



Government & Education | Economics & Public Finance | Health & Human Services | Nonprofits & Communities

Marbletown Fire and EMS Operations

An Evaluation of Existing Conditions and Opportunities
for the Future

Presentation Outline

- Overview of the project
- Current state of MFAU (As of May, 2021)
- Action steps for EMS
- Current state of Fire Districts
- Options for Fire Service
- Next steps






Project Overview

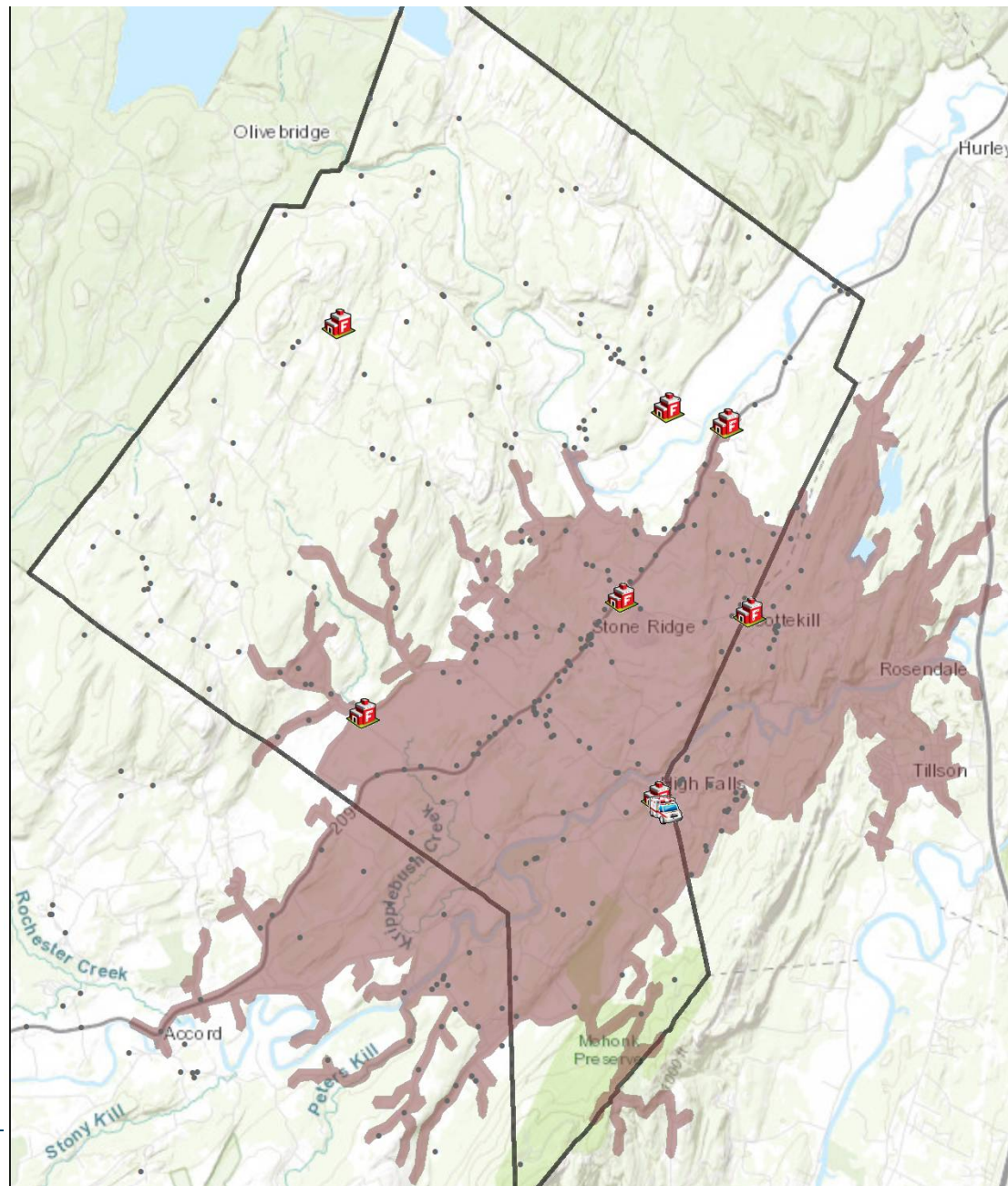
- Project launched January 2021
- Initial data request during February
- Site visit and interviews in March and April
- Interim report related to MFAU completed in May
- Focus on Fire Districts in June and July
- Options presented to Fire Districts in August
- Draft of final report shared in September
- Final report completed October 4th

Current State of MFAU

- Currently, handling BLS responses and transports effectively
- Long-term trend is 1.5 calls per day
- Recent very high coverage rates
- Residents and leaders are happy
- Use a mix of 25% volunteers, 75% paid to meet the demand
- Operating budget for 2020 was about \$350k and had \$313k in revenue.
- Budget for 2021 is likely to go up, but revenue is not likely going to keep pace

Legend

-  Ambulance
-  Fire Departments
-  2020 MAFU
-  10 Minute Travel
-  Marbletown



Options Going Forward

- Town has chosen to develop an ambulance district and contract for service
- Long-Term Concerns
 - Supply of staff for MFAU
 - Location of ambulance station
 - Provision of advanced life support in the community
 - Succession planning for leadership at MFAU

Current State of Marbletown Fire Service

- Full of dedicated volunteers
- Volunteers have restricted availability, but are, as a town, able to currently meet manpower needs
- Daytime availability is a particular challenge
- Number of volunteers a concern in some districts
- Living out of their district is common
- Age of volunteers is reported higher than population
 - Stone Ridge reports to be an exception
- Recruitment of volunteers is minimal for most
- Districts have appropriate numbers and types of equipment, but some are nearing end of service life
- ISO Ratings for most departments lead to higher insurance premiums

Current State of Marbletown Fire Service

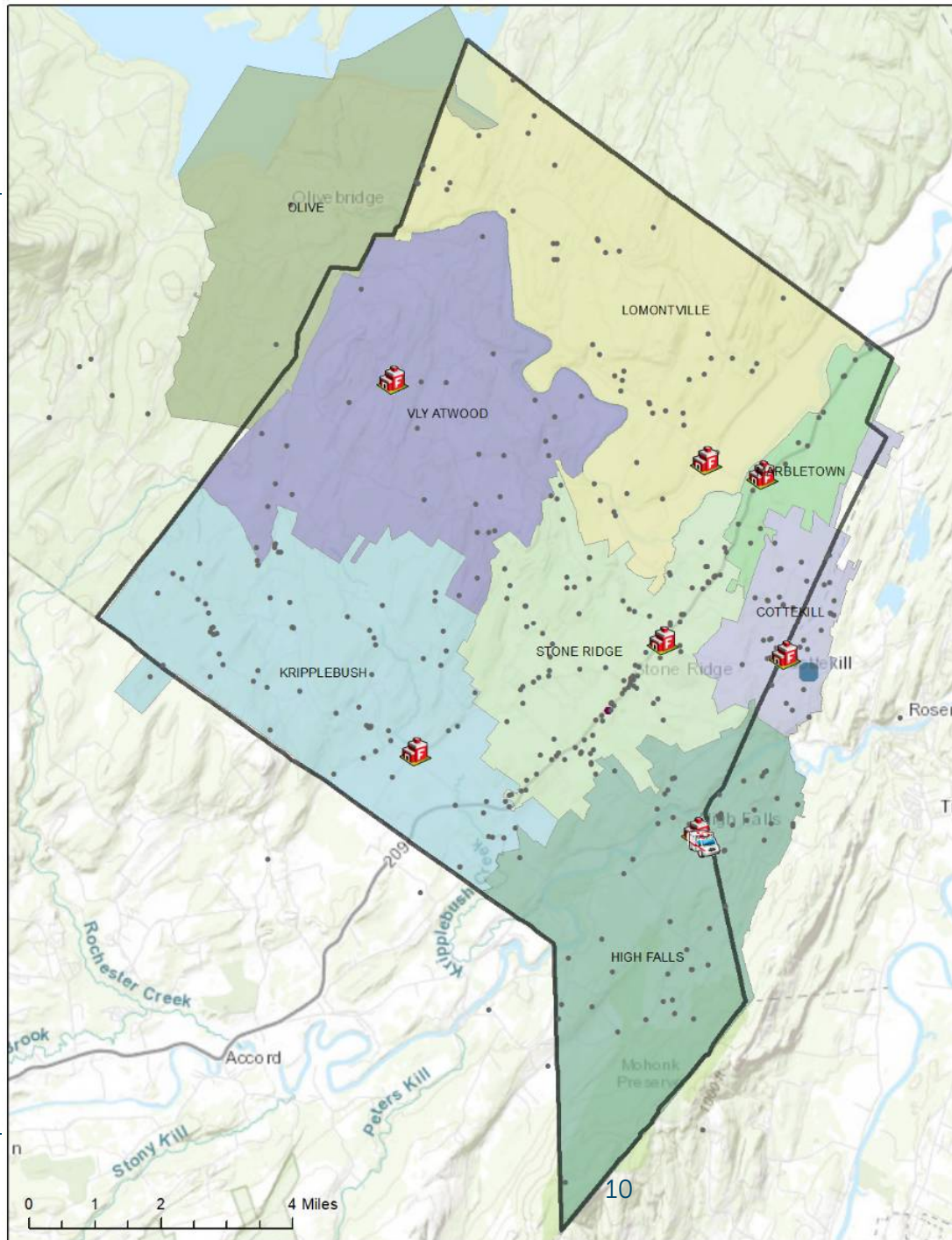
- Cooperation between departments is not universal, although each department has strong bonds with at least one other
- Some employers, such as the town, allow employees to answer calls when appropriate
- Districts need to consider if current operations are bringing greatest possible benefit to community
- Most members recognize the challenges and have varied views on the answers
- If you were to design a system from the ground up, it wouldn't look like this one

	Cottekill	High Falls	Kripplebush*	Lomontville	Marbletown	Stone Ridge	Vly-Atwood**	Total
Total Active Volunteer Personnel	12	17	unknown	9	5	41	NA	84
Engines	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	11
Tankers	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	6
Annual Calls For Service	91	96	122	51	26	246	81	713
ISO Rating	8B	04/4y	unknown	8B	9	8B	NA	
Budget (1,000s)	\$135	\$337	\$154	\$130	\$78	\$373	\$59	\$1,266
Tax Rate (per \$1,000)	1.66	1.44	0.74	0.73	1.82	1.57	0.37	N/A
Estimated Population	400***	1,350***	1,100	1,100	220	1,000	975	5,500

* Kripplebush chose not to participate. All data is from public sources.

** Vly-Atwood stopped operations on June 30, 2021.

*** Estimated population for Cottekill and High Falls includes Rosendale. Total in table is for Marbletown. An estimated additional 825 residents live in Rosendale.



Legend



Ambulance



Fire Departments

2020 Call for Service

● 1 to 5

● 6 to 11

● 12 to 35



Marletown

Fire Districts



COTTEKILL



HIGH FALLS



KRIPPLEBUSH



LOMONTVILLE



MARBLETOWN



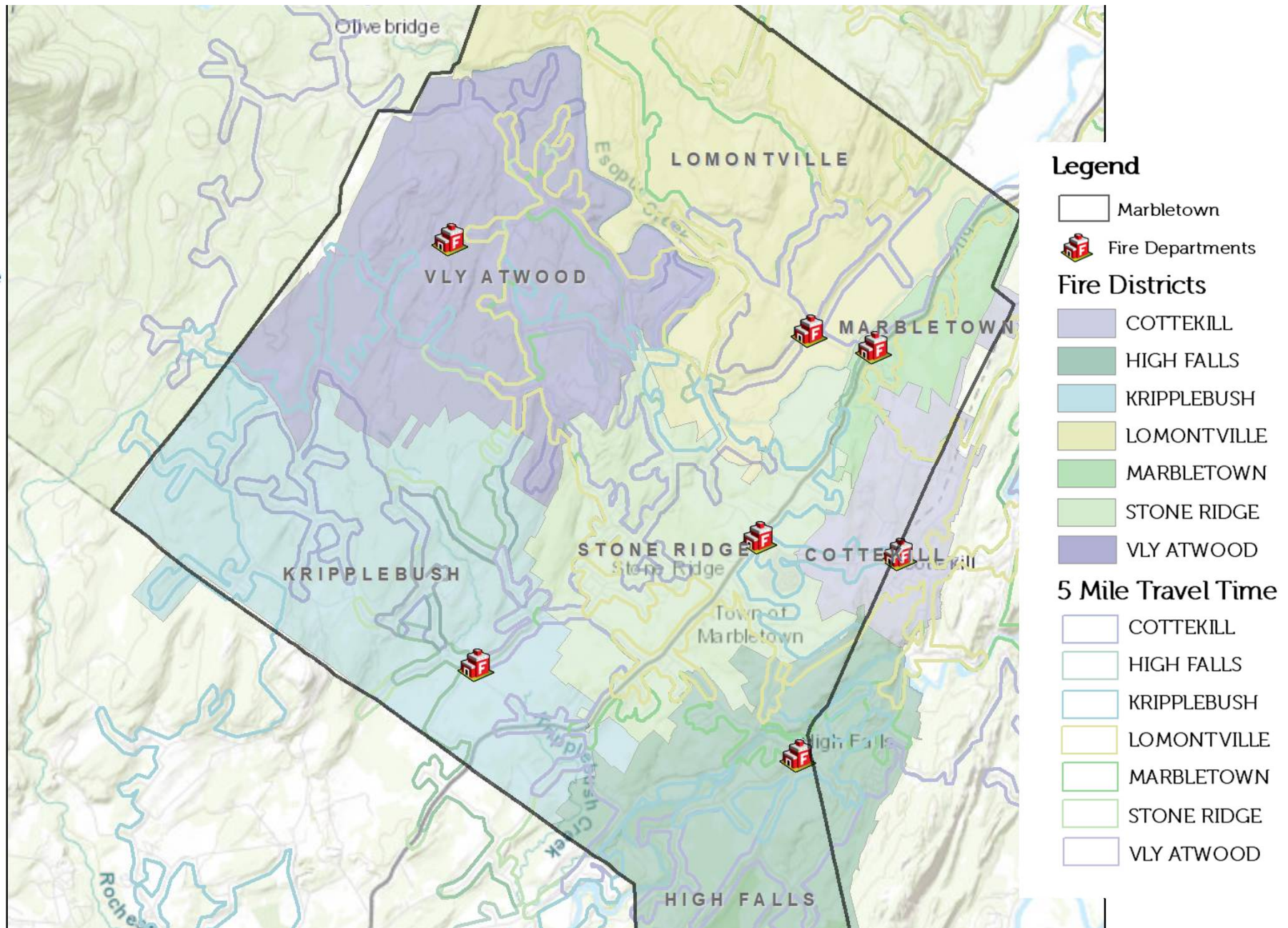
OLIVE



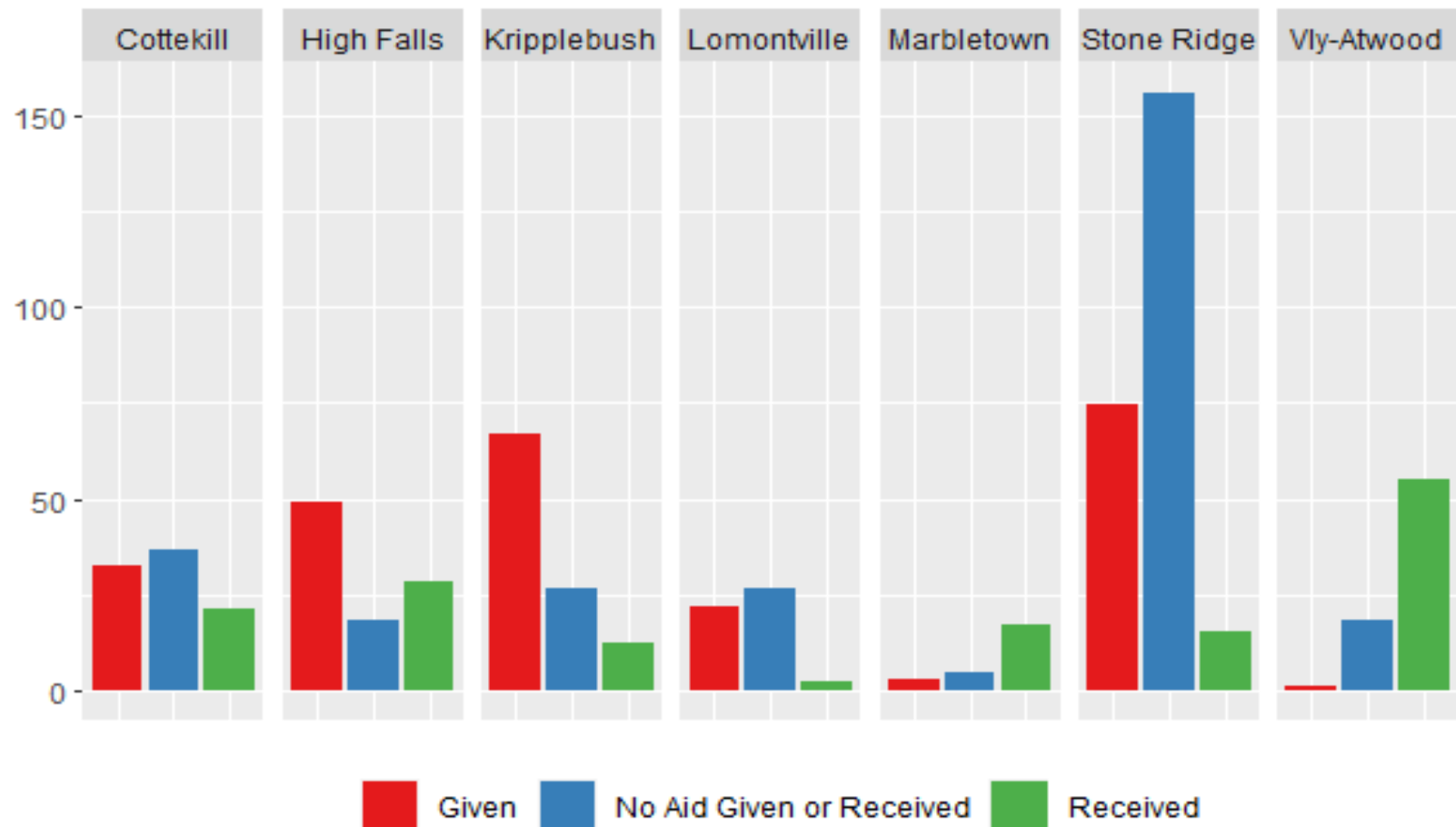
STONE RIDGE



VLY ATWOOD



Exchange of Aid (NFIRS Recent Average)



Options Going Forward

- Merge Fire Districts
 - Similar process, regardless of number of districts involved
 - Create a Single District from Six
 - Some operational changes, but could keep existing companies
 - Eliminate up to 30% of apparatus – mostly older apparatus
 - Reduce some expenses
 - Estimated property tax rate of \$0.986 per thousand. Savings for most residents of between \$125 and 225 a year. Vly-Atwood and Lomontville areas would see an increase of about \$168 and \$72 per year.
 - Would need to address LOSAP and capital needs ASAP
 - Create (or Keep) Multiple Districts
 - Example would be merge Cottekill, Lomontville, Marbletown, Stone Ridge and Vly-Atwood into one district
- Expand Sharing and Coordination
- Develop Plan for Recruitment and Retention
- Consider trigger for Paid Staff

Next Steps for Fire Commissions

- Consider which options to pursue:
- Merging fire districts resulting with a single one or multiple;
- Expanding shared services;
- Enhancing recruitment and retention;
- Considering a trigger for career staff.

Consider Trigger for Paid Staff

- NFPA 1720 Goal
 - Hamlets – 10 firefighters in 10 minutes
 - Rural – 6 firefighters in 14 minutes
- NFPA 1710 Goal
 - 17 firefighters in 10 minutes
- What's the goal for Marbletown?
 - 10 firefighters (8 interior) on scene in 14 minutes, 80% of time
 - An EMS certified person on scene of medical emergencies in 8 minutes, 80% of time
 - Evaluate after every structure fire, critical medical event or other serious incident
- If you aren't meeting the goal, need to think about staffing

Develop Plan for Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

- What has been working for last ten years?
- Some ideas
 - Expand relationship with Rondout Valley School
 - Go directly to local employers
 - Develop a single point of contact
 - Look at LOSAP programs
 - Housing support for volunteers
 - WORK TOGETHER

Expand Sharing and Coordination

- Can be acted upon quickly
- Move to standard LDH diameters and SCBAs
 - MSA (10 units), Scott (15 units) and Survivair (22 units).
- Look to expand automatic aid – especially for high risk events
- Expand the interdepartmental training

Merging Fire Districts to One or Multiple

- Governed under Article 17-A of GML
- Action is taken by the commissions
- Plan is developed and presented to public
- Plan must contain:
 - Name of districts involved and the new name
 - The boundaries
 - New organizational structure
 - Estimate of costs and savings related to consolidation
 - Assets, liabilities and their dispositions
 - Effective date
- Plans are developed by the involved commissions

What if you merged six into one?

- Rondout Valley Fire Department in 2023
 - 6 frontline engines, 3 service/rescue vehicles, 3 tankers and 1 reserve engine. (6 vehicles sold as surplus)
 - Keep all stations although consider long term needs
 - Reduce budget to \$936,000 from \$1.1 million (12% reduction)
 - Immediately consider creation of LOSAP
 - Combine capital reserve but CIP to focus on using the funds to upgrade/replace equipment in those areas
 - ISO rating would likely improve and most taxes would decline
 - Vly-Atwood and Lomontville are exceptions with increases at \$168 and \$72
 - A few years of volunteer “churn” – strong leadership with clear goals of being welcoming are needed
 - RVFD more sustainable for the future

Merger Variations

- 7 or more into 1 district
- 3 or 4 into 1 district, then 2 more later on ...
- Consider outside town limits if appropriate

Next Steps

- Set a goal for commissions to agree to develop a consolidation plan beginning in January 2022
- Develop a planning task force of commissioners and chiefs from the involved departments
- Plan process to have some “easy wins” early
- Have a strong communication plan for members, residents and elected officials
- Consider adoption of other recommendations in the report ASAP