

# 2020 MUSKINGUM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Compiled by: Muskingum County Planning Commission

## Fire & EMS Report

# Fire-EMS Task Force Report

The Fire and EMS coverage has changed drastically in Muskingum County during the past twenty (20) years. Even more so since the Comprehensive Plan was developed.

Fourteen of the fifteen Fire Departments now provide EMS Care and Transport with the remaining departments providing some first responder care. The County also has two (2) private ambulance companies that provide emergency and non-emergency care and transport.

The City of Zanesville staffs three (3) stations twenty-four hours per day while ten (10) of the County Departments have either around the clock staff or daytime staff that is supplemented by volunteers. That leaves four (4) departments depending solely on Volunteers to respond the emergencies within their jurisdictional boundaries. Eight (8) of the county departments also provide coverage in other counties that border Muskingum County.

The State of Ohio continues to increase the number of hours to obtain and maintain certifications to provide Fire & EMS and that is creating a shortage of Fire and EMS personnel. Filling training classes is becoming more difficult along with the cost of classes that can be as much as \$9,000.00 per person. The labor pool continues to shrink as part-time & volunteer personnel leave to take full time positions with better pay and benefits and to raise their families. Countywide training on a regular basis would be beneficial and would promote working together.

The costs of equipment, gear and apparatus continues to sky-rocket! Buildings need upgraded or replaced to operate as full time station versus volunteer stations.

There should be consideration made to forming Fire Districts or a County Wide Fire Department along with making group purchases. The costs to purchase and maintain fire and EMS equipment are astronomical and bulk purchases could greatly reduce the operating costs. Having Fire Districts or One (1) department could help eliminate departments passing other departments to respond to calls that involve safety or loss of property. Instead the closest units could be sent! Most if not all of the departments have received some type of grant funding that has helped offset operating costs in the past.

The County has an active Fire Association but the Committee feels that the Fire Chiefs Association should be more proactive by meeting on a regular basis rather than an as needed basis. Decisions reached by the Fire Association are not binding on the departments unless the Fire Chiefs agree.

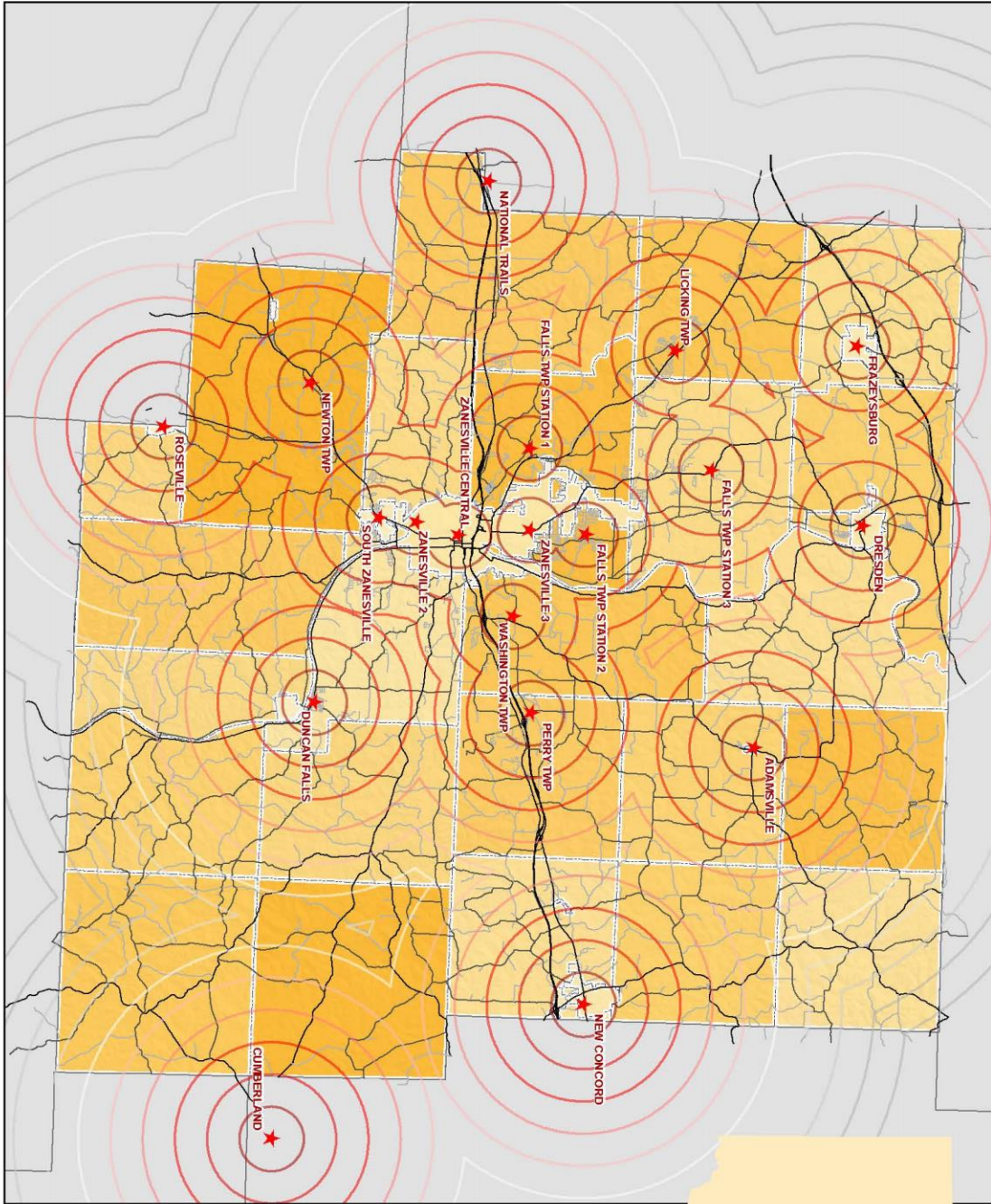
There needs to be improvements made to dispatching within the County. There are currently two (2) centers for dispatching fire and law enforcement and four (4) for dispatching EMS. A single combined dispatch center would allow for increased safety and reduce the time from call made till help arrives. Combining dispatch centers allows for additional radio frequencies to be monitored when mass casualty events or multiple events are occurring at the same time.

The County has a well-organized Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security that is supported by the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) that is represented by various departments, agencies, companies, and community members. Numerous Federal and State Grants have been received through the EMA to support local Fire, EMS and Law Enforcement along with Specialty Teams (Hazmat, Trench Rescue, Collapse Rescue, Rope Rescue, Water Rescue and Urban Search & Rescue). There needs to be additional funding to support these teams by providing training and up to date equipment.

The EMA/LEPC provides funding for Training Classes that support the Specialty Teams. Classes can be taught through Mid-East Career & Technology Center, Ohio Fire Academy, Newton Township Fire Training Center, or any of the many Universities that are approved to teach those Specialty Classes. It would be encouraged that one of the local Universities establish a full time Paramedic/Fire Fighter class to help fill the voids in the current workforce.

To achieve the goals that the Committee feels need to be met it will take the support of the community and its leadership. That means City, County and Township elected officials working hand in hand with each other and State and Federal Officials to make rules and law changes that make achieving and keeping certifications easier to obtain and to maintain. They also need to collectively work to solve the financial issues that plague Fire-EMS and Law Enforcement.

If we want people and industry to want to live and work in our community we must make it a safer place to live and work.



# MUSKINGUM COUNTY, OHIO

FIRE DEPARTMENTS WITH MILE RADIUS

Muskingum County  
Planning Commission

