

STAFF REPORT

Date: February 6, 2025

To: Washoe County Commission, TMFPD Board of Fire Commissioners, Reno City Council, Sparks City Council

Subject: Discussion and potential direction to staff regarding current and future regional fire efforts. Potential direction includes but is not limited to pursuit of interlocal agreements or other consolidation plans among the cities and county and other participating entities, support of pertinent consolidation legislation during the 2025 legislative session, review of funding sources and impacts to levels of service, and development of a consolidation study to fully assess needs and costs. (For Possible Action)

From: Chief Dave Cochran, Chief Dale Way, and Chief Walter White

Department: City of Reno, Truckee Meadows Fire & Rescue, and City of Sparks

Summary:

Truckee Meadows municipal governments are exploring regional fire collaboration to enhance service delivery, efficiency, and emergency response. The City of Reno, City of Sparks, and Truckee Meadows Fire & Rescue coordinate through mutual aid, shared dispatch, and joint training, with ongoing discussions on expanding efforts.

Fire chiefs will present key accomplishments, challenges, and opportunities for deeper collaboration. Potential benefits include faster response times, cost savings, and improved disaster resilience, though governance and funding challenges remain.

Staff seeks direction from all three jurisdictions on continuing regional fire efforts, ensuring innovation and cooperation drive future improvements.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

Public Safety

Background:

Regional fire efforts have been a topic of discussion among the Truckee Meadows municipal government jurisdictions, emphasizing the necessity of innovative and collaborative approaches to provide constituents with the right resources at the right time. These discussions have focused on identifying opportunities to enhance service delivery, improve operational efficiencies, and ensure effective emergency response throughout the region.

City of Reno, City of Sparks, and Truckee Meadows Fire and Rescue have coordinated in various ways, including mutual aid agreements, automatic aid, shared computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems, and joint training initiatives, demonstrating a commitment to regional cooperation and innovation in fire and emergency services. However, continued regional efforts remain an area of continued exploration.

Discussion:

The fire chiefs from Truckee Meadows Fire & Rescue, the City of Reno, and the City of Sparks will present an overview of current regional efforts, highlighting key accomplishments and challenges encountered. Their presentation will include an assessment of previous cooperative agreements, service overlaps, and potential areas for enhanced collaboration and highlight efforts to address through regional collaboration.

Current and future regional fire efforts offer several potential benefits, including improved emergency response times and resource allocation, cost savings through shared services, procurement, and training, streamlined governance and policymaking for fire, and increased resiliency in disaster response and wildfire mitigation efforts. The necessity of innovative and collaborative approaches to fire are paramount to ensuring that service delivery is enhanced for constituents throughout the region. Challenges include differing governance boundaries and structures, funding mechanisms, and operational priorities, underscoring the importance of innovative strategies and collaborative decision-making to overcome these barriers.

Today, staff is seeking understanding of the willingness of all four jurisdictions to continue exploring regional fire collaboration opportunities and direction on what initiatives may be necessary to support this effort. Options may include, but are not limited to, directing staff to take steps to form a working group composed of the Mayors/Chairs and staff. Staff will incorporate feedback and ensure that innovative and cooperative approaches guide the process toward enhanced service delivery.

Financial Implications:

The fiscal impact of regional efforts is currently undetermined and dependent on paths forward. A detailed cost-benefit analysis of large, regional opportunities would be necessary to evaluate potential savings and expenses associated with service integration and collaboration.

Legal Implications:

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission/Council/Fire Chief provide direction regarding regional efforts for fire services.

Proposed Motion:

I move to direct staff to execute the direction provided today by the Commission/Council/Fire Chief regarding regional efforts for fire services.

Attachments: