BURLINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

2019-2024 Strategic Plan

City of BURLINGTON NORTH CAROLINA

Facilitated by

Center for Public Safety Excellence

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Executive Summary

The Burlington Fire Department (BFD) is pleased to present its 2019-2024 Strategic Plan. The purpose of this plan is to clearly define the mission and goals of BFD while developing a guide for continued excellent service as we prepare to meet the many challenges and opportunities in providing emergency services during the next five years.

This strategic plan will serve as a living document and a work in progress, subject to change under evolving circumstances. It was developed using a community-driven strategic planning process that included input from representative groups composed of members of the department (internal stakeholders) and from the community at large (external stakeholders); as well as ongoing discussions, collaborations, and input from BFD staff, executive staff, and City Council. The plan is written in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Commission on Fire Accreditation (CFAI) *Fire & Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual* 9th *Ed.*

Since its inception in the early 1900s, the BFD has had a proud tradition of providing excellent service to the community. The growing demand for services, combined with the ever-increasing costs of service delivery, make it imperative that an effective strategic plan is in place to maintain the high standards expected by the community. This document is a culmination of BFD's efforts to detail how it will meet the needs of the community, how it will prioritize those needs, and establish timelines to achieve those needs.

The BFD is committed to maintaining public trust through the highest levels of responsibility and accountability. We will remain fiscally responsible in our decision-making, treat every resident with the utmost dignity and respect, ensure our equipment is always in superior working order and ready to respond, and continue to perform our profession to the best of our abilities.

Introduction

The Burlington Fire Department (BFD) provides an all-hazards approach in the protection of the lives and property of the residents, businesses, and visitors of Burlington, North Carolina. BFD 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 department's path into the future via a "Community-Driven Strategic Plan." The following strategic plan 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 department's members to work in the best interest of the "team" and critically examine paradigms, values, philosophies, beliefs, and desires. It further provided the department with an opportunity to participate in the development of their organization's long-term direction and focus. Members of the organization's community and department stakeholders' groups demonstrated a commitment to this important project and remain dedicated to the document's completion and plan execution.

BURLINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN
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BURLINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
2019-2024 Strategic Plan

Organizational Background

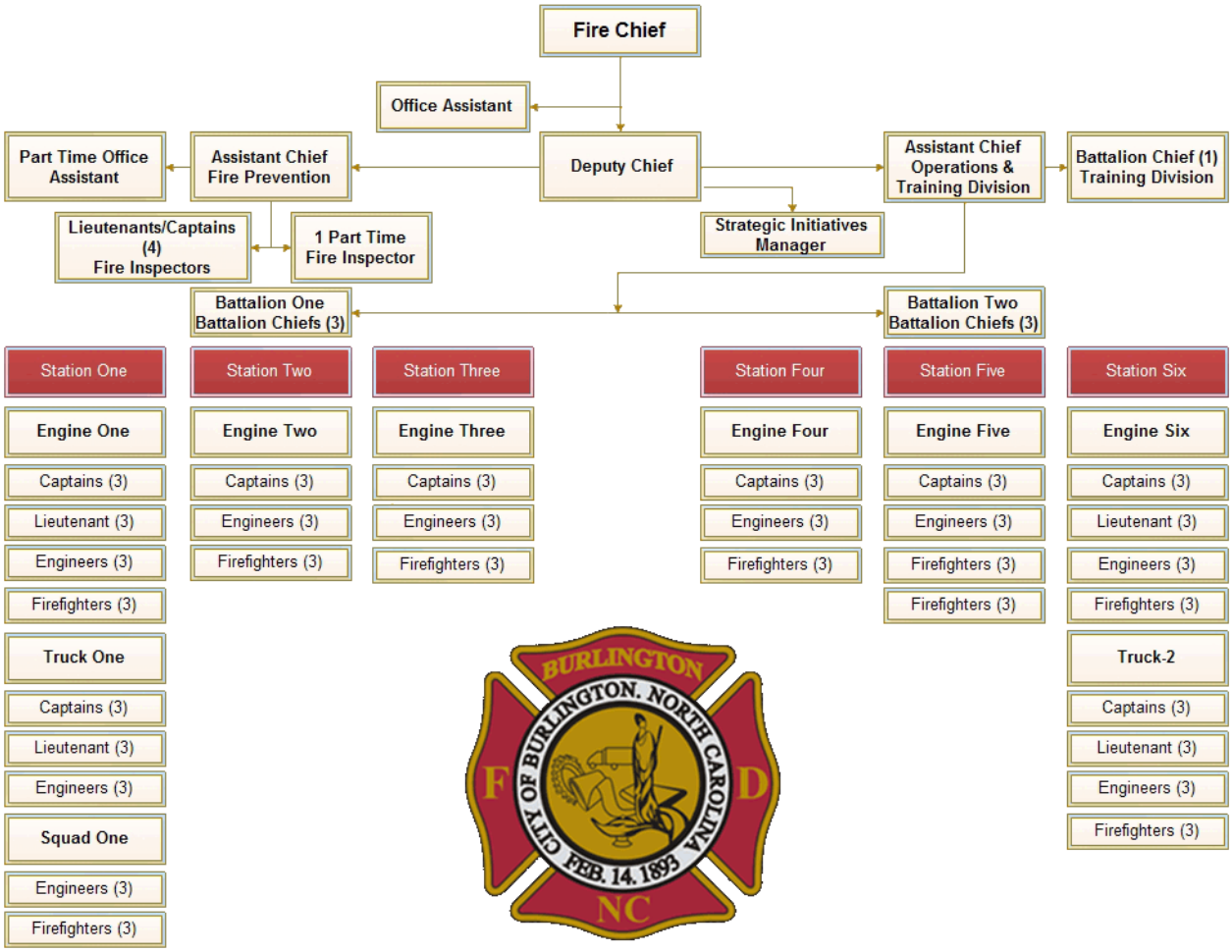
Originally founded as Company Shops in 1854 and Burlington in 1887, the City of Burlington was incorporated as a city in 1893. Built off the railroad and textile industries, Burlington thrived, was challenged, and evolved to meet the ever-changing economic demands that had bases in impacts of the Great Depression, the rise of organized labor, and even world wars that changed markets. The city remained resilient as it grew and changed over its history.

Today, the city continues to grow and evolve, while being home to major industry and corporate business that feeds its economy. This growth and evolution continues to contribute to the various risks that impact emergency services within its approximately 33 square miles. Burlington is a diverse city that supports a quality way of life for its populace. The city acknowledges its past while embracing the changes and challenges encountered with growth.

The Burlington Fire Department's genesis dates to 1887 when the city changed its name from Company Shops to Burlington. The department then was more of an unofficial group of people with a couple of buckets that later transformed into a more formal bucket brigade. Throughout its vast history, the department has continued to evolve within the industry to meet growth and demand, using the latest advances that the industry could provide. This also included the move from an all-volunteer force to a career department that represents and protects the city.

Today, the department provides its services from six fire stations with apparatus and staffing located strategically throughout the city, based on risk and demand. Staffed with 109 uniformed and civilian professionals, the department strives to maximize the preservation of life and property for its community through efficient emergency response, fire prevention, and public education. The Burlington Fire Department continues to remain mission-focused is dedicated to those it serves.

Organizational Structure



Community-Driven Strategic Planning

For many successful organizations, the voice of the community drives their operations and charts the course for their future. A community-driven emergency service organization is one that seeks to gather and utilize the needs and expectations of its community in the development and/or improvement of the services provided. To ensure that the community remains a focus of an organization's direction, a community-driven strategic planning process was used to develop this strategic plan.

A strategic plan is a living management tool that provides short-term direction, builds a shared vision, documents goals and objectives, and optimizes the use of resources. The process of strategic planning can be defined as "a deliberative, disciplined approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why."[1]

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 defined 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 progression and success will be measured.

Community Stakeholders Work Session

[1] See Definition, Purpose, and Benefits of Strategic Planning (Bryson 8)

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 or 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.

Process and Acknowledgements

The Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) acknowledges and thanks the community and department stakeholders for their participation and input into this community-driven strategic planning process. The CPSE also recognizes Fire Chief Jay Smith and the team of professionals who participated for their leadership and commitment to this process.

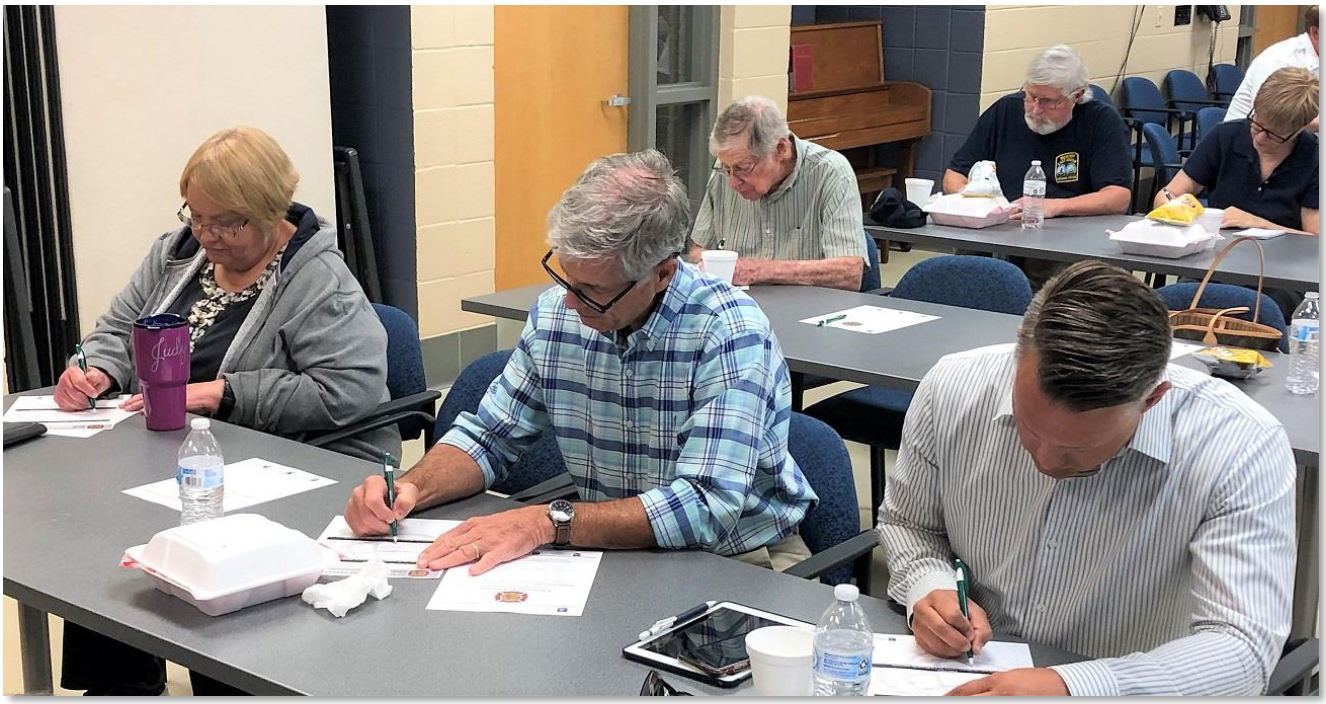
Development of this strategic plan took place in June 2019, beginning with meetings hosted by a representative from the CPSE for members of the community (as named in the following table). The department identified community stakeholders to ensure broad representation. The community stakeholders were comprised of some who reside or work within the BFD's coverage area, and some who were recipients of BFD's service(s).

Burlington Fire Department's Community Stakeholders				
Jim Albright	Ian Baltutis *Mayor*	Amanda Bartolomeo	Hayden Beatty	
Scott Bibler	Peter Bishop	Julie Brown	Paige Coleman	
Tommy Coleman	Dan Danieley	Ed Del Giorno	Celo Faucette	
Heidi Fisher	Chris Gaddis	Reagan Gural	Kathy Hykes *Mayor Pro Tem*	
Dan Jones	Rodney King	Yancy King	Tony Laws	
Brian Long	Martha Mason	Jay Mebane	Mary Beth Nelson	
Catherine O'Donnell	Bob Patterson	Thomas Phelps	Michael Renegar	
Michele Riordan	Todd Thorpe	Jack Vogt	Hardin Watkins *City Manager*	Judy Whitfield

Community Stakeholders Work Session

Community Group Findings

A key element of the BFD's organizational philosophy is having a high level of commitment to the community, as well as recognizing the importance of community satisfaction. Thus, the department invited community representatives to provide feedback on services provided by the department. Respondents were asked to provide a prioritized perspective of the programs and services provided by the department. Additionally, input was gathered during the meeting that revolved around community expectations and concerns (prioritized), as well as positive and other comments about the organization. Specific findings of the community stakeholders are provided in the appendix of this document. The department stakeholders utilized the full feedback from the community stakeholders in understanding the current challenges encountered within the organization. Additionally, the community stakeholders' feedback provided a process to ensure alignment with the work completed on the organizational mission, values, vision, and goals for improvement.



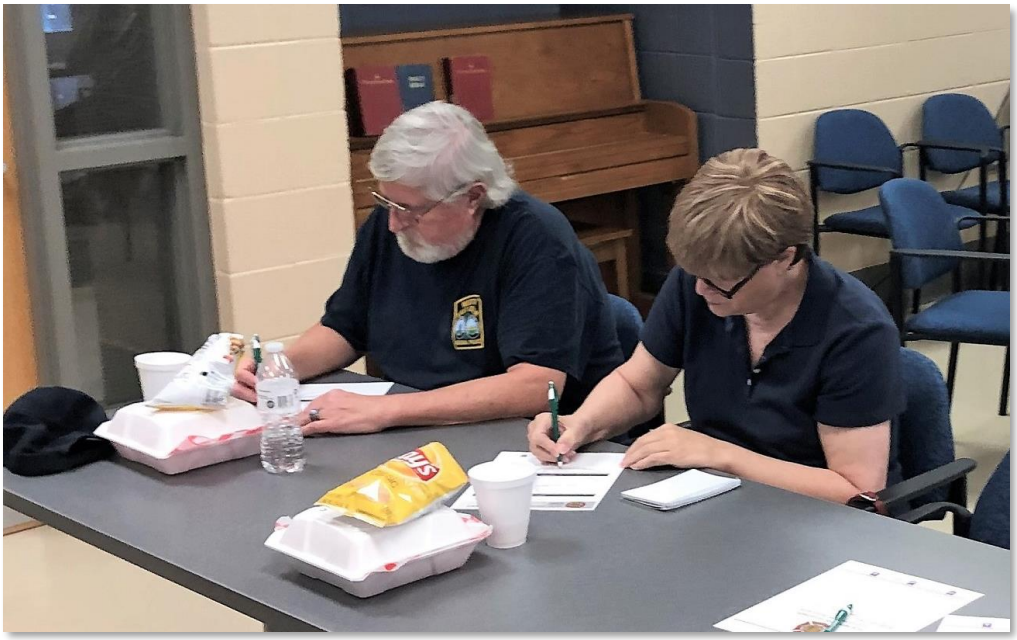
Community Stakeholders Work Session

Community Priorities

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

Programs	Ranking	Score
Fire Suppression	1	215
Emergency Medical Services	2	193
Technical Rescue	3	150
Hazardous Materials Mitigation	4	138
Fire Prevention	5	120
Domestic Preparedness/Emergency Management Planning and Response	6	100
Fire Investigation	7	85
SWAT EMT	8	81
Public Fire and Life Safety Education	9	70

See Appendix 1 for a complete list of the community findings including expectations, areas of concern, positive feedback, and other thoughts and comments.



Community Stakeholders Work Session

Department Stakeholder Group Findings

The department 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, focusing on the department's mission, values, core programs, and support services. Additionally, focus was given to the organization's perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The work sessions involved participation by a stakeholder group that represented a broad cross-section of the department, as named and pictured below.

Burlington Fire Department Stakeholders				
Elan Ashley *Firefighter*	Brad Bailey *Battalion Chief*	Lindsey Boger *Firefighter*	Greg Britt *Assistant Chief*	Seth Chandler *Engineer*
Kathryn Crawford *Administrative Assistant*	Anthony Davis *Battalion Chief*	Lindsey Glover *Captain*	Travis Handy *Assistant Chief*	Eli Huneycutt *Firefighter 1st Class*
Wesley Hunt *Engineer*	Ricky Irby *Captain*	Darren Jenkins *Captain*	Randy Kerns *Battalion Chief*	Matt Lawrence *Deputy Chief*
Jordan Massey *Engineer*	Justin Matthews *Captain*	Ethan Page Engineer	Kyle Paschal *Captain*	Matt Pruitt *Lieutenant*
Raul Ramirez *Lieutenant*	Jeff Shepherd *Captain*	Daniel Shoffner *Strategic Initiatives Manager*	Grey Shoffner *Captain*	Justin Shoffner *Captain*
Don Slagle *Lieutenant*	Jay Smith *Fire Chief*	Jared Spencer *Firefighter*	Donald Wright *Lieutenant*	

Department Stakeholders

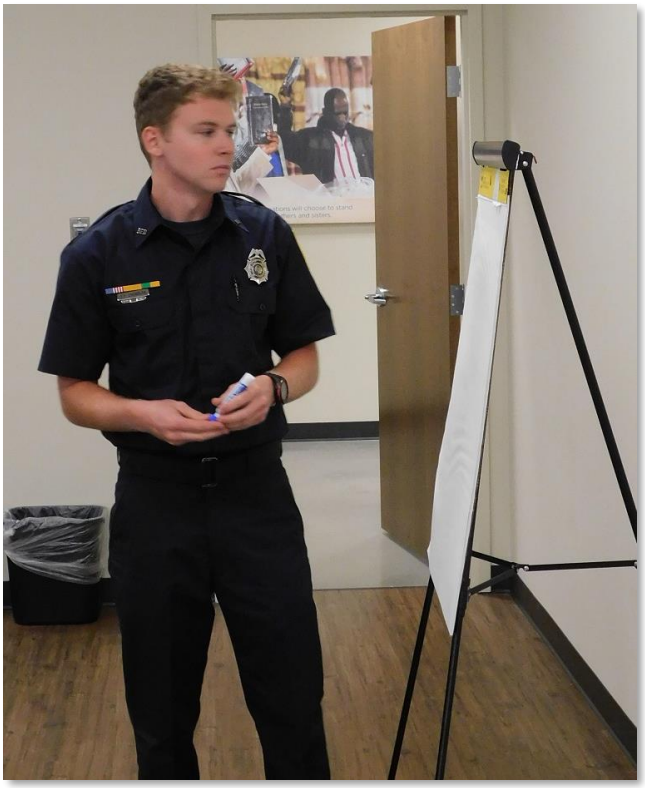
Mission

The purpose of the 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 following mission statement was created, discussed, and accepted by the entire group:

The mission of the Burlington Fire Department is to maximize the preservation of life and property for our community. Our mission is accomplished through efficient emergency response, fire prevention, and public education.



Department Stakeholders Work Session

Values

Values embraced by all members of an organization are extremely important, as they recognize the features that make up the personality and culture of the organization. A workgroup met to revisit the existing values and proposed a revision that was discussed, enhanced further, and agreed upon by the entire group:

Integrity – respect and consistency of our actions, values, and expectations that impact the community.

Commitment – self-discipline with the pursuit of excellence in our mission.

Pride – our personal devotion to distinction through public service.

The mission and values are the foundation of this organization. Thus, every effort will be made to keep these current and meaningful so that the individuals who make up the BFD are guided by them in the accomplishment of the goals, objectives, and day-to-day tasks.

Programs and Services

The department stakeholders identified the core programs provided to the community, as well as many of the services that enable the organization to deliver those programs. The department's core programs are provided below while supporting services are provided in Appendix 2.

Core Programs of the Burlington Fire Department			
• Fire Suppression	• Emergency Medical Services	• Technical Rescue	• Hazardous Materials Mitigation
• Fire Prevention	• Fire Investigation	• Domestic Preparedness/Emergency Management Planning and Response	
• Public Fire and Life Safety Education			

SWOT Analysis

Through a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), an organization candidly identifies its positive and negative attributes. The SWOT analysis also provides an opportunity for an organization to evaluate its operating environment for areas in which it can capitalize, as well as those that pose a danger. Department stakeholders participated in this activity to record BFD's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the possible opportunities and potential threats. Information gathered through this analysis provides guidance toward the larger issues and gaps that exist within the agency. The information gleaned will assist the agency in finding its broader critical issues and service gaps.

Appendix 3 consists of the SWOT data and analysis collected by the department stakeholders.

Department Stakeholders Work Session

Critical Issues and Service Gaps

Following the identification and review of the department's SWOT, two separate groups of department stakeholders met to identify themes as primary critical issues and service gaps (found in Appendix 4). The critical issues and services gaps identified by the stakeholders provides further guidance toward identification of the strategic initiatives, which will ultimately lend direction for the development of goals, objectives, critical tasks, and timelines.

Strategic Initiatives

Based upon all previously captured information and the determination of critical issues and service gaps, the following strategic initiatives were identified as the foundation for the development of goals and objectives.

Burlington Fire Department's Strategic Initiatives			
• Training	• Technology	• Emergency Response	• Capital Resources
• Workforce Management		• External Communication	• Accreditation

Goals and Objectives

To continuously achieve the mission of the BFD, realistic goals and objectives with timelines for completion must be established. These will serve to enhance strengths, address identified weaknesses, provide a clear direction, and address the concerns of the community. These should become a focus of the department's efforts, as they will direct the organization to its desired future while reducing 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 the BFD's leadership.

Goal 1	**Enhance the department's training program to ensure safe, effective, and efficient delivery of service to our customer.**	
Objective 1A	**Evaluate and identify the specific training needs to meet the current and future mission of the department.**	
Timeframe	1 year	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Create a training task group. • Conduct a community risk analysis to identify potential incident possibilities. • Establish a list of critical services needed based on community risk analysis. • Identify training requirements for each identified critical service. • Report findings to the leadership team for future decisions.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1B	**Conduct an analysis of current departmental capabilities to identify potential gaps in the training program compared to our mission.**	
Timeframe	1 year	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Research and identify services provided by other agencies (regional) and evaluate effectiveness. • Conduct a gap analysis of services. • Conduct a gap analysis of current certifications of employees. • Identify employee training needs to fulfill the services identified. • Evaluate cost(s) of training level needed to provide critical services identified. • Report findings to the leadership team for future decisions.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 1C	**Identify the training staff requirements to meet the training delivery needs of the department and enhance the effectiveness of the department.**		
Timeframe	1 year	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Identify required instructor certifications based on training needs. • Identify internal and external availability of qualified instructors for each critical service. • Determine trainer staff hours required for delivery. • Evaluate the need for additional training staff to meet the delivery requirement. • Report findings to the leadership team for future decisions.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1D	**Implement and revise updated training program based on research conducted.**		
Timeframe	18 months	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Compile recommendations from task group. • Create a cost analysis for implementation of the training plan. • Present training plan for approval. • Include the fiscal impact of plan implementation in the annual budget request. • Implement the training program as approved.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1E	**Promote employee fitness levels to minimize injury and ensure the longevity and effectiveness of our members.**		
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Establish a fitness task group. • Identify the recommended fitness standards for the occupation. • Research and compare fitness standards in other departments. • Establish expected fitness level for employees and a program to move the department towards that goal. • Identify external resources for program support and assistance. • Present educational information department-wide on the importance of fitness.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Goal 2	Enhance technology to improve services and training provided throughout all divisions of the fire department.	
Objective 2A	**Identify and evaluate the department's technological capabilities to determine a baseline for service delivery and training.**	
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Develop a technology committee to identify and analyze current usage. • Determine the department's baseline for technology. Technology currently used should be identified. Examples could include: o MCTs o NFIRS reporting/productivity/training records o Any other information deemed applicable from administrative staff or relevant to community expectations o Fire suppression technology, e.g. TIC, accountability software o Internal communication technology o GIS, information technology, and other department relations o Guilford Metro radio shop, Burlington Communications, Alamance County Chamber of Commerce. • Review, revise, and evaluate technology on an annual basis.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2B	**Streamline technological services and identify technology not needed.**	
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Analyze current technology usage. • Consolidate shared information and data to include, but not limited to: o Clean up 'Fire Sched' and other shared folders o Any other information deemed applicable from administrative staff or relevant to community expectations. • Develop guidelines for information and data retention. • Evaluate new strategies, technology, platforms, and media on an annual basis.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 2C	**Research and develop technological resources to efficiently provide service and training.**		
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Utilize technology committee to identify and analyze current technology needs. • Evaluate and research options from vendors. Examples could include: o Peruse publications and journals o Trial period utilization o Any other information deemed applicable from administrative staff or relevant to community expectations. • Expand our technology utilizing proven and new platforms (e.g. TIC, AVL, tablets, cloud-based services, pre-emption, and/or other applicable platforms). • Evaluate new strategies, technology, platforms, and media on an annual basis.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2D	**Seek approval, funding, and implement technological advances.**		
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Determine the amount of funding needed. • Identify funding sources. • Seek funding approval for funding. • Implement new technology as approved and funded. • Evaluate and revise strategies on an annual basis.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Goal 3	Evaluate and enhance the department's ability to provide world-class service to the community.	
Objective 3A	**Evaluate the need for SWAT EMT in the community and establish a program if the need exists.**	
Timeframe	1 year **Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Determine the need for a SWAT EMT program. • Perform a risk-benefit analysis. • Determine the eligibility requirements and minimum standards. • Determine all positions needed and identify applicants. • Establish training requirements. • Research needed equipment. • Determine the department's financial responsibility. • Develop policies and procedures. • Seek approval. • Seek funding, if necessary. • Implement the program. • Review and revise the program as needed.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3B	**Evaluate the community's need for ARFF and establish a program if the need exists.**	
Timeframe	2 years **Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Determine the need for an ARFF program. • Perform a risk-benefit analysis. • Determine the eligibility requirements and minimum standards. • Determine all positions needed and identify applicants. • Establish training requirements. • Research needed equipment. • Determine the department's financial responsibility. • Develop policies and procedures. • Seek approval. • Seek funding, if necessary. • Implement the program. • Review and revise the program as needed.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 3C	**Evaluate and enhance the pre-incident survey program to increase efficacy.**		
Timeframe	2 years	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Identify current abilities as related to the accessibility of pre-incident surveys. • Evaluate CAD upgrades for compatibility. • Review established surveys for accuracy. • Revise and update outdated surveys. • Establish priority for completing surveys based on the community risk assessment. • Establish access between suppression, fire prevention, and building inspections for information sharing. • Establish uniform criteria for completing surveys. • Propose the new process to administration. • Seek funding if necessary. • Implement the new survey process. • Review and revise as needed.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3D	**Evaluate the need for specialized companies and establish a program if need exists.**		
Timeframe	3 years	**Assigned to:**	

Critical Tasks	• Determine the need for specialized companies to include, but not limited to:
	  ○ Trench Rescue
	  ○ High Angle Rescue
	  ○ Swift Water Rescue
	  ○ Confined Space Rescue
	  ○ Structural Collapse
	  ○ Vehicle Machinery Rescue
	• Research applicable implementation processes from surrounding organizations.
	• Perform a cost-benefit analysis.
	• Determine minimum standards and certifications.
	• Determine staffing needs.
	• Establish training requirements.
	• Research needed equipment.
	• Develop policies and procedures.
	• Seek approval.
	• Seek funding if necessary.
	• Implement the approved program.
	• Review and revise the program as needed.		

Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Goal 4	Enhance the department's ability to secure, maintain, and improve resources in order to provide an effective and efficient service for the community.	
Objective 4A	**Evaluate current fire department facility locations to ensure that the most efficient service is being provided for the community.**	
Timeframe	1 year	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Identify areas in the city where response times are consistently greater than four minutes. • Identify deficiencies in response times due to displacement of units while at the training facility. • Using compiled data, develop a presentation substantiating the potential need for additional stations and a strategically placed training facility. • Conduct a cost analysis. • Submit the presentation to city officials for review, approval, and funding. • Maintain consistent data analysis of response times and coverage. • Revise response time and coverage information as needed until implementation has occurred.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4B	**Develop a program to evaluate equipment relevance to provide safe, effective, and efficient services to our customers.**	
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Create a committee to research and analyze new fire service equipment. • Identify and research new fire service equipment, technology, and trends. • Consider the option of using electronic daily equipment check logs. • Develop a list of recommendations for new equipment and technology. • Submit the list of recommendations to administration for consideration. • Request implementation in a portion of the department to test functionality. • Reconvene to review the effectiveness of the implementation. • Revise plans, as needed, for department-wide implementation.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4C	**Use a proactive approach to determine potential funding sources to support the strategies developed for capital resource objectives.**	
Timeframe	18 months	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Identify personnel within the organization to research funding options. • Analyze the funding options to determine which are most appropriate for our needs. • Develop personnel to pursue grant writing. • Form a group to review and approve grant applications. • Submit applications in a timely fashion. • Monitor the status of the applications. • Maintain personnel development for continual grant writing opportunities.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Goal 5	Create and promote a more desirable organization for prospective employees, retain current employees, and plan for the future.	
Objective 5A	**Develop and implement a recruitment plan that reflects our values.**	
Timeframe	1 year	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Identify specific demographics of community through census information. • Form a recruitment committee, including a representative from each rank. • Identify recruitment opportunities. • Develop a marketing plan. • Identify barriers that potential applicants encounter. • Develop solutions based on barriers identified. • Implement the recruitment plan. • Review the number of contacts made and applications received. • Revise the recruitment plan yearly or as needed.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5B	**Identify and promote positive attributes of the organization and recognize factors that lead to increased retention.**	
Timeframe	18 months	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Form a committee including one representative from each rank and administration within the department, as well as a representative from human resources. • Develop and conduct an anonymous online employee survey to identify positive and negative attributes of the department. • Analyze the survey results and identify common themes in both positive and negative attributes. • Create a report of findings for the department, human resources, and the city manager. • Identify what changes can be made at the department level that are consistent with the values, mission statement, and policies. • Seek funding and approval, if necessary. • Implement changes on the department level. • Complete a post-action survey to identify effects of changes implemented. • Review the post-action survey and revise as needed.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 5C	**Prepare for future career advancement at all levels through the development of a succession plan.**		
Timeframe	14 months	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Identify immediate and future vacancies throughout the department. • Identify criteria needed at each level. • Research other fire department succession plans. • Develop a succession plan that is tailored to the needs of the department. • Present the plan to city leaders and seek feedback. • Seek funding, if needed. • Implement the succession plan. • Review and revise, as needed.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5D	**Review and evaluate policies to remain current with industry standards and departmental values.**		
Timeframe	18 months	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Form a committee with representation from all levels. • Review current TOPs and SOPs, utilizing the training committee, as applicable. • Solicit input from all department members. • Research current industry standards. • Identify "hot topics" facing the fire service. • Develop and revise policies that are consistent with industry standards and departmental values. • Make recommendation(s) to the fire chief on policy changes and seek approval/recommendations. • Seek funding, if necessary. • Implement all approved policy changes.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Department Stakeholders Work Session

Goal 6	Enhance external communications to effectively educate stakeholders on services provided throughout the different divisions of the fire department.	
Objective 6A	**Develop a comprehensive external communication program to ensure the community is fully informed about service delivery.**	
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**

Critical Tasks	• Develop an external communications committee to analyze current social media and web-based usage and needs, as well as other tasks as assigned.
	• Expand the department's social media presence utilizing new and current platforms (i.e.: Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) for tangible information. Examples could include:
	  o Training exercises
	  o Media releases
	  o Traffic information
	  o Weather statements
	  o Public education
	  o New and current information
	  o Any other information deemed applicable from administrative staff or relevant to community expectations.
	• Redesign the city webpage for the fire department with more accessible information. Examples could include:
	  o Maps of station locations with interactive address search for closest station
	  o Child safety seat information
	  o Swimming pool policy
	  o Truck requests
	  o Inspection requests
	  o Department history
	  o Recruitment information
	  o Call volume
	  o Census data
	  o Customer service survey
	  o Any other information deemed applicable from administrative staff or relevant to community expectations.
	• Evaluate available publishing media for information from the fire department to provide more accessible information. Examples could include:
	  o Newspaper
	  o Water bill
	  o Monthly newsletter
	  o Any other information deemed applicable from administrative staff or relevant to community expectations.
	• Develop guidelines relevant to the information posted to social media or website.
	• Evaluate new strategies, technology, platforms, and media on an annual basis.	

Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 6B	**Enhance and develop community outreach strategies to increase the fire department presence within the City of Burlington.**	
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Utilize the external communications committee to analyze current community outreach strategies and needs. • Meet with external stakeholders to evaluate needs. • Identify the target audience. Examples to include: o Youth o Working low and middle class o Elderly o Special populations. • Seek funding from: o General fund o Grants – i.e.: Safe Kids, United Way, OSFM o Donations – i.e.: Alamance Chamber of Commerce. • Research or develop strategies. Examples include: o Residential fire inspections upon request o Smoke Alarm Canvass – 1st Saturday in June annually o Bi-annual open house o Leadership Alamance o Citizens Fire Academy o Touch-A-Truck o Bike patrol at large events o Sports standbys o Lunch program at schools – Big Brother/Big Sister. • Develop guidelines and implement strategies. • Evaluate and revise strategies on an annual basis.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 6C	**Increase interaction with allied agencies, city government administration, and elected officials.**	
Timeframe	8 months	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Utilize external communications committee to evaluate needs and strategies to interact with allied agencies, administration, officials, and medical care facilities. • Identify interest and needs. Examples include: o Annual or bi-annual academy for internal stakeholders of the city to include department heads, council, and other interest city employees o Ride Along Program o National Night Out – 1st Tuesday in August o Monitor and influence legislation. • Analyze, research, develop, and seek funding and approval for strategies. • Develop guidelines, review, and revise strategies annually.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Goal 7	Prepare for, pursue, achieve and maintain international accreditation to better serve our community and to embrace excellence.	
Objective 7A	**Form team or committee structures with management components as needed to pursue and maintain accreditation.**	
Timeframe	30 days	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Identify the needed team or committee structure(s) for the various components of the accreditation process. • Create management oversight positions to lead the teams or committees, as well as the process overall. • Establish a team or committee member criteria. • Determine the composition of the teams or committees. • Solicit participation to meet the composition of the teams or committees. • Develop and complete the selection process. • Provide for the needed educational components provided through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International to ensure the relevant members have the needed training.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 7B	**Develop a community-driven strategic plan.**	
Timeframe	3 months and on-going	**Assigned to:**
Critical Tasks	• Hold an external stakeholder meeting where community members provide feedback on program priorities, service expectations, concerns and strengths perceived about BFD. • Provide internal stakeholder work sessions to evaluate (and update if necessary) the mission, vision, and values; determine internal strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities and threats. • Establish critical issues and service gaps. Determine specific strategic initiatives. • Develop goals, objectives, critical tasks and appropriate timelines, to include levels of measurability, to achieve over five years. • Create a vision for the developed strategic plan. • Publish and distribute the formal strategic plan to stakeholders as determined by the organization.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 7C	**Implement the community-driven strategic plan.**		
Timeframe	3 months, on-going	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Create a strategic planning subcommittee to review the draft strategic plan. • Provide internal stakeholder work sessions to evaluate (and update if necessary) the draft mission, vision, and values; determine internal strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities and threats; establish critical issues and service gaps. • Evaluate goals and objectives within the draft plan, and further define critical tasks as needed to ensure clarity with each goal. • Determine a work plan for the accomplishment of each goal and implement the plan. • Annually evaluate objectives accomplished with the plan. • Report annual plan progress to internal and external stakeholders.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 7D	**Conduct a community hazards and risk assessment and publish a Community Risk Assessment - Standards of Cover document.**		
Timeframe	6 – 12 months	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Obtain instruction on hazard and risk assessment, and standards of cover preparation. • Perform community hazards and risk assessment. • Evaluate historical community emergency response performance and coverage. • Establish benchmark and baseline emergency response performance objectives. • Establish and publish the Community Risk Assessment - Standards of Cover. • Maintain, and annually update the Standards of Cover document.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 7E	**Conduct and document a self-assessment of the department utilizing the CPSE/CFAI Fire and Emergency Services Self-Assessment Manual criteria.**		
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Obtain instruction on writing a CFAI self-assessment manual. • Assign self-assessment manual category and criterion writing to the department accreditation committee/team members as appropriate. • Review self-assessment and ensure all reference items are in order.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 7F	**Achieve agency accreditation by the CFAI.**		
Timeframe	4 months	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Apply for "Candidate Agency" status with the CFAI. • Prepare for CFAI Peer Assessor Team visit. • Upload Strategic Plan, Standards of Cover, and Self-Assessment Categories and Criterion for review and comment by CFAI Peer Team. • Host CFAI Peer Team site visit for accreditation review. • Receive CFAI Peer Team recommendation to CFAI for Accredited status. • Receive vote during the CFAI hearings in favor of Accredited status.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 7G	**Maintain accreditation with the CFAI.**		
Timeframe	Ongoing	**Assigned to:**	
Critical Tasks	• Submit the required Annual Compliance Reports. • Attend CFAI "Dayroom Discussion" web-meetings for continued education. • Participate in the accreditation process by providing "peer assessors" for external department review and identification of possible best practices. • Participate in the annual CPSE Excellence Conference for continued education and networking with other accreditation teams and accredited agencies. • Submit Annual Compliance Reports as required by CFAI policies. • Establish succession development of internal accreditation team in preparation for the next accreditation cycle.		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Vision

On the final day of the process, the CPSE presented a strategic plan vision of where the organization will be in the future if the strategic plan is accomplished. This is not to override the department's global vision but rather, to confirm the futurity of the work that was designed by the department stakeholders. This vision is intended as a target of excellence to strive toward and provides a basis for its goals and objectives.

> **"Vision is knowing who you are, where you're going, and what will guide your journey"**
>
> Ken Blanchard

Burlington Fire Department's 2024 Vision

is to continue to be known as an organization that focuses on those we serve while embodying our core values. We commit to our mission of maximizing the preservation of life and property for our community through efficient emergency response, fire prevention, and public education. This vision, our true futurity, will only become reality by striving to accomplish our goals. **We will become this future by**…

Believing that integrity is at the heart of our impact on the community. This will be realized by our focus on those who carry out our mission, our members. As we ensure that we have a workforce that is mission-based and trained to meet our calling, we will provide for sustainability, growth, and afford a return for those who live, work, and play in Burlington. Additionally, our greater definition and design of our emergency response posture will help us meet our calling of providing quality services in all that we may encounter.

Focusing on ways to prove our commitment to all our stakeholders, while being good stewards of what we are entrusted. Through initiatives on physical resources, we will manage these for effectiveness, considering strategy, safety, and requirements to best deliver services within our jurisdiction. Moreover, we will pursue greater efficacies with the use of quality technology that will provide the best services. Our concentration on external communications will ensure transparency and an informed public, thus providing for greater unity.

Demonstrating we proudly provide public service as we pursue international accreditation. We will honor our history while embracing excellence in all we do within our community. Together, we commit to making our future a reality.

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

> **• 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

To establish that the department'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.

[2] Collins Good to Great and the Social Sectors. Boulder, 2009

A "family of measures" typically utilized to indicate and measure performance includes:

- **Inputs** - Value of resource used to produce an output.
- **Outputs –** Quantifiable units produced which are activity-oriented and measurable.
- **Efficiency** - Inputs used per output (or outputs per input).
- **Service Quality** - The degree to which customers are satisfied with a program, or how accurately or timely service is provided.
- **Outcome** - Qualitative consequences associated with a program/service; i.e., the ultimate benefit to the customer. Focused on the "why" of providing a service.

The Success of the Strategic Plan

The department 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. To assist in the development of this plan, the department used professional guidance to conduct a community-driven strategic planning process. The success of this strategic plan will not depend upon the 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 department and community stakeholders. This can be accomplished through a jointly developed understanding of organizational direction, focusing on all vested parties working to achieve the mission, goals, and vision. Further consideration must be made on how the organization will measure and be accountable for its progress and successes.[3]

[3] Matthews (2005). *Strategic Planning and Management for Library Managers*

Glossary of Terms, Acronyms, and Initialisms

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.
ARFF	Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting
ARMC	Alamance Regional Medical Center
AVL	Automatic Vehicle Location
BFD	Burlington Fire Department
CAD	Computer-Aided Dispatch
CFAI	Commission on Fire Accreditation International
COB	City of Burlington
COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan
CPSE	Center for Public Safety Excellence
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).
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
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.
GIS	Geographic Information System
GP	Geographical Planning
Input	A performance indication where the value of resources is used to produce an output.
ISO	Insurance Services Office
LEPC	Local Emergency Planning Commission
MCT	Mobile Computer Terminal

MDA	Muscular Dystrophy Association
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.
NFIRS	National Fire Incident Reporting System
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
OSFM	Office of State Fire Marshal
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 quality or number of units produced is identified.
PD	Police Department
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 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.
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
TIC	Thermal Imaging Camera
TOP	Tactical Operating Procedure
Vision	An idealized view of a desirable and potentially achievable future state - where or what an organization would like to be in the future.
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Appendix 1

Community Expectations

Understanding what the community expects of its fire service organization is critically important to developing a long-range perspective. With this knowledge, internal emphasis may need to be changed or bolstered to fulfill the community needs.

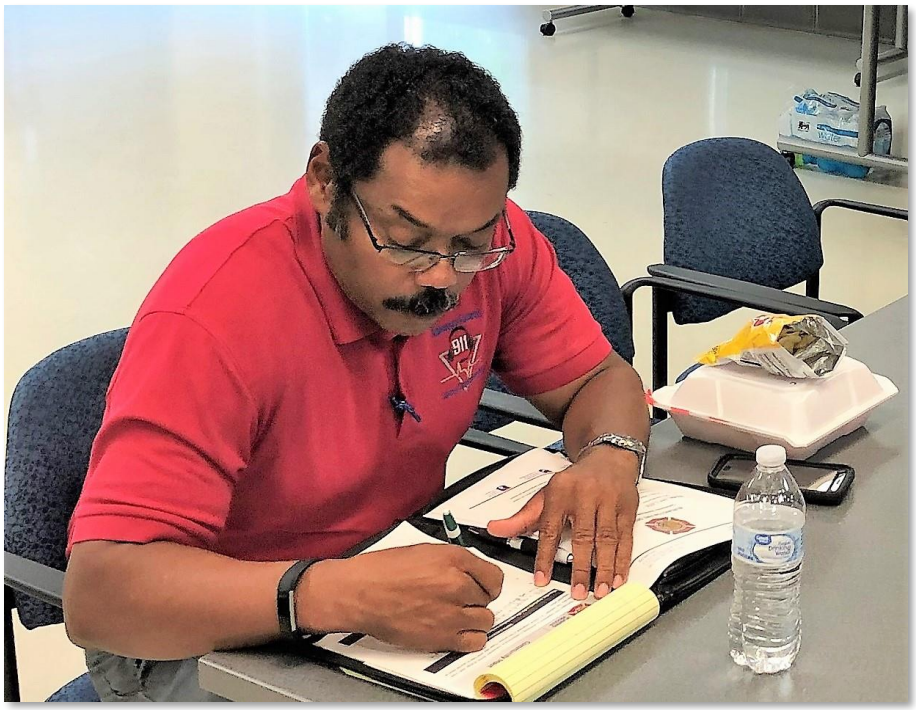
Respondents were asked to list, in priority order, up to five subjects relative to the expectations they have for the Burlington Fire Department. Responses were then analyzed for themes and weighted. The weighting of the prioritized responses was as follows: if it was the respondent's first entry, then it received five weighted points. Weighting gradually decreased so that if it was the respondent's fifth entry, then it received one weighted point. The weighted themes were then sorted from the highest cumulative weight to the lowest cumulative weight and listed below. The numbers in the parentheses are the cumulative weighted value that correlated with the theme identified. While the themes are listed in prioritized, weighted order, all responses were important in the planning process. The following are the expectation responses of the community stakeholders:

Community Expectations of the Burlington Fire Department (in priority order)

1. Quick response to emergencies - fire and medical. Respond to calls as soon as possible. Arrive shortly after they are called. Quick response to an emergency. (89)
2. Well-trained and ready staff. High level of training and preparation. Knowledge of all aspects of a firefighter's duties. Have trained EMTs and staff. Having certified firefighters serving the city - this includes specialized certifications. (70)
3. Have the equipment needed. Equipment needed for firefighters to do their jobs. That the fire department has the full support of the city to have the proper equipment to do their jobs as well as training. Up-to-date equipment. (37)
4. Display professionalism, courtesy, and service excellence. Reflect the community to its best ability. Be polite and friendly. That fire department personnel be caring, kind, and empathic. To be professional and stay calm so as not to cause panic in residents. Kind, respectful interactions. (31)
5. Good interactions/reassurances with the community. Build outstanding relationships with residents and business operators. Active in the community - 4th of July, parades, Carousel Festival, etc. Be visible. Good communication with the public. Community involvement. (29)

6. Safety. Lifesaving. Property saving. Providing safety in an efficient, organized, professional manner. (27)
7. Firefighting and rescue services. Extinguish fires and comfort those in need at the fire scenes. Ability to control situation. (22)
8. Partner with and assist nearby departments regionally. Involvement with other agencies and commissions in shared concerns/goals. Being a good neighbor to partnering agencies to include automatic aid and training opportunities. Strong relationships with emergency management, local law enforcement, and community businesses - hospital, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living, etc. (17)
9. Fire and life safety education starting with Pre-K through adult via community education - need a dog - dalmatian - to relate to kids and elderly. Educating the public. (17)
10. Up-to-date technology. Technology. (11)
11. Exert time and energy daily to save lives and provide assistance to residents and visitors. (9)
12. Ability to contact. Easy to contact. (6)
13. High-quality customer service. (5)
14. Could use three additional sub-stations and more personnel. (5)
15. Fire response to the hospital is high priority. (5)
16. Be where needed, when needed. (5)
17. Citizens. (5)
18. Make effective progress toward fire prevention. (4)
19. Leadership development and succession. Quality leadership. (4)
20. Fire would assist in evacuation of the hospital if necessary. (4)
21. Maintain ISO rating. (3)
22. Diverse workforce - firefighters, chiefs, administration. (3)
23. Accountability for the actions with personnel. (3)
24. Good camaraderie among the firefighters with no prejudice toward any race. (3)
25. Monitor call times to help determine the need for expanding resources to ensure quick response. (3)

26. Knowledge of my facility. (3)
27. Accredited status to ensure best practices/best equipment. (3)
28. Fire continues to participate in hospital exercises when applicable. (3)
29. Welfare of peers and those who have called for service. (3)
30. High level of achievement. (2)
31. To have a strategic plan for growth. (2)
32. Rapid co-response to overdose cases - police, EMS, fire, mental health. (2)
33. Fire attend hospital emergency management committee meeting every other month. (2)
34. Knowledge of community areas, problems, what you should expect to see on the call. (1)
35. Be physically able to do the job. (1)
36. Great teamwork. (1)
37. Safety inspections of businesses in the city. (1)
38. Budgetary increases - these should be expected as a citizen. (1)
39. Fire invites hospital to participate in relevant drills/exercises/training. (1)



Community Stakeholders Work Session

Areas of Community Concern

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

Respondents were asked to list, in priority order, up to five concerns they have about or for the department. Responses were then analyzed for themes and weighted. The weighting of the prioritized concerns was as follows: if it was the respondent's first entry, then it received five weighted points. Weighting gradually decreased so that if it was the respondent's fifth entry, then it received one weighted point. The weighted themes were then sorted from the highest cumulative weight to the lowest cumulative weight and listed below. The numbers in the parentheses are the cumulative weighted value that correlated with the theme identified. While the themes are listed in prioritized, weighted order, all responses were important in the planning process. The following are the concerns of the community stakeholders prioritized and weighted accordingly:

Areas of Community Concern about the Burlington Fire Department (verbatim, in priority order)

1. Coverage of the city as city limits expand. Not having stations to reach edges of the city limits. Growth of the city and the ability of the department to keep up. Station locations to serve all parts of the city. Relocate Station 4 for better coverage and egress. Does the fire department have the capacity to support growth in the city - both business and residential? (42)
2. Funding to maintain or raise the level of service. Rising costs of personnel - sustainability in a world that isn't warm to tax increases. Budget/funding restrictions. Concerned that BFD gets the funding they need to be as well-trained as they can be. Budget shortfalls. (38)
3. Attracting talent. Attracting and keeping firefighters. Future growth of the department - attrition, retention, employee level of knowledge, ability to attract new employees. Turnover of staff. Turnover. (36)
4. Staffing apparatus to meet NFPA 1710. Enough staffing. Staffing. Are staffing levels at the current level adequate? (33)
5. Cost of replacement vehicles. Rising costs of equipment and service contracts. Rising costs of personnel - sustainability in a world that isn't warm to tax increases. Overtime/wage costs. (24)
6. Keeping equipment up to date. Having all equipment needed to be safe. Enough equipment. Properly working equipment. (20)

7. Time it takes to arrive in an emergency. Response time to emergencies. Response time due to limited budgets. (14)
8. Is there enough time in the day for firefighters to do all that is required of them? Time for training. (14)
9. May not be applicable, but I do worry about outside forces (people with bad intentions) harming citizens and firefighters/police. Safety of fire personnel. (14)
10. Have enough equipment and staffing to handle multiple situations. Is the department prepared for a catastrophic event? If they have multiple calls, how do you prioritize? (13)
11. Do the firefighters have all up-to-date training and resources they needed? Is training for current employees up to date? (11)
12. Low pay. Pay and benefits. (10)
13. Leadership development and succession. Succession planning as baby-boomers continue to retire. Retention of senior staff and succession planning. (8)
14. Diversity of personnel. Diverse and inclusive hiring practices. (7)
15. Age of stations and future renovations or relocations - who will be affected? (6)
16. Assuring each firefighter gets adequate and ongoing mental health help when needed, or when others think it would be of value - after a fatal fire, injury, or death of a firefighter, etc. Firefighters' health regarding all chemicals or other things they come in contact with, that may harm them. (5)
17. Community support for training/equipment - is there enough? (5)
18. Distance of fire hydrants. (5)
19. Youth of the department. (5)
20. Department does not have fully integrated tie-in with the GIS system. (5)
21. Will they assist if the residents need to evacuate a facility? (4)
22. Assistance from other departments overlapping. (4)
23. Newer firefighters aren't familiar with the hospital layout and risks to responding in a healthcare/hospital setting. (4)
24. Department does not have building information and/or hazardous material information tied into the Firehouse software. (4)
25. Ability to navigate traffic safely and quickly - during responses. (3)
26. Effectiveness of community outreach campaigns to actual positive outcomes - smoke detectors, child seats, etc. (3)

27. Airport coverage. (3)
28. Fire investigations - are you where you want to be on this? (3)
29. Emergency management not sure who to contact in fire with all the recent changes - for training and exercise participation. (3)
30. Building or lack thereof relationships with community partners and stakeholders. (2)
31. Vehicles in good running condition and dependable. (2)
32. Adaptability for change - flexibility. (2)
33. Service rate increase. (2)
34. Staff at the hospital are not sure what roles/responsibilities fire would have in an emergency at the hospital. (2)
35. Too little community recognition for services provided. (1)
36. Internal relationships with other departments - unity between departments, information sharing. (1)
37. Total support of the elected officials. (1)

Community Stakeholders Work Session

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 Burlington Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)

- Dedication to training and learning.
- Strong commitment to excellence and focus on professionalism.
- Outstanding equipment and technology.
- Strong leadership team with positive outlook and commitment to service.
- Strong tradition and pride in the history of the department.
- Successful fire outcomes.
- Esprit de corps/rigor.
- Fire academy.
- Internal recognitions for bravery and promotions.
- Community perception is highly positive.
- Citizen Fire Academy.
- Participation in community events.
- Leadership promotion and transition.
- Best team to work with! Great service to our community.
- Time spent wisely with the community doing meaningful activities to bring awareness to all the department does for the community.
- One on one with the fire department's Citizen's Academy so we have a better understanding how things work within the department and outside of it – excellent!
- Good attitudes of the fire fighter, always kind, courteous and respectful.
- Clean, dependable fire department, good response to community issues.
- Open to public.
- At events in the community.
- Professional attitude and look.

- Friendly staff.
- EMT service.
- Staff training.
- Firefighting expertise.
- Community involvement.
- Great leadership up and down.
- Up-to-date equipment.
- Work well with other organizations and departments.
- Always working to improve services.
- Great response times.
- Great department.
- Puts community/people first.
- Great overall mission!
- All trained as EMTs.
- Staff shows concern and compassion for EMT situations.
- Has fire fighter academy to let community know what they do.
- Has community events.
- Take pride in being ready to arrive quickly, even when coming out late night.
- Good people.
- Willing to help and improve.
- Quick to respond.
- Have everything on board that is needed.
- Placement of stations.
- Continual training.
- The use of a broad-reaching training facility.
- A friendly face, no matter the problem.
- Do a good job with advanced resources.
- Burlington Fire Department has great community relations.
- Fully support community activities.

- Very friendly and helpful members of the fire department.
- Car seat installation.
- Involvement with community partners.
- Smoke detector checks and installation.
- Informing the community about safety and resources.
- Have personally received an email praising the staff at our facility for a job well done.
- Have had very quick response times.
- Always fast response times.
- Friendly and very professional.
- Helpful to answer questions.
- Ability of first responders to address calls, fires, etc.
- Personal interaction with citizens that are very positive.
- They are excellent.
- They know our community needs.
- They are always accessible.
- They run excellent fire safety programs.
- Very professional group.
- People conscious – they have a great concern for individuals when responding.
- Evident that they are part of our community.
- Supports education and seems to partner with public and private schools to provide learning activities for students.
- Active and well respected in city and community.
- Works well with other city departments.
- Well trained.
- The fire department provides good customer services to citizens.
- Very good inspection program.
- Dedicated employees.
- I see the use of previous Citizen's Academy graduates as volunteers as a positive.
- Being involved in as many activities as possible in and around Burlington.

- Having a Citizen's Academy.
- Having smoke detector installation sessions.
- Excellent leadership.
- Community support.
- Growth of commercial development (which is also a challenge).
- New command staff – new infusion of command working hard to build on what BFD has been doing.
- Geographically well placed with number of stations.
- Professional service.
- Community engagement.
- Traditions.
- Progressive mindset (this meeting is an example).
- EMS on trucks and engines.
- Community relationship.
- Almost (most times) quick responses to emergencies.
- ISO rating.
- Very involved in the community.
- Building for the future (Station #6).
- Excellent leadership.
- As a newcomer here, I was quite impressed with the department's staff – they are open, friendly and helpful.
- Puts high emphasis on quality training of staff in a safe manner.
- Professional, courteous, and friendly.
- Very visible in the community at events, etc.
- Swift communications (in my experience) on issues.
- Well run organization – disciplined and respectful.
- Fire has always been willing to participate in hospital exercises when available.
- Fire leadership has been quick to respond to requests and questions.
- Fire and the hospital have a good working relationship in real events.

Other Thoughts and Comments

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

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

- I'm impressed with the fire department's leadership being willing to tackle such a process and open themselves up to critique and public scrutiny.
- Under Jay Smith's leadership, the climate in the department seems steady and not susceptible to over-reactions. The ascendancy of leadership is a boon.
- Our department has a very positive community perception, but there are also many concerns from family and friends of the firefighters that the department doesn't follow the best practices for hiring and personnel management.
- I love all our fire department does for our community in all the activities with children and adults!
- We have an excellent fire department. Very well trained, quick response. While firefighting and prevention are primary, the EMT service is invaluable. They always arrive before the Rescue Squad and render aid to save lives.
- I would like to see BFD, Graham Fire Department and Mebane Fire Departments work together to create specialized teams to better serve the entire county.
- Time to consider ARFF!
- Remember, the fire fighters go in and risk their lives when others run out (all to save their fellow man).
- As director of the Kernodle Senior Center, we often have fire department volunteers to do blood pressure reading for our participants and they often come for EMT situations – they have always shown concern and caring for our participants and the general public.
- Very tough to assess if you lack knowledge of the department.
- Being able to work with all departments.
- Brookwood appreciates great service that we receive from fire department.
- I think our department does a great job. I see them out in the community, and I have never heard any negative feedback.
- BFD always work as a professional organization and keep the citizens as the focus of their goals.
- Burlington has the best fire department in the county.
- Technology? Where are we on this?
- Afraid of unfunded retirement mandates on city budget.
- What about consolidation with Alamance Safety, volunteers, EMS, or other towns? Seems inefficient.

Appendix 2

Supporting Services of the Burlington Fire Department		
• Administration	• Alamance County EMA	• Alamance County EMS
• Alamance County Fire Marshal's Office	• Alamance County Rescue	• Alamance County Safe Kids
	• Burlington Firefighters' Association	
• City Government	• Civic Organizations	• CPSE
• Emergency Communications	• Faith-Based Organizations	• FEMA
• Finance	• Forestry	• Guilford County EMS
• Guilford County Emergency Services		• Health Department
• Hospital	• Human Resources	• Law Enforcement
• LEPC	• Local Businesses	• Mutual Aid Agencies
• National Guard	• NCDOT	• NC Fire Chiefs' Association
• NC Fire Marshals' Association	• NC State EMA	• NC State Fire Commission
• NC State Firefighters' Association	• Office of the State Fire Marshal	• Other City Departments
		• Other Federal Agencies
• Other State Agencies	• Professional Associations	• Public Works
• Railroad	• Red Cross	• Training
• Utilities Purveyor(s)	• Vendors	

Appendix 3

Strengths

It is important for any organization to identify its strengths to ensure that it can provide the services requested by the community, and that strengths are consistent 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 that 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.

Through a consensus process, the department stakeholders identified the department's strengths as follows:

Strengths of the Burlington Fire Department	
• Uniformity of equipment	• Quality of apparatus
• Departmental communication – city emails	• Administration wanting input
• Community relations – out in public more	• Turnout times
• ISO improvement	• Diversity in age of members
• Quality of people	• Resourceful
• Training diversity	• Personal protective equipment
• Hiring qualified staff	• Supportive community
• Benefits – health, 401k, retirement	• Safety culture
• Service to customers	• Technology – accountability, TIC, MCTs
• Water supply	• Cancer prevention initiatives
• Outside contracts – mutual aid	• Administrative support
• Strategic initiatives	• Roundtable meetings
• Abilities of our employees	• Employee commendations
• NFPA 1975 compliant uniforms	• Work ethic
• Camaraderie	• Filling vacancies quickly
• Competitive starting pay	• Involvement from all ranks
• Child safety seat program	• Fundraisers - MDA
• Community outreach – Citizen's Fire Academy	

Weaknesses

For any organization to either begin or to continue to move progressively forward, it must not only be able to identify its strengths, but also those areas where it functions poorly or not at all. These areas of needed enhancements are not the same as threats to be 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 department stakeholders as weaknesses:

Weaknesses of the Burlington Fire Department	
• No regular raises – a step plan	• Compression of pay grades
• Lack of specialty training	• Lack of adequate training facility
• Lack of training division staff	• Lack of fire suppression personnel/stations
• Lack of specialty companies	• Lack of communication
• Lack of fire prevention personnel	• Too much turnover
• TOP/SOP review	• Infrastructure – station upgrades
• Lack of consistency in personnel evaluations	• Lack of active recruitment
• Lack of experience	• Lack of department morale/pride
• Lack of feedback	• Officer development training – future candidates
• Limited member participation on committees	• Locations of stations
• Pre-emption	• Location of training facility
• GP zones for Car 2/Truck 2	• Not using AVL dispatch
• Lack of live fire training	• Lack of training props

Opportunities

The opportunities for an organization depend on the identification of strengths and weaknesses and how they can be enhanced. The focus of opportunities is not solely on existing service, but on expanding and developing new possibilities both inside and beyond the traditional service area. The department stakeholders identified the following potential opportunities:

Opportunities for the Burlington Fire Department	
• Training with other agencies	• Outside education
• Educating the public on what we do	• Creating a solid recruitment program
• Partnering with college for additional training	• Regional training facility
• Countywide incident management team	• Public exposure – media
• Specialized training – outside instructors, water rescue, high angle, etc.	• Community risk management and hazard mitigation
• Disaster response aid	• Increase diversity
• Grant writing	• Explore more training with ARMC/airport
• Ride-along program	• Critical Incident Debriefing Team
• PD/FD cross training	• City Fire Academy – recruitment, public awareness
• City growth – tax base	• Education of elected officials
• City workshops – John Maxwell	• COB employee development
• New technology – AVL, TICs, upgraded communication center	• Suppression interaction with public education – elementary and special populations
• Strategic planning – in progress	• Accreditation

Threats

By recognizing possible threats, an organization can reduce the potential for loss. Fundamental to the success of any strategic plan is the understanding that threats are not completely and/or directly controlled by the organization. Some of the current and potential threats identified by the department stakeholders were as follows:

Potential Threats to the Burlington Fire Department	
• Negative/lack of public perception	• Losing staff to other departments
• Lack of or low funding – flat budget	• Lack of diverse applicant pool
• Large-scale incidents – domestic terrorism (WMD), airport (ARFF), highway/transportation, railroad	• High expectations with low expense from community
• Inconsistent mutual aid availability	• Legal issues – inexperience, negligence
• Technology failure – radios, computers	• Cyber-security for the city
• Exposure to opioids	• Support of government leaders
• Growth affecting infrastructure	• Social media – negative use
• Lack of fire service interest from younger generation	• Radio communications with mutual aid

Appendix 4

Critical and Service Gap Issues Identified by the Department Stakeholders

Group 1	*Group 2*
Training ○ Number of training staff ○ Effective training ○ Specialized training ○ Efficient training ○ Training props	**Training** ○ Specialized training ○ Training props – VR simulator ○ Career development ○ Mutual aid training ○ Live fire training ○ Real-world training experience – acquired structures
Technology ○ Becoming proficient in our technology ○ Keeping up with modern technology ○ Utilization of local GIS ○ AVL dispatch ○ Turn-by-turn navigation ○ Drone technology	**Technology** ○ AVL ○ Wireless access point ○ Tablets ○ Pre-emption ○ Remote access to Firehouse software
Emergency Response ○ Response times ○ Pre-incident surveys ○ Pre-emption ○ COOP ○ Hazard mitigation	**Emergency Response** ○ Station locations ○ Revisions/upgrades to GP mapping ○ ARFF ○ Specialized companies ○ City growth
Physical Resources ○ Updated stations ○ Number of stations ○ Training facility location ○ Equipment maintenance ○ Equipment quality	**Capital Resources** ○ Station renovations ○ Upgrades to training facility/additional facilities ○ Apparatus replacement plan ○ Grant writing
Workforce ○ Recruitment ○ Retention ○ Succession planning ○ Culture ○ Efficient staffing ○ Workload	**Human Resources** ○ Staffing ○ Compression of pay ○ Succession planning ○ Retention ○ Step plan ○ Evaluations ○ Benefits ○ Policy review ○ Communication
Public Education ○ Public buy-in ○ Current and relevant ○ Social media ○ Educating city government officials ○ Local media outlets ○ Community outreach ○ Expanding personnel	**Community Involvement** ○ Exposure to the public ○ Social media ○ Special populations ○ Ride-along program