

Fire Department Funding and Governance Analysis

Tooele County

January 2021



PUBLIC
CONSULTING GROUP

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Stakeholder Name	Agency
Alison McCoy	Tooele County - County Auditor
Bob Farrell	BLM Assistant Fire Management Officer
Brett Beede	Tooele County - GIS Manager
Thomas Karjola	Town of Stockton
Chris Shubert	Tooele City Fire Department
Daniel Walton	Tooele County Fire Department
Gerald C. Neil	Terra Fire Department
Jason Bolinder	Rush Valley Fire Department
Joe Mannino	Vernon Fire Department
Justin Huffman	Stockton Fire Department
Ken Quirk	Wendover Fire Department
Kendall Thomas	Tooele County - Commissioner
Paul Wimmer	Tooele County - Sheriff
Randy Willden	North Tooele County Fire District
Regina Nelson	Tooele County - Sheriff- Dispatch
Sabrina Fawson	Tooele County - Sheriff - Administration
Shawn Milne	Tooele County Commissioner
Terri Chidester	Utah Tax Commission
Tom Tripp	Tooele County - Commissioner - Chairman
Legrand Bitter	Utah Association for Special Districts
David Swann	Utah State Tax Commission
Jake Parkinson	Tooele County Assessor's Office
Jeremy Raymond	Chief/Director Uintah Fire Suppression SSD

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) is pleased to submit this report summarizing the results of the Fire Department Funding and Governance Analysis to Tooele County Fire Chief/Fire Warden Daniel Walton and members of the Tooele County Commission. The purpose for the study was to examine the current governance and funding for fire services in departments in the Western and Southeastern portions of Tooele County and explore options for future funding and sustainability. The study also analyzes the options for creating either separate fire districts or forming a consolidated Tooele County fire district with existing fire departments that are interested in consolidation.

An analysis of the current service levels provided by the fire departments in the following jurisdictions: **Tooele County, Ibipah, Rush Valley, Stockton, Terra, Vernon and Wendover** is included in this report. Each of the fire departments provides fire services and responds to emergency incidents in their incorporated city and towns but also to large unincorporated areas of Tooele County surrounding each of their respective communities. These additional response areas are identified in the Tooele County Mob Guide as “Response Zones” The departments also respond to vehicle accidents on major interstate highways and busy state routes which pass through their response areas, respond to hazardous materials incidents involving highway and railway transits, and support wildland firefighting operations for Local, State and Federal Resource Areas. **This study focuses strictly on the delivery of fire service response activities and not Emergency Medical Services (EMS).** Although this report will not delve into EMS response activities, each of these departments responds to EMS related incidents, but the primary EMS response authority is the contracted private EMS provider.

Based on stakeholder interviews with the Fire Chiefs of each department, PCG identified that the Rush Valley, Stockton, Terra, Vernon and Wendover Fire Departments are struggling to provide basic levels of service. This is due to challenges in funding as well as the recruitment, retention, and training of volunteer personnel. Another critical challenge for departments is sustainable facilities for apparatus – one of the fire chiefs interviewed stated that a response unit is kept at a private residence due to lack of adequate space. Also challenging, many of the fire apparatus have exceeded their expected service lives based on national standards. Some departments are currently using surplus military vehicles that were not designed nor intended for use as fire apparatus. Most current vehicles are at an age that they should be decommissioned. A very serious safety concern exists, not only for the firefighters operating the apparatus, but for citizens as well. This can result in a serious liability issue for the communities who own and operate the apparatus.

To gain a full understanding of service demands for each community, PCG analyzed computer-aided dispatch (CAD) data provided by the Tooele County Sheriff’s Office 911 Dispatch Center for each of the five fire departments. Consultants analyzed incidents by type and volume. Given that the departments are all volunteer, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1720: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Departments* was used to determine the “Demand Zone” classification for each department to determine the number of personnel and response time requirements for incidents within their given response areas.

PCG was tasked with analyzing the feasibility of creating either separate fire districts for each of these departments or combining these departments – along with Tooele County – to form a single fire district. Either of these options are viable with each option having distinct strengths and challenges for implementation. PCG researched the necessary requirements and identified the articles set forth under *Title 17 of the Utah State Code* which will need to be applied to accomplish the desired result. Under *Title 17 of the Utah State Code*, Tooele County can choose either 17B and create an “*Independent*” Fire District or choose 17D and form a “*Dependent*” or *Special Service Agency Fire District*. Under 17B, either the County or one of the cities can initiate formation of a Special District. However, under 17D, only the county can initiate formation of the Special Service Agency and serves as the “Parent Organization” after formation.

To achieve as full an understanding possible for these complicated processes, PCG conducted an analysis of organizations and in-person interviews for the purposes of gaining the most positive outcome possible for Tooele County.

First, PCG reached out to the Utah Association of Special Districts and interviewed the Executive Director of that organization. Second, PCG researched multiple fire districts from across the state to locate a district that mirrored Tooele County's composition, demographics, and circumstances as closely as possible for comparison. Consultants found that Uintah County Fire District served as nearly a perfect match in this effort. PCG conducted in-person interviews with the Fire Chief/Executive Director of the Uintah County Fire District and secured multiple documents and information that proved beneficial to our analysis.

PCG was also tasked with determining funding source options and any limitations to potential funding sources. In this effort, PCG enlisted assistance from the *Utah State Tax Commission* and the *Tooele County Assessor's Office* to determine what funding either fire district model could potentially garner. Special District funding is typically derived from property taxes assessed to residences and businesses within the district formation boundaries. The caveat of the effort to form a fire district is that the voters residing within the proposed district boundaries will have the final approval. Tooele County officials must determine what the specific district boundaries will be. Once established, and the articles of formation are drafted by the County, then the special district application can be moved forward to the Office of the Lieutenant Governor for review and approval. A ballot measure must be placed before the people residing within the proposed district boundaries for either approval or rejection. If approved, then district formation actions can begin. The County and leadership from the cities and towns will need to negotiate how the board of directors for the district will be comprised. Additionally, they will determine whether the board members will be appointed, elected, or a combination of both. Utah State Law pertaining to *Truth-in-Taxation* will be a major factor in which district option is selected as both (17B and 17D) have unique and distinct requirements that must be put in place early on in the decision making process determining governance and structure.

There will be positive outcomes for Tooele County and its residents with either option, (17B or 17D) including improved service delivery, economy of scale with regards to physical assets such as facilities, apparatus and major equipment such as PPE and SCBA. Perhaps the most positive aspect of this effort will be with recruitment, training, and retention of volunteer firefighters through various incentive programs. By engaging the Utah Association of Special Districts leadership team as early as possible, Tooele County will ensure programmatic success through partnership with an organization that has exhaustive resources available to assist in formation of the fire district regardless of type.



Perhaps the single and most significant challenge for Tooele County moving forward will be gaining approval by residents to support and accept an increase in property tax to support creation, formation and operation of a fire district in the areas identified in this report. Although this poses a significant challenge, it is not insurmountable. Tooele County officials, elected council members from each city and towns and members of the fire departments themselves need to engage in a positive public education campaign and enlist support from the Utah Association of Special Districts to achieve a successful outcome. Another avenue towards success will be for Tooele County elected officials from each of the city and towns to engage their contemporaries from Uintah County to solicit information on what did and did not work for them when they created their own fire district.

From overall analysis, **PCG has concluded that the strongest path forward for Tooele County is to have all five fire departments combine with Tooele County to form a fire district.** Our assessment is that there are few benefits to each city or town forming individual fire districts as there is only one option open for the City and towns to form a fire district which is 17B or the "Independent" Fire District option. Under 17D, Tooele County Commission would be required to serve as the parent organization to five, separate fire districts, deal with five, separate district board of directors and account for five district budgets. When analyzed on a singular basis, forming 5 separate fire districts is neither fiscally, administratively nor even politically practical. PCG believes that either district formation option, 17B or 17D have positive attributes. PCG acknowledges that it is the sole discretion of the Tooele County Commission and the elected councils from each of the city and towns to determine which option provides citizens with the greatest measure of fire protection service as well as which district formation option proves to be the most effective and efficient to manage.

SECTION II: METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this study consisted of four key elements: **Kick-Off Meeting, Stakeholder Interviews, Data Collection and Background Research**. All information collected, from interviews, documentation provided by stakeholders, fire services national and local standards research, and best practices were analyzed to inform the recommendations listed in this study.

Kick-Off Meeting

The purpose of the kick-off meeting was to review and confirm a detailed understanding of the project scope and to present the detailed project work schedule. Chief Daniel Walton served as the primary contact for the study. Under his guidance, Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) sought to understand the motivation and vision for this study and any desired outcomes not stated in the RFP. PCG also gained a deeper understanding of the County's needs for enhancing fire service delivery, the governance of fire services, the historical fire service budgets, planning, and demand for fire services. To obtain a broad understanding of the neighboring agencies' situation, Chief Walton provided PCG with a list of stakeholders to interview, which was examined in detail to understand the role of each stakeholder in the study.

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews are meant to gain an understanding of the current operations and funding of the parties involved in the delivery of fire services in Tooele County. PCG interviewed **23 stakeholders** whose names and organizations are listed in the *Acknowledgement* section of this report. The stakeholder group was mainly composed of Tooele County staff and fire chiefs from volunteer fire departments who expressed their visions and interests for the future of fire services in Tooele County. PCG originally planned to conduct stakeholder interviews on-site, but due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, these were conducted via video-conference calls. On June 4, 2020, PCG attended the Tooele County Fire Chiefs Association meeting via videoconference where we provided information regarding the study and received feedback from the chiefs in attendance. The information collected via stakeholder interviews was used to create recommendations and is referenced throughout the report. Any information obtained from stakeholder interviews is confidential and will only be used to assist PCG with this study.



PCG conducted a series of phone and video interviews with key stakeholders identified by the County Fire Chief/Fire Warden. Each stakeholder was asked the following questions:

- Tenure as Fire Chief
- Type of dept. (Volunteer, Combination or Career)
- Number of personnel
- Number of stations
- Number and type of apparatus
- Governance structure
- Budget/funding
- District size, (Sq. Mi.)
- District population
- Current/on-going challenges
- Knowledge of/purpose for study

From these interviews, PCG gained a full understanding of the status of fire service delivery in Tooele County. Therefore, they could aid in analysis of the options to address current administrative and operational challenges. Additionally, they understood the context of advancing this essential service and matching current and future growth projections within the county.

Data Collection

In addition to information provided in Tooele County's RFP and insight collected via stakeholder interviews, PCG requested data and documentation such as computer aided dispatch (CAD) data, fire department budgets from all the agencies in Tooele County for the past five years, fire zones, fire stations and fire loss maps, inter-governmental and mutual aid agreements, labor and staffing contracts, tax and grant funding,

mobilization guide, and other relevant documents. The data and documentation collected were used to analyze the historical trends of fire service demand, response times and current funding.

The data collection was mainly supported by Tooele County Fire Chief/Fire Warden, Tooele County Auditor, Tooele County Dispatch Center Manager, and Tooele County GIS Manager. The detailed list of documentation collected is found in *Appendix I*.

Background Research

PCG conducted research on the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, Insurance Services Office (ISO) standards, as well as state and local requirements for providing fire services and for the creation of a fire district. Best practices for fire services were reviewed and used to define performance targets for standards of response, standards of coverage, and staffing and organization requirements. These standards and benchmarking guidelines are documented in *Section IV, Applicable Standards* and *Benchmarking Guidelines*. In addition to conducted research, PCG's Fire & EMS Subject Matter Experts hold over 60 years of experience together and their knowledge advised the creation of recommendations.

SECTION III: BACKGROUND

Tooele County Geography and Population

Tooele County is located on the west side of Utah, with most of the county's land being unused. It is adjacent to Salt Lake City, with Salt Lake County bordering the eastern county line. According to the Tooele Community Health Assessment in 2016, it has a total square mileage of 7,287, consisting of 6,920 square miles of land and 357 square miles of water. The eastern area of the county is the most highly populated and consists mostly of irrigated and dry farmland. The western area comprises largely of Federal land and dry, arid desert, which is scarcely populated. Notably, the town of Wendover (population 1,401 in 2016) is located in the western area of Tooele county and is separated by thousands of acres of undeveloped, private, and public lands ([Tooele Community Health Assessment 2016](#)).

Tooele County 2018 Demographics	
Population Size (2019 estimate) *	72,259
Median Income*	\$71,020
Median Age**	31.6
Age Distribution**	
Under 5 years	7.90%
5 to 9 years	7.40%
10 to 14 years	11.70%
15 to 19 years	8.80%
20 to 24 years	6.10%
25 to 34 years	12.50%
35 to 44 years	16.00%
45 to 54 years	10.90%
55 to 59 years	3.40%
60 to 64 years	6.20%
65+	9.20%
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2014 – 2018*	8.1%
Persons without health insurance under 65 years, percent*	10.1%

Figure III.1: Tooele County 2018 Demographics.

*[Census QuickFacts](#)

**[ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates](#)

Tooele County hosted a population of approximately 58,218 in 2010 and an estimated population of 72,259 in 2019, making it the second largest county in Utah ("[2010 Census Gazetteer Files](#)"). According to the ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, the age distribution of Tooele County is young and millennial, with a median age of 31.6. The population of elderly people with a disability is small, around 8.1%. People under 65 without health insurance is 10.1%, which is similar to the national survey results of 11.1%, according to the [National Health Interview Survey](#).

Currently most of the unincorporated lands within Tooele County are only provided with fire department services through mutual aid agreements. These fire departments are underfunded and understaffed. Tooele County is experiencing a steady rate of growth and is concerned that the current system in place to support the fire departments is not sustainable.

Study Objectives

The purpose of this study is to analyze the governance and funding system that exists in Tooele County and explore options available to the County for an improved and more sustainable process. Public

Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) evaluated the tax/revenue possibilities for the creation of a fire district through consultations with the *Utah State Tax Commission* and the *Tooele County Assessor's Office* and how necessary funding will need to be achieved. Consultants were provided with a comprehensive breakdown of properties, their taxable values and the rates each property will be assessed should the County elect to move forward with formation of a consolidated fire district. Section X of this report provides both total potential revenue for the proposed fire district and breaks down revenues for each community, the unincorporated areas by tax code zone.

SECTION IV: APPLICABLE STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKING GUIDELINES

Identifying applicable and appropriate benchmarking standards of service, performance, and operations is critical to assessing/evaluating performance of existing Fire service organizations. The Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) team reviewed National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards, Insurance Service Office (ISO) schedules, International Code Council Fire Codes, Utah State Fire Marshal, National Wildfire Coordination Group, (NWCG) standards and regulations, as well as regional and local standards to determine which benchmarks are applicable to Tooele County.

National Fire Protection (NFPA) Standards

NFPA 1720 Standard

One of the key benchmarks for any rural fire department is the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) 1720: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Departments*. The NFPA 1720 standard is based upon a combination of accepted practices and more than 30 years of study, research, testing, and validation.

NFPA 1720 standard defines minimum staffing levels and response times for fire companies, initial full alarm response levels, and extra alarm response levels for combination and/or mostly volunteer fire departments.

The standard also defines minimum response times to an emergency and minimum fire company staffing levels. For combination and mostly volunteer fire departments, NFPA 1720 calls for fire companies to be staffed based on the "Demand Zone" Classification. Demand Zones are determined by the number of residents per square mile. The Demand Zone then determines minimum staffing required for each zone classification as well as response time performance objectives and the percentage of time performance objectives are to be met.

The table below provides details for how NFPA 1720 classifies communities protected by volunteer fire departments, then sets standards for the minimum number of fire personnel required to combat a fire in a typical residential structure fire. NFPA 1720 defines the Low Hazard Occupancy or "typical residential structure" as a 2,000 Sq. Ft. two-story, single-family home without a basement or exposures.

NFPA 1720 Response Time and Staffing Guides				
Demand Zone ^a	Demographics	Minimum Staff to Respond ^b	Response Time (minutes) ^c	Meets Objective (%)
Urban	>1000 people/mi ²	15	9	90%
Suburban	500–1000 people/mi ²	10	10	80%
Rural	<500 people/mi ²	6	14	80%
Remote	Travel distance ≥ 8 mi	4	Directly dependent on travel distance	90%
Special Risks	<i>Determined by AHJ</i>	<i>Determined by AHJ based on risk</i>	<i>Determined by AHJ</i>	<i>90%</i>

Figure IV.1: NFPA 1720 Response Time and Staffing Guides.

^a A jurisdiction can have more than one demand zone.

^b Minimum staffing includes members responding from the AHJs department and automatic/mutual aid

^c Response time begins upon completion of the dispatch notification and ends at the time interval shown in the table.

PCG will provide analysis of each community in Tooele County and assign that community to one of the previously mentioned "Demand Zones" along with the corresponding fire department(s) in this report.

INSURANCE SERVICES OFFICE (ISO) STANDARDS

The Public Protection Classification (PPC) program administered by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) is the oldest and perhaps the most familiar to city managers and administrators. Using the PPC measures, ISO evaluates a community's public fire protection capability and assigns a protection class rating from 1 to 10. Class 1 represents exemplary fire protection; a class 10 rating indicates that a community's fire suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria.

ISO evaluates all resources required for fire suppression to establish a rating, including available water supply, call taking, dispatching resources and protocols, response unit staffing, firefighter training, response capacity and coverage, and other factors. A key element of coverage evaluation is the location of engine and ladder apparatus in relation to one another within the jurisdiction, i.e. 1-1/2 linear highway miles for Engine Companies and 3 linear highway miles for Truck/Ladder Companies. The PPC was developed by the insurance industry and is used to set fire insurance premiums. It does not evaluate EMS capabilities or other emergency services a modern American fire department routinely provides.

For full credit in the PPC program, a fire department must provide an engine within 1.5 miles and a ladder within 2.5 miles of each property in the jurisdiction. Staffing for this level of service delivery is prohibitively expensive and, outside dense urban cores of large cities, probably unnecessary. An astute fire chief will not base performance standards on ISO alone but will use more direct methods of evaluating community risks and resources. *Figure IV.2* includes a distribution of ISO classifications throughout the U.S.

U.S. ISO Classification Distributions

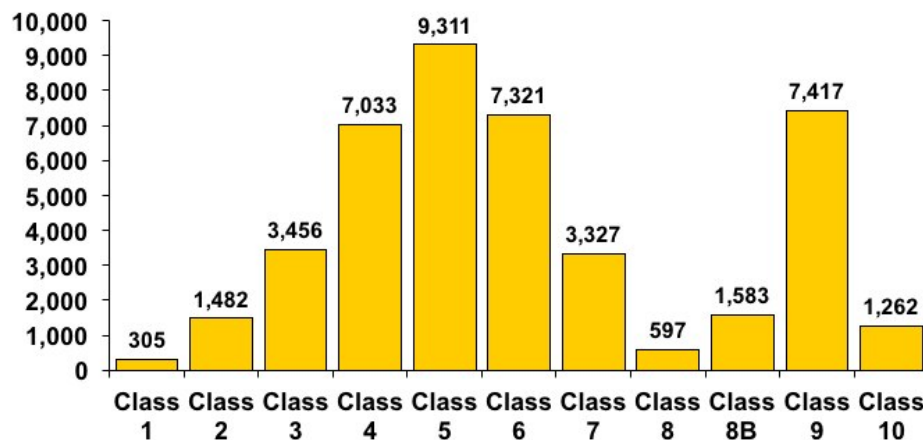


Figure IV.2: U.S. ISO Classification Distributions.

Source: ISO Public Protection Classification distributions in 2017 (Courtesy/ISO)

Fire departments are evaluated in about 75 different areas that fall into four general categories, weighted accordingly: **fire department (40%)**, **water supply (35%)**, **fire safety control (16%)** and **emergency communications (9%)**. An additional 10 points can be gained by having a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) program in place. The fire department category includes things such as the number of stations, number, type and age of apparatus, staffing levels, training, hose and equipment, vehicle maintenance, etc. Water supply evaluates water flow, hydrant locations and condition, operation, and maintenance of the water systems. Fire safety control encompasses prevention programs such as code enforcement, plan review, business inspections and public education programs. The final category, emergency communications, evaluates the department's dispatchers and dispatch center operations.

Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI)

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) provides a self-assessment and evaluation model that enables a fire department to evaluate past, current, and potential future service levels and performance and compare them to fire industry best practices so that a department may:

- Determine community risk and safety needs and develop community-specific standards of cover.
- Evaluate the performance of the department in relation to the standard of cover.
- Establish a methodology for achieving continuous organizational improvement in relation to the standard of cover.

CFAI provides the tools for a fire department to assess its performance against national standards or locally adopted performance goals. The program is voluntary and does not set standards. A successful process leads to accreditation; compliance reports must be made annually, and the assessment process is repeated every five years. Fire Service leaders need to be familiar with these and use them to establish response goals and performance measures appropriate for the community and the fire department in a standards of cover document which is growing platform as the industry standard.

Utah State Statutes and Administrative Code

PCG reviewed the appropriate Utah statutes and administrative codes that were relevant to this study. We focused specifically on Utah Code Title 17B Limited Purpose Local Government Entities – Local Districts and Title 17D Limited Purpose Local Government Entities – Other Entities to provide Tooele County with information related to legislative options to create a fire district.

Utah Department of Public Safety Fire Marshal Division

The State Fire Marshal's Office is a Division of the Utah Department of Public Safety and is responsible for several aspects related to fire prevention, fire training, fire coordination statewide and many more responsibilities. PCG acknowledges that in the event Tooele County Commission initiates formation of a fire district combining five local government fire departments into a consolidated fire district along with Tooele County Fire, action will need to be taken to create a new Fire Department Identification Number, (FDID) and all existing FDID's retired. Such action will need to be coordinated with the Utah State Fire Marshal's Office.

Regional/Local Standards

Consultants requested any documents such as local/regional standards and received the documents identified below.

PCG's consultant reviewed each of these documents which pertain to automatic and mutual aid. In the event Tooele County Commission creates a consolidated fire district, all automatic and mutual aid agreements will need to be rewritten to reflect the appropriate changes.

- Utah Division of Forestry & Fire and State Lands and Tooele County, 2020 Fire Department Manual and Rates
- 2020 Tooele Mob (Mobilization) Guide MT
- Cooperative Agreement between the Utah Division of Forestry & Fire and State Lands and Tooele County
- Mutual Aid Agreements between Tooele County and each of the following fire departments:
 - North Tooele Fire District
 - Tooele City Fire Department
 - Grantsville City Fire Department
 - Wendover Fire Department
 - Stockton Fire Department
 - Rush Valley Fire Department
 - Vernon Fire Department
 - Terra Fire Department
 - Ibapah Fire Department
 - Tooele Army Depot
 - Dugway Fire Department

SECTION V: ANALYSIS OF CURRENT FIRE SERVICE DELIVERY

Overview of Tooele County Fire Service

Tooele County is situated between the western most border of the State of Utah with the major population area of Salt Lake City located 35 miles to the east of the county. The County is classified as rural with a US Census Bureau estimated population in 2019 of approximately 72,259 residents with a population density of 10.4 persons per square mile.

There are fourteen fire departments serving Tooele County. Three of the departments are staffed by career firefighters and include the Tooele Army Depot, Utah Test & Training Range, and the Dugway Proving Grounds. These departments are dedicated to government/military installations and will not be included in this report. It bears mentioning that each of these departments provide mutual-aid, although mutual-aid has been temporarily suspended due to Covid-19 limitations.

The remaining eleven fire departments serving Tooele County are volunteer departments, except for North Tooele County Fire District, which is a combination career/volunteer department. It is the largest department in the County. Tooele City, with a population of 35,251, is protected by an all-volunteer fire department. Although a very cost-effective means of providing service, we have found that most communities in the State of Utah with populations over 15,000 are served by either combination or fully career fire departments.

Although the statement of work for this study was inclusive of potentially merging all the departments (excluding the government installations) into a single fire district, Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) was advised either directly or indirectly that North Tooele Fire District, Tooele City, and Grantsville Fire Departments have no interest in participating with the study or potential consolidation of services.

Geographical Fire Service Options

The RFP Statement of Work directed analysis of three different options as identified below.

- Expand North Tooele Fire District
- All lands outside of North Tooele Fire District
- Current Fire District Zones

Expand North Tooele County Fire District

During our phone interview with North Tooele County Fire District Fire Chief, he indicated he was unaware of the project goal to examine expanding the North Tooele County Fire District by including the smaller volunteer fire departments in the western and south eastern portions of the county. The Chief also indicated that he and his board of directors were not in favor of a consolidation with departments in the western and southeastern portions of the county. In our follow-up conversation with Tooele County Fire Warden/Fire Chief he indicated that he and NTCFD Chief spoke after our phone interview and determined that this would no longer be under consideration for this report.

All Lands Outside of North Tooele County Fire District

Consultants conducted an interview with the Tooele City Fire Chief who indicated that, after consulting with the Mayor and Council, Tooele City has decided not to participate in the study. In a follow-up interview with the Tooele County Fire Chief/Fire Warden he indicated that Grantsville City also declined to participate in the study. The Grantsville City Fire Chief was not contacted for an interview. Although the Fire Chief's from the Federal/Military installations participate in the mutual aid systems with departments participating in the study, they were not interviewed because consultants determined that input from them had no bearing on the focus of this study.

Accordingly, consultants focused on those fire departments who elected to participate in the study and expressed willingness to be considered for inclusion in formation of a fire district or be considered as a stand-alone district. The study focus will include the fire departments providing services to Rush Valley; Stockton; Terra; Vernon; Wendover and Tooele County unincorporated lands.

Current Fire District Zones

The map below is referenced from the *2020 Tooele County Mob (Mobilization) Guide MT, pg. 24. Tooele County Fire Department Dispatch Zones*. The map shows the current boundaries for each of the departments in Tooele County, including those departments not studied for this report. As this study progresses, analysis will be to create either:

- Multiple fire districts each of which will encompass their current response areas as identified in *Figure V.1*. Or,
- Consolidation of all five fire departments, along with Tooele County unincorporated lands to form a single fire district.

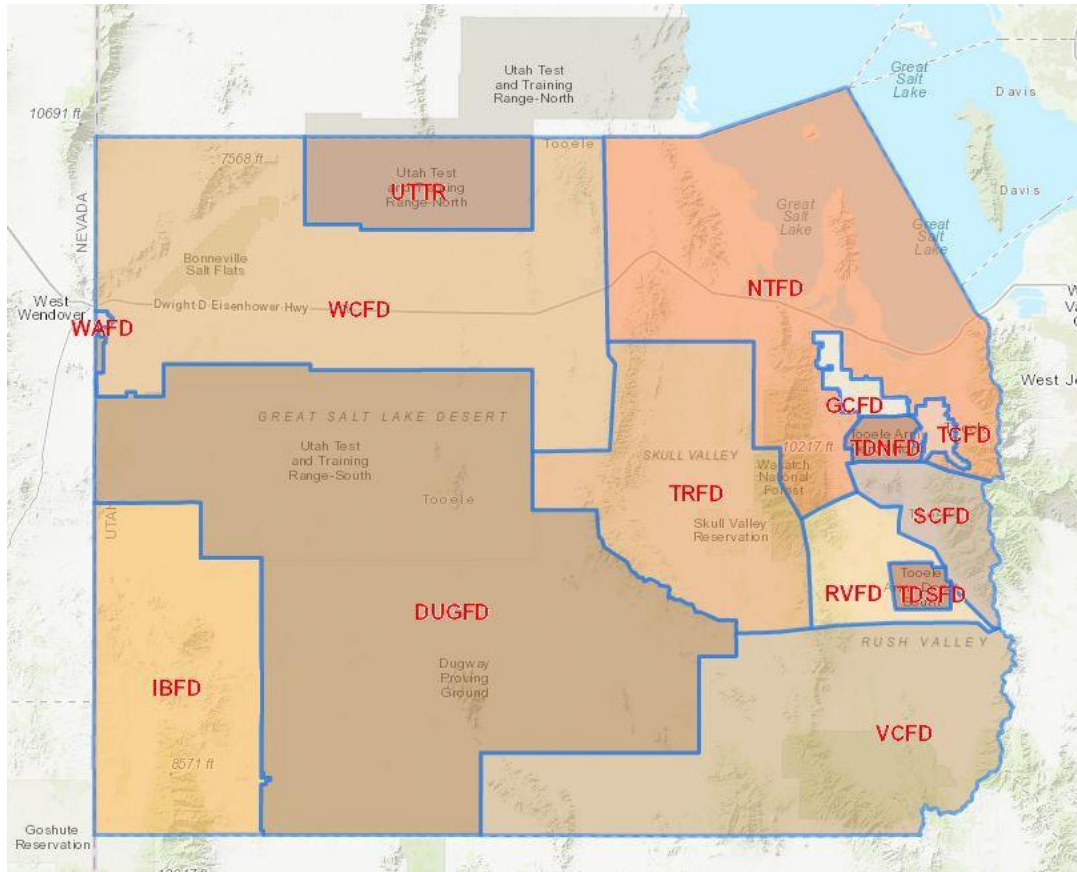


Figure V.1: Current Response Areas.

NFPA Response Zones

The City of Wendover, situated on the Utah/Nevada border along US Interstate-80, is the most populated community participating in the study and is the only incorporated city. Wendover had a 2018 population estimate of 1,468 residents encompassing 8.93 square miles giving it a population density of 164.56 and classified by NFPA-1720 Demand Zone as Rural/Remote.

Additional communities in Tooele County participating in this study are the towns of Rush Valley, Stockton, Terra and Vernon. These five communities and their volunteer fire departments will serve as a major focal point of this report.

Figure V.2 lists the departments in Tooele County, the areas covered in square miles, population, and density and the NFPA-1720 Demand Zone rating for each department. Also listed is demographics for Tooele County for purposes of compare with the communities being studied.

Community/Location	Sq. Mi.	Population	Density	Demand Zone
Tooele County	7,286	72,259	10.4	Rural
Rush Valley	18.08	490	27.1	Rural/Remote
Stockton	1.69	684	406.42	Rural/Remote
Terra	825	40	20.62	Rural/Remote
Vernon	8.06	338	41.93	Rural/Remote
Wendover	8.93	1,469	164.56	Rural/Remote

Figure V.2: Tooele County Fire Departments.

An important factor to bear in mind when examining the information in *Figure V.2* is that the square miles listed for each community only encompasses the incorporated boundaries for each of the communities. To gain a more proper view of the challenges faced by each of these departments is to examine the size of each fire departments response zone as identified on *Figure V.1* on the preceding page. For example, *Figure V.2* shows that Terra has the lowest community population yet when you factor in the overall size of the response zone as reflected in *Figure V.1*, Terra has one of the largest response zones for which the department received very minimal funding to provide response coverage within their zone. It is also important to note that Terra also provides response coverage for the Ibapah response zone. Residents who live outside of the town boundaries do not provide direct funding for the Terra fire department, yet draw on their services, which creates a subsidy issue. This reality is the same for each of these departments.

Each department responds to and provides services to county residents well outside of the department's actual community boundaries.

This poses challenges for each of these departments from funding inequity to significantly extended response times as well as increased operating costs for a fleet of apparatus that is well beyond useful service life.

All Tooele County fire departments combined responded to a total of **1,668 incidents** in 2019. PCG, using CAD data provided by Tooele County Sheriff Department, the PSAP for Tooele County, performed a thorough analysis of the data provided. PCG analyzed all responses by incident classifying incidents into three main categories Fire, EMS and Other. Other refers to non-fire and non-EMS incidents. We further sub-categorized all fire incidents into wildland and non-wildland fires. PCG conducted thorough analysis of response times by department and by incident type.

PCG conducted telephone and/or video conference calls with fire chiefs from each of the departments in Tooele County that participated with the study. Each fire chief presented an overview of their department, number of stations and personnel, number and type of apparatus, approximate square miles protected, population served and a general breakdown of the incidents both in number and type. Before concluding the interviews, each fire chief was asked what they believed to be their most significant current challenges and their most important strengths.

Challenges

Each chief interviewed conveyed that recruitment, retention, and training of personnel is their greatest challenge. The North Tooele County Fire District chief expressed that he had no problem finding qualified personnel but that retaining personnel was both costly and challenging. The fire chief indicated the primary reason behind this issue is that personnel stay with his department long enough to gain certifications and experience then leave for positions with departments in the Salt Lake City market for higher pay and better benefits.

Adequate funding was the second most common challenge expressed by the fire chiefs. Chief's indicated that what funding they do receive is barely enough to cover service and maintenance of their apparatus let alone enough for large expense items such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Several of the chiefs stated that they receive funding directly from the Tooele County Sheriff's Department. The Stockton fire chief expressed concern over the cost of providing response

services to a housing development in his response area that contains 312 homes with a population of approximately 1,500 residents but is in unincorporated county lands, outside of Stockton City limits. According to the Chief, the housing development accounts for 80-85% of the departments total responses yet the department receives no financial support from the residents drawing on the department's resources. Because of the way the department is structured, they are prohibited from assessing impact fees to this housing development because the housing units are located outside of Stockton City limits.

PCG consultants reviewed five years' worth of budgets for each of the departments and consultants agree, each of the departments is currently under-funded for the services being provided and is insufficient to support facilities, personnel and apparatus. Section VI contains more detailed information regarding department budgets.

Strengths

Each of the fire chiefs interviewed lauded the strength and efficiency of the automatic and mutual aid system currently in place in Tooele County as well as the working relationship with each of the other fire chiefs. Each chief acknowledged that it is impracticable for them to attempt to provide emergency response as a stand-a-lone department because of the challenges previously mentioned with recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

Because of the strength of the mutual aid response system, the chiefs of Terra; Stockton; Vernon; Rush Valley and Tooele City have all formed very strong working relationships and cooperation. This will serve as a critical aspect to any changes and/or modifications to the current system PCG will offer in this report.

Each fire chief provided PCG with a list of apparatus operated by each department. The table below represents key facts for each department and includes a list of apparatus by type. Two of the county fire departments have as many fire apparatuses as they have firefighters to staff them. Clearly, within the areas of Tooele County consultants evaluated have enough fire apparatus to deal with both structure and wildland fire threats.

Zone	Engines	Tender	Wildland	Command	Ambulance/QRU	Fire Fighters
Rush Valley	1	1	3	1	1	8
Stockton	1	1	4	1		14
Terra	1		6	1	2	17
Vernon	2		2	1	1	17
Wendover	2	1	2	1	1*	8
Totals	7	3	17	5	3	64**

Figure V.3: Fire Apparatus' and Fire Fighters per Response Zone.

*Ambulances are owned by Mountain West Ambulance.

**Although these are actual personnel roster numbers, the number of active members is lower.

Although we list apparatus inventory as a positive aspect, it is important to point out that having an over-abundance of apparatus can be more negative than positive. This is particularly the case when apparatus sits idle for long periods of time. Firefighters use the phrase "rotting from the inside out" to describe what happens with fire apparatus that sit idle. Water in the tanks becomes stagnant, packing and seals on pumps go bad causing leaks and can even result in pump failure when they are used or needed. The same can be said for the vehicles engines and causes serious issues for the vehicle's tires. This scenario translates into a very serious safety issue for firefighters operating the apparatus.

Risk Analysis

PCG has analyzed the fire service in Tooele County and believe the county has reached a point where certain transactional steps should be taken to ensure current and future continuity of services can be maintained. Commissioning of this study was a sound decision to begin the risk analysis process.

1. There is an inherent risk to maintaining the current number of volunteer fire departments. Given the population of Tooele County and with the majority of residents concentrated within Tooele City, Grantsville and the unincorporated portions in northern Tooele County, the current challenges of recruitment, retention and training of volunteer firefighters will only increase for the smaller

volunteer departments in the southern portion of the county where the population is less and more spread out. As departments lose volunteers there will be an extreme challenge if not, inability to recruit for these future vacancies. Departments are facing two primary challenges which they may not be able to overcome.

- a. First, is that to recruit a new volunteer a department must have the ability to provide adequate training and be able to provide adequate PPE. Each of the fire chiefs interviewed have already indicated this as a major challenge from a fiscal perspective.
 - b. The second challenge comes in the form of maintaining interest of the volunteers. This is typically accomplished through call volume, training, and department activities. As the number of volunteers decrease, it places greater demand on the remaining volunteers who find themselves being overburdened. These individuals will reach the point where they believe/feel that they are giving too much of their time and they resign. With the extremely low call volume experienced by many of the smaller departments there is simply not enough activity to hold interest of younger volunteers who tend to become bored easily and move on quickly.
2. Our analysis shows that the departments in Tooele County are overburdened by fire apparatus. In two instances, the department has as many fire apparatuses as they do personnel to staff apparatus. Because of the special nature of their mission and purpose, fire apparatus must meet higher standards than commercial vehicles performing non-emergency service functions. Fire Apparatus require constant maintenance and use.
 3. Our analysis of the fire apparatus in Tooele County is that many units are well beyond the NFPA recommended service life. In several instances we have identified apparatus currently in use that were not designed and constructed as fire apparatus but rather modified to perform as such. Given the steep mountain terrain and narrow winding mountain roads several of the departments cover this only increases the likelihood of a tragic accident. Fire apparatus used as frontline response assets should be built by licensed fire apparatus manufacturers and to the appropriate NFPA standard for the fire apparatus type and use, *NFPA-1901 Standard for Motorized Fire Apparatus*. Further, Fire apparatus must be maintained according to those same NFPA standards, *NFPA-1911 Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing and Retirement of In-Service Emergency Vehicles*.

Data collected by the US Fire Administration reflects that the second leading cause of firefighter fatalities in the US are vehicle accidents which occur either responding to or returning from incidents. These incidents occur primarily in volunteer departments, involve primarily water tenders and are the result of the operator driving beyond their skill level (training and certification) and beyond the capability of the apparatus (age of the unit, care and maintenance).

Service Volume and Response Time Analysis

Using the CAD data from 2015 to 2019 provided by the Tooele County Dispatch Center, the call volume, service type, demand and response times were examined to determine the state of services provided by five fire departments in Tooele County.

For purpose of the analysis, calls that were cancelled before arrival were not included.

Calls were categorized as fire, EMS and other. Other refers to non-fire and non-EMS incidents. Emergency incidents for the following fire departments was analyzed:

- Rush Valley Fire Department (RVFD)
- Stockton/Ophir City Fire Department (SCFD)
- Terra/Ibapah Fire Department (TRFD/IVFD)
- Vernon City Fire Department (VCFD)
- Wendover City Fire Department (WCFD)

Over the past five years WCFD has had the highest call volume (62%) of all calls in the County. SCFD comes in with the second highest average year call volume at 19%. Additionally, the call volume countywide

has experienced a slight but consistent decrease every year since 2015, responding to an average 345 calls per year.

	2019		2018		2017		2016		2015	
Agency	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
RVFD	27	8%	20	6%	28	8%	20	6%	39	11%
SCFD	70	21%	62	18%	84	24%	59	17%	58	16%
TRFD	29	9%	27	8%	32	9%	19	6%	22	6%
VCFD	10	3%	16	5%	7	2%	15	4%	18	5%
WCFD	198	59%	215	63%	199	57%	226	67%	224	62%
Grand Total	334	100%	340	100%	350	100%	339	100%	361	100%

Figure V.4: Tooele County Yearly Call Volume.

WCFD has responded to 62% of all calls (1,062) from 2015 to 2019 in Tooele County, followed by SCFD with 19% and RVFD with 8%.

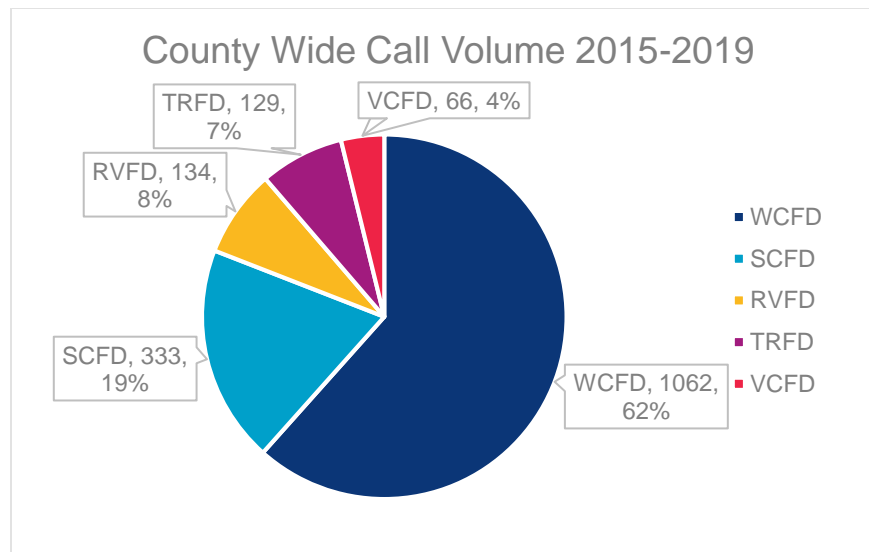


Figure V.5: County Wide Call Volume 2015-2019.

In 2019, 25% of all calls in Tooele County were responded to at or within 10 minutes, 35% were between 10 and 20 minutes and 40% were over 20 minutes. Tooele County experienced its quickest response time in 2018, when 31% of the calls were responded to at or within 10 minutes, 34% were between 10 and 20 minutes and only 35% were over 20 minutes.

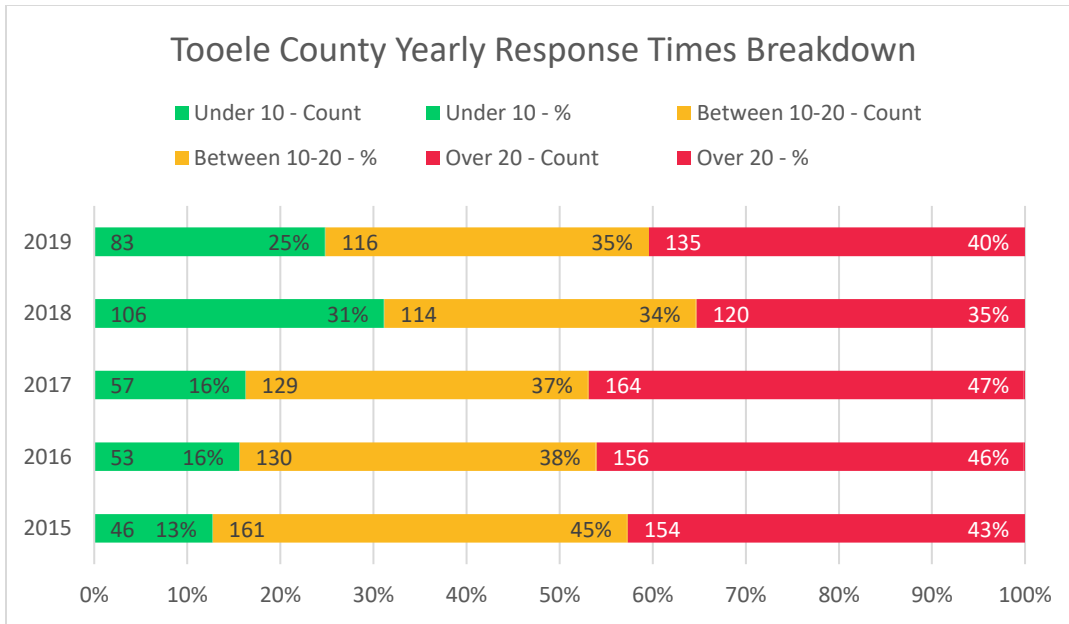


Figure V.6: Tooele County Yearly Response Time Analysis.

In 2019, TRFD had the highest response time at an average of 35 minutes and 25 seconds. VCFD had the lowest response time at 15 minutes and 16 seconds, giving them quickest response time in the County.

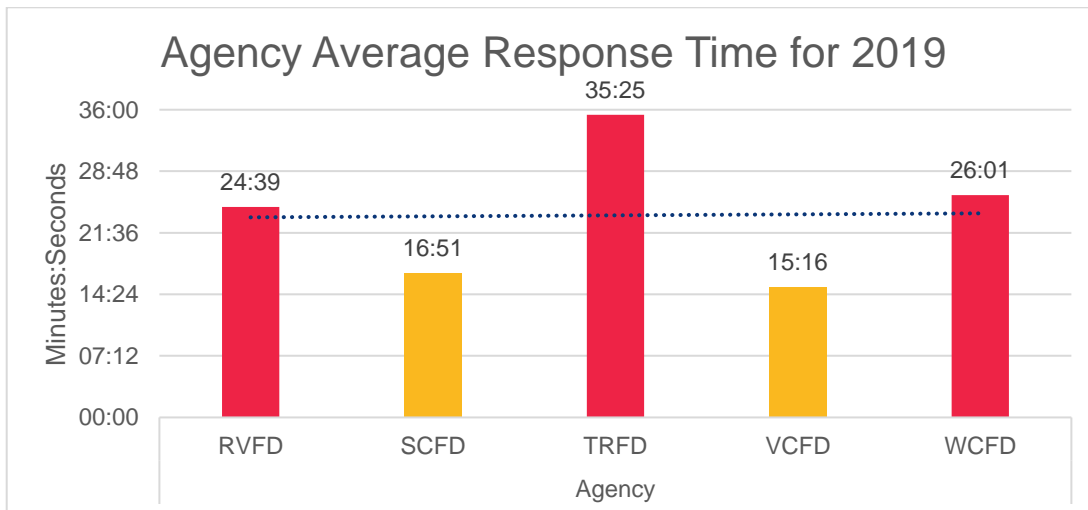


Figure V.7: Agency Average Response Time for 2019.

VCFD had the largest percentage (50%) of calls that were responded to at or within 10 minutes, with only 10% of calls responded to between 10 and 20 minutes and 40% took 20 minutes or more. The majority of 20+ minute response times are for automatic mutual aid responses assisting other agencies.

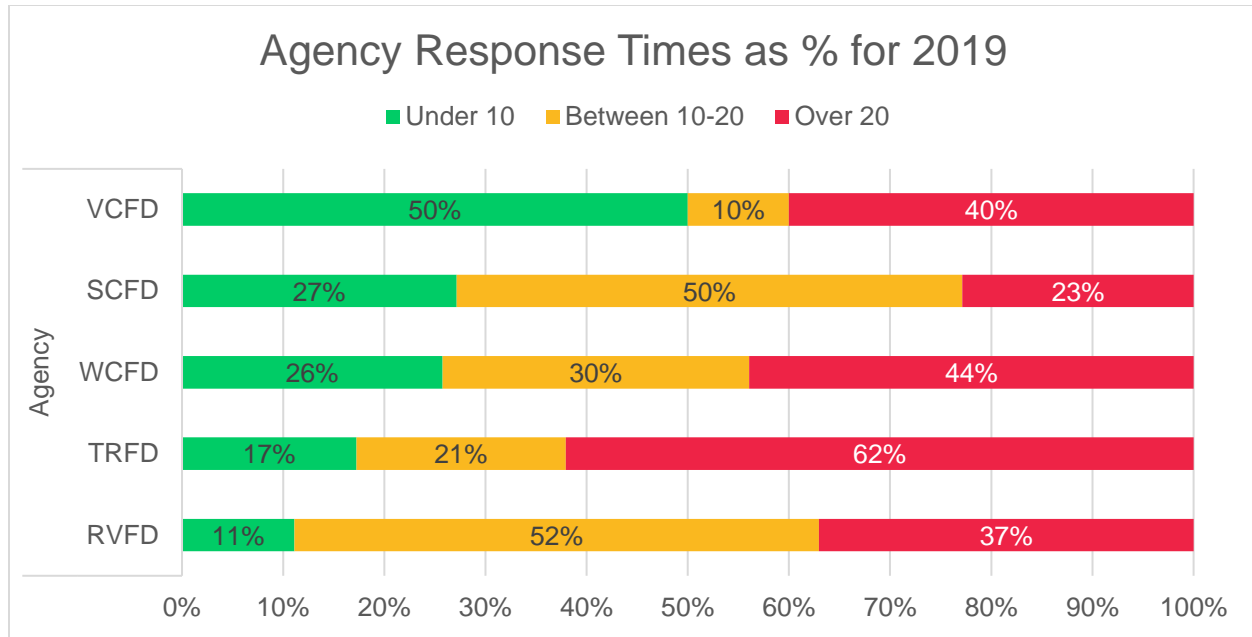


Figure V.8: Agency Response Times as % for 2019.

From 2015 to 2019, 46% of 911 calls in Tooele County were related to EMS services, followed by 40% being related to fire services, and 14% related to other non-fire and non-EMS services (see *Figure V.9*).

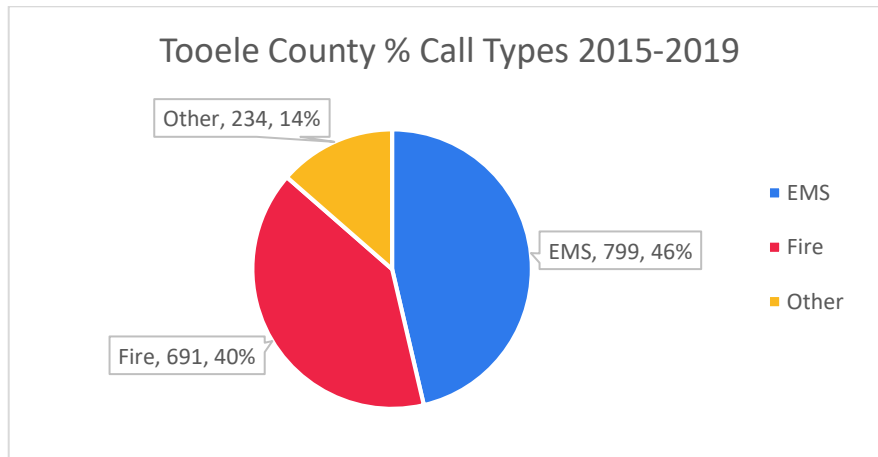


Figure V.9: Tooele County % Call Types 2015-2019.

On average, EMS services accounted for the highest demand in the County every year since 2015, except 2017, with small but consistent decreases year to year. In 2015, EMS calls accounted for 48% (175) of all calls while this dropped to 46% (154 calls) by 2019 (see *Figure V.10*). Calls for Fire services has been increasing since 2015 where Fire services accounted for 38% (136) in 2015 and rose to 42% (140) in 2019.

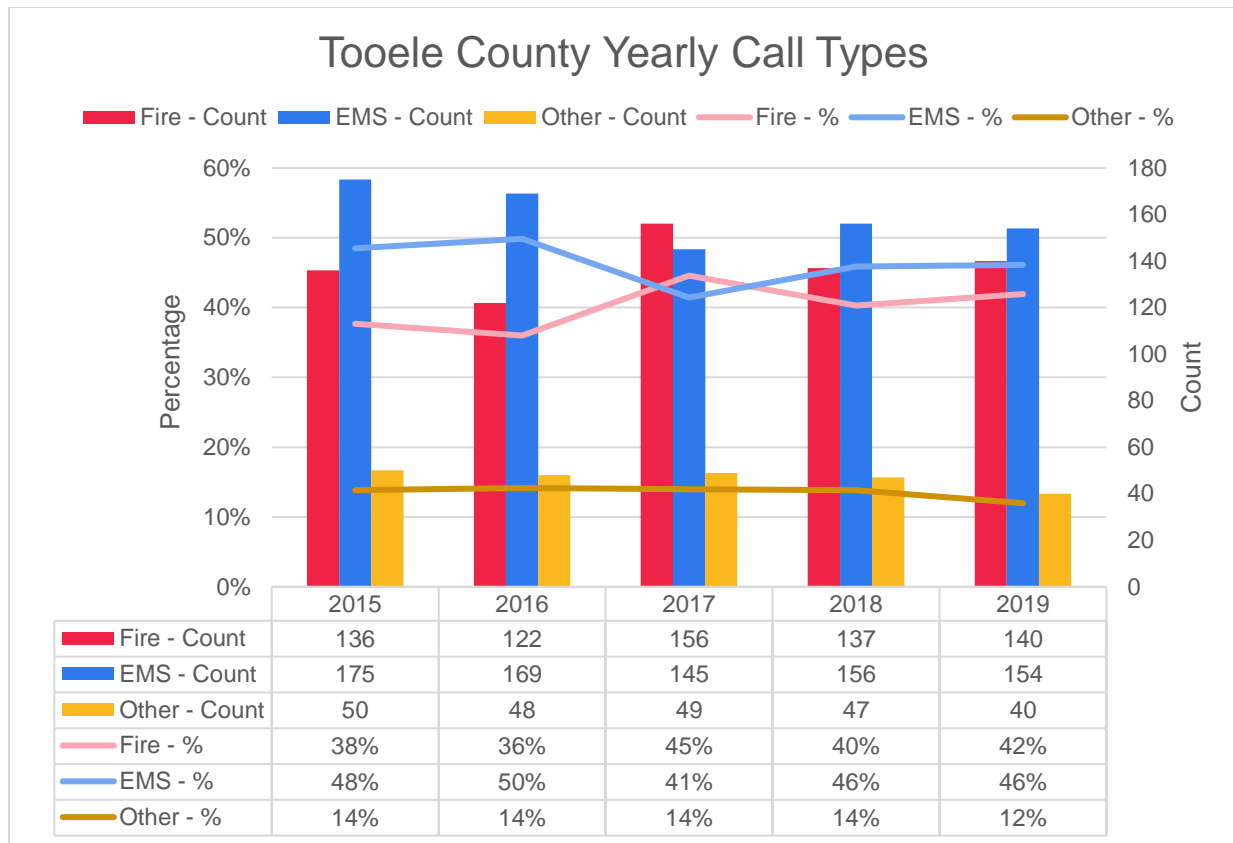


Figure V.10: Tooele County Yearly Call Types.

In 2019, the top three agencies that responded to the highest Fire call volume were VCFD (80%), TRFD at 72% and RVFD at 70%. The agency with the least Fire call volume was WCFD 29%.

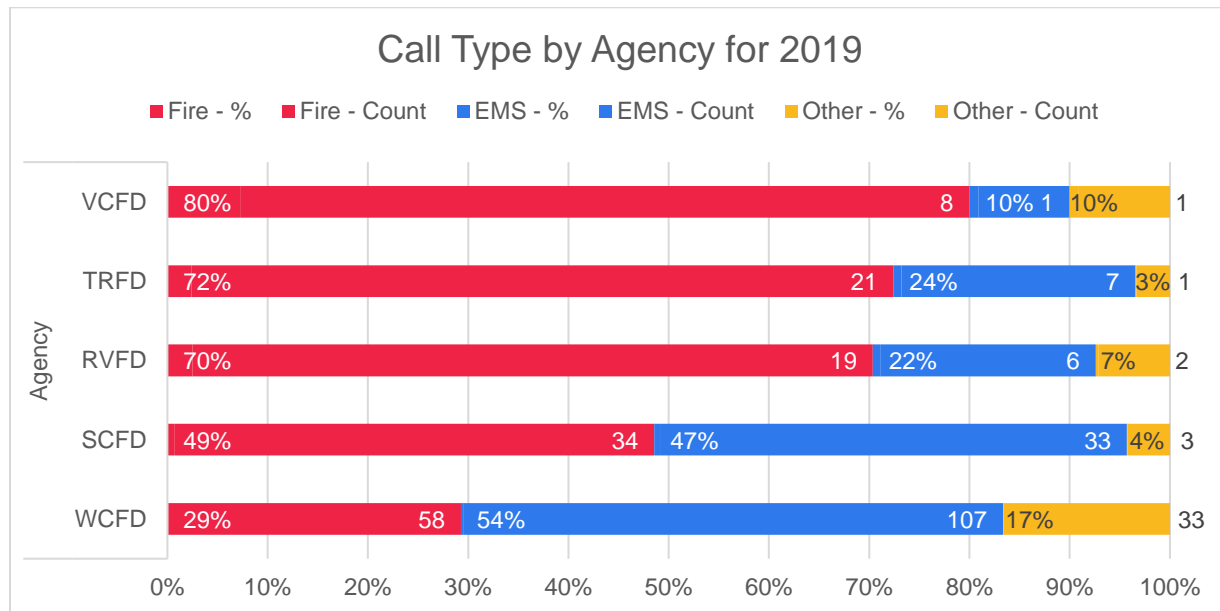


Figure V.11: Call Type by Agency for 2019.

From 2015 to 2019, 74% of all the Fire calls were Non-Wildfire related with 26% of all Fire calls Wildfire related.

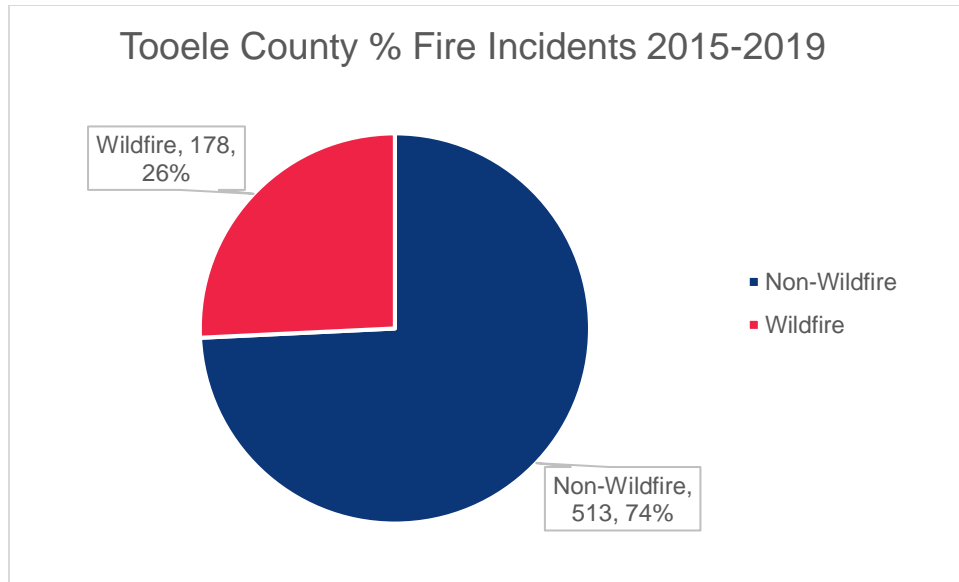


Figure V.12: Tooele County % Fire Incidents 2015-2019.

On average, 25% of Fire incidents across Tooele County are categorized as Wildfires.

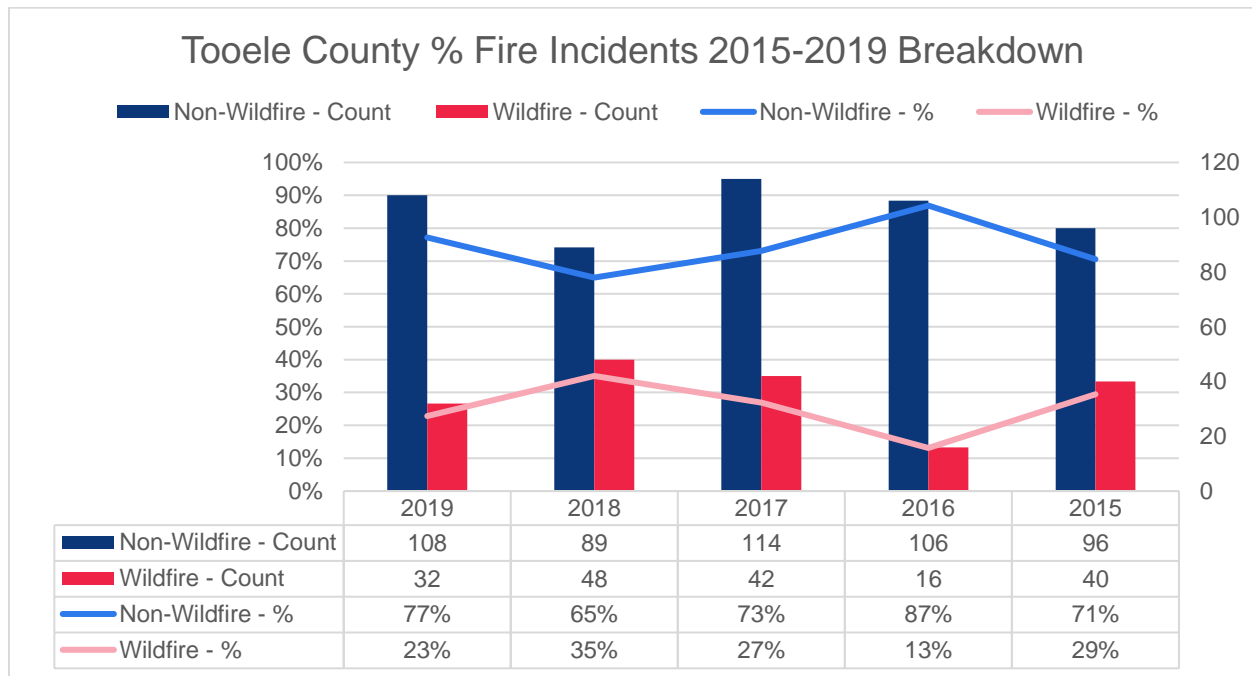


Figure V.13: Tooele County % Fire Incidents 2015-2019 Breakdown.

The top three agencies that responded to the highest percentages of Wildfire related calls in 2019 were TRFD at 62%, SCFD at 26% and RVFD at 16% (see **Error! Reference source not found.V. 14**).

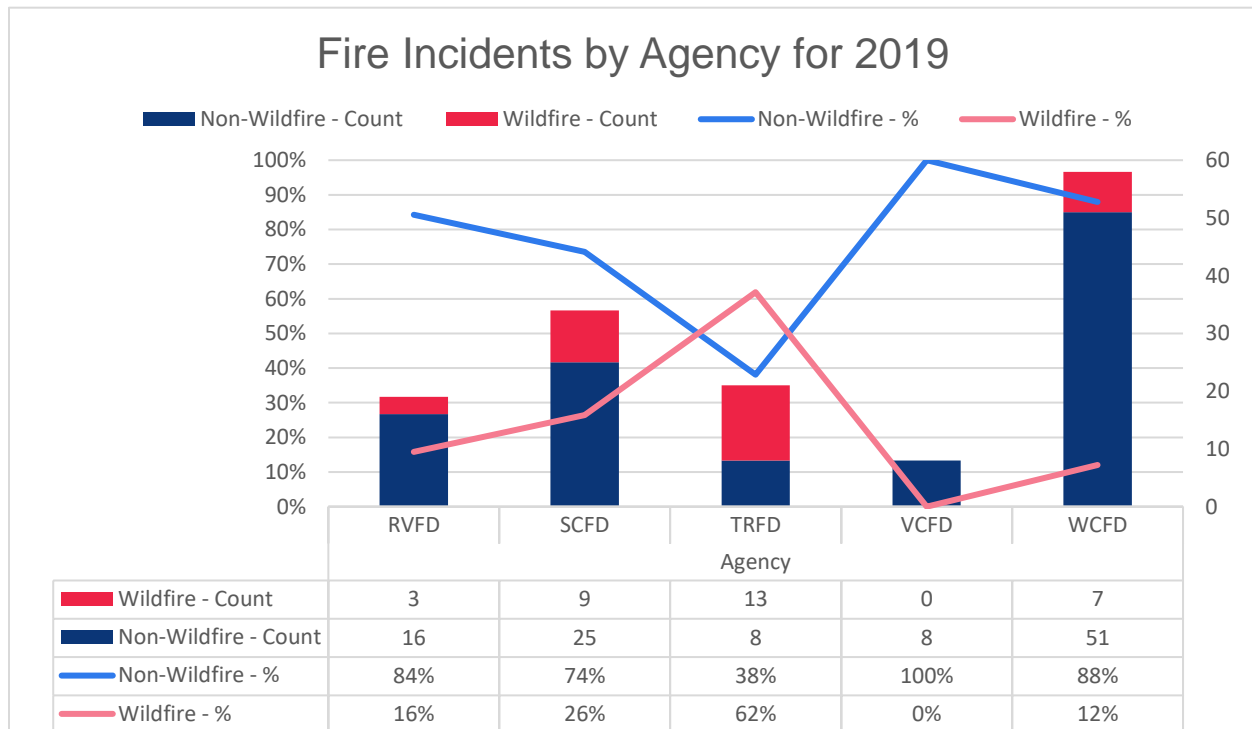


Figure V.14: Fire Incidents by Agency for 2019.

From 2015 to 2019, only 5% (25) of the Non-Wildfire calls were Structure Fire related (see V.15).

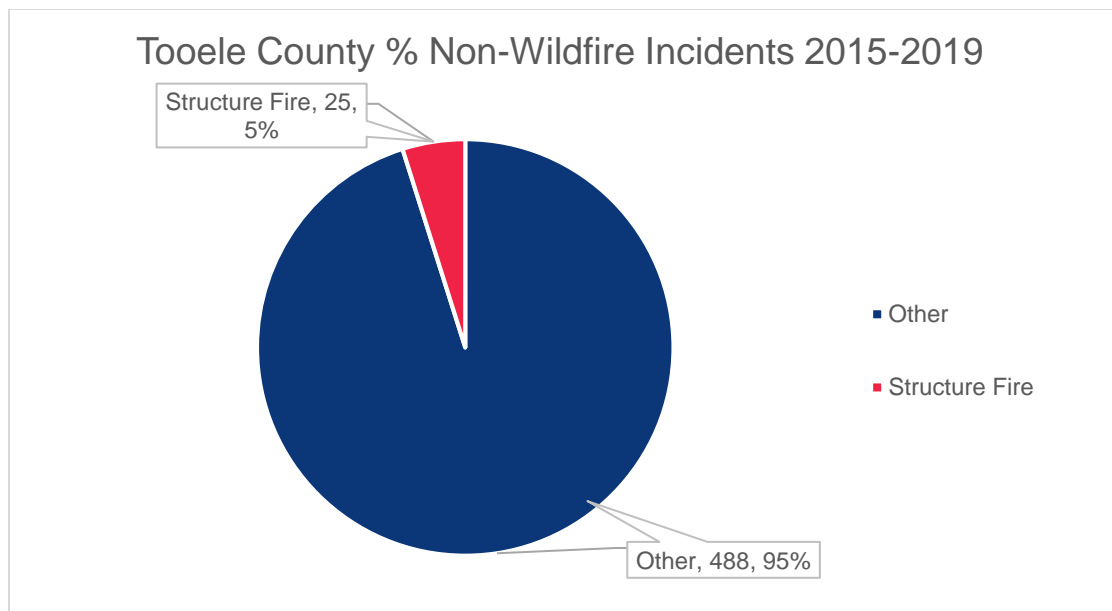


Figure V.15: Tooele County Non-Wildfire Incidents 2015-2019.

From all the non-wildfire calls (488) from 2015 to 2019, the three most common incident types were Traffic Incident (62%), Fire Alarm (10%) and Alarm (7%) (see V.16).

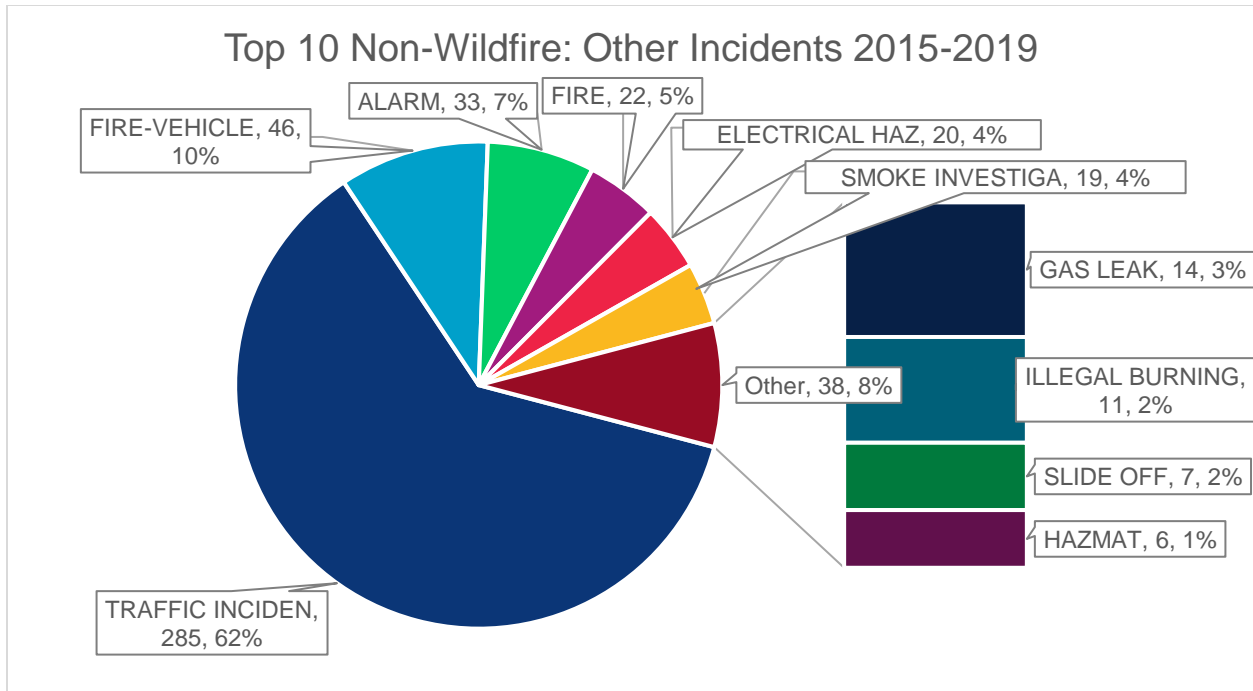


Figure V.16: Top 10 Non-Wildfire: Other Incidents 2015-2019.

Between 2015-2019 within Tooele County, Saturday is the busiest day of the week with 18% of all calls falling on this day.

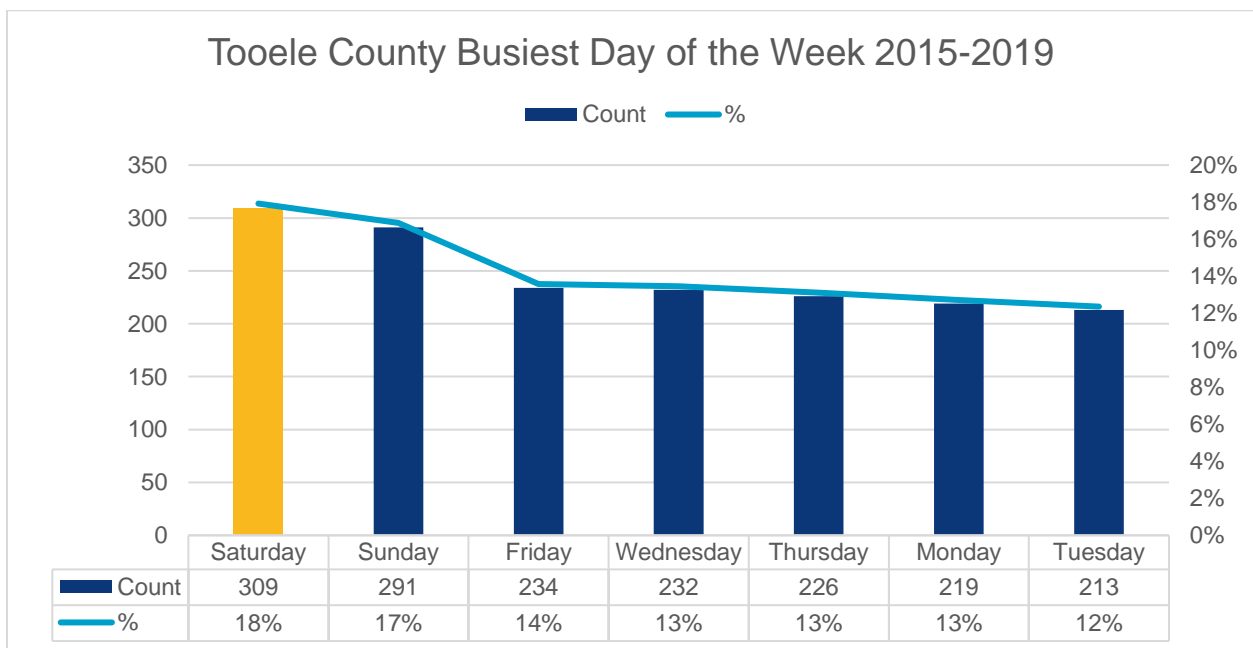


Figure V.17: Tooele County Busiest Day of the Week 2015-2019.

Between 2015-2019, 47% of calls happened between the hours of 8:00 am and 6:00 pm within Tooele County.

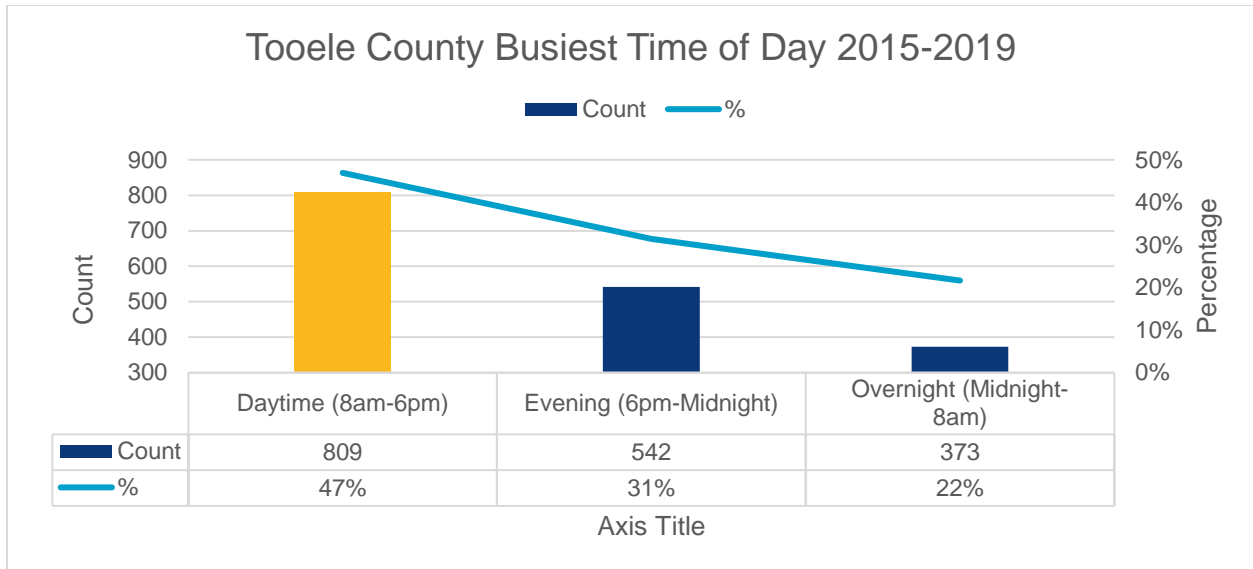


Figure V.18: Tooele County Busiest Time of Day 2015-2019.

While Saturday was the busiest day of the week for Tooele County between 2015-2019, that only held true for SCFD in 2019, and this was tied with Wednesday as being their busiest day (see Figure V.19).

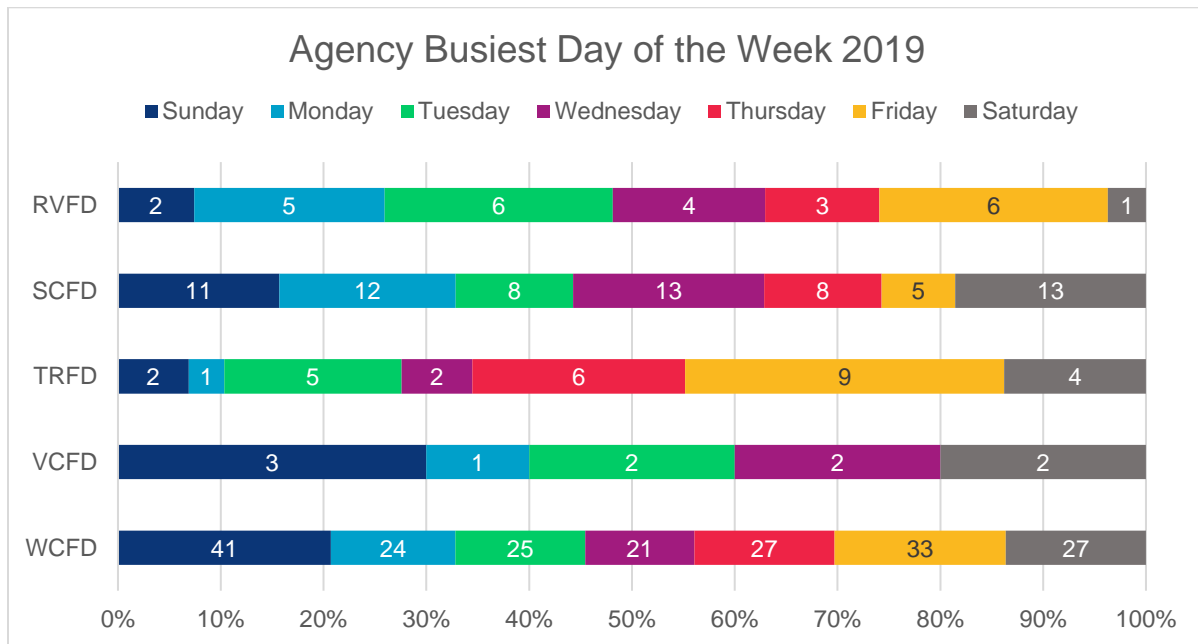


Figure V.19: Agency Busiest Day of the Week 2019.

The busiest time of day during 2019 by Agency was between the hours of 8:00 am to 6:00 pm with an average of 51% of calls happening during those hours (see Figure V.20). The hours of 6:00 pm to Midnight account for 29% of all calls whereas from Midnight to 8:00 am responds to 20% of calls.

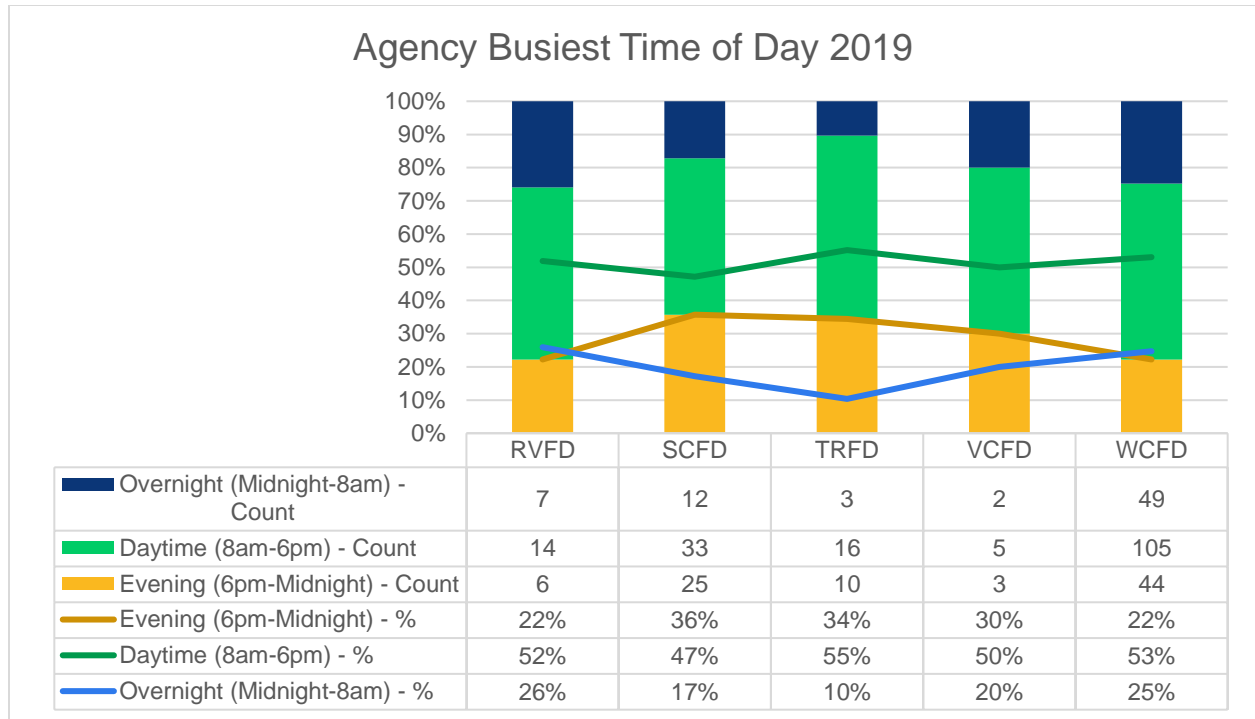


Figure V.20: Agency Busiest Time of Day 2019.

SECTION VI: CURRENT FUNDING ANALYSIS

Budget Analysis

The following agencies, except for Wendover Fire Department, had a **combined total of \$941,693 budgeted** for fire protection in 2020. Tooele County had the highest budgeted amount for fire services at \$860,043 (91%) and Vernon had the lowest budgeted amount at \$10,700 (1%).

- Tooele County Fire Department
- Terra/Ibapah Fire Department
- Stockton Fire Department
- Rush Valley Fire Department
- Vernon Fire Department
- Wendover Fire Department*

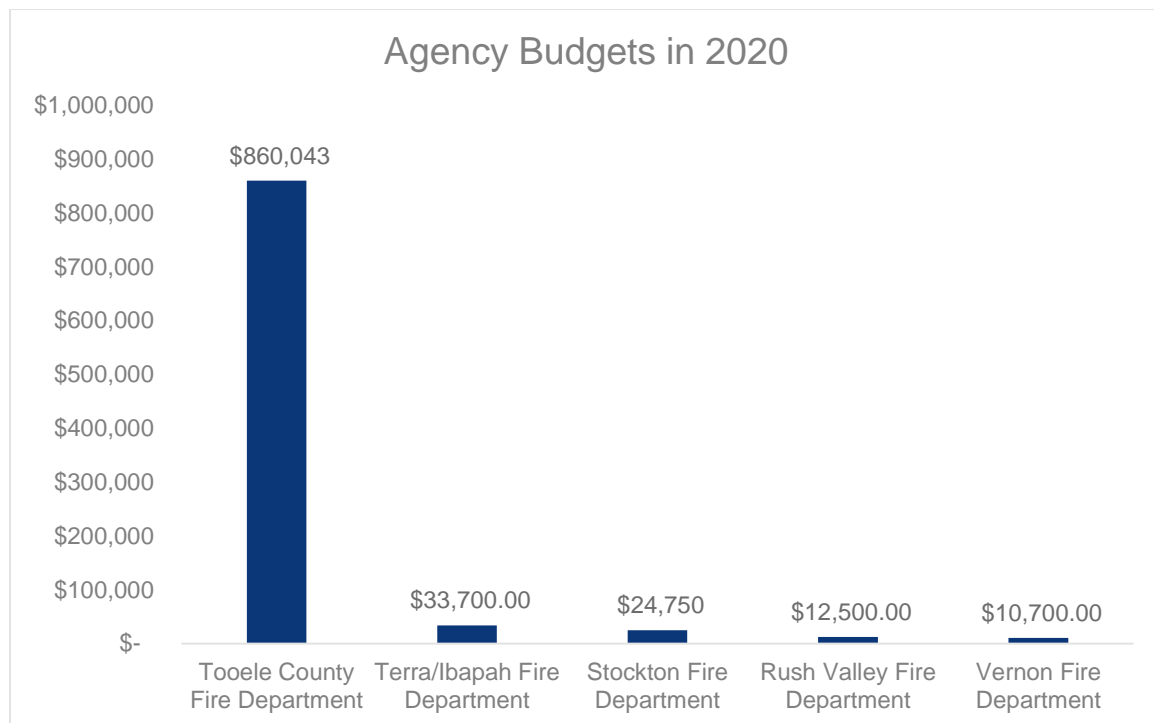


Figure VI.1: Agency Budgets in 2020.

In 2020, the Tooele County had a budget of \$860,043, a decrease of 2% from the previous year. SCFD experienced the highest budget cut at 5.9% in 2020 for a total budget of \$24,750. The 2020 TRFD and IBFD budgets remained the same from the previous year at \$33,700, which is the highest budget out of all the agencies, except the County. The RVFD budget and VCFD budget both also remained the same budget amounts since 2016, at \$12,500 and \$10,700, respectively. See *Figure VI.2* below.

Year	Tooele County Budget	Percent Change
2016	\$ 745,114	
2017	\$ 896,147	20.3%
2018	\$ 887,551	-1.0%
2019	\$ 877,950	-1.1%
2020	\$ 860,043	-2.0%

Year	SCFD Budget	Percent Change
2016	\$ 24,460	
2017	\$ 35,930	46.9%
2018	\$ 26,885	-25.2%
2019	\$ 26,288	-2.2%
2020	\$ 24,750	-5.9%

Year	TRFD & IBFD Budget	Percent Change
2016	\$ 18,500	
2017	\$ 18,500	0.0%
2018	\$ 24,100	30.3%
2019	\$ 33,700	39.8%
2020	\$ 33,700	0.0%

Year	RVFD Budget	Percent Change
2016	\$ 12,500	
2017	\$ 12,500	0%
2018	\$ 12,500	0%
2019	\$ 12,500	0%
2020	\$ 12,500	0%

Year	VCFD Budget	Percent Change
2016	\$ 10,700	
2017	\$ 10,700	0%
2018	\$ 10,700	0%
2019	\$ 10,700	0%
2020	\$ 10,700	0%

Figure VI.2: Agency Budget Percent Changes from 2016 to 2020.

Community/Location	2020 Budget	Sq. Mi.	Cost per Sq. Mi.	Population	Cost per Capita	Density
Tooele County	\$860,043.00	7,286	\$118.04	72,259	\$11.90	10.4
Rush Valley	\$12,500.00	18.08	\$691.37	490	\$25.51	27.1
Stockton	\$24,750.00	1.69	\$14,644.97	684	\$36.18	406.42
Terra	\$33,700.00	825	\$40.85	40	\$842.50	143
Vernon	\$10,700.00	8.06	\$1,327.54	338	\$31.66	41.93
Wendover	NA	8.93	NA	1,469	NA	164.56

Figure VI.3: Community Location and Budgeting.

SECTION VII: PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY

Tooele County values public input and wanted to collect some insight about the importance placed on the formation of a fire district, as well as the public's willingness to invest in it. To receive this input, Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) created the Tooele County Fire District Public Comment Survey, which was advertised by a few local media outlets. The survey was open from July 14, 2020 to August 28, 2020 and was available for completion on a computer or mobile phone.

The description of the survey was:

Tooele County is exploring the feasibility of creating a Fire District that would include the communities of Rush Valley, Stockton, Terra, Vernon and Wendover as well as Unincorporated areas adjacent to each of these communities. Formation of this Fire District will result in a property tax increase that will fund department personnel, services and equipment. As a resident, your input is greatly valued so please take 5 minutes to review and complete this public comment survey. Thank You!

The survey consisted of 13 multiple choice and open-ended questions to collect valuable feedback from the public. The questions focused on location and length of residency, experience with fire services, support for the formation of a fire district and willingness to pay taxes to fund it. The survey also contained a field to capture the respondents' general concerns. A list of all comments is available in Appendix IV.

Summary of Survey Results

There were 32 total responses collected and 56% of the respondents assigned an "essential" level of importance to fire protection services, followed by a 19% that indicated it was "very important." When asked about the likelihood to support the formation of a fire district, 53% suggested that it was "very likely," 22% suggested it was "highly unlikely." Additionally, respondents were informed that they would have the opportunity to vote on this initiative, to which 59% responded they were "very likely" to support, followed by a 31% "unlikely" support and the remaining 9% suggested to be "uncertain." When asked if they were likely to support a \$15 - \$17 tax increase per month to support the formation of the fire district, 50% indicated they were "likely" to support this initiative, followed by a 31% of "unlikely" responses and a 9% of "uncertain" responses.

In summary, although **91%** of the responses indicated that they **believe fire services are essential/important**, **only 50%** indicated to be willing to **approve of a tax increase** for the formation of a fire district.

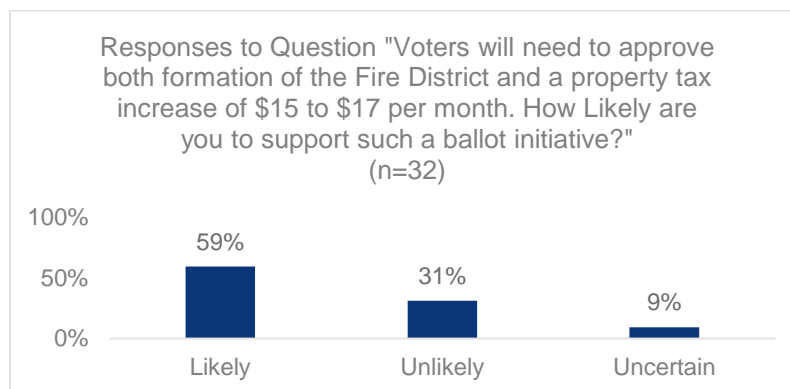


Figure VII.1: Support Ballot Initiative.

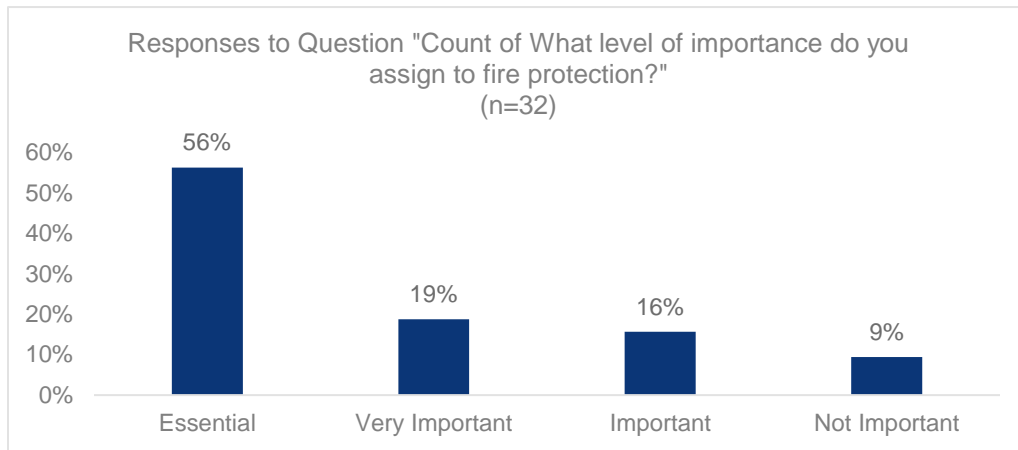


Figure VII.2: Importance of Fire Protection.

SECTION VIII: FORMING A FIRE DISTRICT IN UTAH

Legislative Requirements

Under Title-17 of the Utah State Code there are two primary options for Tooele County officials to consider executing. The Title-17B option is to create a “Local District” also known as an “Independent District” and the Title-17D option is to create a “Special Service Area District” also known as a “Dependent Special Service Component Unit”. As can be stated for any governance option, there are strengths and challenges associated with both options. Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) consultants thoroughly reviewed both section 17B and 17D in accordance with the project scope of work. During our research we discovered a state-wide association of special districts and reached out to them for interviews. Consultants interviewed the Executive Director of the Utah Association of Special Districts (UASD) and posed the following questions:

1. As the executive director of UASD, you have had the opportunity to work with both local districts and special service districts. Please share with us what you believe are the 3, greatest advantages/strengths of each type of district?
2. Now please share with us what you believe are the 3 greatest disadvantages/challenges of each type of district?
3. If Tooele County were to initiate formation of either district option, how long can they expect for the process to take?
4. What are the legislative requirements associated with formation of either option?
5. What services, if any, does UASD offer for entities who desire to form either district option?
6. Are there any requirements for forming a district of either type that require voter approval such as a ballot measure for those residents living in a proposed district boundary?

In the State of Utah there are just over 400 special districts with approximately one-third of them being “Special Service Area or Dependent Districts” and the remaining two-thirds being “Local or Independent Districts.”

Guided by these questions, the executive director explained each of the options to the consultants during the interview made a simple, yet poignant statement: “It all comes down to what do the people want, there is no option better or worse than the other.” With this statement in mind, we have provided a general overview of each district model and information for the formation of each district classification

Local District

A Local District can be formed by any political subdivision within the state, typically a county. Title 17B-103 states either a petition of the residents of the county or the county itself can initiate the process. The creating entity drafts a resolution calling for creation of the Local District which must delineate the geographical boundaries of the district and provide a map clearly outlining the boundaries of the proposed district. Although the creating entity initiates the process for creating a Local District, the formation of the district must be approved by a consent vote of the people residing in the district boundaries.

Under Title 17B-1-202 a local district must have a specific service definition. Section 17B-1-202, (1) (a) (iii) *fire protection, paramedic, and emergency services including consolidated 911 and emergency dispatch services.*

In the case of Tooele County there would be no need for the 911 dispatch and emergency dispatch services to be included as the Tooele County Sheriff currently holds the Public Safety Access Point (PSAP) certification and would continue to perform this function.

If the boundaries of the district being formed encompass other political subdivisions such as incorporated cities or towns, which already provide the services proposed by the creating entity, then the governing bodies for each jurisdiction must also approve a resolution indicating their consent or rejection to form the district and participate with the proposed service.

Upon creation of the Local District all revenue generated must be specifically allocated to the limited and/or purpose of the district specifically; administration, operations, support, and critical infrastructure such as facilities, equipment and apparatus.

Although a local district is created by a political body such as a county. Once created the Local District becomes a political entity unto itself and is why Local Districts are also classified or referred to as “Independent Districts.” A local district may have a governing body that is elected by the residents of the district. In the instance where a County Council takes steps to create the local district, they may opt to appoint elected officials from each of the incorporated cities or towns contained within the district’s boundaries. This is a positive step to ensure each community has equal representation on the governing body of the district. There are also provisions in 17B that stipulate the governing body can be comprised of individuals elected from established voting districts or at-large, one of these options needs to be clearly spelled out in the forming resolution.

As a local or independent district, the governing board may set the tax or mill rate within the district for the purpose of generating revenue to operate the district and provide the specified service the district was formed for. These revenues will be in to form of property tax assessed to residential and commercial properties and may not be generated from sales tax. These taxes are subject to Utah’s “Truth in Taxation” laws and must be approved by consent of the voters residing within the district boundaries. Title 17B, Part 6 sets forth the statutory tax rates or limits that a special district can assess.

Another factor to consider when determining the composition of the governing board deals with the ability to set tax rates assessed for providing services. If the governing board is 100% elected by residents of the district, then the board drafts a ballot measure and places it for a vote of the people. If, however, the board is appointed by the County Commission then the board will have to go through additional steps to achieve setting the tax rate as set forth in Title 17B Section 3.

Special Service Agency District

The second option available to Tooele County executives is the formation of a Special Service Agency District (SSD) utilizing provisions under the Utah Code, Title 17D, Limited Purpose Local Government Entities – Other Entities, Chapter 1, Special Service District Act.

A Special Service District can be created by a political body such as a county or city council through a resolution that must specify the jurisdictional boundaries of the proposed district and must also include a map identifying the area the proposed district shall encompass. The **resolution must also clearly identify what services the special service district will be providing.**



When a Special Service District is created by a county or city council it becomes a “Component Unit” of the entity that created it and must be reflected on that entity’s annual budget. This is not to say that the SSD becomes a department of the county or city, it does not. The county or city council cannot redistribute tax funds/revenues generated for the purpose of supporting the district as it can within county or city department budgets.

When a county or city initiates creation of Special Service District it must follow articles of formation outlined in Utah Title 17D, Chapter 1 Special Service District Act, Part 1 General Provisions: Sections 101 thru 109. A Special Service District can be comprised of multiple entities such as counties and cities or a combination thereof. The creating entity must pass a resolution which complies with Utah’s open meeting laws and specifically, allows for public comment prior to passing the formation resolution.

The creating entity must designate an “Administrative Control Board” or ACB which can be appointed by the creating entity. The creating entity can also serve as the ACB however, under Utah law, the entity must hold separate meetings between their normal business and that of the Special Service District. This means separate business agendas which comply with Utah open meeting laws. The creating entity may also appoint an ACB and grant the necessary authority to the ACB to conduct district business.

There are two important aspects to creation of the ACB that bear mentioning. First, the creating entity retains the authority to revoke the authorities of the ACB at any time if it so chooses. Second, the creating entity cannot, under Utah law, grant the ACB authority to conduct “Truth in Taxation”, this authority must remain under control of the creating entity. The ACB can assess property taxes and fees for certain services however, any increases in taxes must be put before the residents of the district and approved by a majority vote. The ballot measure required to initiate this action must be performed by the creating entity.

Strengths and Challenges

During the interview with the Executive Director of Utah Association of Special Districts there was considerable discussion regarding the strengths and challenges of forming either district option. Whether Tooele County executives choose to form a Local or Independent District or a Special Service or Dependent District, the strengths, and challenges, for all intents and purposes, are identical. It really comes down to the determination of which option best suits Tooele County and its residents with respect to the optimal governance model.

Strengths

- **Economy of Scale:** With the current state of fire service departments in Tooele County struggling with recruitment, retention and training of personnel having a single entity perform these functions alleviates the necessity of each smaller department from having to perform this critical function by themselves and thereby competing against one another for a limited number of potential candidates. The same can be applied for purchasing and acquisition of equipment and apparatus.
- **Efficiencies:** Under a single umbrella of administrative leadership a single department can better focus its administrative and fiscal resources towards critical areas such as purchasing of equipment, streamlining purchasing of fire apparatus, SCBA and other high-dollar value equipment and services to maintain such equipment. These efficiencies can also be applied to operations matters as well such as policies and procedures, communications, training of personnel and human resources functions.
- **Transparency:** This is very important from a fiscal perspective in that with a single function service entity such as a fire department, taxpayers can see exactly what they are funding with their tax assessment for the services provided by the department. Revenues are single or very limited in source, (property tax assessment) and the funds are specifically spent providing this service. This is not to imply that other political entities lack transparency as this is not the case. However, county and city budgets derive revenue from multiple sources many of which can fluctuate widely from year to year and require complex actuarial applications in determining proportionality. County and city governments also have multiple departments competing for limited general fund monies based on prioritization of services and the political climate at the time budgets are approved. County and city governments also have the latitude of redistributing funds between departments which can have significant impacts on a departments ability to operate effectively and efficiently.

Challenges

- As previously articulated in this report, any county government can create a Local District and cities and the county can join to form a Special Service District however, the final step towards actual creation of either district option rests with voters who reside within the proposed district boundaries. Given this fact, it is a possibility that each of the communities and local fire departments within Tooele County take all the necessary and appropriate steps to form a Local Fire District or a Special Service District, those efforts could be rejected by the vote of the people for either political or fiscal reasons resulting in loss of time, effort and capitol to build the program initiative.
- Political climate may well be a factor as well. As detailed in the overview for creation of either district option, if the county initiates the action it must do so with the understanding that some or all of the communities identified as being included may decline to participate in the formation of the district. Should multiple incorporated communities exercise this option then it severely limits the overall effectiveness of the initiative and the challenge of fragmented fire service delivery will continue.
- Limits on revenue generation may also be a significant challenge as well. The overwhelming majority of the taxable base in Tooele County resides in the communities of Tooele City, Grantsville, and North Tooele County Fire District. With each of these locations thus far

declining to participate in this study then the county and remaining communities will be faced with forming the Local District comprised of their collective response areas. A determination will need to be made as to whether there is sufficient taxable properties in the unincorporated areas and these communities to support formation of a either a Local or Special Service Area Fire District that is fiscally sustainable for the present and future of Tooele County.

Fire District Resources

As Tooele County officials begin the decision process for determining how best to move forward with improving fire service delivery throughout the County, it is important to point out that there are tremendous resources available to them with respect to guiding them through the legislative processes of forming either a Local District or a Special Service District. During our interview with the executive director of the Utah Association of Special Districts (UASD), we were directed to the UASD website. In interviews with leaders from various districts around Utah each pointed out that they consulted with the UASD leadership team and relied heavily on the information contained on the UASD website when setting up either their local or special service district.

Located in *Appendix II* of this report are web-links to all information necessary to set up and establish a local or special service district in Utah. Consultants highly recommend following the template, but also consulting with the executive director and members of the board of directors for UASD who indicated their willingness to participate in assisting and advising Tooele County throughout this challenging process.

SECTION IX: FIRE DISTRICT COMPARISON

Compare and Contrast: Tooele County and the Uintah Fire District

Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) analyzed all of the response data for each fire department which is presented in great detail in this report, analyzed the geographic and demographic information for each department and compared and contrasted this information with other counties in Utah in an effort to determine if a model existed that both PCG and Tooele County leadership can use as a template for future actions. PCG researched the following Utah counties for comparison.

- Davis County
- Weber County
- Washington County
- Cache County
- Box Elder County
- Iron County
- Uintah County
- Wasatch County
- Juab County

PCG determined that Washington; Box Elder; Iron; Juab and Uintah Counties have commonalities with Tooele County with respect to demographics and fire service organizations. Box Elder, Juab and Iron Counties all share somewhat similar geographical characteristics. However, of all Utah counties reviewed, Uintah most closely shares and dealt with similar challenges specific to fire service delivery currently facing Tooele County. Accordingly, PCG will utilize Uintah Fire District for comparison and contrast with Tooele County.

Figure IX.1 is a direct comparison between Tooele County and Uintah County, and the five, cities/towns which would make up the proposed Tooele Fire District and the five, cities/towns that currently make up the Uintah Fire District. Data from Jensen was not available.

Community	Sq. Mi.	Population	Density	Community	Sq. Mi.	Population	Density
Tooele County	7,286	72,259	10.4	Uintah County	4,501	35,438	7.2
Rush Valley	18.08	490	27.1	Jensen*	NA	NA	NA
Stockton	1.69	684	406.42	Lapoint	107.7	1,040	10
Terra	825	40	143	Naples	6.6	2,066	312.98
Vernon	8.06	338	41.93	Randlett	5.2	224	43
Wendover	8.93	1,469	164.56	Vernal	4.62	10,370	2,243.62

Figure IX.1: Comparison Between Tooele County and Uintah County.

Figure IX.2 presents a comparison between incident call volume between the five fire departments proposed for Tooele County Fire District and the five fire departments that currently make up the Uintah County Fire District.

Department	Count	Percent	Department	Count	Percent
Rush Valley	27	8%	Vernal	203	48%
Stockton	70	21%	Naples	77	18%
Terra	29	9%	Jensen	56	13%
Vernon	10	3%	Lapoint	63	15%
Wendover	198	59%	Randlett	20	6%
Grand Total	334	100%	Grant Total	419	100%

Figure IX.2: Comparison Between Incident Call Volume.

PCG consultants outlined for Tooele County a set of findings and recommendations with regards to forming a fire district using either 17B or 17D. Consultants also believe that providing a comparison to an existing fire district in Utah that faced similar challenges Tooele County currently faces and how they addressed and overcame those challenges is important to the options and processes to establishing a fire district.

Uintah Fire District (Special Service Agency District)

The Uintah Fire Special Service District was formed as a Special Service District in 2006. It was formed out of many of the same necessities Tooele County currently faces regarding recruitment, retention, and training of volunteer firefighters. They also experienced fiscal challenges as stand-alone departments and struggled maintaining critical equipment such as apparatus, facilities, and PPE, (wildland and structural), EMS, and SCBA.

Each of the five fire departments that comprise Uintah Fire District serve predominantly rural areas/communities and unincorporated portions of the county encompassing their respective communities. Each department is encompassed by or adjacent to significant portions of federal land, forests, and parks which account for approximately 70% of lands. Each department is an essential mutual aid response partner for the State of Utah and Federal firefighting resources, particularly with regards to “Initial Attack” and even “Extended Attack” operations.

Just as Tooele County currently does, prior to the formation of the Uintah Fire District the departments relied on reimbursement from both the State of Utah and Federal agencies such as BLM and US Forest Service to provide funding in the form of reimbursement to their departments in support of firefighting efforts in the extensive wildland and forest areas throughout their respective communities. As this type of funding is predicated on response to fire activities it cannot be relied upon as a sustainable source of funding from year to year. According to the Uintah Fire District Chief, the department responds to an average of 400 incidents per year with an average of 30 of these being for EMS. Although Tooele County responds to fewer incidents than Uintah Fire District, the proportionality between fire and EMS responses is quite similar.

The Uintah County Commission was presented with an opportunity to improve fire service delivery throughout the county when a mineral lease for the drilling and extraction of petroleum oil and gas on Federal lands began generating revenue more than \$35 Million. One aspect of the agreement with the mineral rights however was that the county Could not directly use the revenues but rather needed to create vehicles for channeling the revenue. The Uintah County Chief was not certain why the County Attorney opted for the Special Service Agency model rather than the Local District but believes it may have been because there already existed two Special Service Agency Districts in Uintah County. As a result of the oil and gas drilling revenue the County created a total of four Special Service Agency Districts. The Chief stated that the challenge facing Uintah County now is the dramatic decrease in funding from the initial windfall of \$35 Million to \$8 – 9 Million now. This decrease has been attributed to the recent major decrease in oil and gas pricing world-wide. Where most fire districts are funded through property tax assessments, Uintah County receives 95% of their funding from the drilling revenues.



Uintah Fire District is comprised of five, community fire departments; Vernal, Naples, and three smaller fire districts of Jensen, Lapoint, and Tridel/Avalon. According to the Chief, each of these departments were existing on funding somewhere between \$2,000 – \$5,000/year as operating budgets. **When the Uintah Fire District was created the Chief stated, “It literally took us from the dark-ages.”** Stations had been bare cinderblock garages; firefighters were using 20- to 30-year-old turnout gear and apparatus was so old they barely ran. The departments began to rebuild, particularly new fire stations, fire apparatus, and PPE.

Although the fire district was comprised of five, separate departments, they did not form into one department. Rather, **each department kept its own identity, have their own fire chief, officers, and personnel.** The district however, had to be centrally administered and as such, the Vernal City Fire Chief was appointed as the District Fire Chief/Administrator and is tasked with oversight of all administrative functions such as personnel, Fire Marshal/Code Enforcement and training. The district’s overall annual budget is \$1.6 Million and covers all district operating costs. Operating costs also include all insurance coverage such as liability, workers compensation, facilities, and apparatus.

The department is governed by a five-member board with a representative from each of the communities served. All members of the board are appointed however, each board member is an elected official from each of the departments/communities. As a Special Service Agency District, the new district is a “dependent agency” under Uintah County. The County Attorney prepared the proposed districts’ by-laws and formation documents as required under 17D for submitted to the Utah Lt. Governor’s Office for review and approval. Although Uintah County is the oversight or parent organization for the District, the decision was made to contract all personnel and HR functions to Vernal City which is done through an Inter-Local Agreement between Vernal City and the District. Cost to the District is approximately \$30,000 annually for managing these functions on behalf of the District. This represents a considerable cost savings over hiring a full-time employee to manage these functions.

Each of the paid and part-time District personnel are technically Vernal City employees but are then contracted out to the District. This was done so that the employees could maintain State retirements.

One of the most significant challenges faced by each of the departments prior to creation of the fire district was the recruitment, training, and retention of volunteers. After the district was created, the departments took steps to address this challenge. The district leadership believed that if residents were provided incentives to become members of the department it would improve their recruitment and retention efforts. District leadership explored several different incentive options which included paid retirement, health and life insurance to attract and retain personnel. After conducting a department-wide survey and meeting with personnel, the decision was made to offer monetary compensation to all personnel.

Based on this, the Department created a financial incentive program where people who join as a volunteer firefighter receive \$20.00/hour if they do not have the required firefighting certifications for any response activities and those volunteer firefighters who do possess the required certifications earn \$25.00/hour. New volunteer firefighters have two years to obtain Firefighter-I certification. Personnel also receive a maximum monthly stipend of \$200 for attending required training programs up to a maximum of 8-hours per month. As a result of this incentive program the Department now has a **roster of 105 personnel**.

SECTION X: CONCLUSION



Conclusions and Recommendations

Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) has analyzed all aspects of the issue regarding options for creation of a fire district in Tooele County as outlined in the statement of work. Our conclusions and recommendations are as follows:

1. PCG has concluded that after interviews with key stakeholders from the North Tooele Fire District and from Tooele County that merging the North Tooele Fire District is not a viable option as the policy makers and district fire chief have indicated no interest in such action now or in the future. However, consultants firmly believe that the best option for all resident of Tooele County is for all of the current fire departments/districts to consolidate into a single fire district. This would greatly enhance service delivery throughout the county, improve economy of scale with respect to facilities, apparatus, equipment and personnel. Consultants recognize that this is a political decision and falls outside the scope of work for this project but does, none the less, warrant mentioning.
2. PCG has concluded that creating individual fire districts using either 17B or 17D is neither fiscally, administratively nor operationally practical. Consultants acknowledge that each fire department analyzed during this study may desire such an action however, creating five separate fire districts will leave each of these departments facing the exact same challenges they currently face. Although each of the departments have response areas that far away exceed the geo-political size of their respective cities, these areas by themselves do not have enough taxable properties to support the multiple district option. For this reason, it would take these smaller sized districts 5 – 10 years to build up enough capital reserves necessary to construct adequate facilities and acquire apparatus that meet NFPA standards. These smaller districts will also find themselves in the current situation of limited recruitment pools for qualified candidates to serve as volunteer firefighters. Each of the departments are currently struggling to maintain enough personnel to respond safely, efficiently and effectively to fires. This is not meant as a criticism of the current firefighters whom we applaud for their efforts. This report clearly shows however, that each department is understaffed and underfunded.
3. PCG has concluded that the strongest and best course of action for Tooele County to pursue is formation of a single fire district that includes and/or encompasses unincorporated Tooele County and the communities of Rush Valley; Stockton; Terra; Vernon and Wendover. The consultants believe that there are stronger arguments for a combined district option from all aspects; fiscal, administration, operations and, most importantly, community support.

PCG makes the following recommendations to Tooele County Commission and Fire Chief/Fire Warden:

1. Tooele County has two options with regards to initiating formation of a stand-a-lone fire district. As we have articulated in this report there are inherent strengths and challenges to either option. Under 17B the county can initiate creation of a Special or Independent District. The County will establish the district by-laws, determine composition of the governing board of directors to include appointed or elected or a combination. The county also has the authority to determine the organizational structure and make-up of staffing whether career, volunteer or combination. Once the district formation processes are completed which includes approval by the Lt. Governor's office and ballot measure approval by the residents/voters of the proposed district this new fire district becomes its own political entity and independent of Tooele County influence.

Should the County elect to form the district under articles of 17D, many of the formation processes are identical to those under 17B with the most significant difference being that the newly formed district remains "dependent" to Tooele County in that if, at some point in the future, the County believes changes and/or modifications to the district are required, they retain the overall authority to make such changes, up to and including dissolving the district. A critical aspect to forming a "dependent district" however, is that, should Tooele County Commission elect to serve a dual-role

as county commission and board of directors for the fire district, all business conducted for these two entities must be totally separated as defined by Utah's open meeting law and as ruled by the Utah Supreme Court. With either option, Tooele County Commission has a tremendous support organization through the Utah Association of Special Districts.

2. PCG through its analysis and stakeholder interviews believes that the greatest opportunity for achieving success in establishing a Tooele County Unified Fire District is through full community support. Each of the fire departments under consideration for inclusion in formation of this fire district are currently connected to incorporated city or towns and under control of elected bodies for these communities. As such, it is imperative that all parties in this endeavor proceed with great openness and transparency between all key stakeholders which include councils, citizens, and current members of each of the five fire departments.
3. PCG through its analysis of current fire department operations recommends that Tooele County establish fiscal, administrative and operational priorities which include but are not limited to the following actions: (These recommendations are based on issues identified and solutions implemented by Uintah Fire District)
 - a. Assessment of district fire stations, their status and condition to determine needs for repair and/or replacement. Assess location as it relates to response time/travel distance within each first-due response district.
 - b. Of major concern for PCG is the existing fleet of fire apparatus. Many of these units, built out of necessity, are simply unsafe due to age and the fact that they are being used in emergency response environments which was not their initial purpose or intended use. Fire apparatus must meet strict safety guidelines for both on and off-road use. Current NFPA standards are written by industry subject matter experts to ensure maximum safety of both apparatus and personnel for use during emergency response operations. PCG recommends that each fire district station be outfitted with a standardized complement of apparatus that should include functionality for primary missions and include the following:
 - i. One Type-1 Structure Engine; 1,000GPM pump @150psi, w/auxiliary pump and equipment compliment to NFPA/ISO standards.
 - ii. One Type-1 Water Tender; 4,000Gal Tank Capacity, 300GPM Pump @50psi, 30-min max refill time NWCG equip/crew compliment
 - iii. One Type-3 Wildland Engine; 150GPM pump @ 250psi, w/auxiliary pump & roll capability, 500Gal min tank capacity, NWCG equip/crew capacity
 - iv. One Type-6 Wildland Engine; 50GPM pump w/pump & roll capability, 150Gal min tank capacity, NWCG equip/crew capacity
 - v. One 1-ton capacity, crew cab pick-up, 4x4 w/diesel engine, emergency response & radio equipped.
 - c. Volunteer firefighter recruitment, retention and training programs are essential for the continuation of providing emergency response throughout Tooele County. Each of the current departments are struggling to maintain a minimum roster of personnel yet Tooele County demographics displayed on page 8, reflects that over 52% of the population of Tooele County are of sufficient age to serve as volunteer firefighters. This was the same challenge Uintah Fire District faced in 2006 prior to formation of that district. Uintah overcame those challenges by providing a monetary incentive program which provided them with sufficient numbers of personnel to staff all five fire departments with a total of 6 fire stations and 105 total personnel at a cost of \$584,000 or less than 30% of the departments total operating budget.

Challenges

PCG recognizes the current roadblocks and barriers to success to any potential changes to the County's fire department delivery system as listed below.

- The Tooele County Fire Department is currently under the Sheriff's office and is comprised of one part-time employee who oversees the volunteer fire departments and has numerous administrative duties. The amount of time that he will be able to commit to the recommended process will be limited.



- Loss of local control over the fire department. This is a very common concern expressed by elected officials when confronted with transitioning a fire department from a local municipality to a fire district. Cities elected officials often fail to fully understand the relationship between a contract city and a fire district. In most cases, cities/towns retain ownership of facilities and apparatus and most always have representation on the policy making body.
- Even though all five fire departments provide extensive mutual aid response to each other to the point where they appear to operate as a unified fire department, each department is overseen by their respective city or town council. Each of these entities have expressed interest in being included in the study and appear to support the possibility of forming a fire district, yet there is a long and documented history of resistance to change.
- Resistance for the county-wide model. The majority of tax base in Tooele County exists in Tooele City, Grantsville and portions of the County located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the North Tooele County Fire District. Because of this fact, these departments do not feel compelled to open the potential of fiscal resources being negatively impacted by aligning with the departments from the western and south eastern portions of the county as this will reallocate or perhaps even dilute already limited fiscal resources. The projected revenue for the areas/communities participating in this study reflected in Figure X.1 on page 40 of this report reveals amounts that are, by themselves, insufficient to fund either stand-a-lone community-based fire districts or even a consolidated fire district. Community leaders at both the county and local community levels will needs to fully examine alternate funding sources to achieve the required funding levels to support district formation efforts.
- The unincorporated lands outside of the North Tooele Fire District are vast landscapes with limited taxable properties. This poses challenges from both a fiscal policy and resource distribution perspective. The same can also be said for the total volume of land mass of the County taken up by the federal/military reservations that results in exclusion from taxable properties.

Fire District Funding Option

PCG consultants in cooperation with the Tooele County Assessor's Office and the Utah State Tax Commission have identified the number of properties in each of the communities proposed for inclusion of the new fire district. Figure X.1 below reflects the total number of taxable properties in each of the communities/areas that have the potential to participate in the fire district formation, the total taxable assessed values in each area, the total number of taxable properties in each area, tax rates for both 17B and 17D as well as the state-wide average for fire districts and the estimated revenue potential.

Area	Properties	Taxable Values	Max Tax Rate 17B .0014*	Max Tax Rate 17D .0008*	Average Tax Rate .000589*
Unincorporated	2,103	\$120,101,514	\$168,142.12	\$96,081.22	\$70,740.00
Rush Valley	414	\$24,421,952	\$34,190.74	\$19,537.57	\$14,358.00
Stockton	372	\$30,789,064	\$43,104.69	\$24,631.26	\$18,135.00
Vernon	227	\$10,175,837	\$14,246.18	\$8,140.67	\$5,995.00
Wendover	372	\$43,898,244	\$61,457.55	\$35,118.60	\$25,855.00
TOTALS:	3,488	\$229,386,611	\$321,141.28	\$183,509.32	\$135,083.00

*Taxable value figures provided by State Tax Commission to Public Consulting Group

Figure X.1 Taxable Properties, Assessed Values and Estimated Revenues for Fire District Formation

PCG consultants were initially provided tax tables from the Utah State Tax Commission but that information reflected the property tax rates and values and were not the tax rates for independent or special service districts within the zones encompassing Tooele County. This error was caught by Tooele County Fire representatives and brought to the attention of PCG consultants. PCG reached back out to the Utah State Tax Commission and verified that the values and rates received from Tooele County Fire were, in fact, the correct rates and values needed for formation of fire districts in Utah. The Utah State Tax Commission verified that these are the correct rates.

Given this updated information, whether the included communities continued to move forward with district formation there will be a need to secure additional funding sources as the levels in figure X.1 are insufficient to support either an independent or special service district. Even if each separate community opted to form an independent district, funding is well below levels that could sustain operations and administration of a fire district.

APPENDIX I: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- Risk Assessment Portal (Wildland Fire History Map)
- Rush Valley Fire Department Yearly Budget (2015- 2020)
- Stockton/Ophir City Fire Department Yearly Budget (2015- 2020)
- Terra Chief Agreement
- Terra Fire Department Yearly Budget (2015- 2020)
- Tooele County Fire Billing Systems
- Tooele County Fire Department Apparatus Inventory
- Tooele County Fire Department Response Zones
- Tooele County Land Ownership Map
- Tooele County Sheriff's Office - Tooele County Computer Aided Dispatch 2015-2020
- Tooele County's Wardens Agreement Tooele
- Vernon City Fire Department Yearly Budget (2015- 2020)
- Wendover City Fire Department Yearly Budget (2015- 2020)

APPENDIX II: UTAH ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL DISTRICTS

- [Best Practices Checklist](#)
- [Board Members - MID-TERM VACANCIES](#)
- [Bylaws Templates for Districts - Members Area](#)
- [Community Links](#)
- [Compensation of District Board Members](#)
- [Elections Law](#)
- [Electronic Board Meeting Procedures Template - Members Area](#)
- [Ethics Act](#)
- [GRAMA Forms](#)
- [Imposing or Increasing a Fee](#)
- [Legislative Auditor General Resources](#)
- [Legislative Websites](#)
- [Little Manual](#)
- [Local Districts - Statutes](#)
- [Members Area Resources](#)
- [Oath of Office for district Trustee/Board Member](#)
- [Open and Public Meetings Act](#)
- [Other Statutes for LDs and SSDs](#)
- [Per-Diem Rates, State of Utah](#)
- [Personnel Manual Templates - Members Area](#)
- [Personal Use of Public Property](#)
- [Procurement Procedures Template - Members Area](#)
- [Public and Legal Notice Websites](#)
- [Purchasing - State Cooperative Contracts](#)
- [Records Officers Training and Certification](#)
- [Records Retention Schedules - Utah State Archives](#)
- [Records Storage](#)
- [Special Service Districts - Statutes](#)
- [Surplus Equipment Guidelines](#)
- [Transparency Website](#)
- [Utah Certified Tax Rates website](#)
- [Utah State Agencies](#)
- [Utah State Archives](#)
- [Utah State Auditors Office](#)

APPENDIX III: UTAH STATUTES FOR FIRE DISTRICTS

Utah Code: Title 17b, Limited Purpose Government Entities – Local Districts, Chapter 1 Provisions Applicable to All Local Districts

- [Part 1](#) General Provisions
- [Part 2](#) Creation of a Local District
- [Part 3](#) Board of Trustees
- [Part 4](#) Annexation
- [Part 5](#) Withdrawal
- [Part 6](#) Fiscal Procedures for Local Districts
- [Part 7](#) Local District Budgets and Audit Reports
- [Part 8](#) Local District Personnel Management
- [Part 9](#) Collection of Service Fees and Charges
- [Part 10](#) Local District Property Tax Levy
- [Part 11](#) Local District Bonds
- [Part 12](#) Local District Validation Proceedings
- [Part 13](#) Dissolution of a Local District
- [Part 14](#) Basic Local District

Utah Code: Title 17d, Limited Purpose Local Government Entities – Other Entities, Chapter 1 Special Service District Act

- [Part 1](#) [General Provisions](#)
- [Part 2](#) [Creating a Special Service District](#)
- [Part 3](#) [Administrative Control Board](#)
- [Part 4](#) [Annexing a New Area and Adding a New Service](#)
- [Part 5](#) [Special Service District Bonds](#)
- [Part 6](#) [Withdrawal, Dissolution, Discontinuing Services, and Reorganization](#)

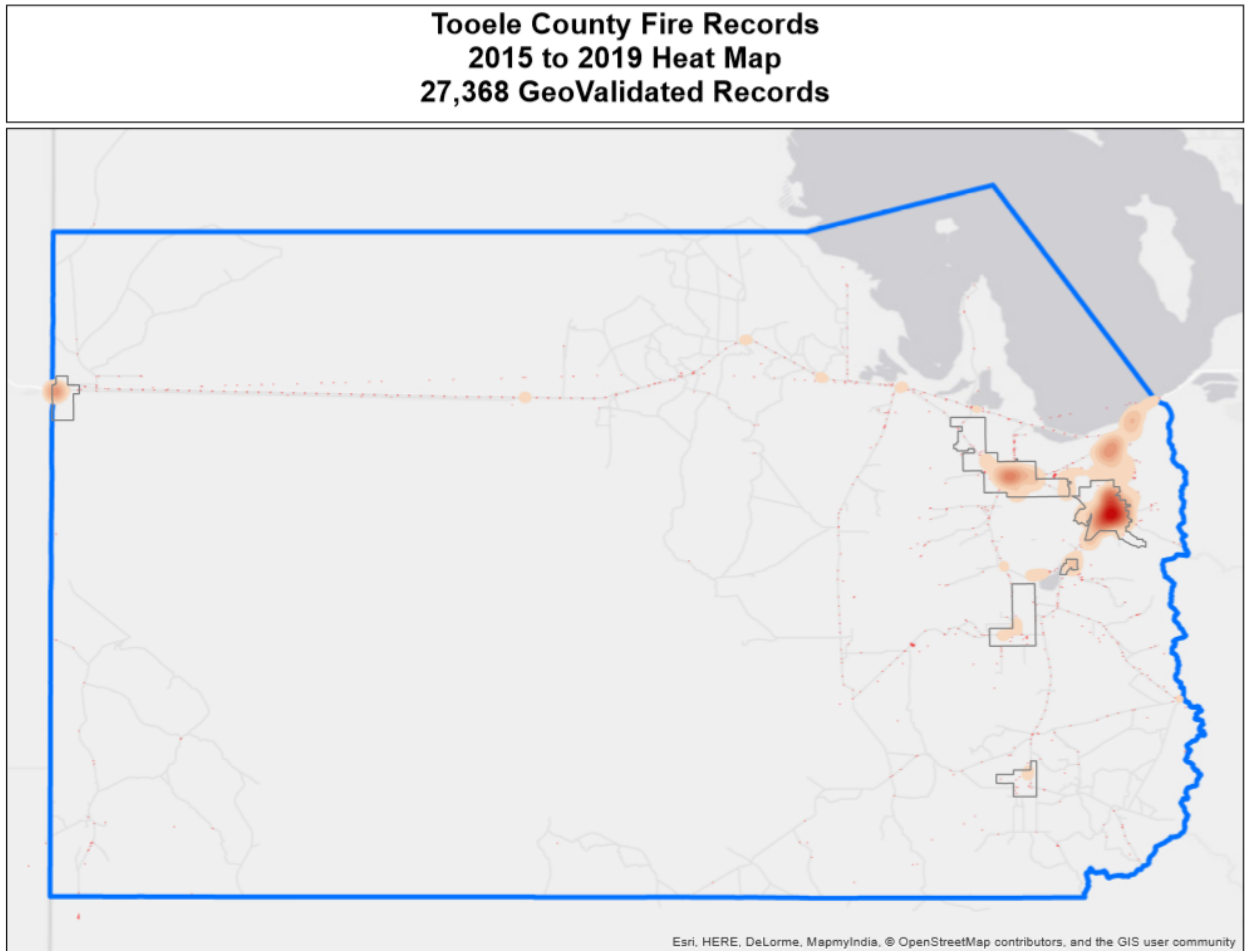
APPENDIX IV: PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

The below concerns were in response to the Tooele County Fire District Public Comment Survey prompt: **“Public input into this process is very important. Please add any additional comments you may have regarding this initiative.”**

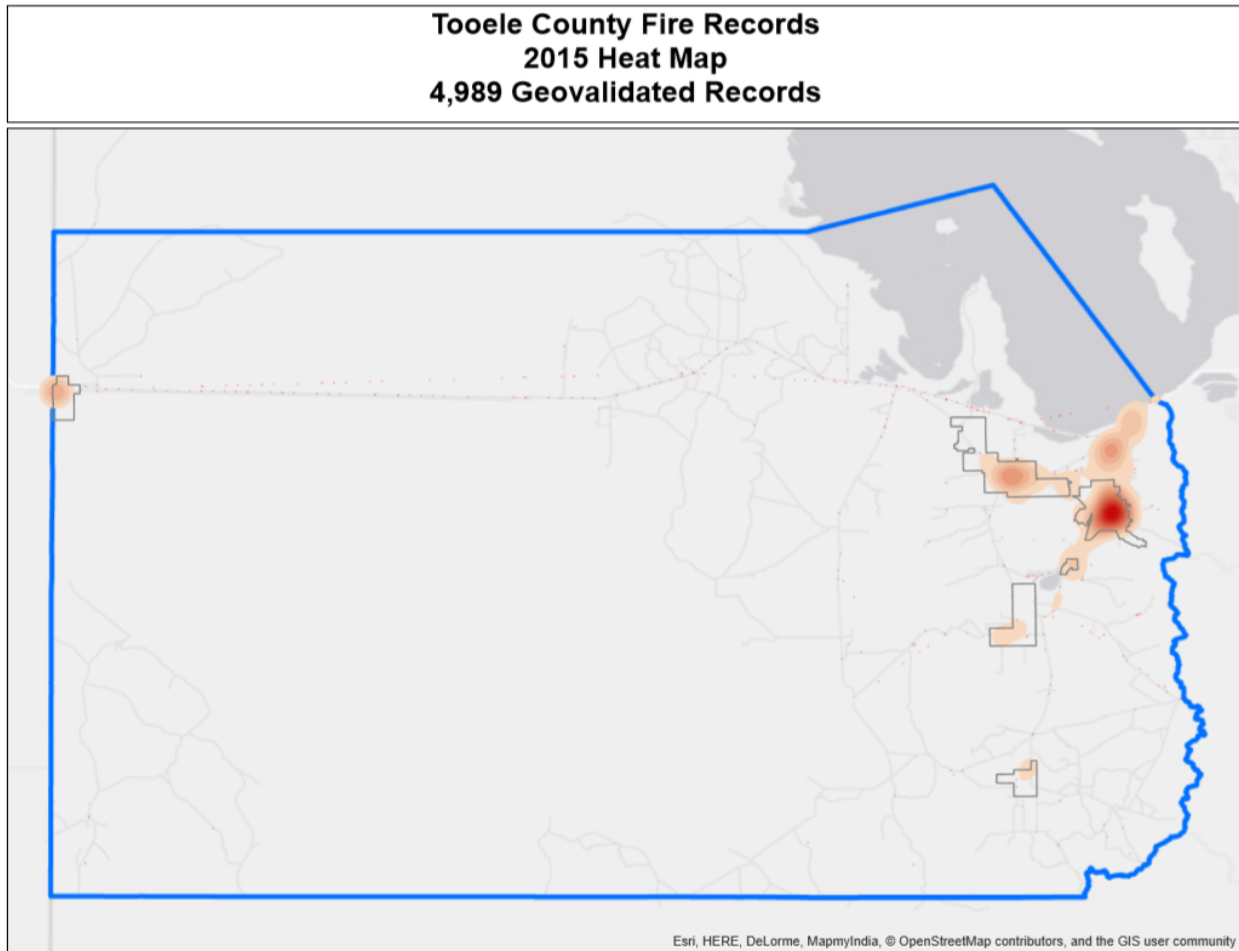
- \$200 a year up front is a bit hard to swallow.
- I strongly feel we need this district. I work for a local district. I know how important they are. Please create the district. But I would ask you to trim the budget back a bit please. Start a bit smaller than what you are proposing and then do a series of small tax increases every 4-5 years.
- I think that fire safety is very important, and I think that we need better fire security
- I live on Big Hollow Rd and am concerned about all the cedar in this area. I've been working with Dan Walton for advice and support and have had amazing service & support even if it's a text at night or on weekends for advice.
- This service seems to be overlooked or just not recognized by most people. You only care when you the help of the firemen
- The article indicated that most fires in Tooele County occur outside the city limits. I find this hard to believe due to the number of structural fires reported in the papers. Most land fires in Tooele County were on BLM land rather than privately-owned land. I know that BLM has support agreements with most fire departments, including volunteers, to assist with BLM fires. I know this because I retired from Dugway Proving Ground and was involved in processing the support agreements between Dugway and BLM. So why are you asking me to pay more property tax for fire protection that is currently provided by volunteers? Will this new district install fire hydrants to ensure access to water when there is a structure fire? Exactly what will this tax increase provide? Or will it simply go to management costs with tax increases yearly? I did not see answers to these questions in the article.
- 15-17 dollars today 200-500 next year. That is what I see happening. Maybe a 1000 the next year.
- I do not support the formation of a south fire district. I do not want to pay for the coverage for a higher density residential area. I also don't like that taxes can be raised without the approval of residents.
- Having the areas around Wendover included in this Fire District is unreasonable. Wendover is over 100 miles away and any response time from the Rush Valley area would be catastrophic!! North Tooele Fire district being closer to the Freeway I-80 would be a more logical choice for Wendover than any of the Fire Depts. in the Rush Valley area
- our property taxes are the same as living in city of Tooele, however, we do not have the same level of services in a rural environment
- I only have property, no house my taxes are already so incredibly high that it is difficult to increase them any more with my budget. I think the fire department does a great job and I truly want to support them but cannot have an increase in taxes at this time.
- Fire protection is important. But a tax increase is a tough pill to swallow. Older people on fixed incomes and young families just barely getting by simply do not have the money. I am for the new district and have the ability to pay for it. But I will never vote for more taxes for the reasons stated above. And I am not confident Tooele County can manage these new funds in a conservative and fiscally sound manner, I.E. Deseret Peak Complex! Raising taxes over \$200 per year per household will raise tens of thousands of dollars. Until I see a detailed plan for the use of that money, I can't support it. Thanks
- Again, increasing older folks with a \$17 per month increase in taxes isn't feasible for most! My parents and others CAN'T do it.

APPENDIX V: GIS MAPS

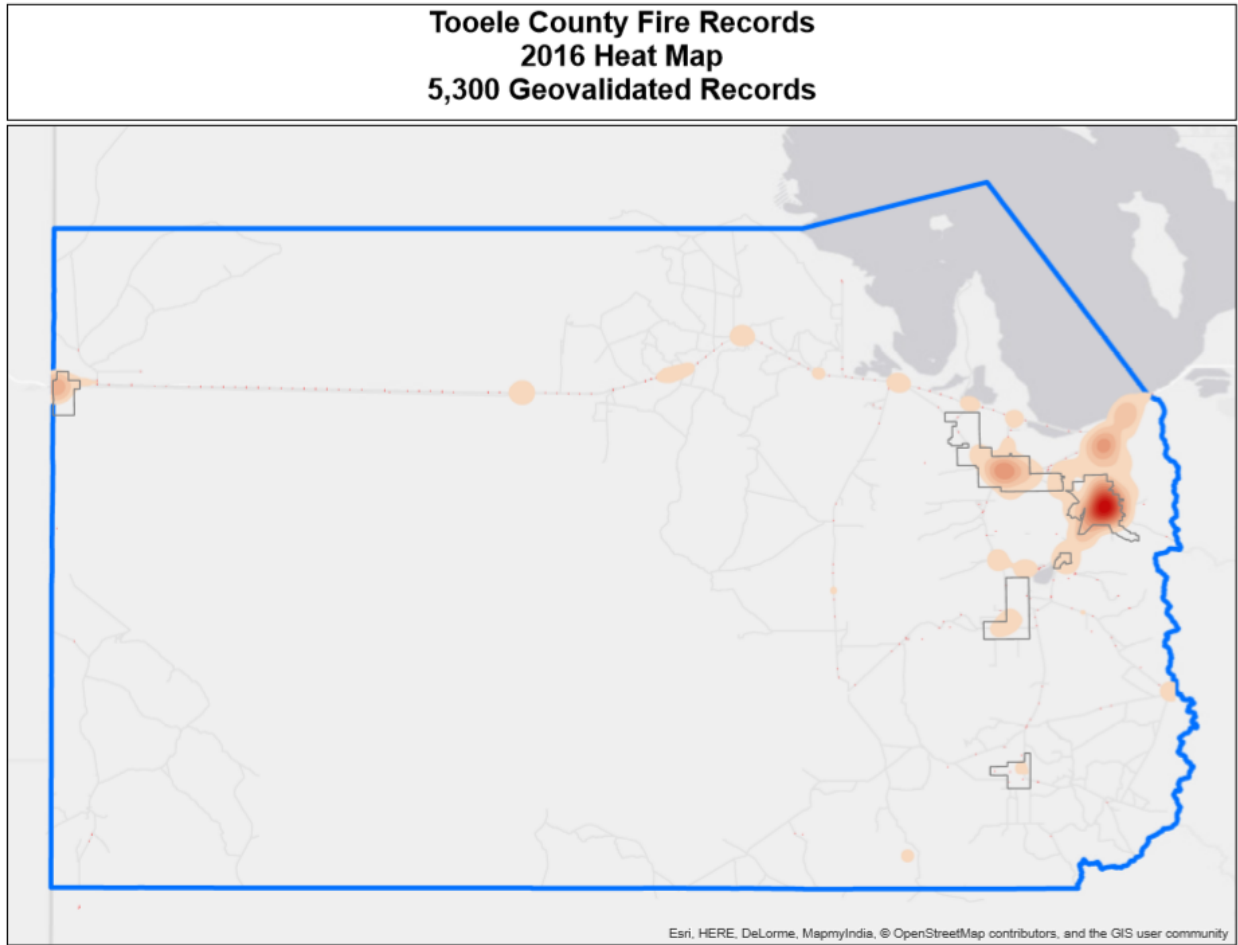
The following GIS maps were created by Tooele County Sheriff's Department 911 Dispatch Center from 2015 to 2019. The following maps are heat maps showing where the concentration of fire calls are located geographically.



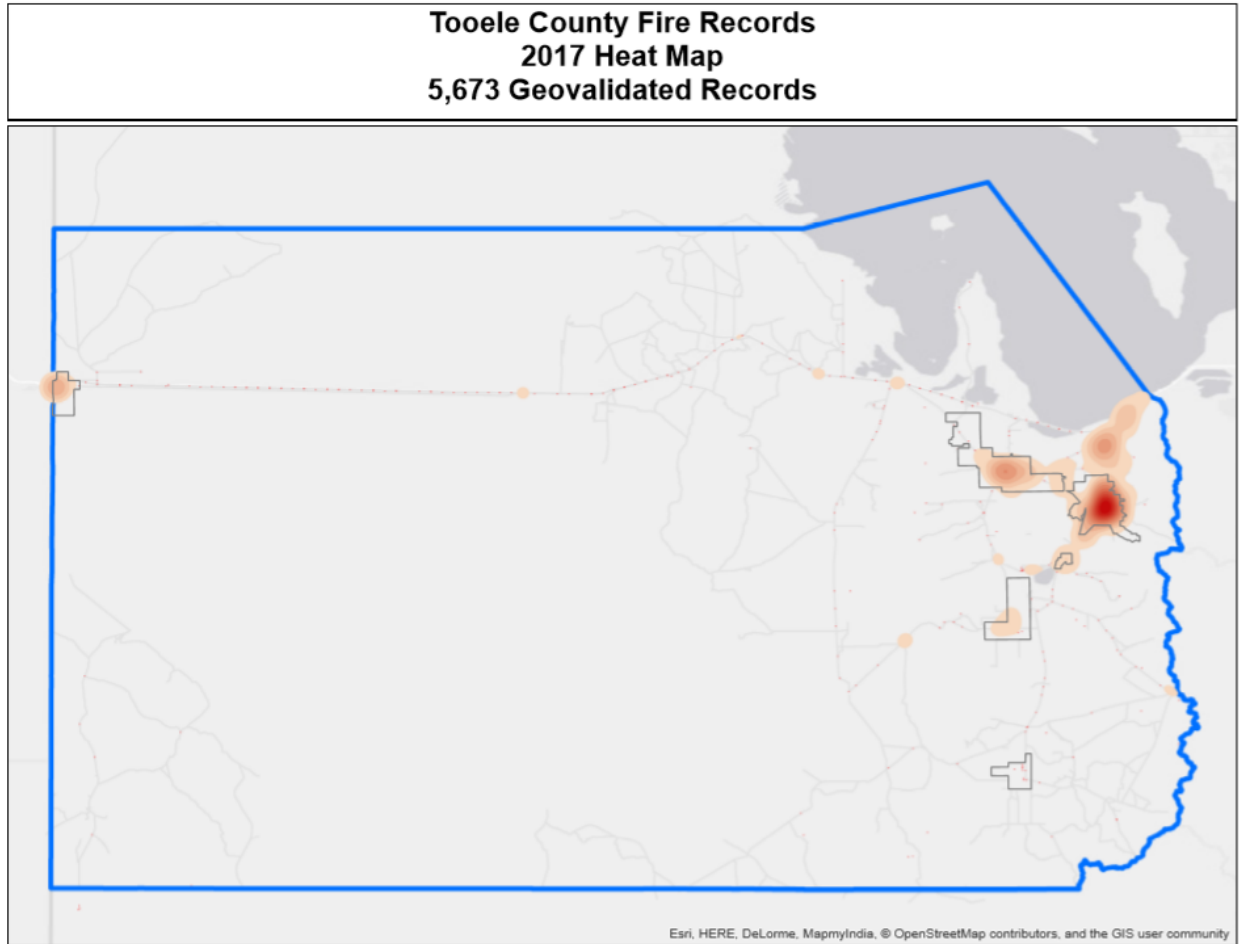
Map 1: Tooele County Fire Records 2015 to 2019 Heat Map.



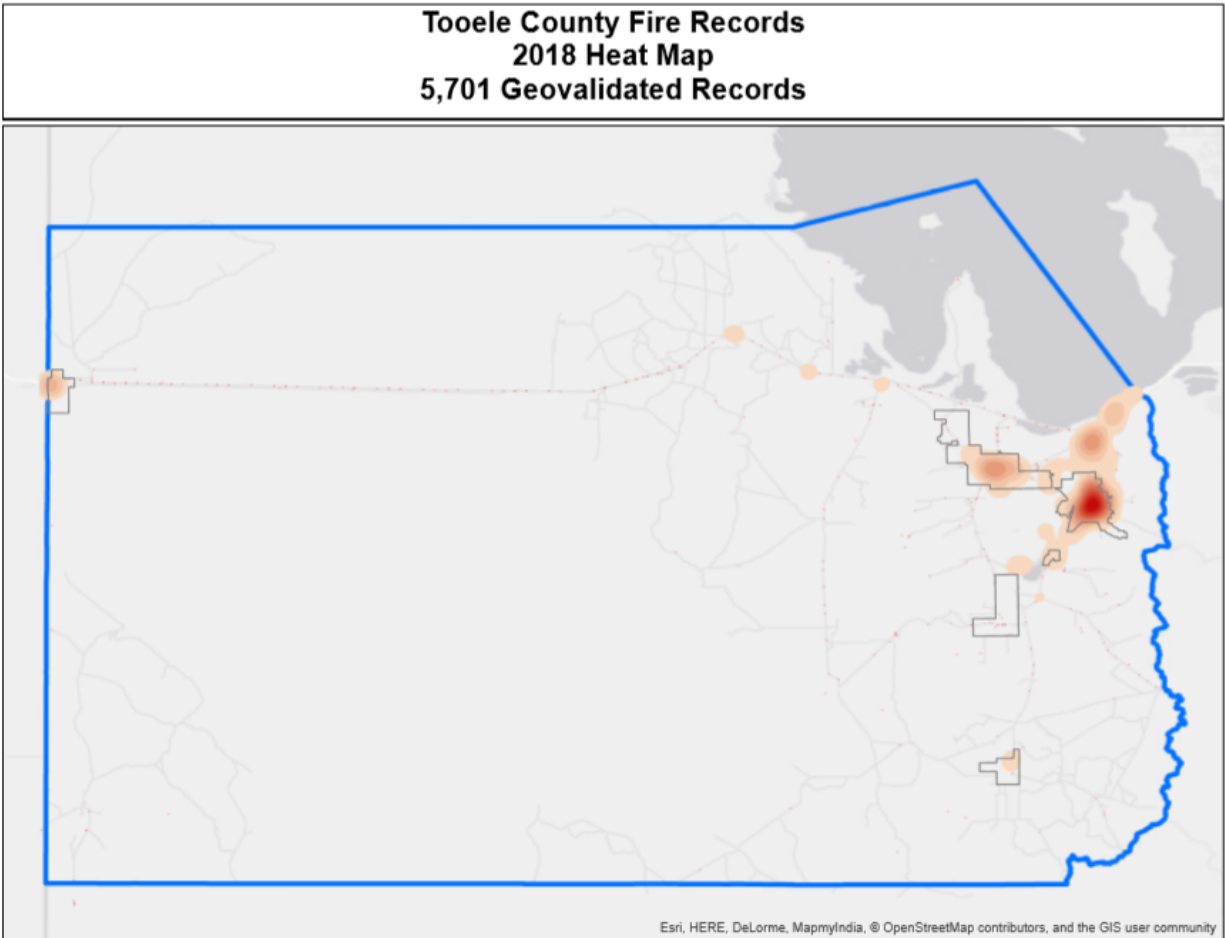
Map 2: Tooele County Fire Records 2015 Heat Map.



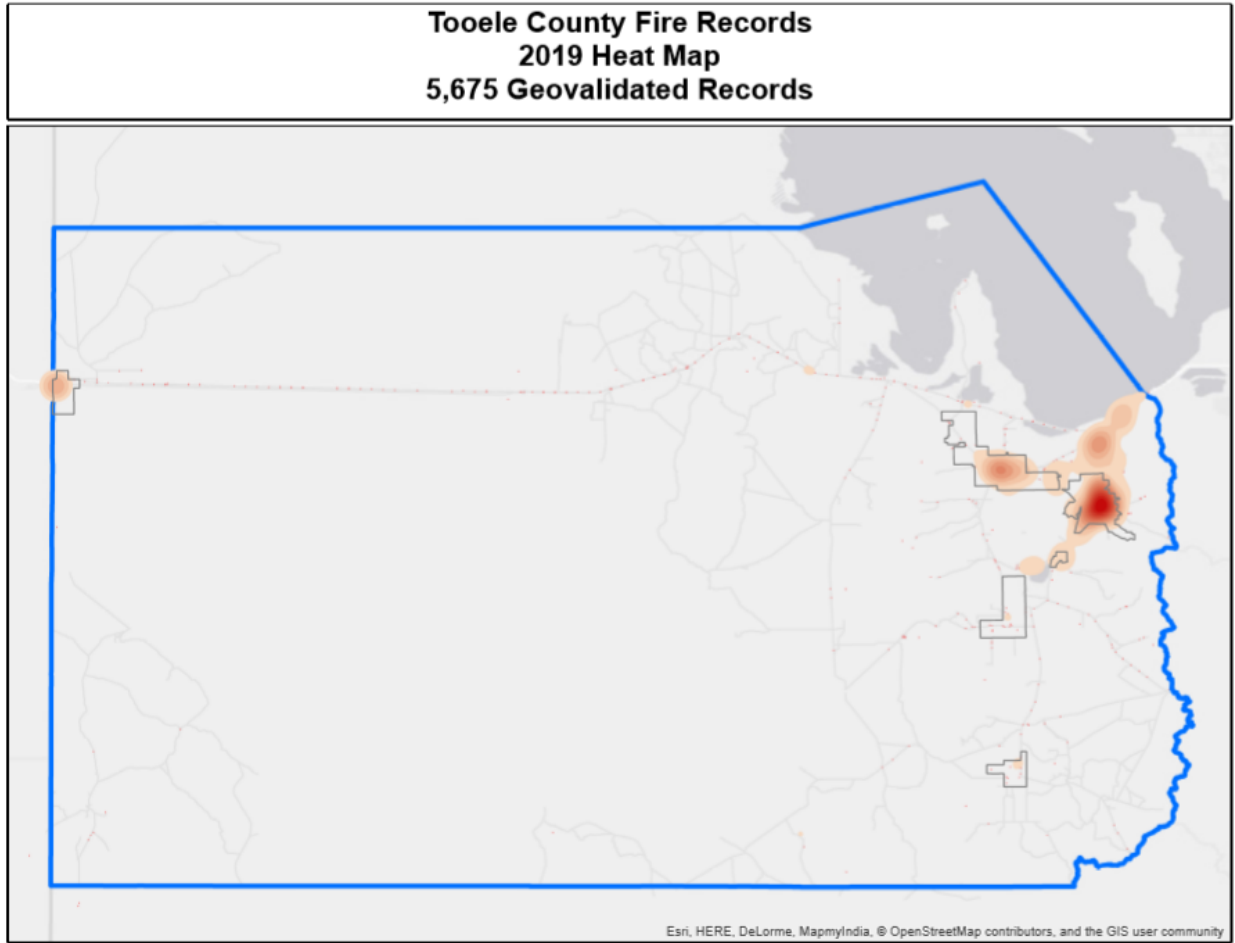
Map 3: Tooele County Fire Records 2016 Heat Map.



Map 4: Tooele County Fire Records 2017 Heat Map.



Map 5: Tooele County Fire Records 2018 Heat Map.



Map 6: Tooele County Fire Records 2019 Heat Map.