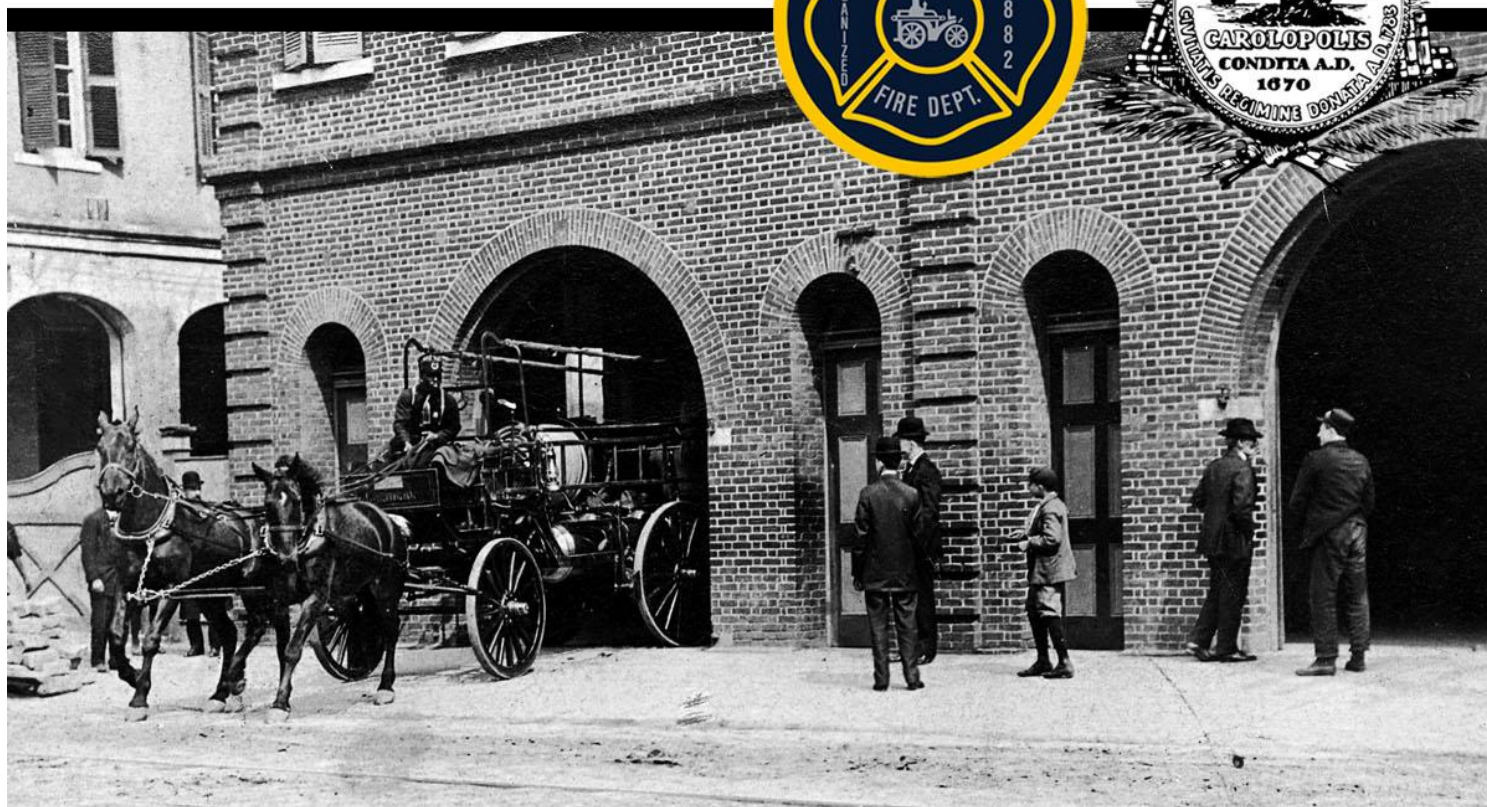


CHARLESTON

FIRE DEPARTMENT



STRATEGIC PLAN

2016
2021

FIRE SUPPRESSION

PREVENTION

EMS

TECHNICAL RESCUE

HAZMAT

MARINE



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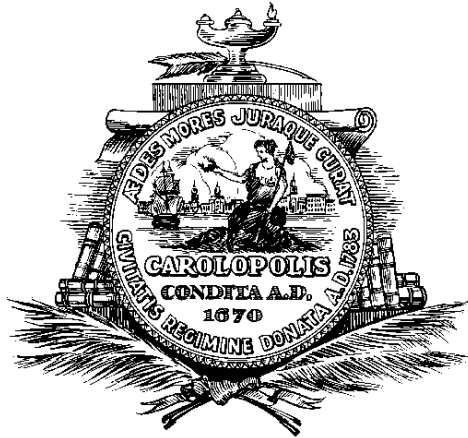
City of Charleston Governing Body



The Honorable Mayor John J. Tecklenburg seated at desk.

Council members seated from left to right: Robert M. Mitchell-District 4, Kathleen G. Wilson-District 12, F. Gary White, Jr. -District 1, and Marvin D. Wagner-District 5

Council members standing from left to right: A. Peter Shahid, Jr. -District 9, William Dudley Gregorie-District 6, Michael S. Seekings-District 8, Rodney Williams-District 2, Dean C. Riegel-District 10, William A. Moody, Jr. -District 11, James Lewis, Jr. -District 3, and Perry K. Waring-District 7



City of Charleston Mission Statement

To preserve and enhance the quality of life of the citizens
of the City of Charleston.

City of Charleston Values

Citizens

We value our diversity and are committed to treating every
resident with respect, honesty and courtesy.

Public Safety

We value every citizen's safety and understand that safe, public
spaces and neighborhoods are essential to our quality of life.

Quality Services

We value providing high quality municipal services at the lowest
possible cost to our residents.

Physical Place

We value our unique natural resources, our man-made
environment, public realm and neighborhoods, and we understand
how our physical place affects each resident's quality of life.
We will work with others to increase the sustainability of our physical place.

Regional Partnerships

We value working with other government entities within our region
to sustain and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Preface

It is my privilege to present to the governing body, the citizens of the City of Charleston and the men and women of the Charleston Fire Department (CFD) our 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. The purpose of strategic planning is to establish the priorities for the organization, focus our resources to meet those priorities and maintain a positive direction which is consistent with the expectations of all stakeholders.

Our members have established a plan that will guide the CFD in its quest for continuous improvement over the next five years through a process of community and departmental engagement. This plan focuses our attention on those we serve in order to strengthen our community, our partnerships and our department.

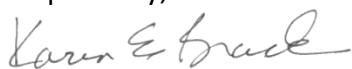
Much was accomplished under the previous strategic plan. The culmination of that commitment resulted in the department achieving accredited status from the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)/Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) and being awarded a Public Protection Class (PPC) 1 rating from the Insurance Services Office (ISO). Both accomplishments were the result of the unwavering support of our elected officials, citizens we proudly serve and the hard work put forth by the men and women of the CFD.

Through this current process we will support our mission, and the mission of the City of Charleston, through the implementation of seven strategic goals:

- Evaluate and improve upon current CFD emergency response programs to enhance the delivery of fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to the community.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive approach to workforce recruitment, hiring, retention, and planning. We believe this will result in a more diverse and effective workforce to meet present and future needs of the department.
- Develop a written comprehensive resource allocation plan to meet the CFD's standards of cover.
- Promote and expand the department's risk reduction programs to educate and preserve our community.
- Enhance and expand the training division and programs to fulfill the department's operational goals.
- Improve departmental communication to enhance consistency.
- Promote stronger relationships with our community through enhanced strategies and proactive outreach.

The members of the Charleston Fire Department are committed to the delivery of excellent public safety services to this community. Implementing this plan will ensure the continuation of the professional, progressive services that our citizens and visitors deserve.

Respectfully,



Karen E. Brack

Introduction

The Charleston Fire Department (CFD) provides the community with emergency medical services, fire suppression, basic and technical rescue, hazardous materials mitigation, wildland urban interface, disaster preparedness planning, marine/shipboard firefighting, community risk reduction, public fire and safety education, fire and arson investigation, and fire prevention services to Charleston's residents, businesses, and visitors. The agency is consistently working to achieve and/or maintain the highest level of professionalism and efficiency on behalf of those it serves, and thus, contracted with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) to facilitate a method to document the organization's path into the future via a "Community-Driven Strategic Plan." The following strategic plan was written in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the CFAI *Fire & Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual 9th Ed.*, and is intended to guide the organization within established parameters set forth by the authority having jurisdiction.

The CPSE utilized the community-driven strategic planning process to go beyond just the development of a document. It challenged the agency's members to critically examine paradigms, values, philosophies, beliefs and desires, and challenged individuals to work in the best interest of the "team." It further provided the agency with an opportunity to participate in the development of their organization's long-term direction and focus. Members of the organization's external and internal stakeholders' groups demonstrated commitment to this important project and remain committed to the document's completion.

This strategic plan, with its foundation based on community and membership input, revisits the organization's pillars (Mission, Values, and Vision) and sets forth a continuous improvement plan that offers a road map for a justifiable and sustainable future.



CHARLESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT | STRATEGIC PLAN

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Community and Organizational Background

Charleston is the seat of Charleston County founded in 1670. It is the oldest and second-largest city in South Carolina. Originally located on the west bank of the Ashley River acknowledged as Albemarle Point, the city moved to its present location on Oyster Point in 1680. Established as Charles Town in honor of King Charles II of England, Charleston adopted its present name in 1783 and is the principal city in the Charleston–North Charleston–Summerville Metropolitan Statistical Area. The city is located on Charleston Harbor, an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean formed by the confluence of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers and is defined by its rich history particularly in the popular French Quarter and Battery areas.



1733 map of Charleston published by Herman Moll

The first fire department in Charleston was the Friendly Society insurance company which began service to its members in 1736. The fire service in Charleston began to change in 1819 when it became a volunteer effort which lasted until January 1, 1882 when a paid professional fire department staffed with 103 firefighters was formed. Since those formative years, the Charleston Fire Department has grown with the city, and now delivers emergency response services to a community



1905 American LaFrance housed at Station 9

of more than 120,000 permanent residents and 4.5 million annual visitors. Protecting an area of more than 109 square miles with 19 square miles of navigable and non-navigable waterways, the department responds to approximately 21,000 calls for service each year from 15 fire stations which comprise four battalions, staffed with 333 members. Throughout its history, the department has achieved milestones representative of its commitment to mission; in the past year, the

department became the eighth agency in South Carolina to achieve accredited status from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, and additionally received an Insurance Services Office Class 1 rating.



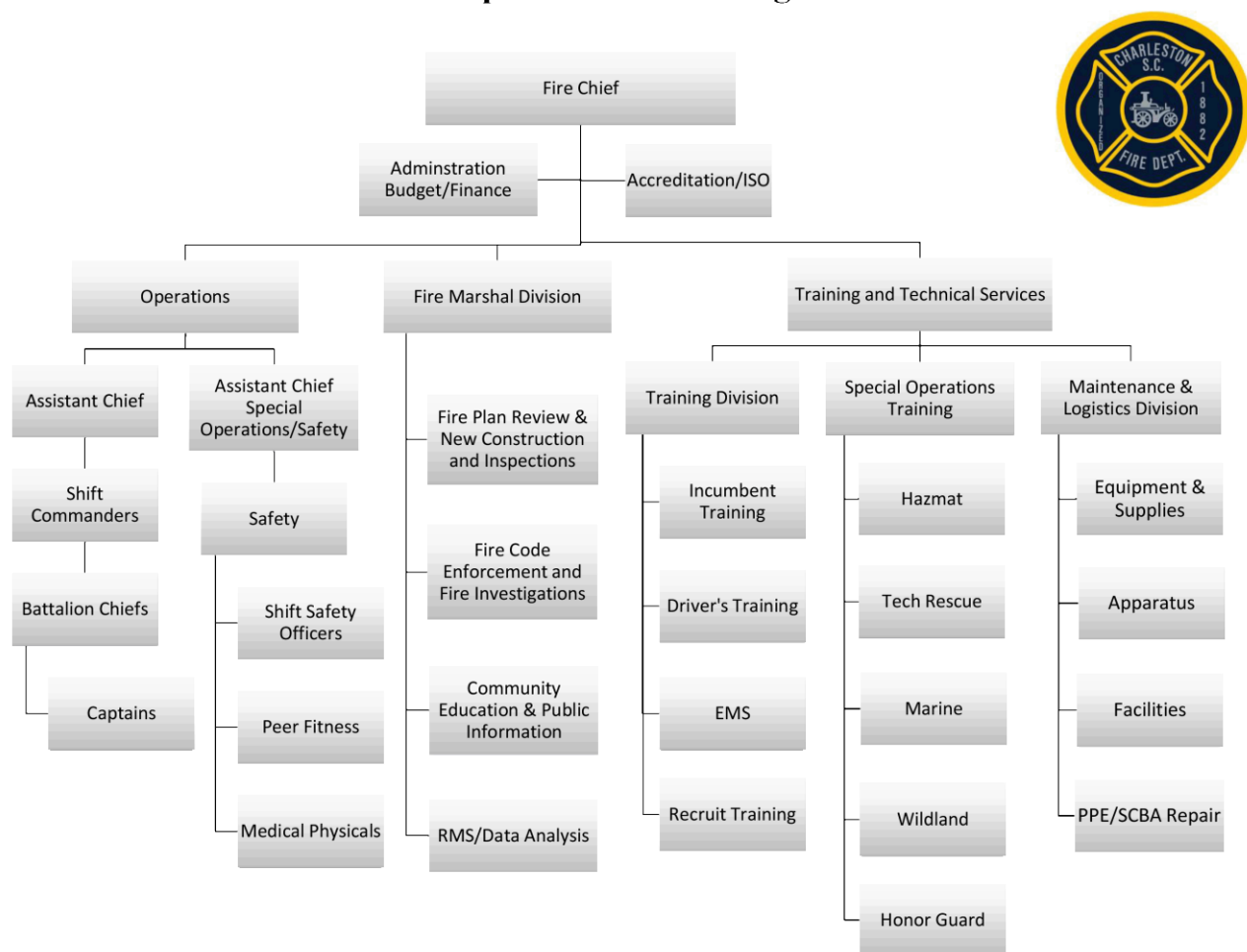
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Organizational Structure

Charleston Fire Department 2016 Organizational Chart





Community-Driven Strategic Planning

The Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) acknowledges and thanks the community's and the agency's external and internal stakeholders for their participation and input into this Community-Driven Strategic Planning Process. The CPSE also recognizes Fire Chief Karen Brack and her team for their leadership and commitment to this process.

Initial development of this strategic plan took place in June 2016, beginning with a meeting hosted by representatives from the CPSE for members of the community (external stakeholders). Input received from the meeting revolved around community expectations and concerns, as well as positive and other comments about the organization.

For many successful organizations, the voice of the community drives their operations and charts the course for their future. A "community-driven organization" is defined as one that *maintains a focus on the needs and expectations, both spoken and unspoken, of customers, both present and future, in the creation and/or improvement of the product or service provided.*¹ A community-driven strategic planning process was used to develop this strategic plan in order to ensure that the community remains a focus of an organization's direction.

A strategic plan is a living management tool that provides short-term direction, builds a shared vision, documents goals and objectives, and optimizes use of resources. Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer define strategic planning as

"a continuous and systematic process where the guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future, develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is to be measured."²

¹ Federal Benchmarking Consortium. (1997, February). *Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Customer-Driven Strategic Planning*

² Ibid

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The U.S. Federal Benchmarking Consortium Study Team explains that, to fully understand strategic planning, it is necessary to look at a few key words in the strategic planning definition:

- **continuous** - refers to the view that strategic planning must be an ongoing process, not merely an event to produce a plan;
- **systematic** - recognizes that strategic planning must be a structured and deliberate effort, not something that happens on its own;
- **process** - recognizes that one of the benefits of strategic planning is to undertake thinking strategically about the future and how to get there, which is much more than production of a document (e.g., a strategic plan);
- **guiding members** - identifies not only senior unit executives, but also employees. (It also considers stakeholders and customers who may not make these decisions, but who affect the decisions being made.);
- **procedures and operations** - means the full spectrum of actions and activities from aligning the organization behind clear long-term goals to putting in place organizational and personal incentives, allocating resources, and developing the workforce to achieve the desired outcomes; and
- **how success is to be measured** - recognizes that strategic planning must use appropriate measures to determine if the organization has achieved success.

Effective strategic planning benefits from a consistent and cohesively structured process employed across all levels of the organization. Planning is a continuous process, one with no clear beginning and no clear end. While plans can be developed on a regular basis, it is the process of planning that is important, not the publication of the plan itself. Most importantly, strategic planning can be an opportunity to unify the management, employees, and stakeholders through a common understanding of where the organization is going, how everyone involved can work to that common purpose, and how progress and levels will measure success.

"What we have to do today is to be ready for an uncertain tomorrow."

Peter F. Drucker,
Professor of Social Science
and Management



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The Community–Driven Strategic Planning Process Outline

1. Define the programs provided to the community.
2. Establish the community's service program priorities and expectations of the organization.
3. Identify any concerns the community may have about the organization, along with aspects of the organization that the community views positively.
4. Revisit the Mission Statement, giving careful attention to the services and programs currently provided, and which logically can be provided in the future.
5. Revisit the Values of the organization's membership.
6. Identify the internal Strengths and Weaknesses of the organization.
7. Identify areas of Opportunity for, and potential Threats to the organization.
8. Identify the organization's critical issues and service gaps.
9. Determine strategic initiatives for organizational improvement.
10. Establish a realistic goal and objectives for each initiative.
11. Identify implementation tasks for the accomplishment of each objective.
12. Determine the Vision of the future.
13. Develop organizational and community commitment to accomplishing the plan.



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Mission

The purpose of the CFD mission is to answer the questions:

- Who are we?
- Why do we exist?
- What do we do?
- Why do we do it?
- For whom?

A workgroup met to revisit the existing mission and, after ensuring it answered the questions, the consensus was to develop a new mission statement.

The Charleston Fire Department protects and serves our community through professional delivery of prevention, outreach, and emergency response services.



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Values

Values embraced by all members of an organization are extremely important, as they recognize the features that make up the personality of the organization. Giving consideration to community feedback, internal stakeholders revised the Charleston Fire Department's Values to the following:

Service - Provide safe, timely, and efficient response to our community.

Commitment - Duty and responsibility to our community and members of the organization.

Community - Dedicated to involving and including our citizens.

Integrity - Being honest, respectful and loyal to our community and peers.

Professionalism - Achieve excellence through progressive and courteous service.

The Mission and Values are the foundation of the CFD. Thus, every effort will be made to keep these current and meaningful so that the individuals who make up the department are guided in accomplishing the goals, objectives, and day-to-day tasks.



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Vision

The following is a vision of where the Charleston Fire Department will be in the future, if the strategic plan is accomplished. This vision is intended as a target of excellence to strive toward, and provides a basis for the department's goals and objectives.

As the Charleston Fire Department strives to maintain a reputation of exceptional service delivery, it is our vision that, by 2021, we shall be widely known for

Service, Commitment, Community, Integrity and Professionalism in the provision of world-class service during a time of transition and transformation.

Charleston Fire Department will enhance workforce development and realize greater stakeholder satisfaction through ever-improving and transparent communications practices.

From industry best practices, we seek to implement cutting-edge training that supports an enhanced emergency response program for the community.

Delivery of a comprehensive community risk reduction program and enriched public outreach will further solidify our strong commitment to the community. Citizens and visitors alike will have a protected place to live and work as a result of our department's highly-trained and appropriately equipped personnel serving from safe and well distributed facilities.

By exceeding the needs and expectations of our stakeholders, delivering our mission, living our values, and accomplishing our goals, we shall bring this vision to fruition.

Goals and Objectives

To continuously achieve the mission of CFD, realistic goals and objectives with timelines for completion must be established to enhance strengths, address identified weaknesses, provide a clear direction, and address the concerns of the community. These should become a

focus of CFD's efforts, as they will direct the organization to its desired future while having reduced the obstacles and distractions along the way. Leadership-established work groups should meet and manage progress toward accomplishing these goals and objectives, and adjust timelines as needs and the environment change. Regular reports of progress and changes should be shared with CFD leadership.

"Goals allow you to control the direction of change in your favor."

Brian Tracy,
Author



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Goal 1	Evaluate and improve upon current CFD emergency response program to enhance the delivery of fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to the community.	
Objective 1A	Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the current automatic and mutual aid programs that the CFD participates in to ensure that the CFD is maintaining an operational ready response force.	
Timeframe	12 to 24 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Identify and review current emergency response program Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to determine relevance and improvement needs. - Invite response partners to participate in the review process. - Identify any shortcomings and gaps in the current program delivery. - Develop new SOPs based on needs assessment from program evaluation. - Conduct and evaluate the appropriate multi-jurisdictional training required to properly implement any new SOPs.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1B	Explore opportunities to expand and improve service capabilities with additional auto-aid partnerships.	
Timeframe	12 to 24 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Identify other agencies that can functionally participate in the auto-aid group. - Appoint a department ambassador to inquire about interest. - Develop and provide processes to assist interested agencies in the auto-aid group transition.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1C	Seek opportunities to create more cohesive SOPs that support operations defined in the emergency response plan established with our response partners.	
Timeframe	12 to 24 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Identify emergency SOPs that should be combined under the umbrella of Charleston regional auto-aid group. - Assemble a task force of representatives from each participating agency to develop joint SOPs identified in the earlier assessment. - Establish a jointly agreed to work flow process to incorporate the develop SOPs.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

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Objective 1D	Expand the inter-department training opportunities to include scenario based exercises in fire, rescue and emergency medical response.	
Timeframe	12 to 24 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Identify areas of deficiency in the joint operations matrix. • Assemble a representative group from each participating agency to develop curriculum for scenario based exercises to create a more cohesive emergency response package to incidents beyond the scope of the Safe Structural Firefighting policy. • Assemble training officers from each agency to conduct the planned practical exercise curriculum.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1E	Develop a compliance and accountability system for all response partners for the equitable enforcement and re-enforcement of jointly agreed to emergency response plans.	
Timeframe	3 to 6 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Propose to auto-aid group the formation of incident review committee comprised of one representative from each participating agency to identify field performance deficiencies and recommended action for improvement. • Propose formal conflict resolution language to be included in the Charleston automatic aid agreement. • Create an evaluation system that ensures the recommendations of the incident review committee are completed. • Develop a system of partner companies to improve intercompany/inter-departmental relations through regularly scheduled meeting opportunities.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



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Goal 2	Develop and implement a comprehensive approach to workforce recruitment, hiring, retention, and planning; resulting in a diverse, effective workforce to meet the present and future needs of the department.	
Objective 2A	Create a diverse workforce within our organization.	
Timeframe	3 to 4 years from inception; then on-going	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Develop and distribute handouts/polling/surveys (org.). • Analyze the information gathered from developed instruments. • Compare results to current demographics of the Charleston metro area. • Obtain comparative diversity data to analyze with the Charleston data.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2B	Promote the department to attract a larger number of qualified candidates.	
Timeframe	1 to 2 years from inception; then on-going	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Determine needs, resources to include funding estimates, and feasibility of implementing a recruitment program. • Implement the program plan. • Advertise (marketing) – recruitment videos, planned events (job fairs, career days, etc.). • Review recruitment plan annually. • Survey potential candidates during and after hiring process. • Analyze data to determine any needs for change.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2C	Provide all employees with opportunities for career progression.	
Timeframe	3 to 5 years from inception; then on-going	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Conduct internal review of progress of current, and prospective employee career paths. • Identify availability of core competency courses for employee career progression. • Analyze data; implement training and education system/plan based on time and qualification. • Annual review of current positions to determine span of control, as it fits into the staffing plan. • Conduct a job analysis review of positions in specific time frame to determine staffing needs.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

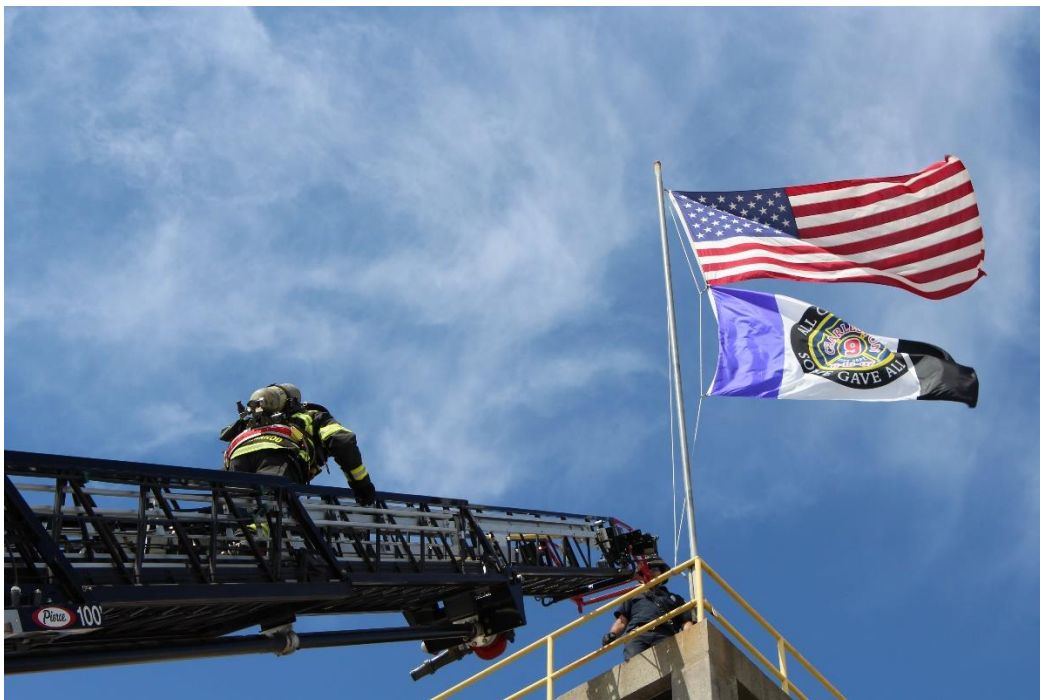


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Objective 2D	Explore and continuously evaluate opportunities in pay and benefits to retain a career workforce.	
Timeframe	2 to 3 years from inception; then on-going	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Conduct a cost benefits analysis to develop a more comprehensive survey for new employees – 6 months, 12 months. Determine change based on inputs. • Conduct annual review of employee feedback (exit interviews, 6 months, 12 months, etc.) • Work with Human Resources to conduct review of pay and benefits by a third-party entity. • Review of hiring process and outcomes to determine if changes are needed to the process.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2E	Implement a performance appraisal system aligned with career development.	
Timeframe	1 year from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Implement performance appraisal system, to include tracking, process, and policy. • Conduct training for all personnel on performance appraisal system. • Conduct annual review of performance appraisal system and make recommended changes based on input from line personnel and senior staff.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs: Determine administrative costs associated with system.	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



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Goal 3	Develop a written comprehensive resource allocation plan to meet the CFD's standards of cover.	
Objective 3A	Evaluate current apparatus replacement plan to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the department.	
Timeframe	6 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Assign the apparatus/equipment committee with the task of reviewing and evaluating the current apparatus replacement plan. - Apparatus and equipment committee develops a report on funding and disseminates to the senior staff. - Senior staff evaluates findings and incorporates into a revised plan as needed.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3B	Improve the efficiency of the logistics division.	
Timeframe	12-18 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Conduct an evaluation of the current logistics division's mission or purpose, and make recommendations for improved efficiencies. - Evaluate current practices for inventory control. - Evaluate logistics mission or purpose against current division staffing. - Find a location large enough to house a facility that meets the recommended needs determined by the evaluation work group. - Have the logistics division develop a tool to educate the department about the complexities of the division.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



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Objective 3C	Evaluate if allocated resources are meeting the needs of the department fire station facilities and programs.	
Timeframe	12-18 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Develop a periodic inspection plan based on pre-determined schedule to assess preventative and safety needs. • Memorialize a replacement program for appliance/equipment in stations (beds, sofa, etc.) • Evaluate parking capacity at all stations and make recommendations as needed. • Assign a group to compare the standards of cover with existing facilities and distribution and make recommendations to ensure operational efficiencies.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3D	Evaluate if allocated resources are meeting the needs of the department EMS facilities and programs.	
Timeframe	12-18 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Conduct an evaluation of the current Emergency Medical Service (EMS) program and make recommendations for improved efficiencies. • Evaluate current technologies and practices for inventory and pharmacy control. • Evaluate the EMS mission versus staffing assigned for current efficiency and need for additional support (e.g. field medical control.) • Convene a work group to evaluate the current delivery model for effectiveness, distribution, response times, etc. • Evaluate need to house EMS program in a larger physical facility to accommodate expanding EMS mission.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3E	Evaluate if allocated resources are meeting the needs of the department training facilities and programs.	
Timeframe	12-18 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Evaluate current status and capabilities of existing training facilities and resources. • Develop a work plan to correct any shortfalls identified in the evaluation (within confines of existing footprint). • Continued involvement in acquisition and development of regional training facility.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



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Objective 3F	Determine if allocated resources and current administrative spaces are appropriate in relation to current staffing and proposed future expansion.	
Timeframe	12-18 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Evaluate current administrative workspace (locations, occupancy, staffing, and parking) to determine if workspace meets capacity. • Develop a plan to address any issues found in evaluation. • Conduct feasibility study to assist in the evaluation of current resources and facilities. • Report findings to the administrative staff.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3G	Evaluate if allocated resources are meeting the needs of the department fleet maintenance facilities and programs.	
Timeframe	12-18 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Assess if current fleet maintenance processes are adequate. • Deliver periodic inspection plan to assess apparatus preventative maintenance needs. • Memorialize a replacement plan for apparatus equipment replacement. • Evaluate parking and work space capacity and make recommendations as needed. • Memorialize a replacement plan for shop tools and equipment (lifts, compressors, etc.).	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



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Goal 4	Promote and expand the departments risk reduction programs to educate and preserve our community.	
Objective 4A	Evaluate current community risk reduction programs.	
Timeframe	6 months – 1 year from inception; then annually	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Analyze current community risk reduction programs. - Evaluate the effectiveness of the programs. - Eliminate any ineffective or unnecessary programs. - Revise and update identified necessary and effective programs to improve service delivery.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4B	Improve the fire risk assessment program.	
Timeframe	48 months from inception; then on-going	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Evaluate pre-fire plan program and introduce needed changes for improvement. - Evaluate comparative data on fire severity against level of response. - Improve and increase the availability of critical building information. - Review and evaluate the hydrant maintenance program to identify and implement improvement processes. - Review and adjust current assigned planning zones to meet new demands.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4C	Enhance fire and life safety education programs.	
Timeframe	36 months from inception, then on-going	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Evaluate effectiveness of the juvenile, school based, and elderly based education programs and add any needed enhancements. - Evaluate and make necessary changes to current public training delivery to ensure it is contemporary and readily available. - Evaluate staffing needs to expand and enhance public education services. - Deliver train the trainer classes to operations personnel needed to enhance or expand the delivery of public education programs. - Identify any other target groups to expand the public education program. - Evaluate and review educational materials and identify improvements and ensure standardization. - Ensure adequate understanding of the process to request, receive, and distribute materials for life safety education. - Establish inventory thresholds and restocking processes to maintain adequate educational materials for Fire & Life Safety programs.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

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Objective 4D	Enhance fire code enforcement, plan review, and permitting.	
Timeframe	36 months from inception; then on-going	Assigned to:
	- Identify and implement changes needed to increase the number of inspections conducted annually. - Evaluate process changes needed to decrease plan review time and feasibility of implementation.	
Critical Tasks	- Develop and implement a risk based inspection frequency standard. - Implement a hazardous material permitting process in accordance with fire code requirements. - Evaluate outcomes from program enhancements and report staffing requirements to improve service delivery.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4E	Enhance fire and arson investigation program.	
Timeframe	12 months from inception; then on-going	Assigned to:
	- Evaluate outcomes from the fire investigation processes. - Determine and provide needed training to improve investigators' skill sets. - Evaluate the effectiveness and seek improvement for the Fire Investigation Team & Company.	
Critical Tasks	- Identify potential or necessary partnership opportunities and enter into MOUs to solidify partnerships and resources. - Work with the Charleston Police Department to provide investigators with the necessary law enforcement authority to carry out the entire case, through arrest and prosecution. - Evaluate outcomes from program enhancements and report staffing requirements to improve service delivery.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:



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Goal 5	Enhance and expand the training division and programs to fulfill the department's operational goals.	
Objective 5A	Determine what training programs directly impact operational goals.	
Timeframe	3 to 6 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Evaluate current programs – examples include but not limited to recruit, incumbent, EMS, and driver. • Review operational goals to determine current program alignment. • Conduct needs assessment to determine needed programs to meet goals.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5B	Determine if training division resources are sufficient to meet operational goals.	
Timeframe	1 year from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Perform desk audit of current positions to determine workload. • Perform audit of physical resources. • Conduct a needs assessment. Compare current resources to national standards and identified needs to develop improvement plan.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5C	Incorporate new or additional resources previously identified into associated training program areas.	
Timeframe	2 years from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Prioritize the incorporation of new or additional resources based on need. • Introduce new or additional resources to the training division. • Incorporate new or additional resources based on operational needs and availability.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5D	Assess and evaluate the impact of additional resources on the training division's ability to meet and fulfill operational goals.	
Timeframe	2 to 5 years from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Assess the outcomes from new resources and delivery programs from the training division. • Assess operational response outcomes to determine change in meeting performance goals. • Report findings to the administration. • Re-evaluate and adjust resources and delivery of programs in order to close any service gaps identified.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

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Goal 6	Improve departmental communication to enhance consistency.	
Objective 6A	Identify areas of internal communications breakdown.	
Timeframe	6 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Form a stakeholder group to study communication issues. • Review data from internal survey. • Identify information gaps in the data. • Develop a survey to gather previously identified gaps in the data. • Compile and organize the data.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 6B	Develop a plan to improve internal communication deficiencies.	
Timeframe	6 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Analyze survey data to determine problem areas. • Prioritize problem areas for improvement. • Research contemporary means of communication to develop an improvement plan.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 6C	Implement internal communications improvement plan.	
Timeframe	One year from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Develop a training curriculum for introduction and use of the improvement plan. • Deliver training on improvement plan. • Evaluate feedback from training and revise improvement as needed. • Implement the improvement plan.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 6D	Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of communications improvement plan.	
Timeframe	Ongoing from date of inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Compile measurable data through employee feedback processes. • Analyze data to determine the effectiveness of the improvement plan. • Revise or create a new plan as indicated through review process.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:

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Goal 7	Promote stronger relationships with our community through enhanced strategies and proactive outreach.	
Objective 7A	Identify and analyze current marketing efforts employed by the department.	
Timeframe	6 months from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Identify current information outlets, use, and benefits to process. - Conduct a needs assessment and compare value to department needs. - Identify any outlets or processes not in use and analyze the benefits to comparative needs. - Review marketing consolidation tools to improve efficiency of strategies. - Assimilate information throughout the organization.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 7B	Evaluate current process and develop new marketing strategies promoting the positive value of the CFD within the community.	
Timeframe	2 years from inception	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Evaluate current strategies and processes employed by the department. - Review strategies and process utilized by other agencies and evaluate any benefit for use in the CFD. - Explore opportunities for external organization feedback or marketing strategies or processes. - Explore opportunities for external organizations to produce and conduct a marketing campaign.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 7C	Implement proactive public outreach program.	
Timeframe	2 years from inception; then on-going	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Develop and deliver an internal training curriculum on delivery of programs, strategies, and processes. Adjust delivery based on employee feedback before implementation. - Develop and implement needed SOPs to provide guidance and support in program delivery. - Identify outreach opportunities for program delivery, such as: - Community groups and organizations (e.g.: HOAs, Citizen Academy, etc.) - Community events - Community leaders - Evaluate the effectiveness of the program initially and annually thereafter. - Adjust the program and delivery process accordingly.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



Performance Measurement

To assess and ensure that an organization is delivering on the promises made in their strategic plan, the organization's leaders must determine performance measures for which they are fully accountable. As output measurement can be challenging, the organization must focus on the assessment of progress toward achieving improved output. Jim Collins states, "What matters is not finding the perfect indicator, but settling upon a *consistent and intelligent* method of assessing your output results, and then tracking your trajectory with rigor."³

Organizations must further be prepared to revisit and revise their goals, objectives, and performance measures to keep up with accomplishments and environmental changes.

. . . successful strategic planning requires continuing review of actual accomplishments in comparison with the plan . . . periodic or continuous environmental scanning to assure that unforeseen developments do not sabotage the adopted plan or that emerging opportunities are not overlooked.⁴

To establish that the agency's Strategic Plan is achieving results, performance measurement data will be implemented and integrated as part of the plan. An integrated process, known as "Managing for Results," will be utilized, which is based upon:

- The identification of strategic goals and objectives;
- The determination of resources necessary to achieve them;
- The analyzing and evaluation of performance data; and
- The use of that data to drive continuous improvement in the organization.

- **If you don't measure the results of your plan, you can't tell success from failure.**
- **If you can't see success, you can't reward it.**
- **If you can't reward success, you're probably rewarding failure.**
- **If you can't see success, you can't learn from it.**
- **If you can't recognize failure, you can't correct it.**
- **If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.**

Reinventing Government
David Osborn and Ted Gaebler

³ Collins Good to Great and the Social Sectors. Boulder, 2009

⁴ Sorkin, Ferris and Hudak. Strategies for Cities and Counties. Public Technology, 1984.





The Success of the Strategic Plan

The agency has approached its desire to develop and implement a strategic plan by asking for and receiving input from the community and members of the organization during the development stage of the planning process. The agency used professional guidance to conduct a community-driven strategic planning process to assist in the development of this plan. The success of this strategic plan will not depend upon implementation of the goals and their related objectives, but from support received from the authority having jurisdiction, the members of the organization, and the community-at-large.

"No matter how much you have achieved; you will always be merely good relative to what you can become. Greatness is an inherently dynamic process, not an end point."

Good to Great and the Social Sectors
Jim Collins

Provided the community-driven strategic planning process is kept dynamic and supported by effective leadership and active participation, it will be a considerable opportunity to unify internal and external stakeholders through a jointly developed understanding of organizational direction; how all vested parties will work to achieve the mission, goals, and vision; and how the organization will measure and be accountable for its progress and successes.⁵

⁵ Matthews (2005). *Strategic Planning and Management for Library Managers*



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Appendix A - Community Group Findings

Charleston Fire Department External Stakeholders			
<i>Director David Abrams</i>	<i>Jennet Alterman</i>	<i>Debbie Blalock</i>	<i>Dave Echols</i>
<i>Doug Farmer</i>	<i>Karen Freischlag</i>	<i>Dr. Dave French</i>	<i>Diane Hamilton</i>
<i>Chief Bobby Herbert</i>	<i>Elizabeth Jenks</i>	<i>Director James Lake</i>	<i>Lori Lambert</i>
<i>Councilmember Bill Moody</i>	<i>Chief Mark Schrade</i>	<i>Margaret Seidler</i>	<i>Charlie Smith</i>
<i>Dr. Kendra Stewart</i>	<i>Sasha Vargas-Fimiani</i>	<i>Chief Richard Waring</i>	<i>Laurie Yarbrough</i>



External Stakeholders Work Session

There are two key elements to the CFD's organizational philosophy: high level commitment to community and community satisfaction. Thus, the agency invited community representatives to provide feedback on services provided.

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Community Priorities

A fire department needs to understand what the customers consider to be their priorities in order to dedicate time, energy, and resources to services most desired by its community. With that, the external stakeholders were asked to prioritize the programs offered by the organization through a process of direct comparison. The results were as follows:

PROGRAMS	RANKING	SCORE
Emergency Medical Services	1	111
Fire Suppression	2	106
Technical Rescue	3	98
Hazardous Materials Mitigation	4	97
Wildland Urban Interface	5	59
Domestic Preparedness Planning and Response	6	51
Marine Response / Shipboard Firefighting	7	48
Community Risk Reduction	8	41
Public Fire and Life Safety Education	9	34
Fire Investigation, Cause and Origin	10	30



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Community Expectations

Understanding what the community expects of its fire and emergency services organization is critically important to developing a long-range perspective. Internal emphasis may need to be changed or bolstered to fulfill the community needs. Education on the level of service that is already available may be all that is needed in certain areas. The following are the expectations of the community's external stakeholders:

Community Expectations of the Charleston Fire Department (verbatim, in priority order)

1. Timely emergency incident response; timely fire and hazardous material response, timely response to acts of terrorism. 70
2. Put out fires; safely suppress fires. 21
3. More knowledge about what to expect upon arrival - training and techniques, excellent training; trained on fire safety procedures. 21
4. Emergency medical response. 17
5. First aid and fire prevention - public safety education; public outreach; visiting senior centers. 15
6. Fire code enforcement and risk reduction .12
7. Disaster response; emergency response to flooding; disaster preparedness. 12
8. Modern equipment. 9
9. Cooperation with regional departments .8
10. Good stewards of tax dollars; remain fiscally responsible; responsible use of resources. 6
11. Professional courteous response .6
12. Properly staffed at 95% or better. 6
13. Good morale upon all firefighters. 5
14. Community involvement. 5
15. Strong leadership, leading disaster response. 5
16. Provide quality service explore potential new programs. 5
17. Communication. 5
18. Suppression technology and practices are effective. 5

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19. Department to maintain accreditation and ISO class 1 rating. 5
20. Save lives. 5
21. Regional approach to providing fire department systems. 5
22. Knowing more about new businesses coming into the area. 3
23. Safe response out of station. 3
24. Sensitivity to calls involving the elderly or disabled. 3
25. Community support. 2
26. Department will provide statistical analysis of calls, response times etc. to public via media on monthly basis. 2
27. Asking for input from the operational people regarding operational policy and procedure. Administration should avoid intervening in operational policy. 2
28. Fire investigation. 1
29. All chiefs should have more involvement with all personnel. 1
30. Good collaborators / partners with other services. 1
31. Maintain a formal system of analysis and feedback to ensure crews are performing at the highest level and learning from every call. 1
32. Diverse workforce that reflects the community. 1
33. Flexibility in working towards goals - ability to shift gears necessary for betterment of community. 1

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Areas of Community Concern

The planning process would be incomplete without an expression from the community regarding concerns about the organization. Some areas of concern may be a weakness within the delivery system, while other weaknesses may be misperceptions based on a lack of information or incorrect information.

Areas of Community Concern about and for the Charleston Fire Department (verbatim, in priority order)

1. Funding; is funding adequate to meet the needs of our community? Funding options; lack of funding, especially infrastructure; sufficient funding; equipment replacement; growth balances with funding; enough equipment; have enough fire units; apparatus maintenance funding; fully funded. 39
2. Are there enough highly qualified firefighters? Staffing needs met; lack of good recruits – low paying/dangerous jobs; have enough personnel; fully staffed. 18
3. Firefighter salary structure – too low; adequate pay/benefits; retention of staff' personnel retention. 18
4. Training/certification; Firefighter level of education; firefighter training; well-trained. 16
5. Are there enough “houses” to be efficient? Facility improvements; modernization of stations; housed in the best facilities in the most accessible locations. 15
6. Duplication of services (i.e. fire department personnel responding at the same time as ambulances do); responding to incidents that are not their responsibility; resource heavy response for minor incidents. 13
7. Visible collaboration with police; developing an active shooter plan with law enforcement. 8
8. Level of instability in firefighters’ lives due to shift work/firefighter culture; work culture. 7
9. Employee morale; morale of members; concern about esprit de corps; so many changes at command level had an adverse morale effect. 6
10. Public Perception; department participating in building strong community relationships; with changing public perception about public safety, am concerned about their safety. 6
11. When working with regional department it is important to keep in mind that other departments may not have available resources to respond in the same manner. 5
12. Potential for lung/heart disorders in firefighters – secondary to job hazards; encouraging use of behavior health resources. 5



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13. Safety of firefighters while responding; safety of firefighters on scene. 5
14. Prioritization of response capabilities. 4
15. Does CFD have enough of a role in leadership for public safety? 4
16. Operating efficiently in a historic city where streets aren't made for fire trucks and buildings are old. 4
17. Meeting technology needs; utilization of technology for future needs and growth. 3
18. Does elected body have faith in and support CFD? 3
19. Potential for substance abuse. 2
20. Lack of community/business cooperation. 2
21. Understanding the future of the industry balanced with long tradition of service. 2
22. Is there a "sofa superstore" hangover? 2
23. Lack of diversity in personnel. 1
24. Union vs non-union issues; labor strife. 1



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Positive Community Feedback

The CPSE promotes the belief that, for a strategic plan to be valid, the community's view on the organization's strengths must be established. Needless efforts are often put forth in over-developing areas that are already successful. However, proper utilization and promotion of the strengths may often help the organization overcome or offset some of the identified weaknesses.

Positive Community Comments about the Charleston Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)

- Capital acquisition appears to have been a priority for the city and has resulted in station/apparatus upgrades in almost all areas.
- Commitment to providing the best possible service to the citizens remains strong department wide.
- Mutual/automatic aid has resulted in more efficient delivery of service community wide.
- Professionalism.
- Integrity.
- Speed.
- The concerted effort to elicit change.
- The desire to add value to the customer.
- The desire for improved cooperative effort with our communities.
- CFD has a great fire and life education.
- Great team for community risk reduction.
- Prepare for hazardous situation.
- Good with delivering public information – social media, conference....
- Always providing their staff with the best training.
- Fast response times.
- Ability to work very well with partner agencies.
- Modern tactics.
- Continually looking forward for improvement and not stuck in the past.
- Great command staff.



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- Strong department support from mayor and council.
- Great presence in the community.
- Great public safety partner! Good collaboration.
- Focus on improving level of service.
- Strong desire to public outreach.
- Willingness to use new approaches to job performance.
- Very good at identifying community needs and working to fill any (appropriate) voids.
- Fire personnel are amazing both in skill and professionalism.
- CFD has strong leadership and clear expectation.
- CFD recognizes the importance of public involvement w/forums such as this.
- CFD has excellent equipment, and has evolved w/the changing needs of the city.
- Medical responses are an added benefit to an involved fire department.
- Strong leadership and ability to work well with other community leaders.
- CFD seeks partnerships with the other agencies and organizations for the betterment of all.
- Ability to change direction and recognize problems that need resolution.
- Cares about staff as well as citizens.
- Problem resolution skills as well as practical skills expected from Fire Department staff.
- Commendable response time.
- Fire Personnel appear better trained.
- Upgraded equipment.
- Very effective at doing job.
- Great leadership interested in improving (excellent chief).
- Very good customer service/professionalism.
- Great response times.
- Staying at the scene until order has been brought back.
- Good interpersonal skills of fire department personnel.



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- Outstanding leadership.
- Dedicated workforce.
- Department's willingness to evolve.
- Department's ability to re-invent itself.
- Department's involvement in the community.
- Seems like Chief Brack's leadership is working well.
- Seems like recent fires have been managed very effectively.
- From my experience via work, interaction has always been positive/willingness to assist. Professional.
- From my observation, firemen and women appear to enjoy being firemen and women.
- While maintaining policy, still willing to discuss options to assist businesses to achieve objectives.
- This group is very good and they work outside of just primary function. In our city, would they have the resources and manpower, and they are willing to share to accomplish the greater good.



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Other Thoughts and Comments

The Community was asked to share any other comments they had about CFD or its services. The following written comments were received:

Other Community Comments about the Charleston Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)

- Observations indicate that leadership at the department remains mission oriented with attention to detail and long term planning an obvious commitment. Although professionalism in the delivery of service to the community remains high throughout the department, there appears to be a disconnect between command staff and company personnel as to personal commitment to the department goals and mission. At times, morale appears to suffer because a culture of negativity has developed at the company level that hinders team building efforts throughout the department.
- My only process suggestion would be that after a major fire, that someone should make sure that the owner of a damaged building gets connected to someone in the building department to help them understand fully what the code will allow them to rebuild and what it will not allow them to rebuild. This should occur as soon as possible.
- My heartfelt appreciation goes out to all the people who helped my parents at 52 Ft. Royal on May 10. I have a new appreciation for what each of them have to do in their daily work.
- CFD is a great organization that thinks ahead and always concern about their community.
- The Charleston Fire Department is viewed as an example of professionalism in Charleston County. They do their job and do it extremely well under the worst circumstances.
- Chief Brack and her command staff are doing an excellent job of leading the department into a department that is well trained and equipped to fulfill the mission.
- A pleasure work with this group (CFD)!
- Getting out and connecting. We see them in the grocery stores but we need to see them here in the community.
- Worried about facility needs being met and the impact of poor facilities on morale of staff.
- The CFD has been great partner to other fire departments in the area, providing many great training opportunities.
- There has been a departmental push toward professionalism, better communication with the public and a general emphasis on upgrading CFD...for which I am grateful.



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- In my limited exchange with the department I have been impressed by the combination of professionalism w/providing support to individuals who are frightened by their circumstances.
- I have the utmost gratitude and respect for all members of the CFD and their willingness to sacrifice their well-being to protect my family and me.
- Do not know much about what's going on concerning the department. There hasn't been a feedback with the community.
- I think if you had more involvement for fire mentors to get involved with all personnel, they could bring back more information to the chiefs about what the personnel like or dislike about their job.
- I hope that this strategic plan is developed using a polarity thinking approach.
- Thanks again for asking [to be invited to participate in the strategic planning].
- Appreciate opportunity to contribute.





Appendix B - Internal Stakeholder Group Findings

The internal stakeholder work sessions were conducted over the course of three days. These sessions served to discuss the organization's approach to community-driven strategic planning, with focus on the agency's Mission, Values, Core Programs and Support Services, as well as the organization's perceived Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The work sessions involved participation by the broad organization representation in attendance, as named below and pictured on the next page.

Charleston Fire Department Internal Stakeholder Representatives			
<i>Dan Arthur</i> Engineer	<i>Robert Baldwin</i> Director of Training	<i>Daniel Chavous</i> Captain	<i>Greg Chesher</i> Health & Safety Officer
<i>Mark Davis</i> Deputy Chief of Training and Technical Services	<i>Jason Dunigan</i> Assistant Engineer	<i>Rob Fulmer</i> Captain	<i>Will Garwood</i> Logistics Coordinator
<i>Albert Graziani</i> Engineer	<i>Brent Gunn</i> Engineer	<i>Mike Hanuscin</i> Battalion Chief Accreditation Manager	<i>Jacob Hegeman</i> Firefighter
<i>Kenny Jenkins</i> Captain	<i>Mike Julazadeh</i> Chief Fire Marshal	<i>Andy Kotz</i> Firefighter	<i>John Lemacks</i> Captain
<i>Cassandra McSwain</i> Administrative Services Manager	<i>Anthony Morley</i> Captain	<i>Kevin Prin</i> Captain	<i>John Rhodes</i> Fire Inspector
<i>James Richardson</i> Captain	<i>Brandon Shaw</i> Assistant Fire Marshal	<i>John Tippet</i> Deputy Chief of Operations	<i>Chris Vanhoy</i> Assistant Chief Operations
<i>Joe Waters</i> Fire Mechanic	<i>Kevin Weeks</i> Captain	<i>Matt Wilder</i> Captain	

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Agency Internal Stakeholders

Programs and Services

The agency's internal stakeholders identified the following core programs provided to the community, as well as the services that enable the organization to deliver those programs:

Core Programs of the Charleston Fire Department	
• Emergency Medical Services	• Fire Suppression
• Technical Rescue	• Hazardous Materials Mitigation
• Wildland Urban Interface	• Disaster Preparedness Planning and Response
• Community Risk Reduction	• Marine Response /Shipboard Firefighting
• Public Fire and Life Safety Education	• Fire Code Enforcement, Plan Review, and Permitting
• Fire and Arson Investigation	• Community Outreach and Public Information

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Supporting Services of the Charleston Fire Department

• Charleston Police Department	• All internal city departments
• CFD Logistics	• Charleston County EMS
• Utility Providers	• Charleston County Consolidated Dispatch
• Mayor and City Council	• Medical University of South Carolina
• Hospitals	• US Coast Guard
• American Red Cross	• Berkeley County EMS
• Urban Forestry	• Fire Administration
• South Carolina Fire Marshal – Labor License Regulation	• Department of Health and Environmental Services
• International Association of Fire Chiefs	• IAFF Local 61
• PPE Repair Team	• SCBA Repair Team
• Information Technology Department	• Human Resources
• Housing Authority/Office of Livability	• Department of Transportation
• Vendors	• Parking Enforcement
• College of Charleston	• South Carolina Emergency Management
• Automatic Aid Partners	• Mutual Aid Partners
• Civil Support Team	• Railway industry
• South Carolina State Port Authority	• International Code Council
• National Fire Protection Association	• Blue Card Incident Command
• Charleston Dorchester Mental Health	• Charleston Area Rapid Transit Authority
• Charleston County Sheriff's Office	• County Emergency Operations Center
• Center for Public Safety Excellence	• South Carolina Fire Academy
• Homeland Security	• Insurance Services Organization
• South Carolina Department of Natural Resources	• All Law Enforcement Agencies



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S.W.O.T. Analysis

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis is designed to have an organization candidly identify its positive and less-than-desirable attributes. Internal stakeholders participated in this activity to record their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the possible opportunities and potential threats.

Strengths

It is important for any organization to identify its strengths in order to ensure service provision capability and consistency with the issues facing the organization. Often, identification of organizational strengths leads to the channeling of efforts toward primary community needs that match those strengths. Programs which do not match organizational strengths, or the primary function of the organization, should be seriously reviewed to evaluate the rate of return on staff time and allocated funds. The internal stakeholders identified the agency's strengths through a consensus process.

Strengths of Charleston Fire Department	
Dedicated people	Resilient workforce
Willing to share to knowledge	Reliable equipment
Competent maintenance shop	Effective special teams
Willingness to cooperate with other agencies	Competent/visionary leadership
Good core training (incumbent/recruit)	Wellness program better than ever
Embrace technology	Compassion for community
Supportive administrative staff	Officer development program
Commitment to effective operations	Specific/effective SOPs
Effective accountability system on the fire ground	Emphasis on safety
Strong support for operational readiness – SCBA, PPE	Strong company officers
Commitment to improve in all aspects	Efficient logistics
Responsive Fire Marshal Division	Strong command presence
Progressive training staff	Skilled responsive shop staff
In house repairs PPE, SCBA, turn around cost effective	In-house recruit program
Increased department growth (staff, stations)	Fire service based fire marshals



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Four-person staffing	ISO Class 1/CFAI accreditation
Improved uniforms, gear, equipment, process	Squad 101 – delivery of EMS
Strong command staff	Strong team commanders
City benefits – PUSH, smoking, weight, gym	History culture
Largest department tri-county	All career department
Self-assessment, quality improvement/control	Young healthy department
Fire Marshal's Division	Internal input-committee
Advisory board	Forecasting /replacement
Budget accountability	Clear expectations
Charleston County Consolidated Dispatch	



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Weaknesses

For any organization to either begin or continue to move progressively forward, it must also be able to identify areas where it functions poorly or not at all. These areas of needed enhancements are not the same as threats (identified later in this document), but rather those day-to-day issues and concerns that may slow or inhibit progress. The following items were identified by the internal stakeholders as weaknesses:

Weaknesses of Charleston Fire Department	
Lack of diversity (cultural, gender)	Lack of retention
Inadequate reserve fleet	Negativity
Internal communication	Inadequate benefits
Pay vs. cost of living	Lack accountability and consistency
Disconnect in organizational clarity between senior staff and lower ranks (SOP interpretation, freedom to lead)	Adequate funding, resources, and quality of facility maintenance (need more internal capacity)
Micromanagement	Busy work
Lack of marketing	No clear identity
Lack of public information	Revolving door
Marginalization	Lack of administration personnel
Lack of understanding of Fire Marshal's Division roles and responsibilities	Resource starved to support EMS mission (personnel, funding planning, buy in)
Ability to meet matrix requirements	Succession plan struggles
Inability to provide adequate safety education to schools; more educators (prevention)	Automatic aid inconsistency across the board – SOPs, training, staffing
Lack of specialized staffing – forced to cross-staff (hazmat, marine)	Improved, long-term, quality shop and logistics facility
Forced to take promotional classes off duty	Improved, long-term, quality training facility
Lack of compensation for special teams	Lack of organizational clarity
Inability to complete inspections on all buildings and increase community/firefighter safety	Technology with city (lack of time keeping) email, IT infrastructure
	Time management
Lack of peer-to-peer support, mentors, help your co-worker	Too many units out of service at the same time, reduces ERF and timely response



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Workload	Favoritism
Inconsistent promotion process	No clear expectations on programs
Communication disconnect - battalion chief to company	

Opportunities

The opportunities for an organization depend on the identification of strengths and weaknesses and how they can be enhanced. The focus of identifying opportunities is two-fold: maintaining existing successful service, and seeking new possibilities to serve both inside and beyond the traditional delivery model. The internal stakeholders identified the following potential opportunities:

Opportunities for Charleston Fire Department	
Grant opportunities	Expansion of auto aid
Community para-medicine	1% Investments
Department growth, through expansion of coverage area	Outside training opportunities; SCFA, NFPA, OSHA, ICS, FEMA, IAFF, IFSAC, NFA
Explorer program	Alternative benefits CO-OP for purchasing
Access to credit unions and other financial institutions	Educational partnerships Charleston Southern University - more local
CPSE: outside professional development	Send personnel to shadow other departments
Charleston/Dorchester mental health	Local gyms (gold, planet)
ISO	Joint equipment/research and development
School partnerships - mentoring	South Carolina State Firefighter's Association
Charleston County Chiefs	Post-retirement benefits
Department doctor for us pro-bono – "in house healthcare"	Fire Marshal Division with full enforcement capabilities
Partnership with Charleston County Public Schools to establish a fire cadet program	Partnership with hospitals - Medical University of South Carolina
Regional training facility	Water system upgrades
Improvement in firehouse system	Getting something other than Target Solutions
Chamber of commerce	Growth through inclusion
More joint SOPs	Establish and expand fire 101 program



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Trident Technical College apprenticeship program	Bring in more 3 rd party training programs to the area
System wide ALS	Bring in outside instructors
IAFF benefits – financial, mortgage, AT&T, auto/life/home insurance	Too many software systems, seek vendor to streamline or use one program
Establish visiting firefighter program to illustrate CFD progress	Educate the courts about the severity of life safety violations, to elevate life safety violations to criminal status.
Provide age based education in school	
Stronger relationship with business community	Conduct hydrant maintenance with off duty/extra duty personnel
Outside/3 rd party pay study	Stronger relations with state and local legislators
More education for the media, local leaders about the fire department and services provided	

Threats

An organization can reduce the potential for loss by recognizing possible threats. Understanding that threats are not completely and/or directly controlled by the organization is fundamental to the success of any strategic plan. Some of the current and potential threats identified by the internal stakeholders include:

Threats to Charleston Fire Department	
Prep for natural disasters, training coordination and supplies	Staff improvements/retention/personal growth due to pay issues.
Quality of incoming staff (due to pay)	Ports railroad, highways
Potential for reduction in department funding	Recession
Active shooter, terrorism	Public perception, unrealistic? Informed?
Change in service level with outside/partner agency (auto aid/ red cross, SCFA, CWS, etc.)	Lack of performance/accountability/staffing of auto-aid partners
Hazmat – target hazards - pandemics/flu etc.	Lack of infrastructure/over growth
Historical Society	Tourism (high risk)
Natural disasters	Utility (water department, power)
Income loss due to business loss	Loss of city revenue
Lack of department/citizens interface/interaction	Potential laws that change financial responsibilities



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Man-made disasters	Flooding, snow and ice (natural disasters)
Increased population from special events, bridge run, presidential visits/debates	Lack of understanding/appreciation for the fire service by state legislators
Cost of living	Solvency of other jurisdictions in auto-aid
The Affordable Health Care Act	Poor public perception
Lack of warranty support	Political change (city, state, federal)
Rising cost of retirement	Port expansion (bigger ships)
Population growth	New construction
High profile city for terror attacks	Lack of cooperation between agencies
Weak support for fire code (from courts)	Lack of understanding from public of fire department mission
Shrinking labor pool	Aging infrastructure

Critical Issues and Service Gaps

Two separate groups of internal stakeholders met following the identification and review of the agency's SWOT analysis to identify themes as primary critical issues and service gaps.

Critical and Service Gap Issues Identified by the Internal Workgroup

Communications	Public Outreach	Recruitment and Retention
Resource allocation	Community risk reduction	Facilities
Workforce development	Training competency	Planning
Organizational clarity	Diversity	Emergency response programs

Strategic Initiatives

The following strategic initiatives were identified following the agency's review of critical issues and service gaps. These initiatives form the foundation for developing goals and objectives.

Strategic Initiatives

Communications	Training	Workforce Development
Emergency Response Program	Facilities/Resources	Public Outreach
Community Risk Reduction		



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Glossary of Terms, Acronyms, and Initialisms

ALS	Advanced Life Support
Accreditation	A process by which an association or agency evaluates and recognizes a program of study or an institution as meeting certain predetermined standards or qualifications. It applies only to institutions or agencies and their programs of study or their services. Accreditation ensures a basic level of quality in the services received from an agency.
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CFAI	Commission on Fire Accreditation International
CPSE	Center for Public Safety Excellence
CWS	Charleston Water System
Customer(s)	The person or group who establishes the requirement of a process and receives or uses the outputs of that process; or the person or entity directly served by the department or agency.
Efficiency	A performance indication where inputs are measured per unit of output (or vice versa).
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
Environment	Circumstances and conditions that interact with and affect an organization. These can include economic, political, cultural, and physical conditions inside or outside the boundaries of the organization.
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IAFF	International Association of Firefighters
ICS	Incident Command System
IFSAC	Internal Fire Service Accreditation Congress
Input	A performance indication where the value of resources is used to produce an output.
ISO	Insurance Services Office
Mission	An enduring statement of purpose; the organization's reason for existence. Describes what the organization does, for whom it does it, and how it does it.
NFA	National Fire Academy



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OSHA	Occupational Health and Safety Administration
Outcome	A performance indication where qualitative consequences are associated with a program/service; i.e., the ultimate benefit to the customer.
Output	A performance indication where a quality or number of units produced is identified.
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
Performance Measure	A specific measurable result for each goal and/or program that indicates achievement.
SCBA	Self Contained Breathing Apparatus
SCFA	South Carolina Fire Academy
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
Stakeholder	Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on, or influence the organization's resources or outputs, is affected by those outputs, or has an interest in or expectation of the organization.
Strategic Goal	A broad target that defines how the agency will carry out its mission over a specific period of time. An aim. The final result of an action. Something to accomplish in assisting the agency to move forward.
Strategic Objective	A specific, measurable accomplishment required to realize the successful completion of a strategic goal.
Strategic Plan	A long-range planning document that defines the mission of the agency and broadly identifies how it will be accomplished, and that provides the framework for more detailed annual and operational plans.
Strategic Planning	The continuous and systematic process whereby guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future, develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is to be measured.
Strategy	A description of how a strategic objective will be achieved. A possibility. A plan or methodology for achieving a goal.
Vision	An idealized view of a desirable and potentially achievable future state - where or what an organization would like to be in the future.

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