



Whatcom County Washington

Fire/EMS Assessment Project

June 24, 2025

Your Mission Matters


M MissionCriticalPartners

Study goals

This independent study will review the structures, staffing, budgets, and service delivery of the current systems and identify opportunities



Make recommendations for further collaboration and or consolidation. Additionally, the study will identify potential benefits and drawbacks of these



Enhanced partnerships and/or consolidations as well as cost and savings estimates for proposed changes.

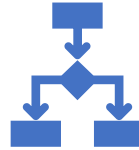
Overall Approach



Collaborative and
interactive process



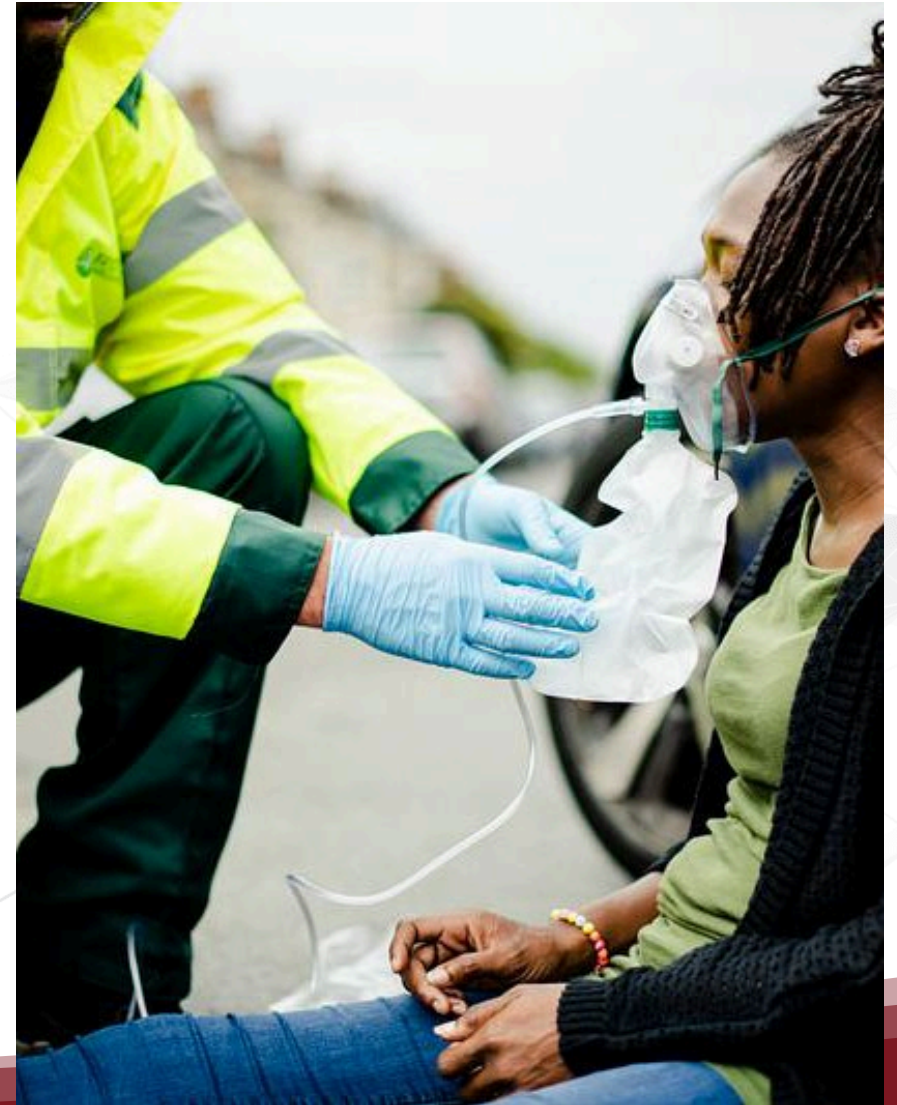
Stakeholder
engagement/input
throughout



Controlled,
systematic, common-
sense approach



Open and honest
findings



Stakeholder Interviews Completed

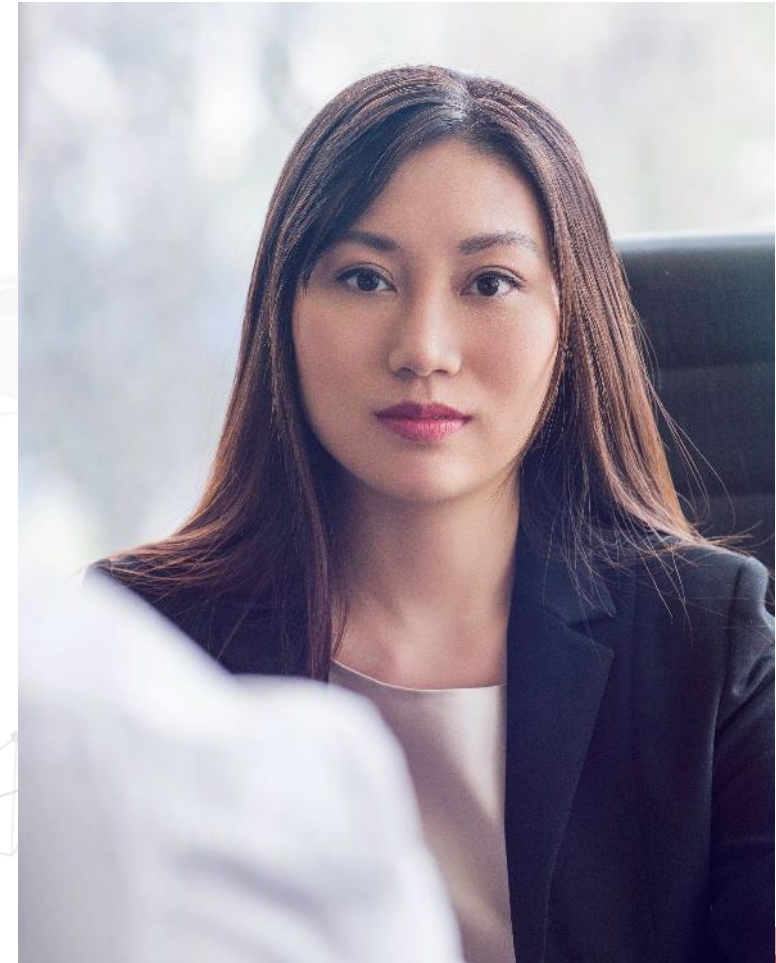
EMS Manager

Cascade EMS

County Chiefs representatives (all Districts)

IAFF representatives

Whatcom County Fire Marshal



Preliminary Findings

- Fire Departments operate under Title 52 (Revised Code of WA)
 - Allows autonomous operations of Fire Districts and Authorities
 - Allows for annexation and mergers
 - Allows for their own governance (Fire Commissioners)
 - Allows for finances and bonds (Can set levies without a vote with parameters)
 - Excess levies above the CAP need voter approval
 - Bonds
 - Needs super majority vote of 60%

Findings for County government

- County government has limited authority over Fire Districts
 - Coordinate regional planning
 - Land Use – Planning, roadway and grade requirements
 - Fire flow and water access requirements
 - Emergency Management planning
 - Impact Fee policies
- Can coordinate needs with Communications (9-1-1)
- Regional planning (EMS Council)
 - EMS Levy
 - Current funding model
 - Sustainability

Highlight Recommendations

- While County government cannot force any consolidations, MCP has identified two District consolidations that will be identified and should be considered
- Emergency Communication Centers
- Transparency
- EMS levy financial review and EMS deployment plan
- EMS staff training initiatives
- Further county staff for building inspection (reoccurring)
- Training for the fire service
- County council increased involvement

Project Timeline

	Project Start		
Name	Fall 2024	Winter into Spring 2025	Spring/Summer 2025
WHATCOM COUNTY PROJECT			
ITEMS REMAINING TO BE COMPLETED			
Stakeholder Interviews			
Compilation of data and follow up questions			
MCP assessing data			
MCP draft report writing			
Touchpoint calls with agencies if additional information is needed			
Finalize draft report			
Review by leadership and corrections to draft			
Final Report development			
Final Report delivery			



Thank You.

Questions, comments?

www.MissionCriticalPartners.com

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