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# CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN

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**NORTH WHATCOM  
FIRE AND RESCUE**

## Service Standards

### **Emergency Response – Tiered by Call Type**

Not all emergency calls are as critical as a working structure fire or an unconscious victim in cardiac arrest. Dispatchers, using caller information, dispatch units (fire apparatus) based on the type of emergency described. Based upon the critical nature of an emergency, tiered response performance levels can be adopted. For instance, a *Priority One* emergency would be the most critical fire or medical call requiring a short response time performance, while a *Priority Five* emergency is less critical (the threat to life or property is deemed less) and would allow for a longer performance time objective. The probability of an occurrence is greater in areas of higher population densities, more community risk properties, and areas of historical and projected high service demand. Therefore, a tiered response performance standard is based upon geographic composition.

### **Emergency Response – Tiered by Geographic Composition**

While service demand is projected to remain high in areas of dense population, those areas with anticipated population and infrastructure growth will have associated increases in service demand. Lighter call volumes will continue in areas of sparse population and minimum development. The District has three distinct types of communities consisting of a densely populated area, a growing suburban area, and a rural (more agricultural) expanse.

The differing communities and areas present diverse risks of fire incident impact as well as varying levels of service demand. Each area has unique fire protection and emergency service requirements. These areas have been identified as “service delivery planning zones” and are considered tiered response levels.

NWFR’s adopted Response Time Objectives for all Priority 1 incidents (fire and life threatening medical) is:<sup>9</sup>

- (Tier 1) Urban – Eight minutes 90% of the time for arrival of the first due fire engine company
- (Tier 2) Suburban – Ten minutes 90% of the time for arrival of the first due fire engine company
- (Tier 3) Rural – Twelve (12) minutes 90% of the time for arrival of the first due fire engine company

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<sup>9</sup> Note: See Appendix A: NWFR Adopted Standards of Cover.

- (Tier 4) Remote – Fourteen (14) minutes 90% of the time for arrival of the first due fire engine company

The reaction time objective is ninety (90) seconds, 90% of the time for all Priority 1 emergency incidents.<sup>10</sup>

### **Tiered Areas**

The City of Blaine, its UGA, and the Birch Bay UGA are identified as urban areas of the District. The future land uses in these UGA's are slated for higher residential, core commercial, multi-family housing, and resort operations density, which differs from non-UGA areas. Outside of UGA's, land use designated for commercial and higher density residential (RR2, RR3, STY) are categorized as urban areas. In the District, islands of these designations exist on the Guide Meridian and in Custer. Areas within the Lynden UGA and outside of Lynden are expected to be annexed into the City of Lynden, will therefore be outside of the District's response area and service will be transferred to the Lynden Fire Department. The areas identified above are slated for a Tier I (maximum risk), response time goal objective. Areas zoned for lower residential density (R2A, R5A), are designated as Tier II (high risk) with a longer response time goal objective. The remainder of the District is considered Tier III (moderate risk) and the associated response time goal objective is longer than the previous tiers. There are no areas within the District that are in excess of eight miles from a fire station to qualify as Tier IV (remote) and an extended response time goal objective as detailed in the District's Response Time Objectives.

A complete list of the District's response time objectives are listed under Appendix A: NWFR Adopted Standards of Cover.

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<sup>10</sup> Reaction Time is the time interval between receipt of the alarm by fire personnel and the time emergency apparatus are enroute to the incident.

The following map (Figure 5) details the three tiered service areas in the District. Areas in white are outside the UGAs and are Tier III.

Figure 5: Service Delivery Zones

