



WISCONSIN

POLICY FORUM

**FIRE & EMS SERVICE SHARING
IN THE LA CROSSE COUNTY
REGION**

SOMETHING IN COMMON

Exploring Fire and EMS Service Sharing Opportunities in the La Crosse County Region



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STUDY PROCESS RECAP

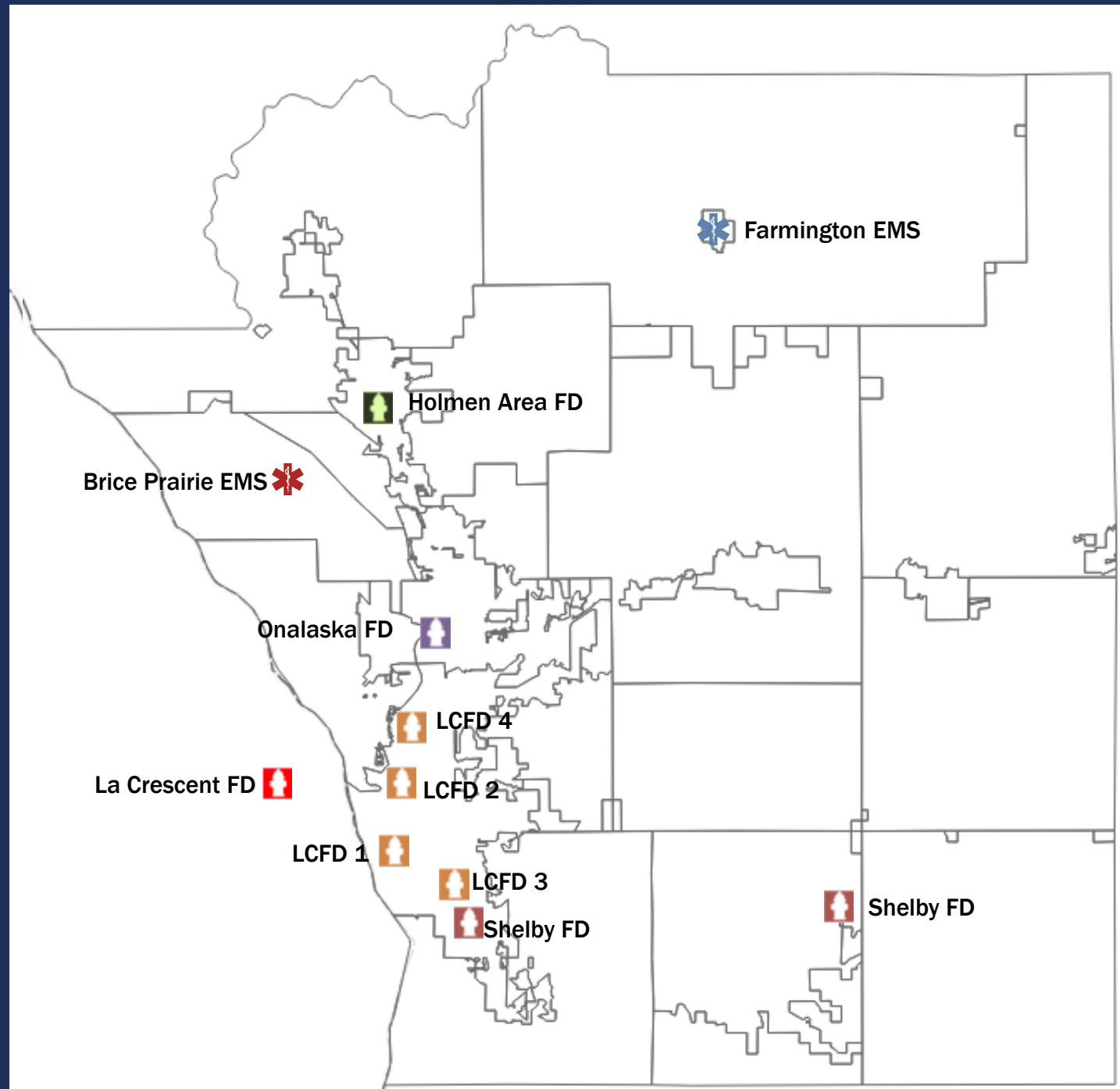
- ❑ **Two preliminary meetings w/stakeholders funded by UW-La Crosse and hosted by Area Planning Committee & County in August & Sept 2019.**
- ❑ **Consensus established to study broad range of service sharing options; funded by planning committee and county.**
- ❑ **Kick-off meeting w/stakeholders Feb. 4; one-month hiatus when COVID-19 crisis hit; two additional stakeholders meetings in June and November; several additional meetings with chiefs.**
- ❑ **Draft final report reviewed prior to publication by 5 chiefs and stakeholders group.**

PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

Department/Agency	Type	Staffing	EMS/Fire
La Crosse City Fire	Municipal Dpt	Career	Fire/First response, ALS
Onalaska City Fire	Municipal Dpt	Career and PT	Fire/First response EMT
Shelby Ridge Fire	Municipal Dpt	Volunteer	Fire/First response EMR
Holmen Area Fire	Independent District	Career and PT	Fire/First response EMR
City of La Crescent	Municipal Dpt	Volunteer	Fire/First response EMR
Brice Prairie EMS	Non Profit	Volunteer	First response EMR
Farmington Emergency Medical Team	Non Profit	Volunteer	First response EMR, transitioning to EMT
Tri State	Non Profit	Career and PT	ALS and transport for entire County

EMS LEVEL & SHIFT STAFFING

Station	EMS Level	FFs per Shift
LAFD 1	Paramedic	10
LAFD 2	Paramedic	6
LAFD 3	Paramedic	5
LAFD 4	Paramedic	4
Onalaska	EMT	4
Holmen	EMR	1*
Shelby	EMR	
La Crescent	EMR	
Brice Prairie	EMR	
Farmington	EMR	
Tri State - EMS paramedic	Patrol near areas of high demand	10

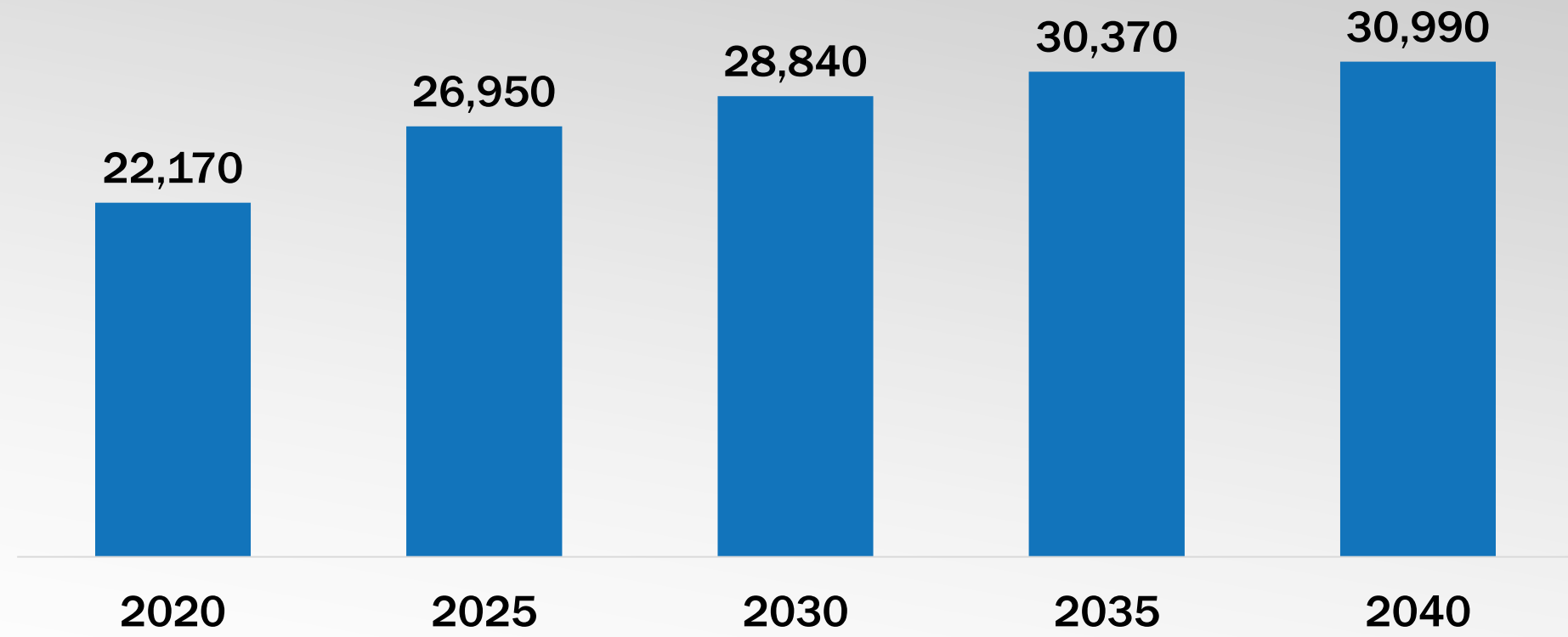


POPULATION GROWTH

Central Urban Area	2019 Population	Difference 2010 to 2019	% Change 2010 to 2019
Holmen Area	10,204	1,749	20.7%
Onalaska	18,988	1,851	10.8%
LaCrosse	52,197	965	1.9%
La Crescent	5,107	277	5.7%
Subtotal	86,496	4,842	5.9%

SENIOR POPULATION GROWING

Population 65+



% Change 2010 -2040 39.8%

GROWING CALL VOLUMES

	2016 Calls	2019 Calls	% Change
Holmen Area FD	825	1,057	28.1%
Onalaska FD	1,458	1,596	9.5%
LaCrosse FD	6,009	6,837	13.8%
Shelby FD	305	330	8.2%
La Crescent FD	310	400	29.0%
Farmington EMS	75	97	29.3%
Brice Prairie EMS	60	71	18.3%
Tri State EMS	8,250	9,810	15.1%

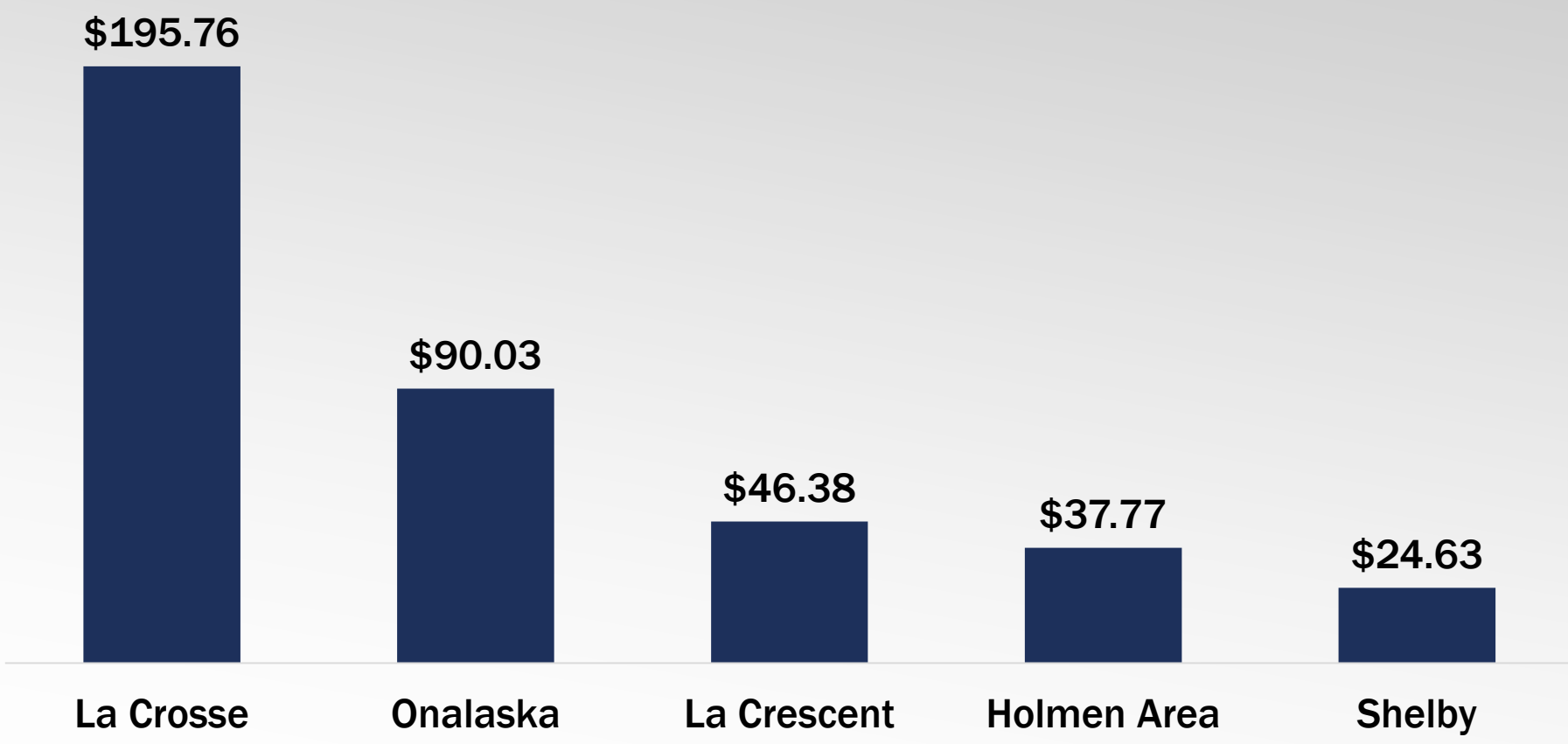
RESPONSE TIMES, FIRST RESPONDERS

	EMS Avg. Response Time
Holmen Area FD	10:27
Onalaska FD	5:52
LaCrosse FD	4:08
Shelby FD	10:34
La Crescent FD	8:00
Farmington EMS	8:14
Brice Prairie EMS	8:58

TRI-STATE RESPONSE TIMES

	Municipality	Contract	Actual Est P1 (lights and sirens)
Zone 1	LaCrosse	max 8:59	93%
Zone 2	Onalaska C, Shelby, Campbell	max 10:59	93%
Zone 3	Onalaska T, Medary, Holmen	max 15:59	91%
Zone 4	all other areas	< 20 minutes	83%

PER CAPITA OPERATING EXPENDITURES



SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

- ❑ Some departments have sufficient capacity to respond to normal conditions but may be stretched during times of high call volumes.
- ❑ Growth in Holmen area (particularly to the north) requires added fire & EMS capacity; how the Holmen Area FD responds will impact others.
- ❑ Lower levels of mutual aid than we've seen in other regions; region may not be making best use of full-time, well-resourced La Crosse department.
- ❑ Two-tiered EMS response works well but response times could be improved in east.
- ❑ Recruitment and retention of PT staff becoming more challenging.
- ❑ 3 larger departments considering new stations, Shelby's needs major repairs; station sharing could save money and produce other sharing opportunities.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO ENHANCED SHARING

- ❑ **Wide variation between departments in staffing models and funding; service sharing initiatives require a degree of standardization that may not benefit all departments equally.**
- ❑ **Sharing/consolidating in west hinges (in part) on whether suburban communities wish to pay more to approach full-time level of service.**
- ❑ **Conversely, La Crosse will be wary of subsidizing cost of neighbors' enhanced service.**

TIER 1: ENHANCED FUNCTIONAL SERVICE SHARING

Option	Description
Joint Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. La Crosse coordinates training for region 2. Tri-State enhances & coordinates EMS training 3. Create joint training bureau
Joint Recruitment & Retention	Departments with part-time staff recruit jointly & standardize pay and advancement opportunities.
EMS Case Management	Departments jointly pay for EMS case managers to proactively serve frequent 911 callers.
Other	Build on La Crosse-Holmen Area vehicle maintenance arrangement and explore applying to prevention, inspections, investigations.

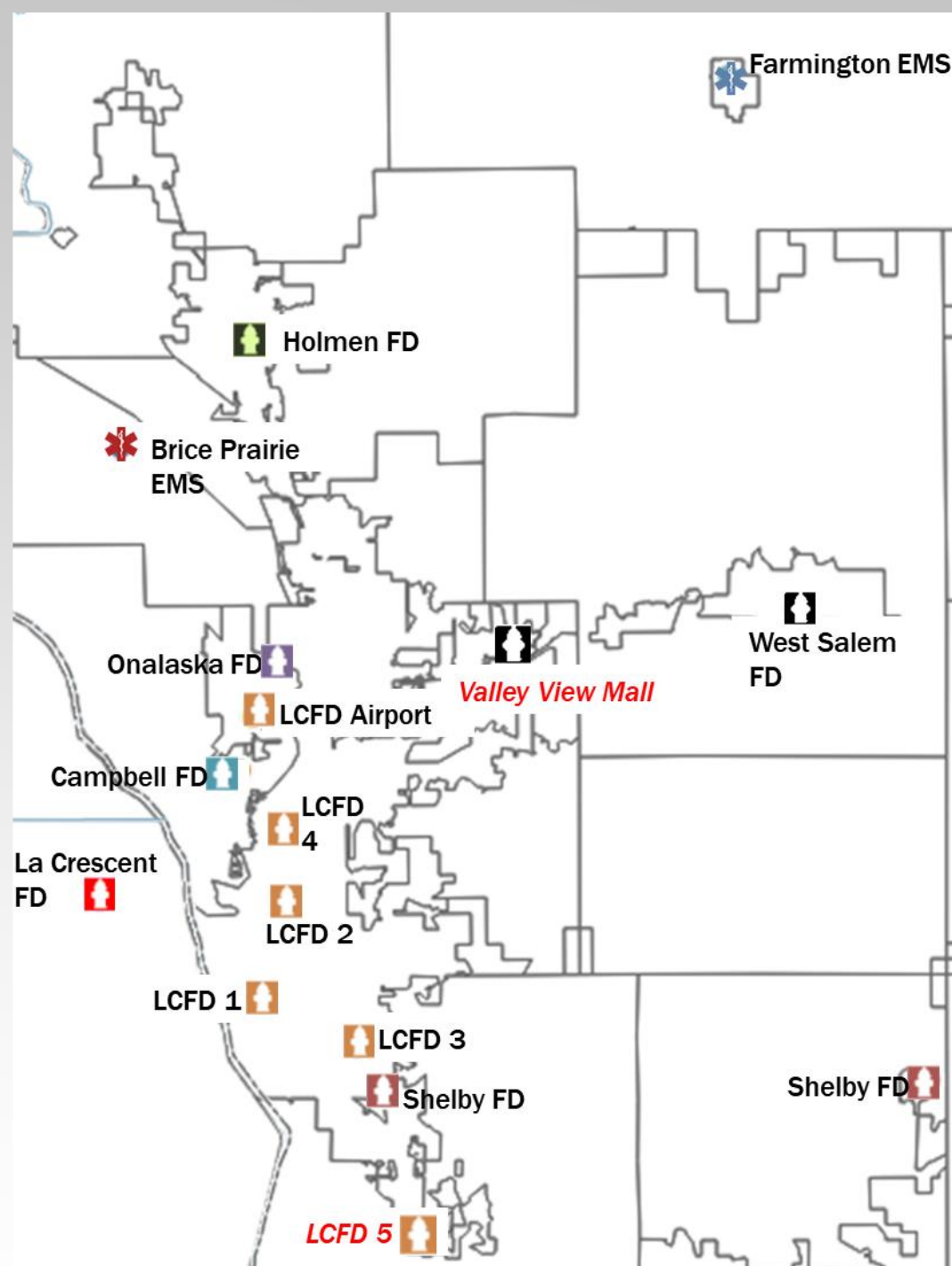
TIER 2: ENHANCED COORDINATION OF OPERATIONS

Option	Description
Improved Mutual Aid	Formalize mutual aid agreements and practices to enhance cohesion and effectiveness; consider automatic aid, change of quarters, closest unit response as part of such agreements.
Work with Tri-State to Improve EMS Response	Departments outside of La Crosse work jointly with Tri-State to improve first response times and ALS response in Zones 2,3,4.
Share Apparatus	Develop service sharing agreements to share ladder trucks, tenders/tankers, back-up equipment.

TIER 3: ADVANCED OPTIONS

Option	Description
Station Sharing	Existing and potential new stations are shared by one or more communities to reduce staffing and/or construction costs and encourage new contracting arrangements.
Consolidation Through Contracting	La Crosse FD would provide fire and first response under contract to Shelby, Greenfield, and La Crescent.
Consolidated Department	A single consolidated department would replace the five departments, which would function under the governance of a board of directors formed by the participating municipalities.

EXISTING AND POSSIBLE NEW STATIONS IN LA CROSSE REGION



APPROXIMATE TRAVEL TIMES

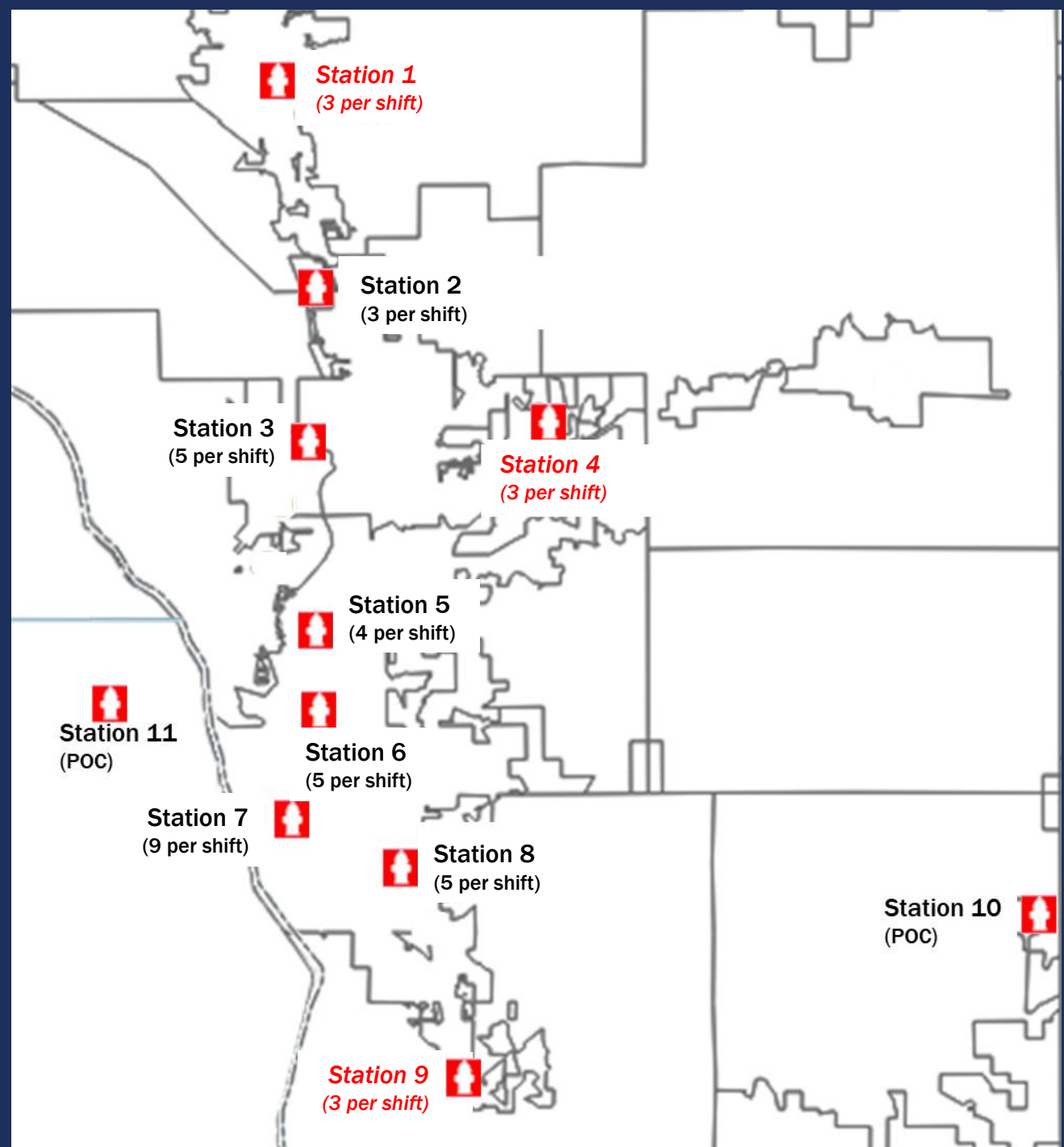
From La Crosse stations to neighboring jurisdictions

Travel scenario	Approx. travel time
La Crosse Station 1 to La Crescent FD	8 minutes
La Crosse Station 2 to Campbell	7 minutes
La Crosse Station 3 to Shelby Town Hall	3 minutes
La Crosse Station 3 to Greenfield	15 minutes

CONSOLIDATED MODEL

- **Northern division w/five stations:** current stations in Onalaska and Holmen, La Crosse Station 4, new northern station, new Valley View station.
- **FFs per shift in north grow from 9 to 18:** 3 added at each new station, 2 to existing Holmen area station, one to Onalaska.
- **Southern division with La Crosse Stations 1 ,2, 3 & new southern station;** Shelby station eliminated; POC in Greenfield and La Crescent.
- **FFs per shift in south grow from 21 to 22;** 3 at new southern station, with two relocated from La Crosse Stations 1 and 2.

HYPOTHETICAL CONSOLIDATED DEPARTMENT STATIONS AND SHIFTS (NEW STATIONS IN RED)



NEW STATION STAFF

For hypothetical consolidated department

	New FFs per Shift	FTE	Personnel Cost
Career	5.0	17.5	\$1,765,554
POP	5.0	16.0	\$597,328
Total	10.0	33.5	\$2,362,882

COMMAND AND ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

For hypothetical consolidated department

	Current	Consolidated
Chief	5	1
Assistant Chief	3	2
Division Chief	2	3
Captains	3	4
Fleet Mechanic	1	1
Admin Assistant	1	1
Community Risk Coordinator	1	1
Total	16	13

COST SUMMARY

For hypothetical consolidated department

Expenditure	Cost/Saving
Shift staffing	\$2,362,882
Battalion chiefs	\$264,091
Non shift staffing	(\$158,304)
Apparatus	(\$386,486)
Non personnel costs	(\$90,460)
Total Cost/(Savings)	\$1,991,723

COMPARISON TO “FUTURE STATE” COSTS

- ❑ Costs of hypothetical consolidated model need to be weighed against added costs the five departments may need to incur individually:
 - ❑ La Crosse FD adds two per shift at new Valley View area station (jointly staffed with Onalaska). New southern station staffed by shift of existing FFs.
 - ❑ Onalaska FD adds one per shift at Valley View and one at its current station.
 - ❑ Holmen Area FD adds two per shift at current station, three at new station.
 - ❑ Shelby and La Crescent each fund one POP per shift at \$17/hour.

Additional annual cost = \$2.8 million - about \$800,000 more than jurisdictions would need to incur collectively under the consolidated department scenario.

CONCLUSION

- ❑ Departments already cooperate via shared fleet maintenance, joint training meetings, countywide ALS; but growing service demands and POC retention/recruitment issues suggest need for enhanced collaboration.
- ❑ **Enhanced service sharing options** could produce cost efficiencies, improved service for smaller departments, better mutual aid cohesion.
- ❑ **Enhanced coordination of operations options** could improve service levels and response times.
- ❑ **Advanced options** could require some departments to relinquish autonomy but hold greatest potential for regional service improvement and enhanced efficiency.
- ❑ **Overall, we find each of the departments will need to increase spending soon; collaborative action could achieve at least some desired improvements at a lower cost and a higher level of service than could be achieved by acting alone.**

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

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