

Presentation of Final Report

Town of Bethlehem Fire Districts Collaborative Planning Task Force



November
2011



The Study Team

- Manitou, Inc. – formed 1999, over 35 major studies, recognized for expertise in deployment analysis; uses rigorous methodology, publishes.
- Charles Jennings – PhD, City and Regional Planning; Deputy Commissioner of Public Safety, White Plains, 20 plus years in fire service.
- John Cochran – Fire Chief, Russellville, AR; Former Program Officer, US Fire Administration;
- Tom Vaughan – MUP, GIS Analyst, over 20 years experience working on fire issues with Manitou principals
- John Grasso – BS Eng., MS FPM, Retired FDNY Lt.,

The Study Process

Bid Process – RFP issues August 2010, firms selected by competitive process

Original Study called for EMS to be included, EMS agencies withdrew from study

Study originally proposed at 6 months, lengthened to 1 year

Methodology –Mixed Methods:

Quantitative – State incident data, dispatch data, Department records and statistics; surveys of members and public

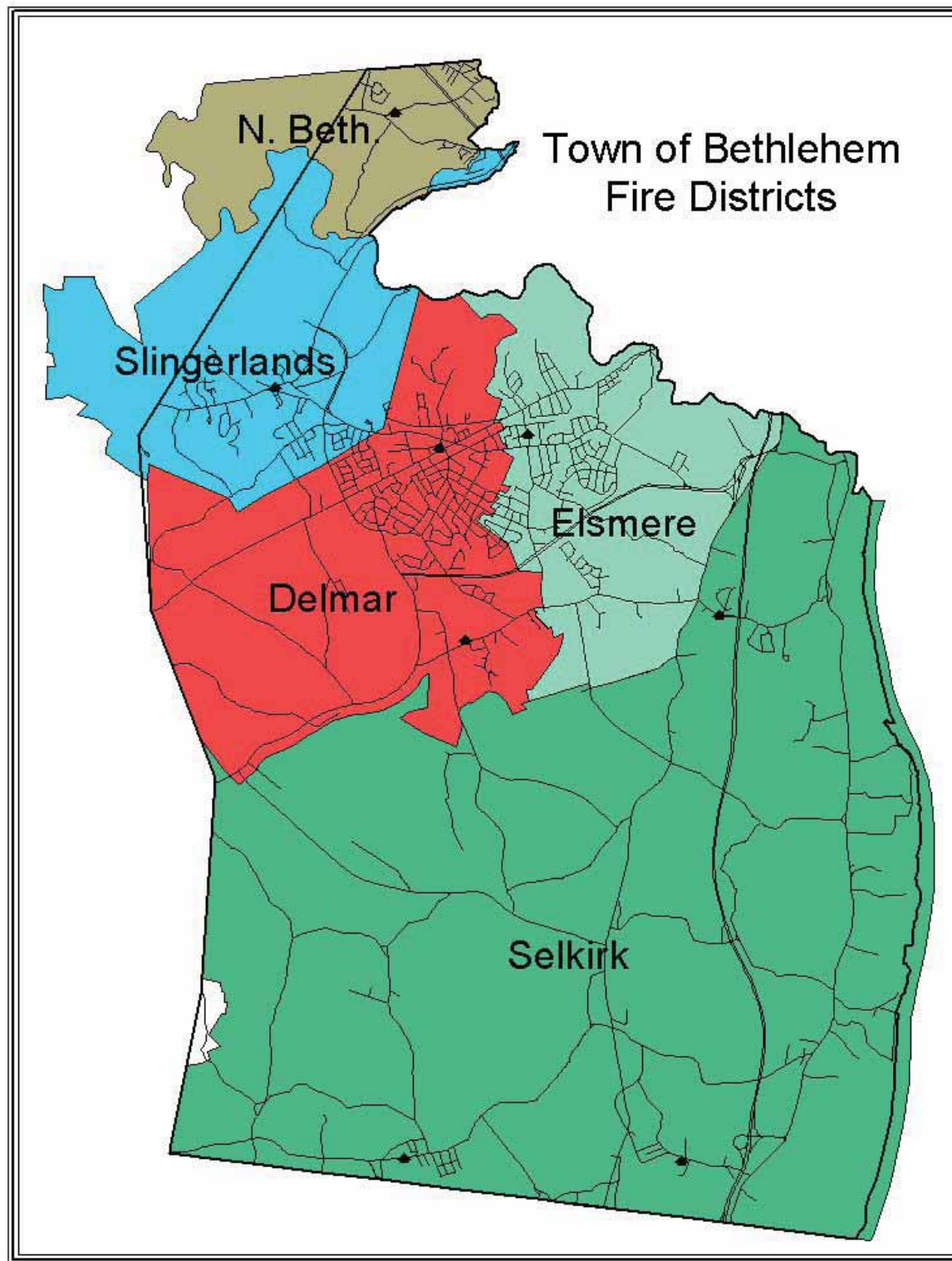
Qualitative – interviews, surveys, and focus groups with members

Description of Study Scope

- Training
- Record Keeping
- Pre-planning and inspections
- Dispatching
- Apparatus and Special Service Needs (NFPA/ISO)
- Collaboration on equipment purchase and use
- Mutual Aid
- Future Facility and Apparatus Needs
- Review of organization and management structure
- Ten-Year Plan for continued fire service delivery

Relevant Standards

- National Fire Protection Association
 - Numerous standards
 - Most require local entity to adopt to have force of law; some enforced by State or federal agencies
- Insurance Services Office (ISO)
 - Fire Suppression Rating Schedule
 - Grades municipal fire protection on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being best
 - (under revision)



The Volunteers

Fire system is 100 percent volunteer-based

Roughly 340 Active Members

Major Commitment of Time for:

- Incidents

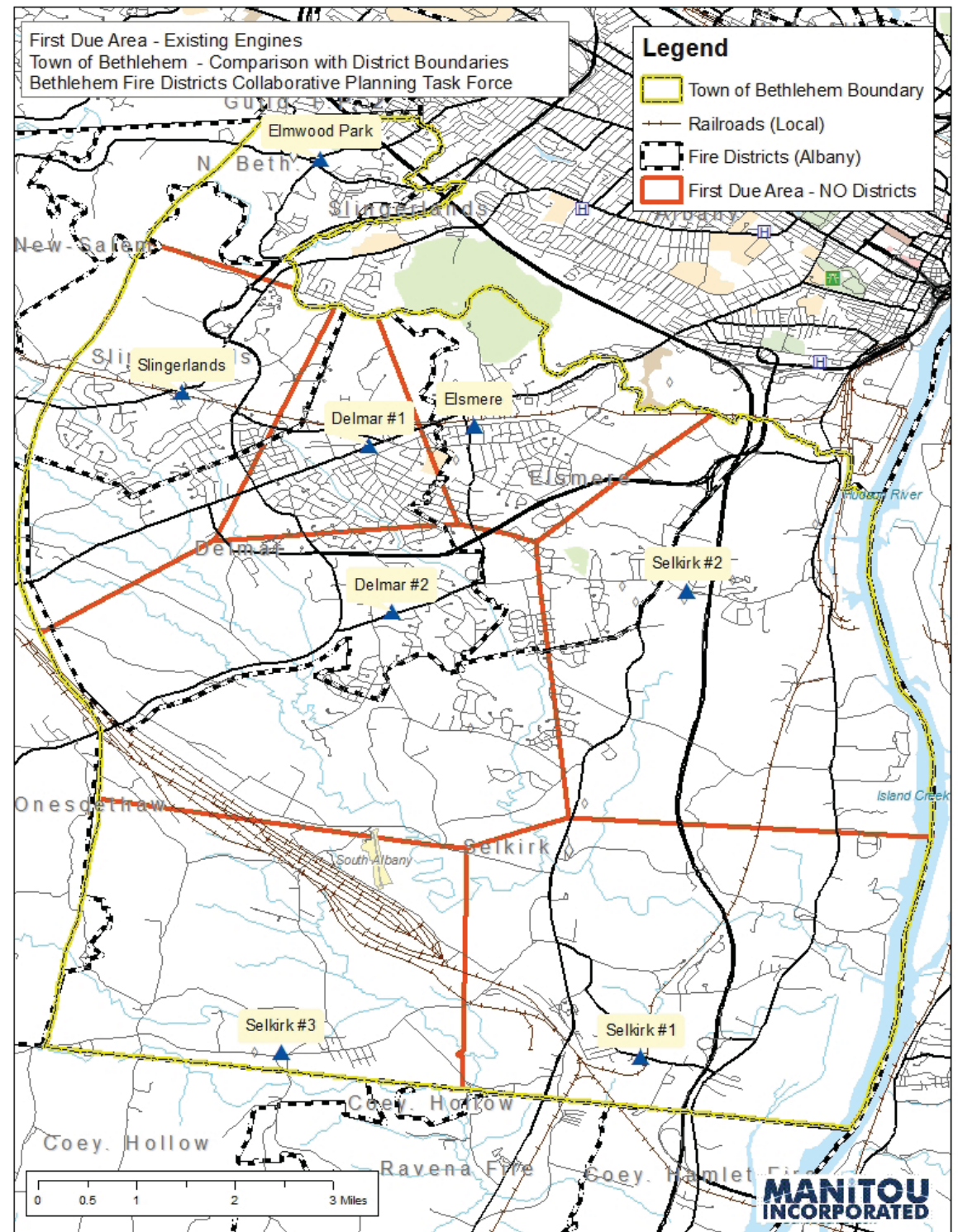
- Training

- Administrative Activities

Requirements increasing!

Overview of Current System

- 5 Districts
- 8 Stations
- 16 Engines
- 3 Ladders
- 2 Heavy Rescues
- 3 Squads (Heavy Duty)



2010 Incidents by District

District	Incidents
Delmar	349
Elsmere	360
Elmwood Park/North Bethlehem	640 (includes EMS first response)
Selkirk	269
Slingerlands	224
TOTAL	1,202

Individual District Overviews and Performance

Table 8.4: Town of Bethlehem fire districts' average response time for all calls (in minutes)

Department Name	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Average	80th Percentile
Elsmere	7.5	9.3	9.1	8.0	9.7	8.7	10
Delmar	7.0	4.9	6.0	7.3	6.6	6.4	<8
Selkirk	4.1	4.7	5.6	8.6	7.4	6.1	<8
Slingerlands	8.4	8.1	5.8	7.8	9.3	7.9	<10
Elmwood Park	6.3	6.2	5.9	5.4	N/A	6.0	<8

- Average response time (from dispatch to arrival on scene)
- Most alarms (59 percent) are in daytime hours
- Includes ALL responses (includes mutual and automatic aid)

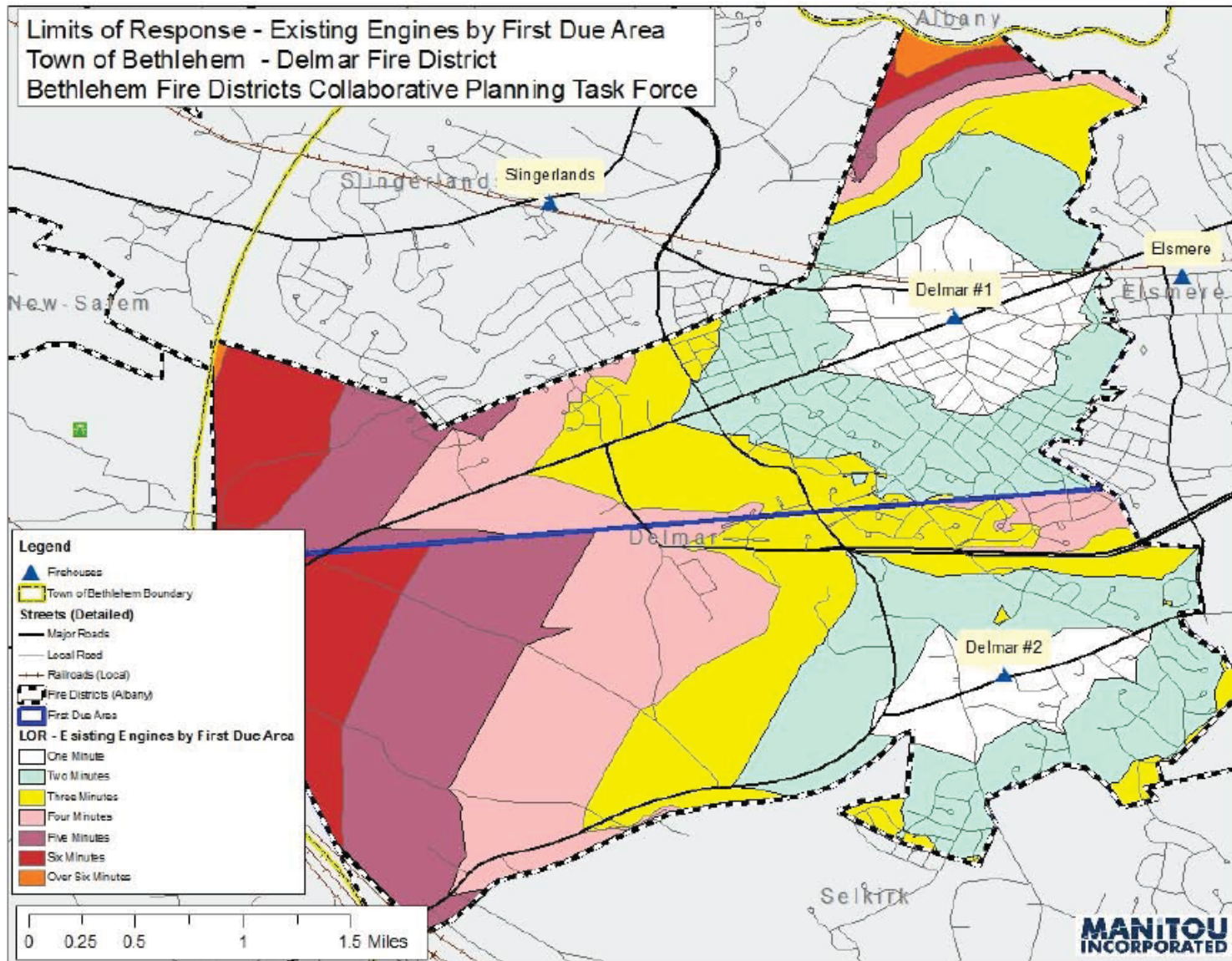
Number of Members Responding, 2010

Table 8.7: Personnel Responding per Incident by District, 2010

	Delmar	Elsmere	North Bethlehem (Elmwood Park)	Selkirk	Slingerlands
Average Number of Members	19	17.1	7.3/9.4*	21.3	12.6



Delmar



Delmar

Budget and Expenditure

2010 Budget \$974,470

Apparatus

2 Engines

1 Ladder

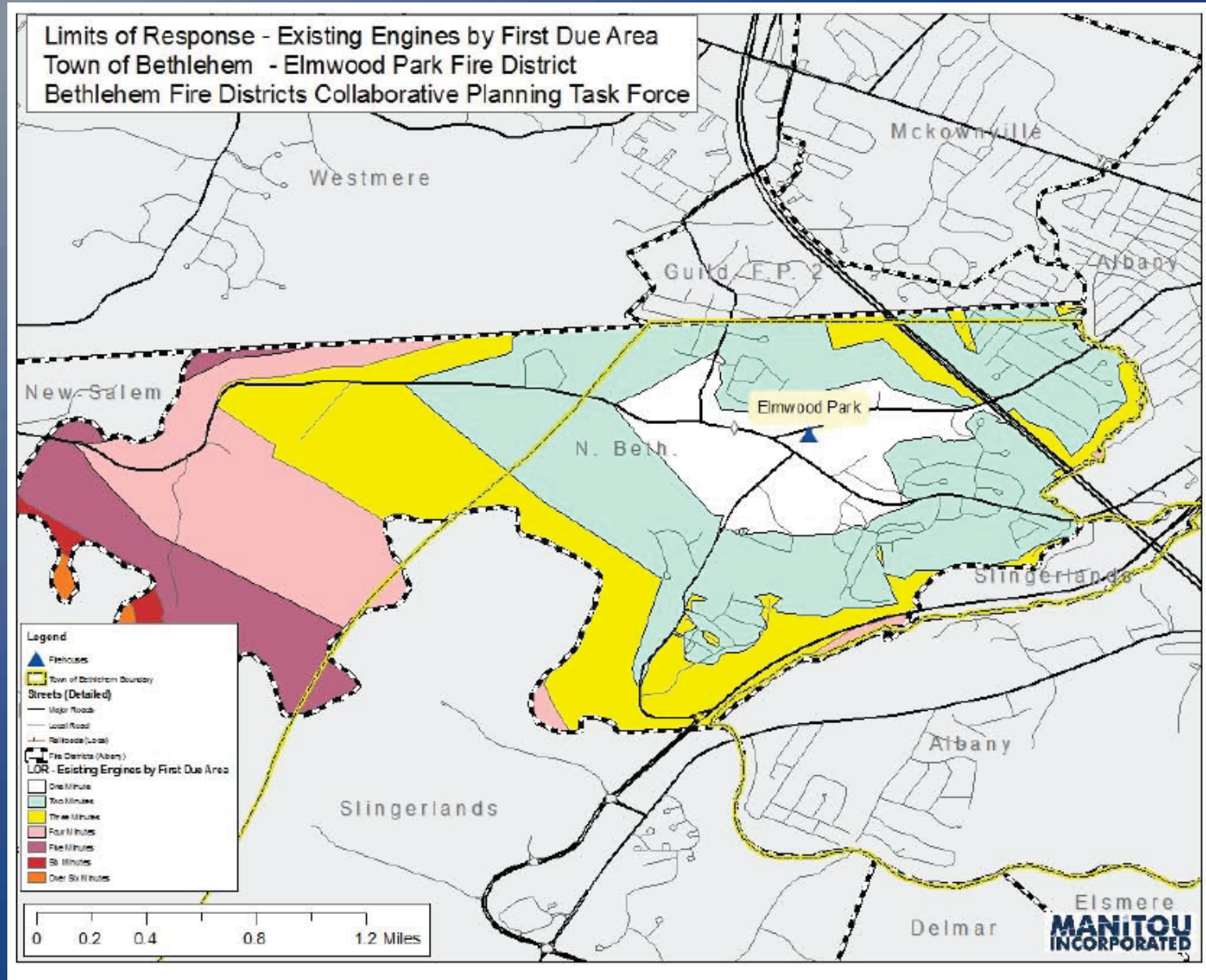
1 Squad

1 Utility

2 Stations



Elmwood Park

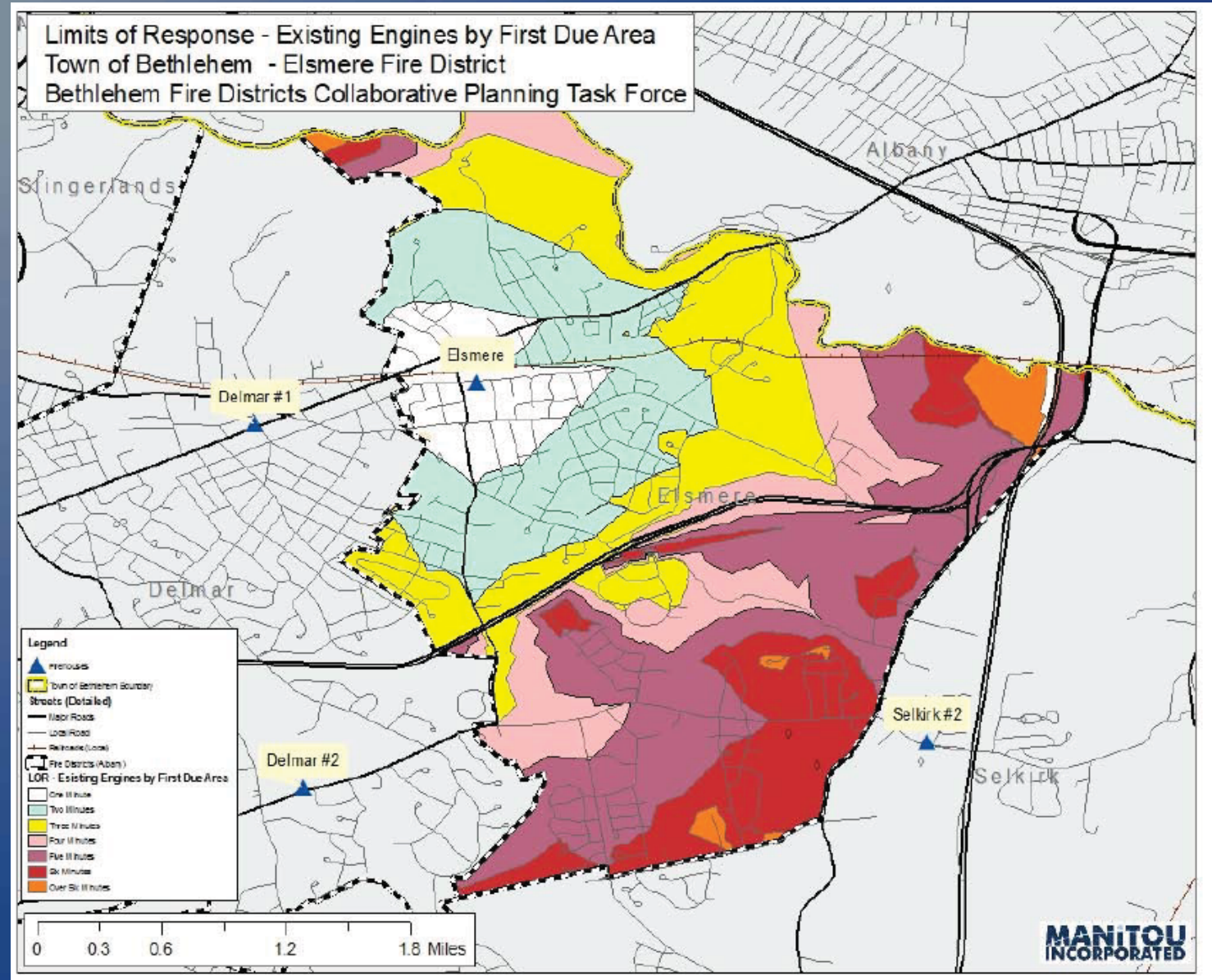


Elmwood Park

- Budget and Expenditures
 - 2010 Budget \$538,801
- Apparatus
 - 3 Engines
 - 1 Squad
 - 1 Utility
 - 1 Station



Elsmere

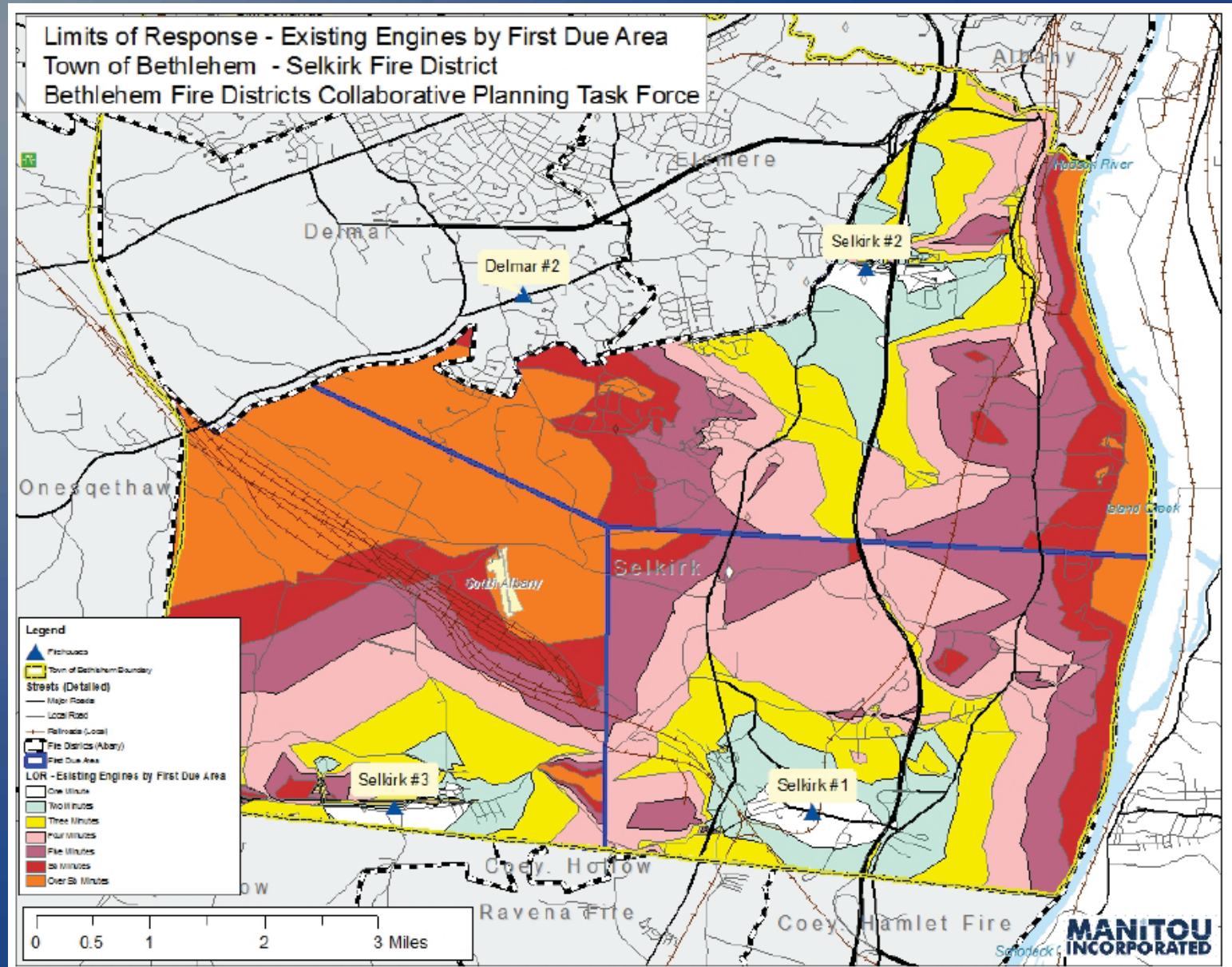


Elsmere

- Budget and Expenditure
 - 2010 Budget \$864,902
- Apparatus
 - 2 Engines
 - 1 Ladder
 - 1 Squad
 - 2 Utility
 - 1 Station



Selkirk

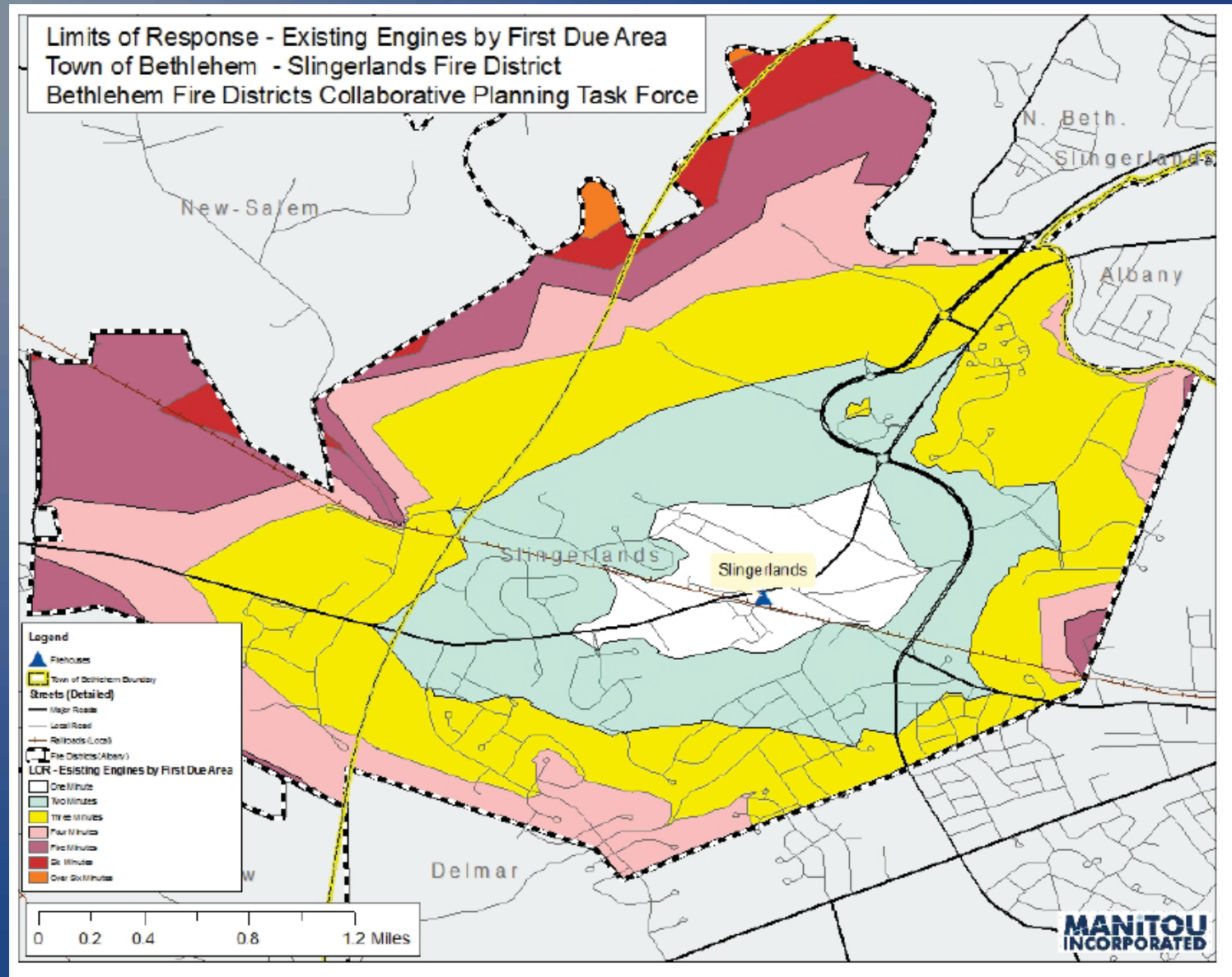


Selkirk

- Budget and Expenditure
 - 2010 Budget \$959,425
- Apparatus
 - 7 Engines
 - 1 Ladder
 - 1 Heavy Rescue
 - 4 Utility
 - 1 Boat
 - 3 Stations



Slingerlands



Slingerlands

- Budget and Expenditure
 - 2010 Budget \$433,500
- Apparatus
 - 2 Engines
 - 1 Heavy Rescue
 - 2 Utility
 - 1 Station

Overall Budget Comparisons

District/ Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Delmar	739	787	846	989	961	975
Elmwood Park	429	465	459	523	518	539
Elsmere	740	675	710	784	878	865
Selkirk	613	754	404	808	927	959
Slingerlands	381	386	372	385	432	434
TOTALS	\$2.9M	\$3.1M	\$2.8M	\$3.4M	\$3.7M	\$3.8M

Thousands of Dollars

Findings

- Current Service Level is Good, Some Daytime Problems
- Collaboration is much better than average
- Mutual and Automatic Aid is good, but can be improved
- Dispatching is satisfactory, but not exemplary; dispatch is split between Town of Bethlehem Police and Town of Guilderland Police (Elmwood Park)

Findings (cont'd)

- Existing ISO Ratings can be improved with administrative changes
- Existing station locations can be adjusted over time; no major call for wholesale new facilities, but investments will be needed now and in future;
 - Some station consolidations possible
 - reduced apparatus may lessen burdens on existing facilities
 - Consider EMS as well

Costs of Service

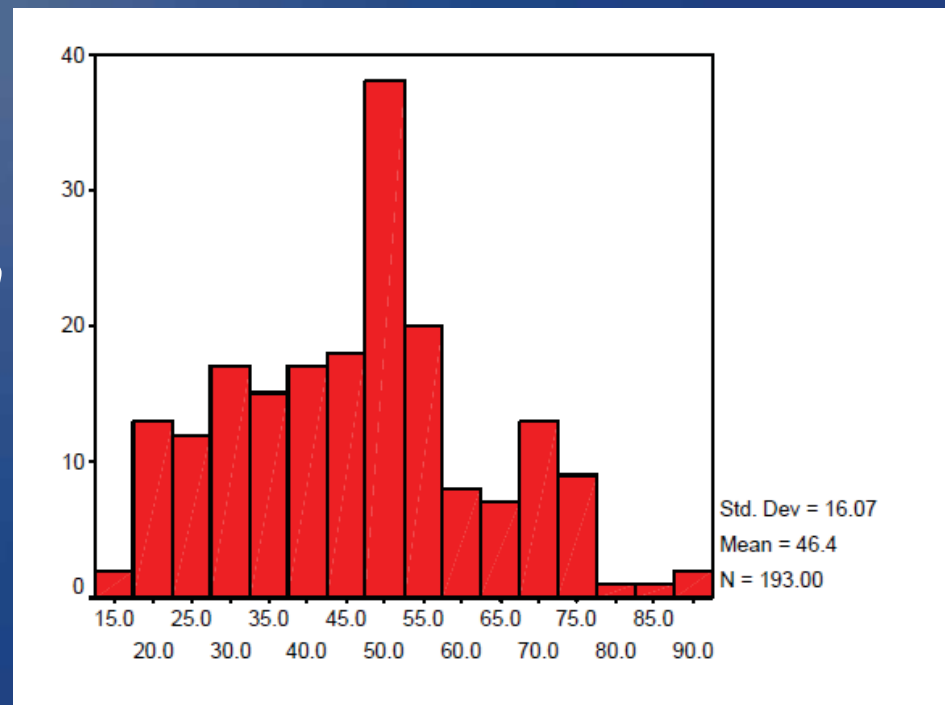
Roughly \$130,000 in administrative salaries
across all five Districts

Cumulative Expenditures are \$3.7 million

Per capita costs for fire protection are \$118,
which is in mid-range of costs for similar sized
Towns in New York State

Member Survey

- Paper survey mailed to all active members of fire districts
- 330 copies mailed out; 199 returned – 59 percent response rate
- Biggest risk identified as Not enough volunteers; Followed by “communication should be more open or two-way”; and “conflicts not addressed openly”



Age of members

Member Survey

- Showed 2-1 support for improving cooperation even if it meant reducing apparatus or moving stations
- Members were generally satisfied with their membership experiences
- While over 91 percent of members believed that emergency scene relations between firefighters of different districts was good; only 45 percent agreed that “relations between districts are positive”

Citizen Survey

- Online survey via press release and government and district web pages
- 302 responses received, representing at least 789 people
- 60+ percent satisfied with “timely response” and “professionalism”
- 55 percent satisfied with value of services; 17 percent did not know
- 73 percent did not care where service came from, as long as it was timely and professional

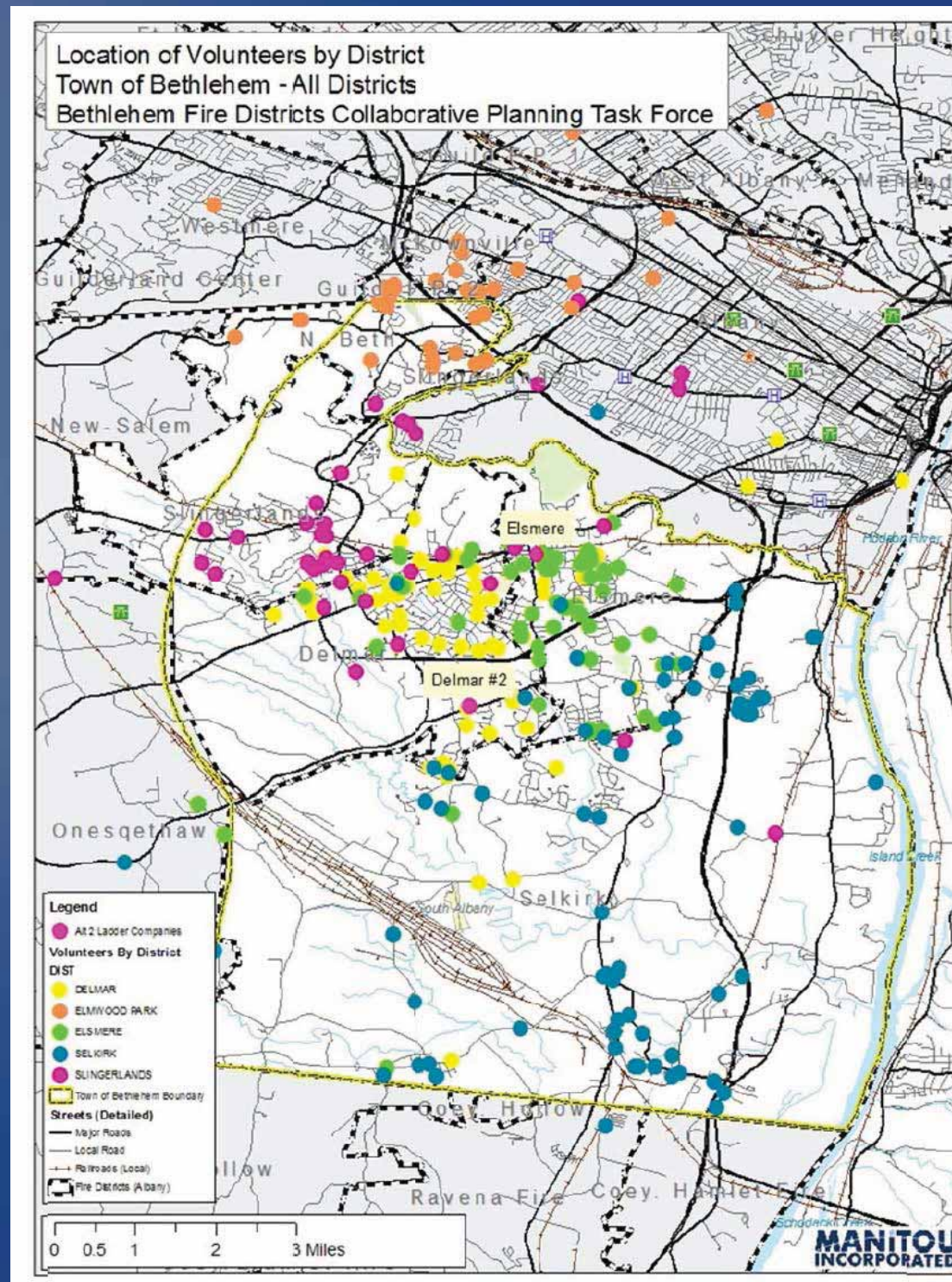
Citizen Survey Open Responses

- General support for quality of service, less support for cost of service provision

Tone/Theme	Positive	Negative
Services	25	14
Finances	4	33

Reality of Member locations

- Many members do not live in their District
- Percent of members living in their District varies between 42 percent (Slingerlands) to 72 percent (Elsmere)



Recommendations

16.1 Make the Task Force Permanent

16.2 Move Toward a Goal of Functional Consolidation

Standardized:

Training

Operating Procedures

Equipment

Apparatus

Closest Station Should Respond to Emergencies

16.15 Need Additional Study of ISO Ratings

New reports coming in

Changes in schedule

Tradeoff Between ISO and Resources and Needs

Recommendations

16.5 Begin closest Station Response in the Glenmont Area

16.7 Monitor and adjust staffing and dispatch based on staffing levels at each station

16.9, 14 Reduce apparatus fleet over time, share apparatus and enforce manage a plan through the Task Force.

Specialty Services of heavy rescue, haz mat support, foam, and rehab should be maintained. No additional special services needed based on our analysis.

16.10 Move toward a single computer-based records system for all Districts

16.11, 12 Improve dispatch record keeping to provide individual unit response times; Evaluate feasibility of moving to Albany County Dispatch

Station and Apparatus Needs: ISO

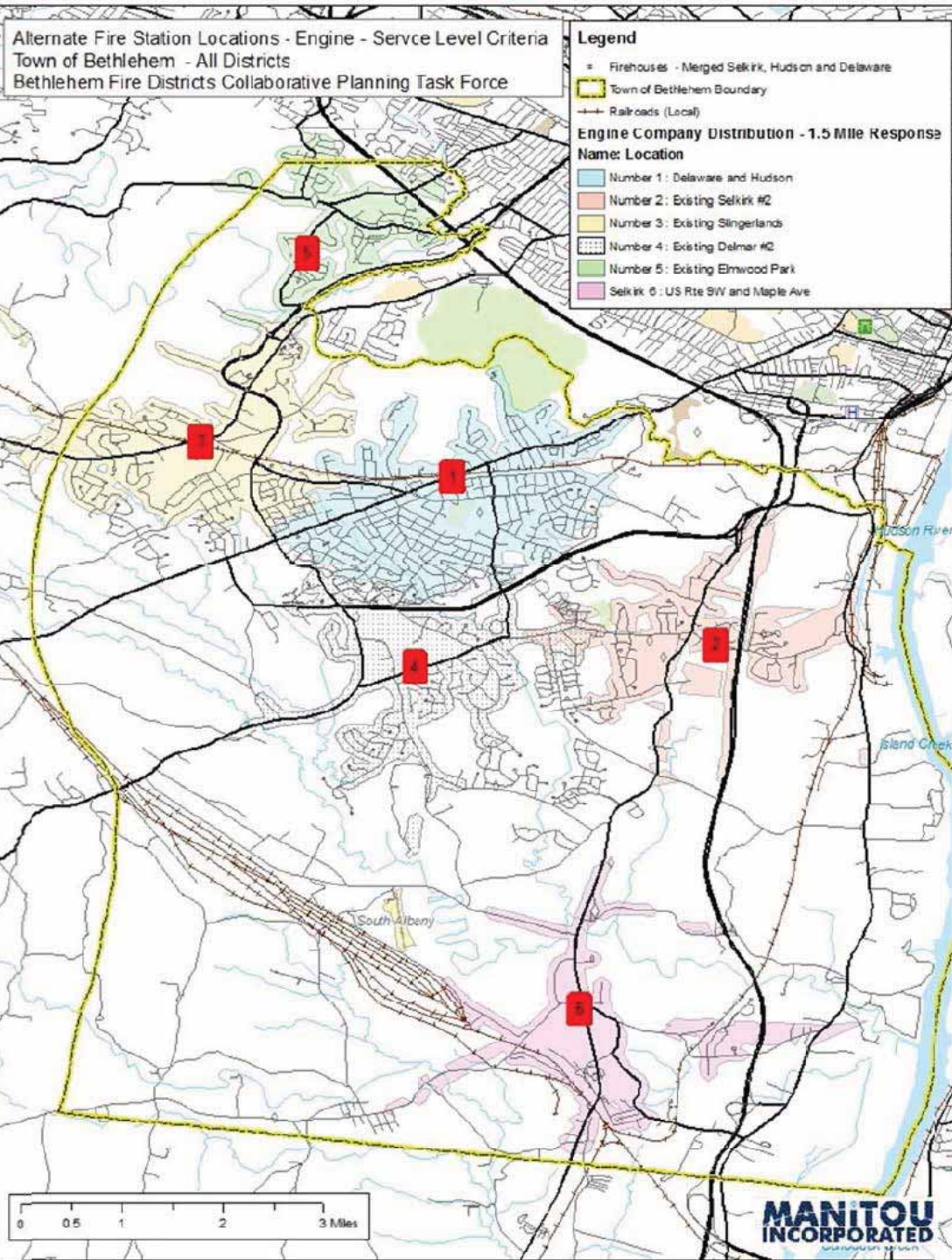
Station	Location	Front-line Engines	Reserve Engines/ Pumper Tanker	Front-line Ladder Truck	Front-line Service Truck	Reserve Ladder/ Service
1	Delaware Avenue. & Hudson Avenue	1	1	1		
2	Existing Selkirk Fire Station #2	1		1		
3	Existing Slingerlands Station	1				
4	Existing Delmar Fire Station #2	1	1			1
5	Existing Elmwood Park Fire Station	1	1*		1	
6	Creeble Road & Route 9W	1	1*		1	
7	River Road & Van Derzee	1				
8	South Albany Road & Rupert Road	1	1*			
Total		8	5	2	2	1

**Pumper/Tanker*

Station and Apparatus Needs : Service Level

Station	Location	Front-line Engines	Reserve Engines	Front-line Ladder	Front-line Service	Reserve Ladder/Service
1	Delaware Ave. & Hudson Ave.	1	1	1		
2	Existing Selkirk Fire Station 2	1		1		
3	Existing Slingerlands Station	1				
4	Existing Delmar Fire Station 2	1	1			1
5	Existing Elmwood Park Fire Station	1	1*		1	
6	Rt. 9W and Maple Ave	1	1*		1	
Total		6	4	2	2	1

*Pumper/Tanker



Conclusion

- Existing service is generally good
- Areas for immediate improvement
- Recommendations:
 - Today – Good to do
 - Tomorrow (3-10 years) – Required
 - Will help contain costs and extend life of the volunteer system
- Task Force Structure can work, but requires good faith participation by Districts
- Consolidation can ease this process, but is not required; nor is it a cure all

Thank You

- District Members
 - Delmar Fire District
 - Elmwood Park Fire District
 - Elsmere Fire District
 - Selkirk Fire District
 - Slingerlands Fire District
 - Town of Bethlehem Government
 - Other Participating Agencies
- Bethlehem Fire Districts Collaborative Planning Task Force:
 - John A. Lutz, Elsmere Fire District, Chair
 - David A. Scoons, Delmar Fire District
 - Todd Silvernail, Delmar Fire District
 - Dan Ryan, Jr., Delmar Fire District
 - John Mahoney, Elmwood Park Fire District
 - Paul Fuino, Elmwood Park Fire District
 - William Webb, Elsmere Fire District
 - Charles Wickham, Selkirk Fire District
 - William Asprion, Selkirk Fire District
 - Walter W. Eck, Jr., Slingerlands Fire District
 - Brian J. Sleurs, Slingerlands Fire District
 - George Kaufman, Elsmere Fire District, Secretary

Questions



1008 Main Street, Suite 201
Peekskill, NY 10566
914-437-8749
cjennings@manitouinc.com