

2017

FORT MYERS SHORES FIRE DEPARTMENT  
5-YEAR PLAN & FACILITIES REPORT



FORT MYERS SHORES FIRE PROTECTION & RESCUE SERVICE DISTRICT

12345 Palm Beach Boulevard

Fort Myers, Florida 33905

FIVE YEAR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2017-2022

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

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Approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners April 19, 2018  
TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Executive Summary .....4**

    Introduction..... 4

    Boundaries..... 6

**Background.....7**

    History ..... 7

    Facilities..... 8

    Equipment..... 8

    Personnel..... 8

    Revenue..... 8

**Existing Levels of Service.....9**

    District ..... 9

    Facilities..... 9

    Equipment..... 9

    Personnel..... 10

    Revenue..... 10

**Future Service Levels ..... 14**

    Facilities..... 14

    Equipment..... 15

    Personnel..... 15

    Revenue..... 16

**Goal and Objectives ..... 16**

    Goal ..... 16

    Objectives..... 16

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Florida Statute 191.013(2) requires that each independent special fire control district adopt a five-year plan to identify the facilities, equipment, personnel, and revenue needed by the District during the five-year period.

This document is prepared in accordance with Florida Statute 191.013(2). Any attempt to produce a report without a description of the organization would not be fair to the organization. The Fort Myers Shores Fire Protection and Rescue Service District (FMSFD) is a distinctive entity in territory, diversity, and philosophy. Therefore, a history and background of the District is included.

The FMSFD is located in Lee County, Florida; one of the fastest growing, waterfront communities in Florida. The FMSFD is an independent special district established by Laws of Florida, Chapter 76-409 and has been modified under the provisions of Florida Statute 633 and modified again by Laws of Florida, Chapter 97-340. Laws of Florida, Chapter 2000-456 “codified, reenacted, amended and repealed” it’s prior enabling acts. The District was formed with the intention of providing fire control, protection, crash, and rescue services for an area in eastern Lee County, Florida. The District is governed by an elected five-member Board of Commissioners serving alternating four-year terms on the following schedule: Seat 1 – up for 4 year term in November 2020; Seat 2 – up for 4 year term in November 2020; Seat 3 – up for a 4 year term in November 2020; Seat 4 – up for 4 year term in 2018; Seat 5 – up for a 4 year term in 2018.

The District’s growth has significantly trended upward since 2012. A brief recap of property values shows a decrease of 37% from fiscal year 2009 to fiscal year 2012 with the largest drop coming in fiscal year 2010 at 20.14%. The values for fiscal year 2013 increased by almost 1.6%, which signaled the beginning of the economic turnaround. The taxable assessed values for the District have continued trending positively with increases for; 2014 at 6.19%, 2015 at 4%, 2016 at 5.83%, 2017 at 13.44% and 2018 at 20.1% although the final adjusted value is not available at this time.

The District purchased land for a new station in 2007 at the entrance to River Hall, a large community at the eastern end of the district. At that time, we had plans to build an 18,000 square foot station but those plans were put on hold due to the economy. As the economy, property values and building continue making a comeback we will start the planning process for the new station, equipment and personnel to meet projected service delivery needs for the future. The size of the station and the projected needs have changed since the

Verandah Community is in the process of offering us additional land next to Station One. The configuration of apparatus and personnel will be lower at Station Two than originally thought. Personnel needs will increase to six per shift with one additional fire apparatus, so that Station Two has three personnel to equal Station One's staffing. Station Two should be operational by 2021.

The District currently has twelve line personnel and three captains on three shifts, operating out of one fixed location to serve a year-round population of approximately 16,000 residents along the southern shore of the Caloosahatchee River. The administrative staff includes an administrative assistant, an assistant fire chief and a fire chief who work a flexible forty-hour workweek with their offices at the fire station. The assistant fire chief and fire chief respond to incidents from the station and from home depending on the situation.

The District provides fire suppression services and rescue services at the Emergency Medical Technician B (EMT-B) level. The District has 15 full-time EMT-B's. Additional services include: a Fire Prevention and Investigation Division and Public Education as requested from the community; training; confined space rescue; marine vehicle operations including rescue skin divers and first response water rescue; rope rescue; vehicle extrication; and Haz-Mat awareness level response. These services are based on the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for awareness, operations, and technician level response. The establishments of the following Advisory Boards and their participation in the department's growth and expansion are in place or in the developmental stages: hiring, building, insurance, safety, standard operating guidelines, job descriptions, and uniforms.

The FMSFD provides and receives mutual aid with area departments and has automatic response agreements with Alva FD, Bayshore FD, and Tice FD. We respond per the Lee County Fire Chief Association Communication Plan to all local and regional disasters through a cooperative effort with the Lee County Emergency Management Division and the Lee County Emergency Operations Center. Dispatch services are provided by the Lee County Department of Public Safety Communications Division, commonly known as Lee Control.

For regional, state, and national response the area emergency services are dispatched through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The Lee County EOC (LCEOC) works directly with the State of Florida EOC. They work in concert with the: State Fire Marshal; Florida Fire Chief Association; Emergency Support Function (ESF) 4 (Fire) & 9 (Urban Search & Rescue); Domestic Security Task Force Region 6; and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 4. The District's response activity whether local, regional or state primarily consists of an engine company which is a captain, an engineer, and two firefighters based on minimum staffing provisions of the collective bargaining agreement.

By presenting a five-year plan the requirement of the law is fulfilled. Florida Statute 191, *Independent Special Fire Control Districts* requires the District to adopt a five-year plan. The plan shall be updated in accordance with s.189.08. The District will be able to review where it has been, the current status, and the future directions so that it will be in a position to plan for future growth.

This plan contains the following sections: Executive Summary, Background, Existing Service Levels, Future Service Levels, and Goals and Objectives. Service levels include facilities, equipment, personnel and revenues.

## **Boundaries**

The boundaries of the District have remained the same since the formation of the District: Begin at the point of intersection of the South bank of the Caloosahatchee River and the West bank of the Orange River; thence Southerly and Easterly along the West and North bank of the Orange River to the intersection of said bank of the Orange River and the South line of Township 43 South, Range 26 East, thence Easterly along said Township line to the Southeast corner of Section 36, Township 43 South, Range 26 East; thence Northerly along the range line between Ranges 26 East and 27 East to the point of intersection of said Range line with the South bank of Hickeys Creek; thence Westerly and Northerly along the Southerly and Westerly bank of Hickeys Creek to the point of intersection with the South bank of the Caloosahatchee River; thence Westerly along the South bank of the Caloosahatchee River to the Point of Beginning.

The District boundaries include the following target hazards: three public schools; the Lee County Utilities Olga Water Treatment Plant; numerous churches; the Fort Myers facility of Florida Power and Light; and the Sweetwater Marina.



## **Background**

### **History**

In 1962 residents in the Fort Myers Shores area of Lee County, Florida formed a volunteer fire department to provide fire protection for the subdivision. Fire protection was previously supplied by the City of Fort Myers. In 1971 the Lee County Board of Commissioners formed the Lee County Fire Control Department. Fire service was then provided by the volunteer department and by the newly established county fire department from a station located in the Tice area of east Lee County. The Fort Myers Shores area had an Insurance Service Organization (ISO) rating of Class Ten. This is the same rating as if no fire department existed.

In 1976 the FMSFD became an Independent Special District established by Laws of Florida, Chapter 76-409 and ratified by voters. The District encompasses approximately sixteen square miles. The District immediately purchased a new fire engine and hired two full time firefighters. A new fire station was also built. The original station was a small, two-bay, garage type structure in the center of the residential area located on 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The District requested an ISO review and was awarded a Class Six rating in the Fort Myers Shores subdivision. Areas where no potable water was available received a Class Nine rating. These areas were large tracts of land used mainly for agricultural purposes. The areas rated at Class Six were later reviewed and given a Class Four rating. In 2011 the District was reviewed once again and most of the areas previously rated at a Class Nine were changed to a Class Four due in part to the automatic mutual aid agreements in place with the surrounding Districts.

In 2007 the FMSFD purchased property in the new River Hall community at the eastern end of the District to build a second fire station. Due to the economic downturn the decision was made to postpone building the station. The District has worked diligently to build the reserves necessary to construct and equip the station when the economy improves. When the new station is completed, ISO will recognize the entire FMSFD as a Class Three and the remainder of our residents will benefit from the new rating with considerably lower homeowners' insurance premiums.

The District has been modified under the provisions of Florida Statute 633 and modified again by Laws of Florida, Chapter 97-340. Laws of Florida, Chapter 2000-456 "codified, reenacted, amended and repealed" its prior enabling acts. The District was formed with the intention of providing fire control, protection, crash, and rescue services for an area in eastern Lee County, Florida. The District is governed by an elected five-member Board of Commissioners serving varying four-year terms.

## **Facilities**

The original fire station was located on 5<sup>th</sup> Street in the Fort Myers Shores subdivision. This location was in the middle of the residential community. With the construction of the current station in 1977 the original station was sold and turned into a privately-owned home.

The current station was built on property on Palm Beach Boulevard. The station is a 5000 square foot steel building that is situated on approximately 7/10 of an acre. The station underwent a \$586,572.56 renovation in 2005.

## **Equipment**

When the independent fire control district was created in 1976, equipment from the volunteer fire department was transferred to the District. It included the following:

- 1952 Chevrolet Front Mount Pumper—500 gallons per minute
- 1952 Chevrolet Tank Truck—1500 gallons capacity
- 1970 Chevrolet Pick-up truck

## **Personnel**

At the time of the creation of the District there were no full-time employees.

## **Revenue**

Prior to the creation of the District the only funding was derived through donations and various fund-raising activities including raffles, dinners, and boot drives.

Through the enabling legislation the District was able to levy ad valorem taxes at one-millage point. The District raised the millage cap to two-millage points in 1991 by a referendum vote.

In 1999 the District entered into the Lee County Impact Fee Program.

## **Existing Levels of Service**

### **District**

The District was re-rated by ISO in April of 2016. The old rating was a 4/9; the 9 rating was in the areas without potable water and therefore no hydrants. The new rating of 3 is throughout most of the district. The lowering of the classification is due to the automatic response agreements we have with Alva FD, Bayshore FD, and Tice FD. There are two areas within the district that ISO rated a 10 due to the areas being over five miles from the fire station; the Hickey creek area and the section of River Hall east of the club house. When the new station is built, these areas will be within the five-mile rule which will bring the rating down to a 3.

The District boundaries remain unchanged since its formation; however, the population increases steadily. Responses to emergency incidents have also increased steadily. In 1976 emergency incident responses were less than 100 calls. In 2009 emergency incident responses were 1,075. As the economy recovered, in calendar year 2015 the District emergency incident responses increased to 1,294. In calendar year 2016 the District responded to 1,517 emergency incident responses. In calendar year 2017 the District responded to 1,723 incidents. If the trends are reliable we can forecast responding to 1900 incidents for service delivery in 2018.

### **Facilities**

The FMSFD currently operates from one fire station located at 12345 Palm Beach Boulevard. The Fire Board of Commissioners purchased land to build Fire Station Two at the entrance of the River Hall community which is on Palm Beach Boulevard 0.8 miles east of Buckingham Road. With the addition of this location we will be capable of providing a response time of five-minutes or less to all geographic areas of the District. The new station will put all residents of the District within five miles of a fire station. This will be within ISO recommendations and allow all district residents to fall under the class 3 rating.

### **Equipment**

The department's line personnel operate the following vehicles:

- Engine 81: 2009 KME Pumper—1500 gpm with a 750-gallon water tank
- Engine 82: 2003 Pierce Contender Pumper—1262 gpm with a 1000-gallon water tank
- Engine 83: 2016 E-One Pumper—1500 gpm with a 1000-gallon water tank
- Brush 81: 1978 military transport vehicle—310 gpm with a 500-gallon water tank

- Air 81: an air cascade trailer
- Marine 81: a 21-foot Carolina Skiff boat with 115hp motor and trailer
- Utility 81: a 2005 Ford F250 4X4 utility vehicle
- Utility 82: 2006 Ford F250 4X4 Fire Prevention vehicle
- Utility 83: a 2007 Ford Expedition utility vehicle
- FMS 1: a 2018 Chevy Tahoe command vehicle

## **Personnel**

Currently the District employees:

- 6—Firefighters
- 6—Engineers
- 3—Captains
- 15—Volunteer firefighters
- 1—Administrative Assistant
- 1—Assistant Chief
- 1—Fire Chief

The firefighters, engineers, and captains are divided into three shifts with a 24/48-hour work schedule. This means that shift personnel work 24 hours on duty, followed by 48 hours off duty. The Administrative Assistant, Assistant Fire Chief and the Fire Chief work a flexible 40-hour work week.

## **Revenue**

The primary funding for the District is from ad valorem taxes, which are taxes levied on property values. The District currently levies taxes at a rate of 2.0 millage points. This tax and the term millage equates to two dollars per one thousand dollars of assessed property value. Therefore, a home valued at \$200,000 would have an annual fire district tax of \$400.

In FY 2017/2018 this millage rate is projected to generate \$3,403,726 in ad valorem revenue when the 5% non-collectible rate of -179,143 is included. This figure does not take into account the collection of unpaid taxes and penalties from prior fiscal years, which is generally negligible and as of February 2018 the amount collected is \$445.69.

The secondary funding source is from impact fees which are one-time assessments on new construction, the proceeds of which are restricted to expenditure for capital improvements. Contained within Chapter Two, Division 5: *Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Impact Fee* of the Lee County Land Development Code the current impact fee rates are found in Table 1 of Sec. 2-386: *Computation of amount*. For the reader's convenience the 2017/18 chart is provided below for reference, so the reader can compare the revised 2018/19 approved Impact Fee Schedule which follows.

TABLE 1. FIRE IMPACT FEE SCHEDULE 2017									
Use and Development Unit									
FIRE DISTRICT	Single-Family Residence or Mobile Home on Individual Lot Per Dwelling	Multi-Family Per Dwelling	Mobile Home or Recreational Vehicle in Mobile Home/RV Park Per Space	Hotel/Motel Per Room	Retail Per 1,000 sq. ft.	Office Per 1,000 sq. ft.	Public or Institutional Use Per 1,000 sq. ft.	General Industrial Per 1,000 sq. ft.	Public or Private Ware-House Per 1,000 sq. ft.
Fort Myers Shores	\$474	\$356	\$327	\$289	\$559	\$261	\$171	\$133	\$62

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Fort Myers Shores	\$760	\$595	\$554	\$625	\$593	\$277	\$593	\$286	\$269

For FY2017/18 impact fees revenue was budgeted at \$25,000. The District has collected, thus far this fiscal year, \$52,958.14. This emphasizes the trending growth in the District.

The following chart is a copy of the FY2017/18 budget for existing revenue consideration. The chart reflects all available revenue sources and for the readers convenience a three year comparison is provided.

	Actual	Actual	Budget
Ad Valorem	FY 2015/2016	FY 2016/2017	FY 2017/2018
Ad Valorem Levied	\$ 2,629,229	\$ 2,982,322	\$ 3,582,869
Discounts	\$ (94,555)	\$ (109,055)	\$ (179,143)
	\$ 2,534,674	\$ 2,873,267	\$ 3,403,726
<b>Supplemental Compensation</b>			
Supplemental Compensation Reimbursement	\$ 2,400	\$ 3,450	\$ 4,600
	\$ 2,400	\$ 3,450	\$ 4,600
<b>Interest Earnings</b>			
Interest on Ad Valorem	\$ 343	\$ 830	\$ -
Interest on Impact Fees	\$ -	\$ 699	\$ -
Interest on CDARS and Operating Account	\$ 16,032	\$ 35,680	\$ 25,000
	\$ 16,375	\$ 37,209	\$ 25,000
<b>Impact Fee Receipts (Deferred Revenue)</b>			
Impact Fee Receipts (Deferred Revenue)	\$ 89,643	\$ 111,799	\$ 25,000
	\$ 89,643	\$ 111,799	\$ 25,000
<b>Other Income</b>			
Fire Inspection Fees	\$ 4,276	\$ 4,115	\$ 3,500
Retiree Insurance Reimbursement	\$ 7,159	\$ 6,768	\$ 13,000
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Proceeds from Sale of Fixed Assets	\$ -	\$ 40,054	\$ -
Refunds/Reimbursements/Donations	\$ 1,086	\$ 9,547	\$ -
	\$ 12,521	\$ 60,484	\$ 16,500
<b>Reserves</b>			
Non-Spendable: Prepaid Items	\$ -	\$ 253,528	\$ -
Union Time Bank	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,800
Union Education Bank	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Unassigned Budget Reserves	\$ 731,142	\$ 1,010,910	\$ 878,200
Sick & Vacation	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000
OPEB/Post Employment Insurance	\$ 675,000	\$ 675,000	\$ 800,000
Building Fund	\$ 1,528,280	\$ 1,525,780	\$ 1,707,000
Equipment/Personal Protective Gear	\$ 81,800	\$ 91,800	\$ 180,000
Apparatus/Staff Vehicle Fund	\$ 995,000	\$ 695,000	\$ 720,000
Disaster Fund	\$ 800,000	\$ 800,000	\$ 800,000
Three Month Operating Fund	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000
Impact Fee (Deferred Revenue)	\$ 357,752	\$ 468,829	\$ 445,000
	\$ 5,990,774	\$ 6,342,647	\$ 6,352,000
<b>Total Income and Reserves</b>	<b>\$ 8,646,387</b>	<b>\$ 9,428,856</b>	<b>\$ 9,826,826</b>

## **Future Service Levels**

### **Facilities**

The District will maintain the primary station at 12345 Palm Beach Boulevard. The District has purchased land in the River Hall community for a new station. The property is located on Palm Beach Boulevard 0.8 miles east of Buckingham Road.

Originally, we planned to place Administration, Fire Prevention, Operations, and Training at Station Two when it was built. With the Verandah community offering additional property adjacent to Station One our plans to house the aforementioned divisions is being revisited. Nonetheless, there is a need for expanded facilities to accommodate the growth in these divisions as the community expands.

Station Two will house three operations staff; a Lieutenant, an engineer and a firefighter. The shift Lieutenants will be responsible for the daily activities of the on duty shift as well as facility/apparatus maintenance at the location. Training will be housed at this station since it will have a three-story training tower and additional property to facilitate training. There will be one Class A fire apparatus stationed at the facility initially with the potential for additional vehicles. There will also be space available to house an Emergency Vehicle Technician in the future who will maintain our apparatus inhouse and potentially other local departments. EMS is not a consideration at this time with the potential that they will house at Tice FD Station 3 in the future. But growth in the area may direct EMS to a more central location. The projected time frame for occupying Station Two is three-years.

Station One, once Station Two is operational, will also house three operations staff; a Captain, an engineer and a firefighter. They will operate from the current Station One location. The Administrative staff and Fire Prevention will also remain at Station One.

With the increasing population growth in the residential and commercial community the Fire Prevention Division will expand to include a Fire Marshal who will continue to use on duty personnel certified as fire inspectors to conduct fire inspections. Each Fire Prevention Division employee will also have arson investigation and public education responsibilities. With the Insurance Service Office's addition of Community Risk Reduction to their Public Protection Classification grading survey, Public Education and the additional 5.5 points they could add to the survey could mean the difference between an ISO rating of 3 or a 2. This savings could be beneficial to our property-owning constituents. The location of the division will be at Station One.

The operations personnel for Station One may relocate to a new station next to the current station location on Palm Beach Boulevard. These plans fall

outside the scope of this five-year appraisal of the District's needs. But, if this were to occur the current location of Station One will be considered for a standalone Administrative building that would house the Operations Division Chief, Planning Division, Logistics Division, Finance Division, Fire Prevention and Public Education. This building could also have a large community room that can afford a location for various civic organizations to meet as well as additional training and meeting space.

The Marine vessel will be housed at Sweetwater Marina in slip 33.

We have our first paramedic student enrolled for 2018. This may be the first step in being able to provide advanced non-transport paramedic service delivery (ALS).

## **Equipment**

The additional future equipment needs of the District by 2021 could include:

- One Fire Engine Pumper—1500 gallons per minute
- Or, one elevated ladder—1500 gallons per minute
  - This apparatus may be a ladder truck or a combination ladder/pumper commonly called a quint.
- One Fire Prevention vehicle for the Fire Marshal
- One Fire/Rescue Marine vessel

## **Personnel**

Facility and delivery of service expansion will necessitate the addition of personnel. In addition to the current staffing level of 16 employees which is comprised of:

- 6-Full Time Firefighters
- 6-Engineers
- 3-Captains
- 1-Administrative Assistant
- 1-Assistant Chief
- 1-Fire Chief

The current personnel services liability for FY 2017/18 is budgeted at \$2,629,560.00.

The District's future staffing for 2022 could include up to 25 employees:

- 6—Firefighters
  - Three at Station One
  - Three at Station Two
- 9—Engineers

- Six at Station One
- Three at Station Two
- 3—Captains at Station One
- 3—Lieutenants at Station Two
- 1—Fire Chief
- 1—Fire Marshal
- 1—Administrative Assistant
- 1—Secretary

The estimated personnel services liability for FY 2022 with the listed additional personnel could be upwards of \$3,784,000.00.

## **Revenue**

The District will continue to use ad valorem tax assessments and impact fees for permitted purposes. The District will continue to seek grants, gifts, etc. to fund projects. Although there does not appear to be a need to raise the millage rate cap of 2.0 the option is available via referendum vote. There is also the concept of a one-time special assessment to raise funds for a single purpose.

If the District continues to collect ad valorem revenue at the current rate cap of 2.0 mills, and the District experiences an average growth in total property values of 10% per year, in 2022 the ad valorem collected will be approximately \$5,245,679.00.

This may not be sufficient revenue to operate the District at the proposed levels, so without additional millage or higher growth in property values the District will need to be very careful in its decisions. The Board of Commissioners and management will reevaluate the financial situation each year and make only those additions which they feel are both vital to the District's operations and financially sound for the future.

## **Goal and Objectives for Five-Year Plan**

### **Goal**

To provide quality fire department based emergency services to our customers and stakeholders in an atmosphere that is conducive to professional growth and development.

### **Objectives**

- Increase services delivered to include but not limited to:
  - Water Rescue
  - Rope Rescue

- Haz-Mat Awareness Level response
- Confined Rescue Technician Level response
- Auto Extrication Technician Level response
- Plans Review
- Arson Investigation
- Secretary
- Improve quality of services delivered to include but not limited to:
  - Fire Suppression
  - EMS- non-transport ALS
  - Fire Prevention and Investigation
  - Marine Operations
  - Training
  - Public Relations Services
  - Financial Management
  - Strategic Planning
  - Maintain positive Management/Labor relationship
- Expansion of facilities
  - Current
    - Station One
  - New
    - Station Two
- Increase staffing to accommodate additional apparatus and facilities
- Develop an Battalion Chief position
- Develop a Training Branch within the Operations Division
- Develop a Lieutenant position on each shift to enhance and assist the Captains. The Captains and Lieutenants will be responsible for establishing incident command, safety, and personnel accountability. The Captains will also act as the shift commander.
- Lobby the county for water supply lines in areas without hydrants