming transitioned from a township to a home-rule city. The city functions under a council-manager form of government in which the city manager is appointed by the city council and functions as the chief executive officer. The city manager, with the approval of the city council, is responsible for appointing a fire chief.

There are currently three personnel that make up the department's Administrative Division: the fire chief, fire inspector, and an administrative assistant (Figure 3). Chief Bob Austin is a long-serving member of the Wyoming Fire Department and has served both as a paid on-call firefighter and as a career fire department member.

The Wyoming Fire Department is a combination department that utilizes both career (full-time) and part-time paid (paid on call) staff. The Suppression Division consists of twenty-two career personnel: one battalion chief, five lieutenants, three equipment operators, and thirteen firefighters. All career suppression personnel work a 50.4 hour workweek based on a 24-hour shift, which requires three shifts to staff the department 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. All career personnel except the chief and administrative assistant are represented by the International Association of Firefighters, Local 2758.

The Wyoming Department also has twenty-one paid on-call personnel assigned to three stations (#1, #2, and #4). These personnel are Michigan-certified firefighters who typically work another job. By design paid on-call employees carry a department-supplied pager and respond to the fire station when available for predefined call types. Once at the station, paid on-call personnel respond in a fire department vehicle to assist career personnel. The paid on-call personnel only receive compensation (hourly) when they are activated and do not have any required response benchmarks.

FIGURE 3: Organization Chart, Wyoming Fire Department



SECTION III: Consolidation Analysis

Prior to ICMA's involvement, the cities of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming had worked for a period of time assessing the possibility of consolidating their fire departments. The discussion regarding consolidation appeared to have been an open and honest partnership with all three cities playing equal roles.

Following the engagement of ICMA, the cities continued to actively and willingly participate in exploring the opportunities and challenges associated with consolidation. Fire service and city management staffs were engaged throughout the study effort. Due to its size and resources, the Grand Rapids Fire Department provided much of the staff support involved in developing and analyzing alternatives. Grand Rapids did not appear to dominate the process, and the work seems to reflect a true partnership of all three cities.

The city staff involved in analyzing the possibility of consolidating departments had reached the conclusion that the cities could not maintain the current level of fire and EMS service delivery under the present organizational structure, staffing, and delivery approach, which was deemed to be both inefficient and reactive. The local government professionals agreed that a consolidated effort should enable greater efficiencies and shared resources, and thus potentially created a more sustainable solution. They also concluded that a consolidated department may be more likely to be proactive. **The ICMA fire team strongly agrees with these conclusions.**

The staff estimated that the merger of the three fire departments would reduce costs by an estimated \$1.3 million annually. In this independent review and analysis of consolidation, the ICMA team identified an additional estimated \$5.9 million in savings that can be achieved through staffing and deployment changes. If the cities follow these recommendations, a consolidated department could save a combined estimated \$7.2 million annually.

Recommendations:

- Full consolidation is judged to be the best alternative for each of the three cities and will improve service to residents of all three communities and yield efficiencies in aggregate costs. The cities should pursue the full consolidation of the three fire departments.
- The staff work completed by the three cities in 2009 and 2010 represents a solid basis for the consolidation. The proposed course of action should be followed.
- Consolidation of the three fire departments would result in an estimated annual savings of \$7.2 million when compared to the combined budgets of the three individual departments. \$1.3 million is identified in a staff proposed consolidation of the three departments, and \$5.9 million is identified by ICMA.

The Consolidation Plan

The staff consolidation plan proposed by the cities included recommendations for a responsive, modern organization with a commitment to fire prevention, the use of modern technology, and demand-based staffing. Instead of traditional large pumpers that rely

exclusively on water resources to extinguish fires, the staff recommended quick response vehicles (QRVs) that would use compressed air foam. The demand-based staffing would provide for differential levels of staffing in recognition of the fact that calls for service are not uniformly spread over all 24 hours of each day.

Put simply, the proposed plan uses best practices as the underpinning of a sustainable department. More information about some of these best practice initiatives is included in the individual reports provided to the cities, particularly the Grand Rapids report.

Recommendation:

- The fire organization outlined in the staff proposal for consolidation is consistent with best practices in the fire service. This should serve as the basis for consolidation, but the plan also should incorporate ICMA recommendations, and where applicable to a consolidated department, the recommendations in the three separate city reports, including having the private ambulance provider as the response agency for all calls except the most serious medical.

Fire Station Location and Operation

Fire departments should conduct a community risk analysis within their communities for use in the comprehensive planning process. This assessment process will assist in determining the resources and assets needed to accomplish the department's core mission functions. Deciding how many emergency response resources to deploy, and where, is not an exact science. The final decision on a deployment model is based on a combination of risk analysis, professional judgment, and the governing body's willingness to accept more or less public-safety risk, based on available revenues.

Community risk and vulnerability assessment are essential elements in a fire department's planning process. According to a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) paper on assessing community vulnerability, fire department operational performance is a function of three considerations: resource availability/reliability, department capability, and operational effectiveness.¹ These elements can be further defined as:

Resource availability/reliability: The degree to which the resources are ready and available to respond.

Department capability: The ability of the resources deployed to manage an incident.

Operational effectiveness: The product of availability and capability. It is the outcome achieved by the deployed resources or a measure of the ability to match resources deployed to the risk level to which they are responding.²

¹ Fire Service Deployment, Assessing Community Vulnerability: From <http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/pdf/urbanfirevulnerability.pdf>.

² National Fire Service Data Summit Proceedings, U.S. Department of Commerce, NIST Tech Note 1698, May 2011.

Linking a fire department's operational performance functionality to the community risk and vulnerability assessment further assists fire personnel in the planning process by increasing their understanding of the community risk with regard to property and life-hazard potential. In combination with response run cards and staffing patterns, the analysis can help the department to shift resources from areas at less risk to concentrate more resources where there is a greater likelihood of incidents and to prepare for worst-case scenarios.³ The community risk assessment may also include determining and defining the differences in risk between a detached single-family dwelling, a multifamily dwelling, an industrial building, and a high-rise building by placing each in a separate category.

In the planning process for a proposed consolidated fire department, the GRFD planning division performed an extensive risk analysis of Grand Rapids, and wind-shield risk analysis of Wyoming and Kentwood. While all three cities have both low and medium risks for which to plan for, the analysis identified 1301 high risk occupancies in Grand Rapids, with 185 identified in Kentwood and 225 identified in Wyoming.

Additionally, the GRFD planning staff analyzed and plotted for all three cities critical planning components such as social vulnerability, daytime population, owner occupied housing, population density utilizing 2010 census, diversity index, median age, and percentage population density above the age of 64 and below the age of 18. All of these planning elements are essential when considering staffing and deployment of resources to ensure effective outcomes.

Although the staff proposed organization for the consolidated fire department is a solid plan, the number of stations, apparatus and personnel merits further discussion when considering all of the planning factors. In the current unconsolidated arrangement, the three departments have a total of 18 fire stations. (Three of the four Wyoming Fire Department stations however, are not staffed with full-time personnel.) The 18 stations have a total of 22 apparatus to respond to calls for service: 9 engines, 5 ladders or platforms, 3 rescue engines, 3 battalion chief cars, and 2 medical squads. Figure 4 shows the stations and the apparatus currently assigned to those stations. Figure 5 illustrates the demand for all fire incidents for 2009-2010, while Figure 6 illustrates structure fire demand. The purpose of these demand maps is to benchmark current and proposed deployment of resources as illustrated in Figures 4, 7 and 8 against demand for fire service.

It is important that prior to and after implementation of any consolidated fire department, deployment adjustments are made based on consideration of an increase or decrease in risk, demand for service, response time, and available funding.

³*Fire and Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual*, Eighth Edition, (Center for Public Safety Excellence, 2009), 49.

FIGURE 4: Current Stations and Apparatus

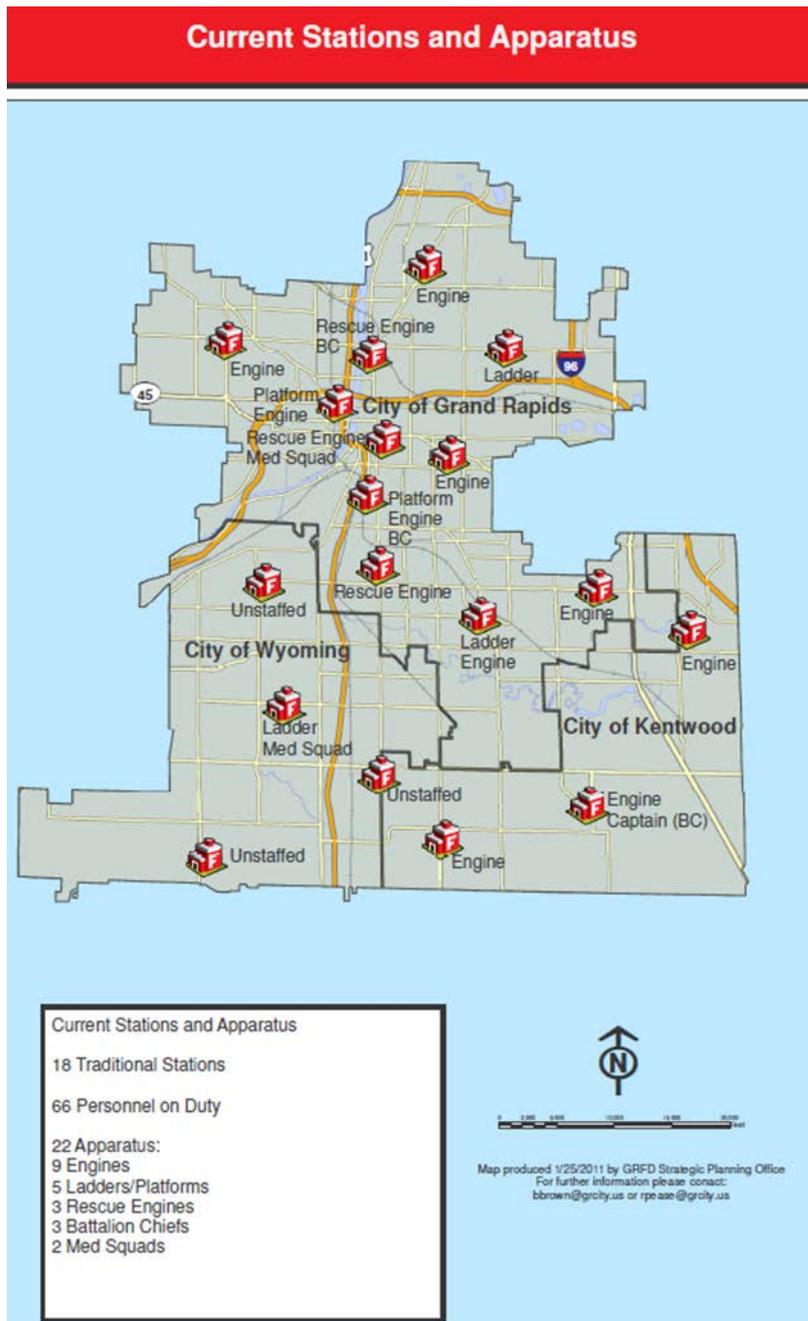


Figure 5: Fire Incident Demand

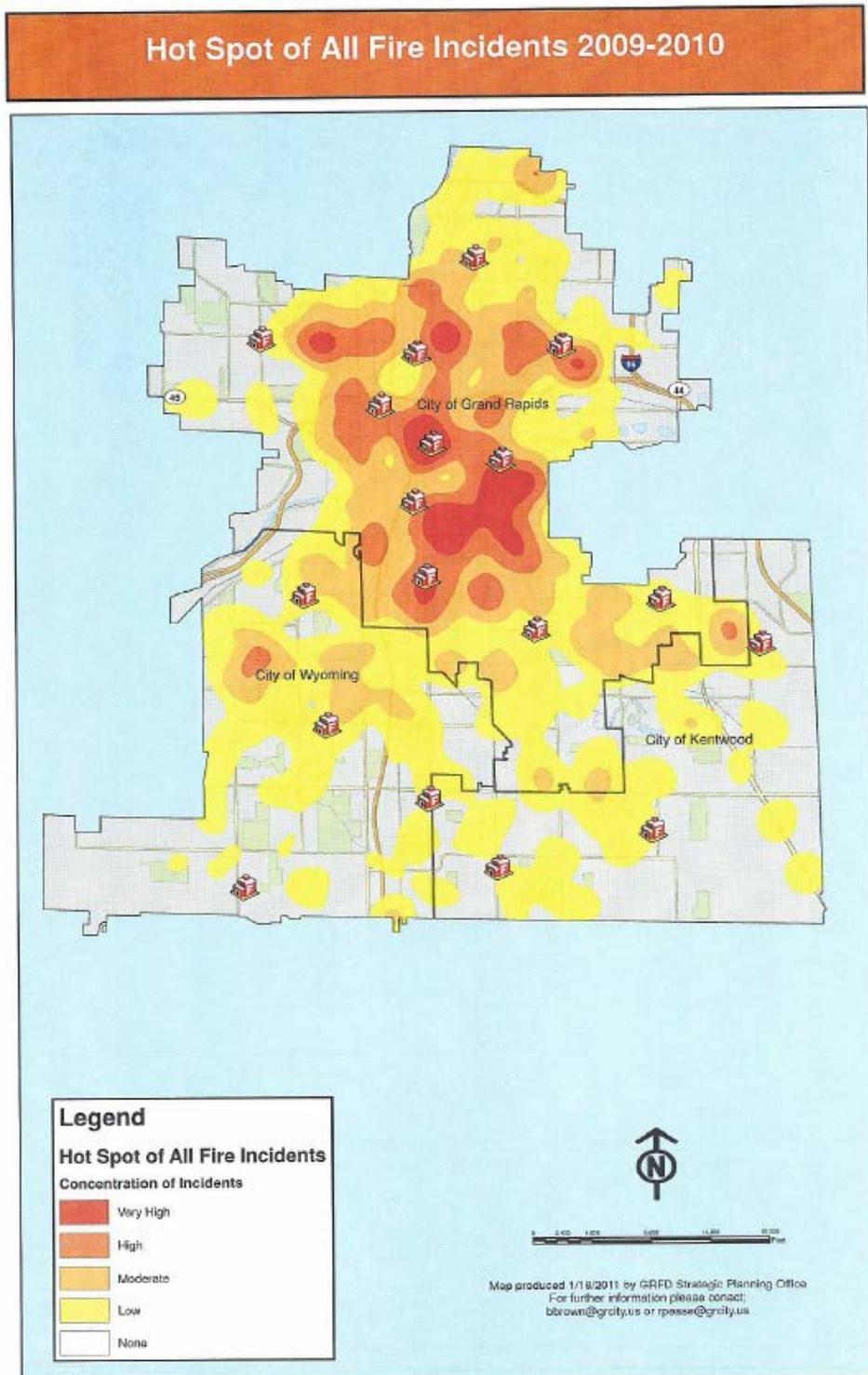
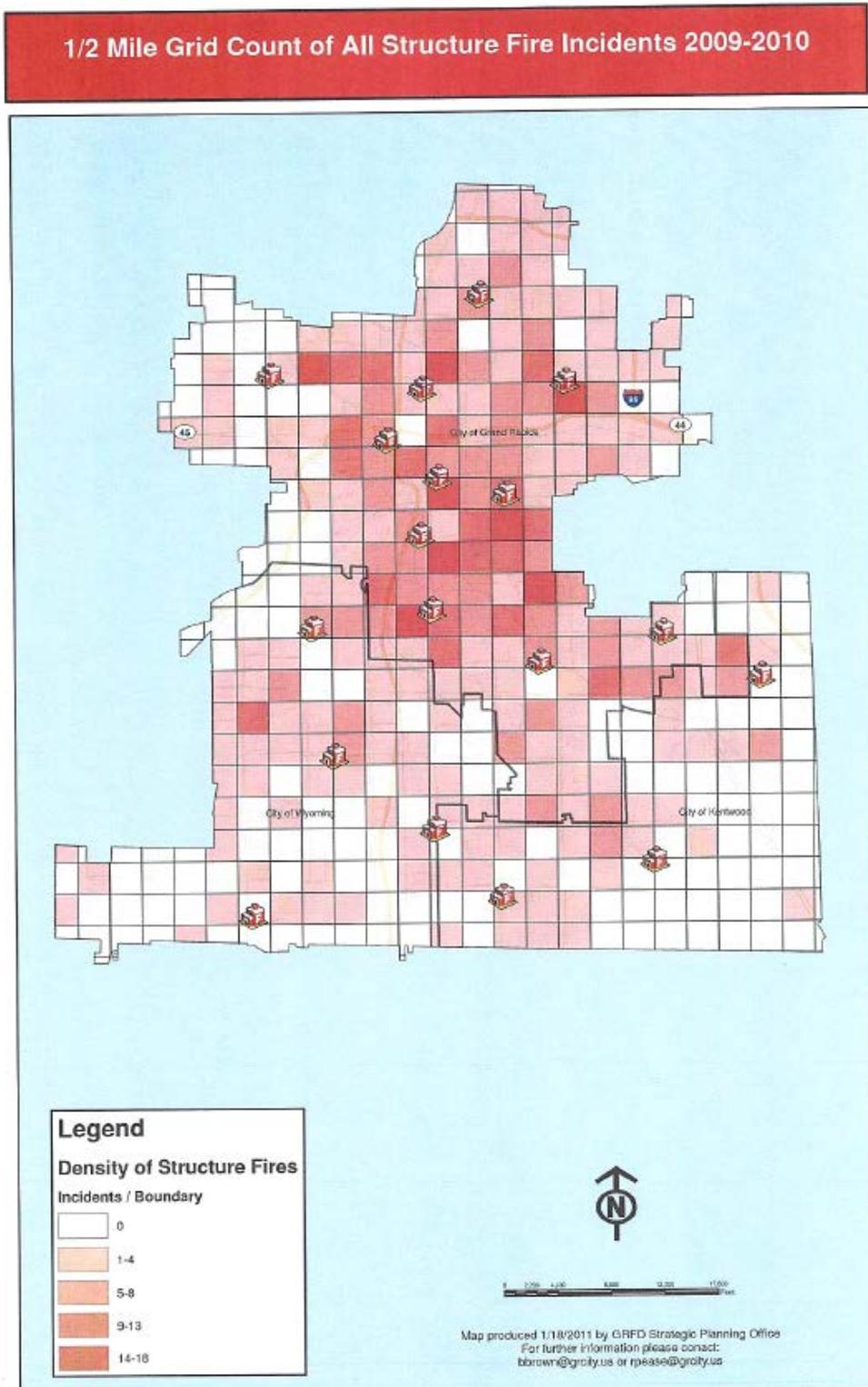


Figure 6: Structure Fire Demand

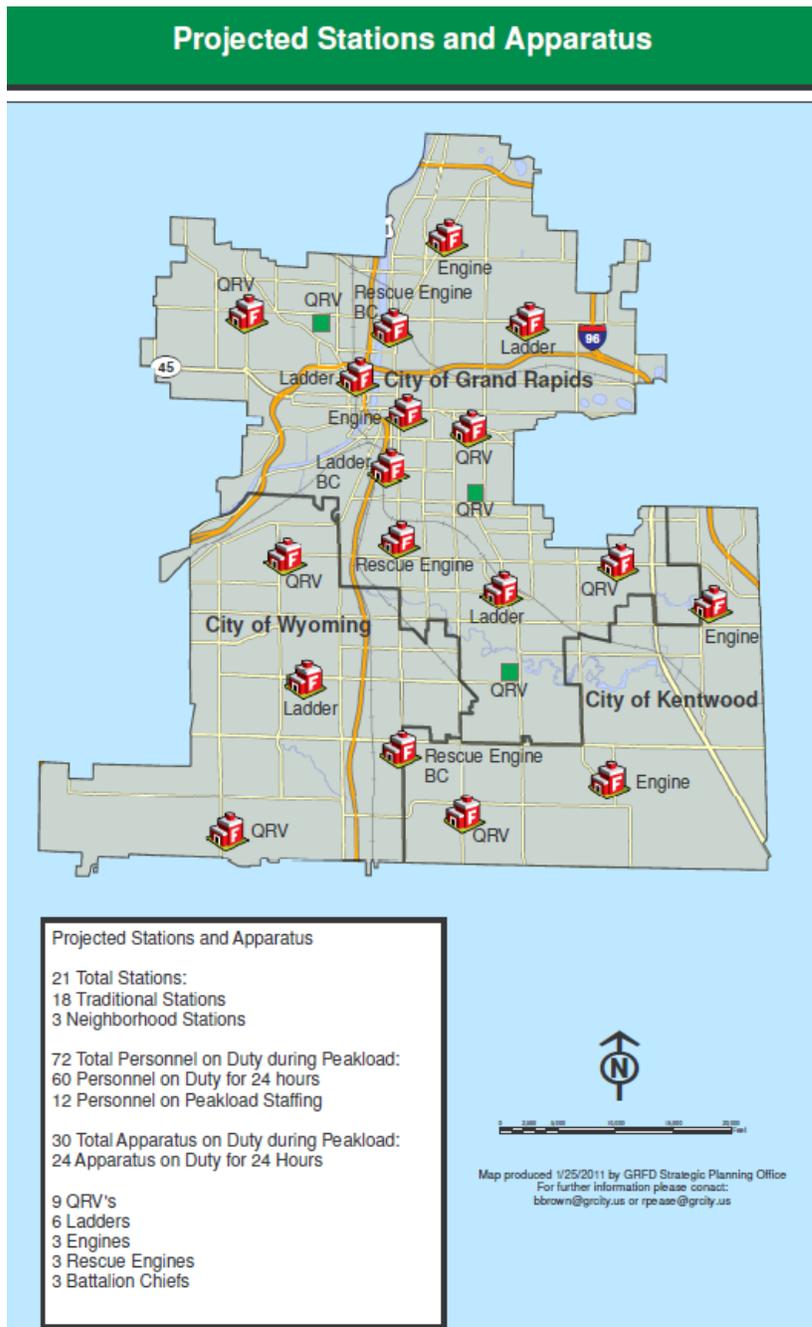


The three-city staff developed consolidation plan proposes 21 stations for the consolidated department. Thirty pieces of apparatus would be on duty each day; 24 pieces of apparatus would be staffed on a 24-hour basis, and 6 staffed only at peak demand times. The apparatus staffed 24-hours a day consist of 9 quick response vehicles, 6 ladder trucks, 3 engines, 3 rescue engines and 3 battalion chief vehicles. The incident peak demand would be covered by 6 additional quick response vehicles.

Three of the 18 stations identified in these communities are currently unstaffed. The ICMA fire team believes that it is unnecessary to move from 15 staffed stations to 21 stations, as proposed. This is particularly true if the cities adopt ICMA's recommendations for a more managed approach to EMS calls discussed later in this report.

The staff proposed plan includes three new neighborhood stations. These stations would deploy a quick response vehicle staffed by two personnel for each of the three platoons. ICMA believes these three additional stations could be removed from the proposed consolidation plan without impacting service delivery. The change would reduce the proposed staffing from 312 to 300 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees. This change would also make 4 employees available on each platoon for meeting staffing shortages on a daily basis due to vacation or sick leave. This change will result in an estimated savings of \$1.3 million. Figure 7 provides a map showing the location of stations and the assignment of apparatus in the consolidation plan proposed by staff from the three cities.

FIGURE 7: Staff Consolidation Plan: Projected Stations and Apparatus



In the separate reports prepared for each of the cities of Grand Rapids, Kentwood and Wyoming, the recommendations for staffing levels were reflective of the current and potential future financial issues faced by each. A total of 256 personnel were recommended with 177 in Grand Rapids, 39 in Kentwood, and 40 in Wyoming. This consolidation report proposes a staffing level of 256 which is consistent with the three reports. To accomplish this target requires an additional reduction of 44 personnel beyond the elimination of the Grand Rapids neighborhood stations. To accomplish this staffing target, the following is recommended.

- Eliminate the rescue engine proposed for the station on the border of Kentwood and Wyoming and relocate the Battalion Chief to be housed with the ladder company in Wyoming. This change reduces the proposed staffing by 16 personnel and results in a savings of \$1,680,000.
- Change three of the quick response vehicles (QRV) from 24 hour staffing to staffing only for a 12 hour peak demand period. (Covell, Burton, and the Kentwood QRV) This reduces staffing by 12 FTE personnel and generates an annual savings of \$1,260,000.
- Replace an engine in Grand Rapids (Plainfield) which is staffed on a 24 hour basis with a quick response vehicle which is staffed only for a 12 hour peak period each day. This modification results in a net reduction of 8 FTE personnel and generates an annual savings of \$840,000.
- Eliminate the quick response vehicle proposed for the northern area of Wyoming. This reduces FTE staffing by 8 and results in annual saving of \$840,000.

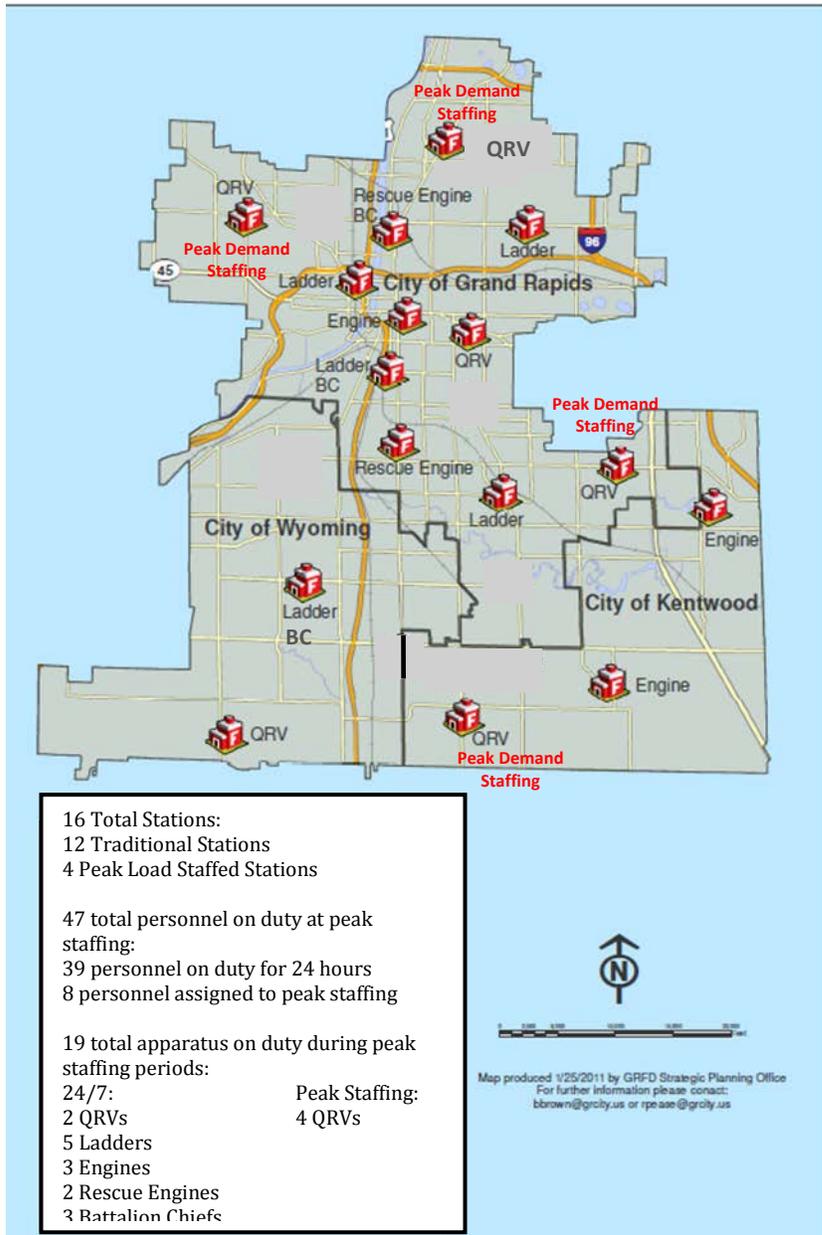
The four changes proposed above (estimated to be \$4.6 million), plus the elimination of the staff proposed neighborhood stations equals an estimated \$5.9 million in annual savings beyond the 1.3 million of estimated savings identified in the proposed staff consolidation report, for a total annual estimated consolidated department savings of \$7.2 million when compared with the current spending levels in the three separate departments.

The above changes are based on a review of run data and an analysis of the site geographic analysis between stations. Figure 8 illustrates the station configuration and apparatus deployment plan proposed above. This staffing plan would still retain the roving QRV's proposed in the staff consolidation report which would be placed in service where needed each day.

It should be understood as an outcome that staffing levels as proposed in the ICMA deployment plan will reduce overall response deployment and response times during certain periods of the day. However, it is still the judgment of ICMA that the plan as presented here will sustain a capable level of emergency service to citizens.

Figure 8: ICMA Proposed Station Configuration Plan

ICMA Recommended Stations and Apparatus



In discussions with leadership from all three cities it was requested that an additional option be prepared which represented a further reduction in the staffing level less than the 256 level proposed in the plan above, in the event of even more serious financial problems. To that end the cities could consider a revised plan which makes all of the reductions proposed above plus taking a ladder company (Bridge) out of service in the central area of Grand Rapids. This plan would result in a further reduction of 16 personnel and generate an estimated annual savings of \$1,680,000. This option is not recommended at this time.

Recommendation:

- ICMA recommends the staff consolidation plan should be amended to include only the 16 fire stations (12 traditional and 4 staffed during identified peak call volume time periods). This represents a reduction of 5 fire stations from the 21 stations that are proposed. The 16 fire stations would deploy fewer total apparatus and would be staffed by fewer personnel. These recommended changes would result in an estimated annual savings of \$5.9 million, and would make the consolidation plan staffing level consistent with the sum of the staffing outlined in the three separate city reports, which are 256.

Staffing

As can be seen in Figure 8, the consolidation plan recommends peak demand staffing. This is consistent with recommendations made by the ICMA team in the separate city reports and should be included in the merger plan.

The recent recession and resultant budget issues for local governments have forced communities to look at other staffing options for their fire departments, including staffing that is based on the demand for service as determined by how many calls for service are expected at different times of the day. Law enforcement agencies have used differential staffing for years, in recognition of a far greater need for staffing levels on Friday at midnight than on Sunday morning, for instance. Similar demand-based staffing would be of great benefit to the consolidated department. A review of the three cities' run data indicates a higher percentage of calls during the day than late at night and the early morning hours. This suggests that staffing could be reduced during these periods without impacting deployment capability. A peak or demand staffing pattern is recommended that uses fewer personnel during identified low call volume time periods by having some employees work a 12 hour peak demand shift.

Another challenge in the consolidation plan is to determine what should be the fate of the current paid on-call firefighters who are a part of the Kentwood and Wyoming fire departments. The ICMA team believes that the paid on-call system used in the Kentwood and Wyoming departments should be continued in the new consolidated department. This will provide greater flexibility for the department to use peak demand staffing, and will help to keep some staffing costs to a minimum. There will likely be a period of adjustment for merging the organizational cultures of a paid on-call approach with the overall full-time career consolidated department, but the flexibility that is provided by a combination department of this type represents a hallmark of a sustainable department in the twenty-first century.

In addition to the paid on-call system, the department should consider the use of part-time employees working the peak demand shift. These employees could potentially be certified firefighters who seek to obtain a full-time position with the consolidated department. Such an arrangement provides an opportunity for both the department and the part time employee to have a trial period to determine if a full time job as a firefighter with the

department is in the best interest of both. The use of part-time employees would also have the benefit of providing the same service with significantly reduced personnel costs, as part-time employees may not receive health insurance or participate in the pension system.

A final critical staffing issue is related to the reduction in personnel that will result from the above recommendation regarding the number of stations. The recommendation calls for the consolidated department to have fewer career personnel than are currently employed in the three departments. Although a positive financial outcome of consolidation, it is important that the staffing approach to consolidation be implemented with consideration to do so without a reduction in force if possible, to avoid a potential negative outcome of the consolidation. The reduction in the number of employees could be accomplished through attrition, or an employment transition program to another position the employee may be qualified for. This translates to potentially less savings in the short term, with full savings realized over the long term.

The success of consolidation will be judged on whether the consolidation plan results in a long term sustainable department that provides high-quality services to the citizens of the three cities. It should not be viewed as simply a way to balance next year's budget.

Recommendations:

- Demand-based/peak load staffing should be an integral part of the staffing plan for the consolidated department in recognition that calls for service is not dispersed uniformly throughout the 24 hour workday.
- The paid on-call systems in use in the Kentwood and Wyoming fire departments should be integrated into the staffing plan for the consolidated department.
- The consolidated department should consider the use of part-time employees to increase the flexibility in staffing in order to accommodate peak demand without adding unnecessary cost.
- Any reduction in personnel resulting from the establishment of the consolidated fire department should be accomplished only through attrition, not through reduction in force.

Emergency Medical Services

The approach to and methods of providing emergency medical services in the consolidation proposal are consistent with emerging best practices of EMS providers. The direction identified in the staff consolidation report also is in sync with the recommendations made by the ICMA team in the individual reports for each of the three cities, particularly medical priority dispatch and a greater reliance on having the private ambulance provider handle most calls without the involvement of fire-rescue personnel.

This section reviews several key components of a modern EMS system: quality management, system design, scope of practice, and response configurations. This last area represents the greatest opportunity for more efficient and effective service through the adoption of a medical priority dispatch system. The ICMA team supports the approaches

identified in the staff report, particularly the introduction of a comprehensive medical priority dispatch system.

Quality Management

According to the *Findings and Recommendations on Emergency Medical Services in Kent County* report,⁴ formal quality-management programs are in place in each of the ambulance services but are lacking in the medical first responder agencies. As with many fire department staffing situations, human resources are primarily dedicated to operational endeavors as opposed to administrative or support functions. In order to achieve an effective quality management program, there must be dedicated staff members working in an oversight capacity to develop a program framework, establish system performance measurements, and monitor compliance. Through a consolidation of department EMS resources, the appropriate support staff could be allocated to serve in this important area. Individuals would be tasked with working with other EMS system shareholders to develop a process improvement framework, which would provide a level of consistency in service delivery methods and thereby increase the quality of patient care.

EMS System Design

The components of an EMS system include an array of elements, such as a communications infrastructure, first responder support, response, on-scene activity and care, patient transport, performance specifications, provider levels, scope of practice, and prospective and retrospective medical direction.⁵ Response time is probably the most important and fundamental component of a system strategy for operational success. It drives other performance indicators and is usually the most significant aspect of what really matters in a community.

Traditional approaches to the deployment of limited resources have proven ineffective in reaching recommended response time standards for many fire and EMS agencies. The consolidation of resources and a more practical approach can help agencies improve response time and patient care. Dispatching response units from the closest station regardless of jurisdictional boundaries, implementing variations on system status management concepts, and up-to-date communications technology all aid in decreasing response times.

Scope of Practice

Increasing the scope of practice from medical first responder (MFR) to emergency medical technician (EMT) is vital to providing an efficient yet effective level of service to the communities of Grand Rapids and Wyoming. [The city of Kentwood provides EMS first response service at the EMT level] The costs associated with providing paramedic care are considerable compared to that of MFR or EMT. Moreover, EMTs use far more medical

⁴ Integral Performance Solutions, "Findings and Recommendations on Emergency Medical Services in Kent County," (Lakeland, FL.: Integral Performance Solutions, 2011).

⁵ Jeffrey M. Goodloe and Stephen H. Thomas (eds.), "Emergency Medical Services Evidence-Based System Design," *EMSA White Paper* (University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine, July 2011), 19.

interventions today than they were permitted to use at the inception of the EMT responder level. In addition, recent medical research indicates that only about 5 to 10 percent of any urban EMS system's calls actually require interventions at an advanced life support level. Basic emergency medical technicians typically have the ability and capability to save lives depending on local system protocols and what the state allows in the EMS scope of practice.⁶ This key factor coupled with the number of receiving medical facilities within the area served by the three fire departments and the available ambulance resources facilitate reduced patient travel times. This makes the higher paramedic level certification unnecessary. Grand Rapids and Wyoming employees, who are only MFR certified, should be upgraded, however. Given the proposal to have fire department personnel of the consolidated department respond to only the most serious medical cases, the appropriate practice over time would be to raise all personnel to EMT certification.

Response Configurations

Reducing unnecessary emergency responses has been shown as a vital way to increase the level of safety for both patients and emergency responders. Fully employing medical priority dispatch system (MPDS) priority levels and codes to align response levels with the patient's condition, and the actual need for EMS resources will result in a safer, more efficient emergency medical system.⁷

One of the reasons EMS agencies have been reluctant to fully employ MPDS is the fear that a 911 call will be inappropriately classified as a no response situation. EMS agencies are concerned about the possibility of being found liable in a resulting lawsuit, but their concerns have not been substantiated. On the other hand, every year people are injured or killed in emergency vehicle collisions, sometimes resulting in litigation. In a ten-year study, the Denver EMS system reported that 59 of 82 claims (72 percent) against it were related to motor-vehicle collisions involving an ambulance, and these led to six lawsuits.⁸ With the proper quality improvement program in place, both at the communications and responder levels, full implementation of a no-response policy can help improve the EMS system.

Recommendations:

- The EMS service delivery models proposed in the staff consolidation report and in the ICMA individual city reports related to medical priority dispatch and a greater reliance on having the private ambulance provider handle most calls without the involvement of fire-rescue personnel, represent best practices and should be adopted by the consolidated department.
- The consolidated fire department should adopt a medical priority dispatch system and train all operational personnel to the level of EMT, so that it will provide efficient and effective emergency medical services designed to respond personnel and equipment of the consolidated department to only the most serious medical cases.

⁶ Goodloe and Thomas, "Emergency Medical Services Evidence-Based System Design," 19.

⁷ Goodloe and Thomas, "Emergency Medical Services Evidence-Based System Design," 12.

⁸ Goodloe and Thomas, "Emergency Medical Services Evidence-Based System Design," 12.

Governance

Two fundamental questions related to a new consolidated fire department need to be answered:

- How will the organization be structured?
- Who will have the authority to decide the major issues for the organization?

Three alternative governance policies could be used, each with its own pros and cons: (1) an interlocal agreement that establishes mutually agreed-upon roles and relationships; (2) the creation of a new fire authority with taxing power; or (3) the creation of a new fire authority without the power to tax. Each of these alternatives is discussed in this section. A final possibility—the establishment of a new fire district—is intentionally left out of this discussion. Lynn R. Harvey, a professor from Michigan State University, is among the experts who argue that fire districts are really methods of finance rather than governance.

Interlocal agreement: The first option would be to establish a formal interlocal agreement among the three cities approved by the city council of each city. Essentially, this would be a contractual arrangement in which the three departments would be merged and made a department under the control of one of the three cities. The other two cities then would contract for services from the city overseeing the department as the method used to provide their share of the costs.

Due to the larger size of the Grand Rapids Fire Department, the most logical arrangement in this option is that the three departments would be merged to become a department within the city of Grand Rapids. The cities of Kentwood and Wyoming would then contract for service from Grand Rapids.

Of the three options discussed in this report, this would be the easiest to implement. Kentwood and Wyoming could decide how much fire protection service they wished to provide and could contract with the city of Grand Rapids to accommodate the desired service level. The main downside of this approach is that it would be dominated by the city of Grand Rapids, both in appearance and in fact. Kentwood and Wyoming would be dependent on Grand Rapids to provide fire and EMS service to their communities. This option may be unattractive to Kentwood's and Wyoming's citizenry.

Fire authority with taxing power: Another option would be to create a fire authority pursuant to the Michigan Emergency Services Authority Act. One way of funding the new fire department would be to give the fire authority taxing power. A referendum of the citizenry of all three cities would be required to implement this option due to the taxing power granted to the authority.

The authority would function as a separate, independent, and distinct unit of government governed by articles of incorporation and a board of existing elected officials, city employees, private citizens, or any combination of the three. Essentially two service provider options would be available to the authority: It could hire all personnel and provide services directly, or it could contract with one of the cities to provide the service.

One advantage of a separate fire authority is that it would have significant capacity to manage the fire service without hindrance by other parties. In addition, giving the fire authority the power to assess taxes would protect it from the local budget problems of the participating cities. However, -from the taxpayers' standpoint this advantage might be considered a disadvantage. Some citizens would likely be concerned that the fire authority could result in a net increase in local taxes. A new tax could be established to fund the new fire authority, but there is no guarantee that cities would reduce their taxes by the same amount.

Furthermore, the percentage shares of property tax base for the three cities of the authority are currently 55%, 22% and 23% for Grand Rapids, Kentwood and Wyoming respectively. The current percentage shares of fire expenditures are 72%, 15% and 13% for Grand Rapids, Kentwood and Wyoming respectively. The result of relying on property taxes exclusively in a taxing fire authority would result in very significant increases in taxation for the citizens of Kentwood and Wyoming making consolidation highly unattractive to those cities.

Since having a fire authority with taxing power requires a referendum to establish, it is unclear whether it is a viable option. If city elected and appointed officials decided to move forward with this approach, more information should be gathered to assess the likelihood that citizens in Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming would support the measure.

Fire authority without taxing power: Another, often more palatable option, would be to create a new fire authority that would not have the power to tax. Taxing power instead would remain with the cities of Grand Rapids, Kentwood and Wyoming. The ICMA fire team believes that this option would provide the best governance structure for the consolidated fire department for a number of reasons.

First, a nontaxing fire authority could be implemented more quickly because it would not require a referendum. In addition, instituting a fire authority without giving it taxing power has the advantage of turning over significant power over the authority to local elected officials. Elected officials would be responsible for funding fire and EMS services. Because they are responsible for weighing all public needs, they could determine the appropriate funding for fire and EMS in relation to other local services. This arrangement also would encourage greater cooperation between the consolidated fire department and other departments in all three local governments.

City staff has participated in considerable discussion about what to call the consolidated department. The ICMA team concurs that adopting a broader title, such as "West Michigan Fire Rescue Authority," would help to highlight the mission and scope of the consolidated department.

Recommendations:

- A new fire authority should be established to oversee the consolidated fire department, but it should not be given taxation power. Rather, the elected officials of the three cities should maintain control over funding. .

- West Michigan Fire Rescue Authority should be adopted as the official name of the consolidated department.

Board Composition and Powers

As stated above, the board of a fire authority could be composed of elected officials, local government employees, private citizens, or any combination of the three. Due to the significant size of the fire service budgets and the critical need for effective working relationships with other local government departments, the ICMA team recommends that the board should consist of one council member from each of the cities of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming. Each city council would select the member to represent it on this board.

The board should be given the authority to recommend the annual budget, confirm the appointment of the fire chief, and adopt a strategic plan for the department. The board should be required to meet at least quarterly. One meeting each year should be devoted to reviewing the budget for the next fiscal year and recommending funding levels for each of the three cities. The board should hold another meeting initially to begin the development of a long-range strategic plan and subsequently every two to five years to update this plan to keep it current. Once developed, the fire chief should present an annual report describing departmental activities and achievements at a strategic planning meeting. Additional meetings, particularly in the early stages of the department, may be needed to accomplish other specific objectives.

Recommendations:

- The authority should have a three-person governing board consisting of one elected official from each of the three cities.
- The board should meet at least monthly during the initial consolidation and quarterly thereafter. Specific responsibilities should include approving the proposed fire department budget and developing and updating a strategic plan for the department.

Administration

In general, there are two options for organizing a new consolidated department: (1) The authority could hire all employees, including direct service providers and administrative support staff; or (2) the authority could contract with one of the three cities—most likely Grand Rapids—to provide the requisite services. The ICMA team believes that the second option has several clear advantages. Most important, the authority would not need to establish a separate bureaucracy to support departmental operations. In addition, the cities have experience with a similar arrangement in the Kent County Dispatch Authority, which relies on the city of Grand Rapids to be the provider of dispatch services at its police location.

One of the most critical decisions to be made about the new consolidated department is the appointment of the fire chief. The chief should be selected on the basis of professional qualifications and experience. Although the city of Grand Rapids is proposed to be the

administrative home for the consolidated department, the cities of Kentwood and Wyoming also should be involved in selecting the chief. Specifically, the ICMA team recommends that all three cities should be actively involved in fire chief appointment decisions. The chief executive officers in Grand Rapids, Wyoming, and Kentwood should interview candidates and jointly make a recommendation to the board of the fire authority, which would then have the authority and responsibility for the final selection of the new fire chief.

It is further proposed that the termination of the fire chief could be made either by the Grand Rapids city manager or by a majority vote of the authority board. While such an arrangement is somewhat unusual, this would help to ensure that the spirit of partnership inherent in the consolidation effort continues into the future. The shared power further ensures that the fire chief can be held accountable by his or her supervisor, the city manager of Grand Rapids.

Recommendations:

- The West Michigan Fire Rescue Authority should be housed within the city of Grand Rapids for administrative purposes.
- All three cities should be actively involved in fire chief appointment decisions. The chief executive officers in Grand Rapids, Wyoming, and Kentwood should interview candidates and jointly make a recommendation to the board of the fire authority, which would then have the authority and responsibility for the final selection of the new fire chief.

Budget

Two central questions for any organization are “who will decide?” and “who will pay?” There is no activity which brings these questions into focus more sharply than the annual budget process.

The decision about the budget adoption process for the new consolidated department is a logical extension of the decisions that have already been made in the proposed establishment of the authority. Since it is recommended that the authority not have independent taxing power, it is clear that the three cities will still have funding obligations for fire and EMS services. The ICMA team therefore recommends that the authority board should have the power to recommend a funding level for the consolidated department, but the approval of all three city councils should be required for the budget to take effect. Elected members of the city councils should retain the final authority to set the funding level in their annual budget process.

The downside of this approach is that it may lengthen the budget process as the three cities discuss and resolve differences of opinion. The ICMA team believes that the adoption of a cost-sharing formula for the new department (discussed later in this report) will help the cities avoid gridlock in this matter.

Recommendations:

- The annual budget for the consolidated department should be recommended by the authority board and approved by all three city councils.

Sun setting Provisions

The ICMA team believes that the consolidation of the fire departments of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming would improve fire and emergency medical services for the citizenry of all three cities. It is therefore recommended that the three cities move forward to implement the plan.

However, there is often concern when changing to the new that one may later find that the change did not result in the anticipated benefits. To address these concerns, there should be a mechanism in place to assess the consolidation and determine whether to continue the arrangement for the long term. To that end, the ICMA team recommends that a sunset review provision should be included in the plan. It is suggested that the West Michigan Fire Rescue Authority be established for an initial period of ten years—long enough for the merger to be fully implemented and operating in a routine manner, but short enough for those who have concerns to see an opportunity for them to be addressed. After the sunset review, the authority would continue only through unanimous consent of all three cities.

Recommendation:

- There should be a sunset review of the consolidated fire department within ten years of its adoption.

Funding

The professional staff from Grand Rapids, Wyoming, and Kentwood spent considerable time in developing variations of formula for the “fair” sharing of the cost of the consolidated department among the three cities. Additional assistance was also sought from a team from Grand Valley State University. In the final analysis, the sharing arrangement needs to be comprehensive enough to capture the distinctions in the demand for service and the risk that is sought to be protected. However, any arrangement to fund a consolidated fire department needs to be simple enough to be understandable by the average citizen. After reviewing the various alternatives, ICMA proposes adoption of either the original cost-sharing formula or a revised formula with greater value placed on the actual risk of each city. Both formulae include factors related to population, area, population density, property value, incident history, and risk assessment to allocate costs. Using the original formula, the resulting budget share for Grand Rapids is 64.9 percent; Wyoming is 19.5 percent, and Kentwood is 15.6 percent, Figure 9 shows the components of this formula, their weighting, and the resulting budget percentages for each city.

FIGURE 9: Cost Allocation Formula

City	Population	Sq. Miles	Pop. Density	SEV	Incident History	High Risk Occupancies	Budget
Grand Rapids	197,800	45.3	4,366.4	\$5,192,219,200.00	18,709	1,301	\$26,680,205.00
Kentwood	45,255	21.0	2,155.0	\$2,045,559,700.00	3,956	185	\$5,568,900.00
Wyoming	69,368	24.5	2,831.3	\$2,229,233,900.00	4,863	225	\$4,730,760.00
TOTAL	312,423	90.8	3,440.8	\$9,467,012,800.00	27,528	1,711	\$36,979,865.00
Grand Rapids	63.31%	49.89%	126.90%	54.85%	67.96%	76.04%	72.15%
Kentwood	14.49%	23.13%	62.63%	21.61%	14.37%	10.81%	15.06%
Wyoming	22.20%	26.98%	82.29%	23.55%	17.67%	13.15%	12.79%
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	POP	Sq. Miles		SEV	INC	High Risk Occupancies	TOTAL
	25%	5%		20%	30%	20%	100%
Grand Rapids	15.83%	2.49%		10.97%	20.39%	15.21%	64.89%
Kentwood	3.62%	1.16%		4.32%	4.31%	2.16%	15.57%
Wyoming	5.55%	1.35%		4.71%	5.30%	2.63%	19.54%
TOTAL	25.00%	5.00%		20.00%	30.00%	20.00%	100.00%
Grand Rapids Share	\$23,995,498.10						
Kentwood Share	\$5,758,819.56						
Wyoming Share	\$7,225,547.34						
TOTAL	\$36,979,865.00						

The next cost allocation formula increases the share of the formula attributed to risk from 20% to 30% with reductions in the population and incident history categories by 5% each. This formula recognizes the important distinguishing characteristic of risk which is found in each of the three cities, and the deployment required to service this risk. Communities that have increased or higher risk require a more comprehensive response and therefore, in our judgment, costing for these communities' should be weighted more heavily than in the earlier proposed formula. When this revised formula is applied the allocation share are 65.8%, 18.9% and 15.3% for Grand Rapids, Wyoming and Kentwood respectively. Figure 10 shows the allocation resulting from the application of this recommended formula, and is estimated to fund the consolidated department based on suggested deployment levels in Figure 8.

Figure 10: Adjusted Cost Allocation

City	Allocation	Budget
Grand Rapids	65.8%	\$19,609,000
Wyoming	18.9%	\$5,632,000
Kentwood	15.3%	\$4,559,000
Total	100.0%	\$29,800,000

While the cost-sharing formula is an attempt to determine an equitable way to allocate cost, there is another factor to be considered. It is clear that the adoption of the consolidation plan will result in a more efficient and effective fire protection service collectively for the citizens of each of the three cities. While improvements in service to the public should be incentive enough, it is understood that it may be difficult for one or more of the cities to join the consolidation effort if it potentially may result in a higher budget for fire service than it currently has in place, and that it can afford in the short term. Therefore, there needs to be

enough of a financial and service delivery value to make the consolidation plan appealing to all parties. To that end, the ICMA fire team strongly suggests that the three cities agree to phase in the implementation of the cost allocation formula. While the final phasing-in plan will likely require further discussion among the three cities, the following approach provides a starting point:

- Adopt a formula as the long-term equitable cost allocation plan.
- Establish a provision that in each of the first three years, no city is required to pay more than they are paying in the current fiscal year. While one or more cities may have to pay more than the formula would dictate, with the savings resulting from consolidation, each city should still benefit financially and from an overall improved service perspective.
- In years four through seven there should be a phasing in of one-fourth of the distance between the year-three budget payment and the amount required by the formula.
- Beginning in year eight the formula should be followed.

Phasing in the consolidation funding plan will be an important component in the successful implementation of the merger initiative. Without financial appeal to all, chances for success are limited.

Recommendations:

- Funding for the consolidated fire department should be provided through a shared formula adopted by the three city councils that is based on a modification of the original cost allocation plan, which would place a greater value on the difference in risk between the three cities.
- Funding for the merged organization should be phased in over a seven-year period with a guarantee that for the first three years no city would be required to pay more than it was paying for fire service in its current budget year. Changes would be phased in over the next four years in accordance with the adopted formula.

Functional Consolidation

While a complete consolidation of the Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming fire departments is the recommended course of action, there may be reasons that cause one or more cities not to pursue a full merger. If full consolidation proves untenable, it is strongly recommended that the three cities still consolidate specialized services.

In functional consolidation, organizations merge like functions while retaining the mission-critical functions. Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming fire departments would each benefit from the functional consolidation of, at a minimum, training, hazardous material (HAZMAT) response and technical rescue. These services are all extremely important and can be costly when provided by a single community. Based on current funding and

deployment strategies, it does not appear any of the three cities by itself could provide these functions at the same level as perhaps if it is provided by a single, consolidated function serving all three departments. While these are the most obvious consolidation opportunities, the cities may identify other potential areas as well such as fire prevention, investigation, and public education. Due to the size and the breadth of the activities of the Grand Rapids Fire Department, it is recommended that most services merged as part of this functional consolidation should be integrated into the Grand Rapids Fire Department.

All three of the cities have very limited training programs. Employees in all three departments are underserved in the area of training. The most extensive training program is the Grand Rapids Fire Department, which has just two staff members dedicated to training for the entire department. A consolidation of training resources, including staff and equipment, would enable all three departments to better meet the needs of employees at all levels, from recruit training, to basic refresher courses, to highly specialized training required for special response teams.

HAZMAT response requires specialized types of equipment and a significant amount of targeted training on how to respond to an event that may involve handling of a hazardous material. An example might be the derailment of a train carrying a chemical such as chlorine or ammonia. Such an event could take place in any of the three jurisdictions. The response to such a situation must be rapid and must be undertaken by personnel who are highly trained in utilizing highly technical equipment. HAZMAT events, though serious, are relatively rare. These characteristics make HAZMAT response a good candidate for consolidation. Although all three fire departments currently have HAZMAT response capability, none of the three departments can provide the same level of service as would be enabled by a joint effort.

Best practices suggest that the optimal situation is to have one fire department own all the HAZMAT response equipment and provide the majority of personnel in handling a HAZMAT threat. In this case, the other two departments should have personnel who are also trained to respond, but they would do so under the direction of the lead agency.

Like HAZMAT response, technical rescue is a very specialized response. This could include an event like a trench cave-in where workers of a utility company are buried. Again, specialized equipment and intensive training are requirements for handling such a rescue; again, such rescues are rare occurrences. As with HAZMAT response, technical rescue is an area that would benefit from having one fire department serve as the lead agency and maintain most of the technical rescue equipment and personnel

While any of the cities could serve as the lead agency for training, HAZMAT response, technical rescue, airport crash rescue, and any other consolidated functions, the larger size of the Grand Rapids Fire Department make it the most logical choice. The best approach would likely be an interlocal agreement whereby Kentwood and Wyoming would contract with Grand Rapids for access to the service in exchange for a set fee.

The arrangements for functional consolidation should be long enough to ensure successful consolidation implementation and a reasonable time to judge success. However, the period should not be so long that a party with unresolved concerns is unable to see a window for pursuing a different course of action. The ICMA team believes that ten years provides adequate time for implementation and assessment of a functional consolidation.

Recommendations:

- While full consolidation of the three departments is the recommended course of action, in the event that plan is not adopted, the three cities should pursue functional consolidation of specialized services, including training, hazard material response, and technical rescue.
- Services that are combined as a result of functional consolidation would be best administered by the Grand Rapids Fire Department.
- If functional consolidation is pursued, it should be funded by a ten-year interlocal agreement whereby Wyoming and Kentwood contract for services from the city of Grand Rapids.

Police/Fire Consolidation

While making the site visit to Wyoming, the ICMA team was asked about the public safety officer arrangement. In this section, we respond to that inquiry. It should be noted that the recommendation of the ICMA fire team is for the full consolidation of the three fire departments rather than a recommendation for the public safety officer model.

Since the beginning of the economic recession of 2008 and 2009, police and fire agencies have found it increasingly difficult to maintain proper staffing levels and provide basic police and fire service. Decision makers have sought to respond to these challenges in several ways, specifically in the interest in regionalizing, consolidating, or sharing police and fire services. Michigan has led the way in consolidation of public safety services, but it is likely to occur increasingly often elsewhere as well. Such efforts can be complicated by collective-bargaining agreements that reduce flexibility by mandating minimum staffing levels.

Nevertheless, the traditional reluctance to cut public safety funding has given way to unprecedented changes. Localities seeking to reduce the cost of government increasingly scrutinize public safety, which is often the largest service in their budget, and personnel costs, which is inevitably the largest portion of the public safety budget.

There are four basic models of public safety consolidation, which are on a continuum from full consolidation to nominal consolidation:

- Full consolidation, with full integration of police and fire services, public safety officers cross-trained in both police and fire services, and a consolidated management and command;

- Partial consolidation, with partial integration of police and fire services, cross-trained public safety officers working alongside separate police and fire personnel, and consolidation limited to select positions within the organization’s hierarchy;
- Functional consolidation, in which police and fire services are not integrated, but consolidation occurs within middle or upper management; and
- Nominal consolidation, in which police and fire services are not integrated and there are no cross-trained public safety officers, but in which separate police and fire services may share facilities or training and dispatch resources and a public safety director may oversee separate police and fire services.

Among the benefits of police/fire consolidation are possible increases in efficiency, augmentation of fire staffing, promotion of community policing, and enhancement of efforts in community safety and homeland safety preparedness. Consolidation can make more staff continuously available to respond to a wider variety of calls. It also reflects an evolution in firefighting from fire suppression to emergency medical services. Consolidation also can reduce duplication of administrative, communications, and physical infrastructure.

By making more staff available for a wider variety of calls, consolidation also can enable and encourage new efforts, such as community policing and problem solving. A consolidated department with a larger total staff provides increased access to staff and flexibility in deployment. Expanded roles may also attract officers with broader skills. Increased efficiency of public safety departments can also help avoid reduction in fire staffing or elimination of community-policing activities.

Consolidation also can enhance community safety and homeland security preparedness because it facilitates improved communication among all public-safety personnel, unified command structures, planning for all-inclusive emergency responses, and comprehensive training.

Police/fire consolidation is a growing trend. As of September 2011, more than 150 agencies across the United States have been identified as having some form of public safety consolidation, with consolidation most prevalent in Michigan. Although nearly 15 agencies in Michigan have deconsolidated in the past decade, many agencies have recently adopted the model or are actively considering it.

ICMA conducted independent operational analyses of the Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming fire departments. These reports did not analyze the feasibility of the public safety officer model, but a member of the ICMA team with specific expertise on this model reviewed the individual reports to provide guidance. Based on this in-depth review, the ICMA does not recommend the merger of police and fire operations in the city of Grand Rapids or Kentwood. A few of the obstacles to a consolidated police/fire department include:

- Significant upfront costs (training, equipment, backfill);
- Labor issues; and

- A political climate that may not be supportive.

In addition, the operational analysis far better supports full consolidation of the three fire departments rather than a merger of police and fire functions.

The merger of police and fire operations in the city of Wyoming, on the other hand, is worthy of consideration only if the city chooses not to pursue consolidation of its fire department with Grand Rapids and Kentwood. This recommendation is based on the current fire staffing level in this city. The public safety officer concept potentially would enhance deployable fire suppression resources, and enhance certain police functions as well.

The ICMA team strongly believes that citizens in all three cities would benefit most from a total merger of the three fire departments.

Recommendation:

- If full fire department consolidation is not carried out, the city of Wyoming should pursue further analysis of a possible merger of police and fire departments utilizing the public safety officer concept.

Outcomes/Benefits/Next Steps

Consolidation of public services presents many challenges. Included in this report are suggested deployment alternatives for fire services consolidation and alternative service delivery methods. These include a staff proposed consolidation and a staffing and deployment method created by ICMA specific for this project. Additionally ICMA has estimated significant cost savings for a consolidated fire service as discussed in this report. The ICMA deployment and cost recommendations are based largely on a desire for each city to provide fire services more efficiently yet remain effective in the delivery of fire services and some first response emergency medical services calls. Each city is self-tasked with matching available revenues to expenditures across all departments and activities it provides public services from. Currently each city is either seeking solutions to sustaining their fire department budget, or reducing the fire department budget as they no longer have the revenues to match the expenditures of their current deployment model.

The outcomes and benefits of this proposed consolidation of fire services are evident in this report. The primary outcome and benefit is the estimated overall cost savings a consolidated fire department can realize. An additional outcome is the modified and more efficient deployment of resources across each community, which includes a non-traditional staffing model (peak demand staffing), the introduction of quick response vehicles (some already deployed in Grand Rapids), and modification through a comprehensive emergency medical dispatch system of fire services deployment on EMS first response calls. Further outcomes include improved administrative and training outcomes achieved through either a full or functional consolidation, a functional consolidation alternative that can be initiated now at a minimal cost, and a managed approach to funding a consolidated fire department and potential workforce impacts.

One outcome that may occur in the short term, and which will be based on the final costing formula, is that some communities may initially fund the consolidated fire department at a higher level than how they currently fund their individual fire department. However, the overall benefits of the consolidated department for those cities that may be faced with this as a decision point include: experienced staff from which to draw from to include managers, planners, fire prevention and education staff, and command officers; the sharing of overall resources and equipment; the sharing of the total deployment model; the ability to adjust deployment of resources based on community demand and risk.

As communities engage in consolidation, in this case fire services, there are key performance measures that should be considered. These performance measures will link to the planning process of how the consolidated fire services will be measured, and in some cases, what the sustained cost will be. Additionally, when considering costs, funding mechanisms, and service deliverables, there are several variables that drive the final decision-making process for consolidation.

Key Performance Measures

1. Ratio of fire code violations cited/corrected within 30 day period. (*Fire Prevention-measure effectiveness of Fire Prevention program*).

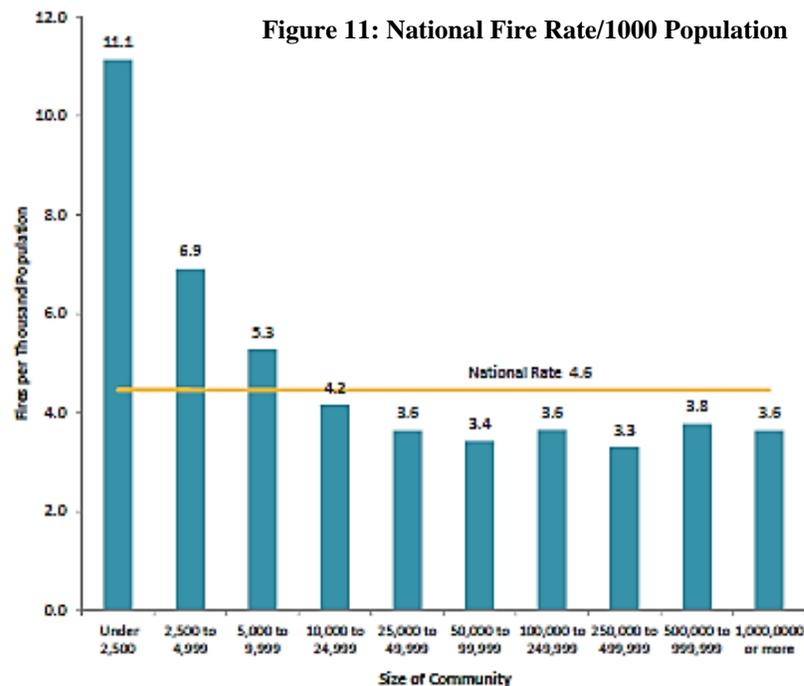
Fire suppression and response, although necessary to protect property, have little impact on preventing fire deaths. It is rather public fire education, fire prevention, and built-in fire protection systems that are essential elements in protecting citizens from death and injury due to fire.

Effective fire prevention efforts depend on the ability for a fire department or agency within a local government to conduct fire prevention inspections through a code enforcement program. One measurement of this program is the correction of code violations found. When a code violation is discovered, a suitable period to correct the violation is established through a written report⁹. In this measurement 30 days is recommended, as this a norm in fire departments ICMA has studied and that the ICMA team is familiar with.

2. # of reported fires/1,000 population (Fire Prevention-measure effectiveness of Fire Prevention program).

This measure links with measure #1. As discussed in this measure, fire suppression and response, although necessary to protect property, have little impact on preventing fire deaths. It is rather public fire education, fire prevention, and built-in fire protection systems that are essential elements in protecting citizens from death and injury due to fire.

Figure 11, from the *NFPA Fire Analysis and Research Division*, illustrates the national fire rate (structure and outside fires) per 1000 population of varying sized communities (2007-2011).



⁹ Swain, J., *A Practical Guide for Local Government*. 2009, p.344.

3. Average response time per fire incident call (*Fire Suppression-measures effectiveness of fire station location and efficiency of road networks, e-911 center call processing, and crew turnout time*).

The location of responding units is one important factor in response time; reducing response times, which is one of the key performance measures in determining the efficiency of department operations, often depends on this factor. The goal of having a network of responding fire stations in a single community or a consolidated fire department of several communities is to optimize coverage with short travel distances, while giving special attention to natural and manmade barriers and response routes that can create response-time problems.¹⁰ Additionally, a community's fire risk analysis and the agency's pre-incident planning process will contribute to determining the number and type of fire units needed to adequately respond to a reported fire.¹¹

Meeting NFPA-recommended standards for travel time can increase a fire service agency's cost, which raises two questions: *what are the added costs* and *what is the evidence supporting these recommendations?* For fire suppression, NFPA travel times are established primarily due to the risk of flashover as shown in the fire propagation curve (Figure 12).

According to fire service educator Clinton Smoke, the fire propagation curve establishes that temperature rise and time within a room on fire corresponds with property destruction and potential loss of life.¹² At approximately the 10-minute mark of fire progression, the fire flashes over (due to superheating of room contents and other combustibles) and extends beyond the room of origin, thus increasing proportionately the destruction to property and potential endangerment of life. The ability to quickly deploy adequate fire staff before flashover thus limits the fire's extension beyond the room or area of origin.

Regarding the risk of flashover, the authors of an IAFF report conclude:

Clearly, an early aggressive and offensive initial interior attack on a working structural fire results in greatly reduced loss of life and property damage. Consequently, given that the progression of a structural fire to the point of "flashover" (the very rapid spreading of the fire due to super-heating of room contents and other combustibles generally occurs in less than 10 minutes), two of the most important elements in limiting fire spread are the quick arrival of sufficient numbers of personnel and equipment to attack and extinguish the fire as close to the point of its origin as possible.¹³

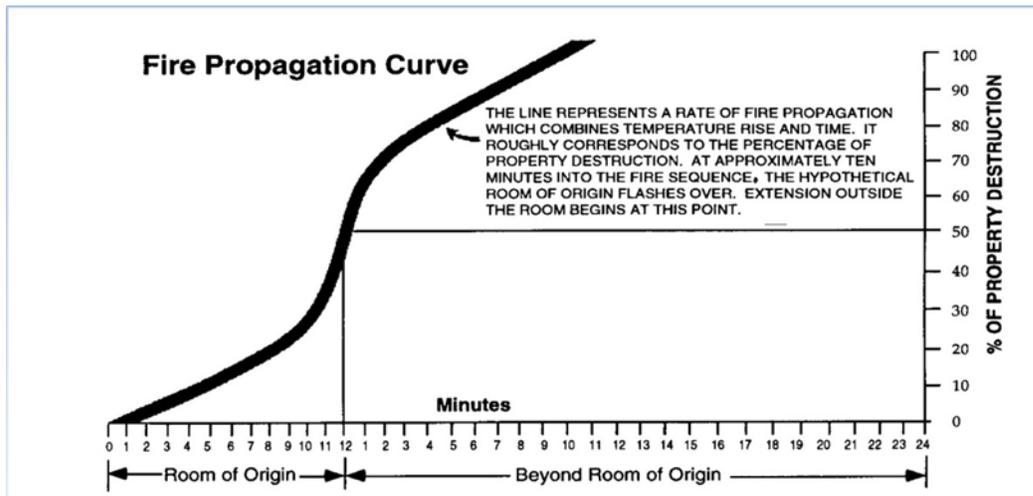
¹⁰ NFPA 1710, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Departments, 2010 Edition, 122.

¹¹ Compton and Granito, eds., *Managing Fire and Rescue Services*, 52.

¹² Clinton Smoke, *Company Officer* (Clifton Park, NY: Delmar Learning, 2004).

¹³ *Safe Fire Fighter Staffing: Critical Considerations* Second Edition (Washington, DC: International Association of Fire Fighters, 1995).

FIGURE 12: Fire Propagation Curve



4. % of fires responded to that spread beyond room of origin after fire department arrival (*Fire Suppression-measures effectiveness of fire station location, response times, training, and crew effectiveness*).

This measure has a direct link to the measure #3, and as well the fire prevention and training performance measures contained herein. The ability to quickly place well-trained fire suppression forces on the scene to aggressively attack an active fire reduces property loss. As well an aggressive fire prevention and public education (such as a residential smoke alarm or sprinkler program) effort shares in the positive increase in this measure.

5. % of firefighters with completed, up to-date training (*Training-measures the effectiveness of the training program and the preparedness of the workforce*).

Preparing the workforce for the delivery of emergency services is a critical component of any fire department. Response to emergencies and subsequent deployment of critical tasks to mitigate the emergency should be second-nature, deliberate and sharpened through continuous training. This measure links to staffing and deployment discussion contained in this report.

6. The average time in seconds from the receipt of a call until a unit is responding (*Emergency Communications-measures efficiencies emergency dispatch is issued to a response unit, and the emergency unit is of staff*).

Call processing time and turnout time both have a direct impact on how quickly emergency units respond to a call for assistance, are components of the overall response time of an emergency unit, and are components of response time that can be directly controlled. As discussed in this report, where the primary public-safety answering point is the communications center, as a benchmark the alarm processing time or dispatch time should

be less than or equal to 60 seconds 90 percent of the time.¹⁴ Additionally, turnout time should be less than or equal to 80 seconds for fire and special operations 90 percent of the time. Combined, the unit(s) should be underway to the emergency in less than or equal to 140 seconds (2.3 minutes). Monitoring these components is important as it directly links to measures discussed such as response time and % of fires contained/not contained to room of origin.

Variables to Consolidation

There are many variables that drive a consolidation decision for a community, and that create apprehension regarding consolidation. Variables that drive a need or want to consolidate include: What are the financial savings? What service enhancements would my community realize? What is the best option for my community? Conversely, consolidation apprehension is driven by: Will service in my community change or decline? What are the costs and will it cost more? What happens to employees?

Until a consolidation option is chosen, and all communities wishing to participate have been determined, ICMA is only able to provide estimated savings and funding feasibility alternatives based on a three community consolidation. Key variables to consider consolidation or that create apprehension about consolidation discussed herein are not meant to be all inclusive, but rather to stimulate further conversation and considerations regarding consolidation and service delivery alternatives contained in this report.

Additional variables include:

- If full fire services consolidation is chosen and all three communities participate:
 - What community will serve as the lead agency?
 - How is the new agency governed?
 - Who will be the Fire Chief?
 - What will happen to the other Fire Chiefs/Deputy Chiefs etc.?
 - How will redundant FTEs (if any) be reduced from the new consolidated department? Attrition, reduction in force?
 - How are labor contracts merged-can they be?

- Is it feasible for all three (3) communities to consolidate services under full consolidation?
 - What formula for cost-sharing will be utilized?
 - Will this be more or less than what a community currently budgets for fire services?
 - Should a community that does not have the resources to adequately serve its community (based on call volume and present aide received) pay an additional cost? If a community has less demand would they pay less?
 - Can a community contract with the new department and procure parts of the consolidation—on a community's immediate border?

¹⁴ NFPA 1710, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Departments, 2010 Edition, 7.

As these and other variables and determining factors are answered, a more defined cost for the consolidation can be determined.

The merger of the fire departments of Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Wyoming has been the subject of discussion for over three years. It is now time for the community to decide whether it wishes to proceed with the consolidation plan. Nothing makes a decision more real than to set a deadline. While there will still be the need for a some amount of further analysis by local professionals, particularly as it relates to the service and funding levels necessary to reduce structural budget deficits, it is reasonable to believe that a firm decision can be thoughtfully made by each of the three cities within a few months of the receipt of this report. Therefore, the ICMA team recommends that the city council of each of the three cities set a deadline of April 30, 2013, for making a decision about whether to move forward with consolidation. Assuming a positive vote, staff should then be tasked with developing a specific time schedule for implementation of the consolidation plan.

Recommendation:

- The three city councils should adopt April 30, 2013, as the deadline for deciding whether to proceed with consolidation. Upon approval, the cities should establish a timeline for implementation of the consolidation plan.