ST. CHARLES
FIRE DEPARTMENT

St. Charles
FIRE RESCUE
Pride of the Fox

2016-2021
STRATEGIC PLAN

Integrity | Courage | Commitment | Excellence

Facilitated by
CPSE
Center for Public Safety Excellence

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Introduction

St. Charles Fire Department (SCFD) provides the community with emergency medical, fire suppression, basic and technical rescue, community risk reduction, domestic preparedness planning, hazardous materials mitigation, fire investigation, and public fire and life safety education services to St. Charles 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 in 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.

ST. CHARLES FIRE DEPARTMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN
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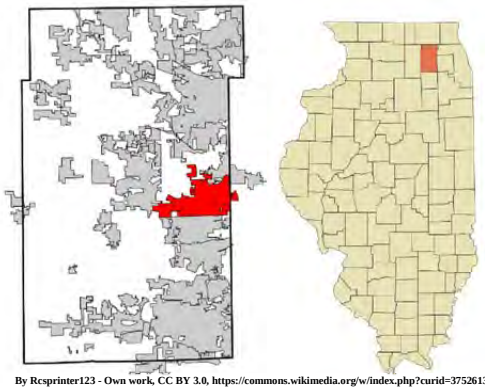
Community and Organizational Background



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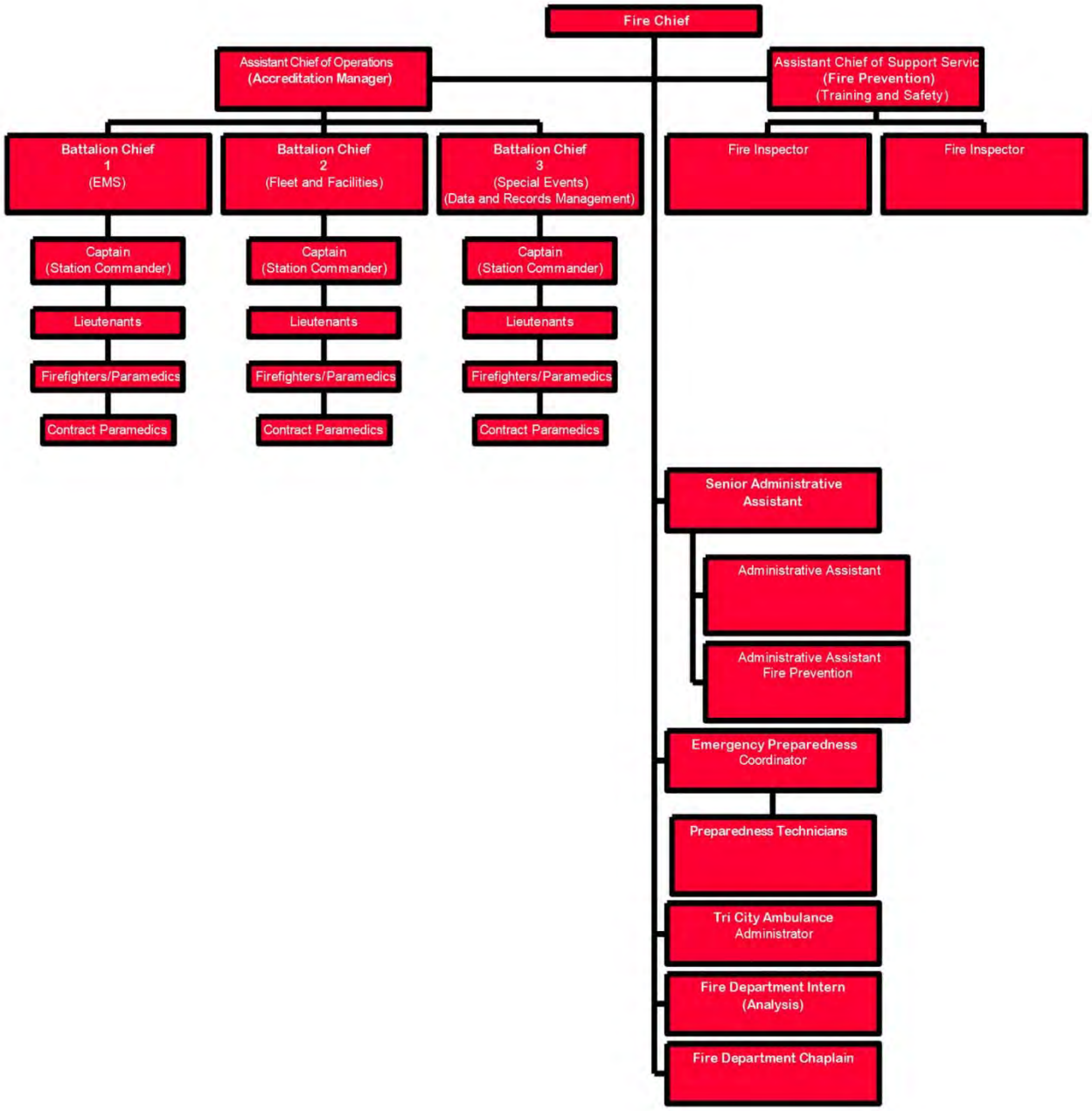
The city of St. Charles Illinois, "the Pride of the Fox", after the Fox River that runs through the center of the city, is located in DuPage and Kane approximately 40 miles west of Chicago on Illinois Route 64. St. Charles is part of a tri-city area, along with Geneva and Batavia, all western Chicago suburbs of similar size and relative demographic condition.

The entire Fox Valley area was opened to American settlement after the Black Hawk War of 1832. Evan Shelby and William Franklin of Indiana, staked the first claim in what is now St. Charles in 1833. A year later they came back with their families and were joined by over a dozen other families later that same year. The township, initially known as Charleston, but with the name already procured by the downstate city of Charleston, Illinois, the name of St. Charles was adopted in 1839, and became incorporated as a city in 1834, three years before the city of Chicago. In response to a serious fire that destroyed several three-story buildings in 1842 the village of St. Charles chartered its first fire service delivery agency under the name of the Layfette Fire Company that consisted of an initial membership 56 members. In 1888, by Municipal Ordinance, the Lafayette Fire Company became the St. Charles Fire Department, while still a volunteer department, reorganized itself to become more efficient. Membership fluctuated over the years after World War 1 as the organization continued to operate a paid on call system to handle emergencies in the community. In August of 1959 the city decided to begin shifting the department from a volunteer organization to a combination department with the hire of four full-time firefighters, a fire chief, and three lieutenants (one to work each of three 24 hour shifts).

The agency continued to function as a combination department until 2011 when union negotiations and the reduction of service area coverage with the loss of a contract for services provided to a surrounding fire control district, resulted in the elimination of the paid on call program. Today as a full career organization, the St. Charles Fire Department protects a 14.9 square mile area from three stations with 47 sworn members, 12 contracted paramedics and 20 Emergency Medical Technicians. Responding to nearly 4500 calls for service annually, the department provides the approximately 33,000 residents of the City of St. Charles a comprehensive mix of emergency response, risk reduction, domestic preparedness, and public education services.

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 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] In order 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 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]*"*

The U.S. Federal Benchmarking Consortium Study Team goes on to explain 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.

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

> ***"What we have to do today is to be ready for an uncertain tomorrow."***
>
> Peter F. Drucker,
> Professor of Social Science
> and Management

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.

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.

Process and Acknowledgements

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 Joe Schelstreet and his team for their leadership and commitment to this process.

Initial development of this strategic plan took place in August 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. Those present at the meeting were as follows:

St. Charles Fire Department External Stakeholders			
John Baird	*Anne Becker*	*Mark Cassidy*	*John Ducharme*
Edwin Garland	*Bob Gilmartin*	*Fran Gilmartin*	*Ralph Grathoff*
Larry Gunderson	*John Hoscheit*	*James Keegan*	*Cheryl King*
Mark Koenen	*Ron Lubben*	*Charles Lucas*	*Jennifer McMahon*
Timothy Miller	*Chris Minick*	*Sue Pfotenhauer*	*Mayor Raymond Rogina*
Laura Rudow	*Elmer Rullman*	*Peter Suhr*	*Rita Tungare*
Dean Wagner			

External Stakeholders Work Session

Community Group Findings

A key element of SCFD's organizational philosophy is having a high level of commitment to the community, as well as recognizing the importance of community satisfaction. Thus, the agency invited community representatives to provide feedback on services provided.

Community Priorities

In order to dedicate time, energy, and resources to services most desired by its community, the fire department needs to understand what the customers consider to be their priorities. 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	155
Fire Suppression	2	130
Rescue- Basic and Technical	3	120
Community Risk Reduction	4	73
Domestic Preparedness Planning and Response	5	67
Hazardous Materials Mitigation	6	64
Fire Investigation	7	46
Public Fire and Life Safety Education	8	45

External Stakeholders Work Session

Community Expectations

Understanding what the community expects of its fire and emergency services 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. In certain areas, education on the level of service that is already available may be all that is needed. To follow are the expectations of the community's external stakeholders:

Community Expectations of the St. Charles Fire Department (verbatim, in priority order)

1. Timely response time. Prompt, successful response to emergencies. Timely response to emergency requests for fire suppression and medical services.
2. Trained, knowledgeable responders. Well trained, professional and dedicated staff - well defined and clear roles and responsibilities.
3. Emergency medical services - continued excellence.
4. Collaborative approach with external and internal customers. Collaboratively support area-wide initiatives and fire related crisis. Interfacing with other stakeholders on potential terrorist activities.
5. Reduce community risks with proper inspections. Leadership engagement with the community to reduce risks for fire through code enforcement, inspections, plan review and building codes. Influence policy to improve building codes.
6. Proper training and equipment for disaster situations. Being prepared to lead the community's efforts during disasters.
7. Prevention through education. Provide public fire and life safety education. Educate the public - the fire department needs to make sure the public is educated and proactive about helping to prevent problems.
8. Provide fire suppression and emergency services as required - 24/7.
9. Rescue.
10. Maintenance of equipment. Proper equipment. Work with equipment that exceeds expectations.
11. Fire suppression. I expect superior fire suppression skills.
12. Professional in methods, training, and public relations.
13. Efficient responsiveness for emergency situations. Quality medical and fire response service / professionalism.
14. Save life. Protect the people - the fire department needs to be able to solve all or most of the maladies caused by fire and the other areas the department addresses.
15. Successful community outreach. Consider citizen's fire training program such as police have. Continue with community outreach.

16. Cost effectiveness. Good budgeting with tax dollars. Monetarily responsible - the fire department should spend their budget wisely, but be innovative about keeping up-to-date.
17. Be open and friendly ambassadors of the city - whether at the station or dealing with a person in need.
18. Current and adaptable to rapidly changing technologies. Keep up with technology - the fire department needs to have the most updated technology to keep the citizens safe.
19. Effective and prepared. Capable and competent personnel.
20. Investigate fires. Proper fire investigations.
21. Follow applicable standards. Implement best practices.
22. Provide the community with a safe environment.
23. Safe and secure environment for students and staff - HLS inspections.
24. Maintenance of personnel qualifications.
25. Leadership and management of the incident management and emergency response processes for natural and man-made disasters.
26. Save property.
27. Be creative in developing safe solutions in the building - economic development area.
28. Want excellent rescue skills.
29. Safety plans in place and drilled throughout the year.
30. Proactive with high legal and ethical standards.
31. Committed to the citizen – the fire department members should be committed to their careers and care about keeping a team effort strong in the department.

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 in fact be a weakness within the delivery system, while some weaknesses may also be misperceptions based upon a lack of information or incorrect information.

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

1. Continued adequate funding. Adequate funding. State funding - maintaining very high level service.
2. Continued supply of qualified personnel. Constant turnover in staffing could potentially be a problem - loss of institutional knowledge. Are we adequately staffed considering the aging population in St. Charles? Succession planning.
3. Costs of service and personnel compared to revenue raising ability. Being able to provide the desired level of service within cost constraints.
4. I am concerned for the safety of all first responders, given the current climate of domestic terrorism. Firefighter safety.
5. Pension costs. Union contract demands and pension liabilities.
6. Need more attention to community risk reduction.
7. St. Charles has the highest ISO rating. How does this recognition transfer into financial savings to the individual business or resident?
8. Population increase.
9. Important for officers and firefighters to be in excellent physical condition.
10. Downtime utilization for community benefit considering random and immediate response interruptions to such downtime for primary.
11. Code enforcement - older town - code violations.
12. Recruitment of women firefighters (avoid good old boys club).
13. Attitude toward EMS education. There seems to be more positive toward fire education and not toward EMS education.
14. Unfamiliarity of customer's property, business, and client base.
15. Public pressure for the concerns of a minority of people that takes away from the overall community needs.
16. Continued adherence to standards.
17. Perceived as working in a silo.
18. Maintaining the solid morale that exists in the department today.

19. Our response to potential terrorist threats - considering the airport and its closeness to recreational sites and population centers.
20. Aging population.
21. Call volume - are we overworking staff and extending service areas to our detriment?
22. Keep actively trained.
23. Flooding - Fox River bad engineering.
24. Continued review of practices to reduce disability exposure.
25. Challenges posed by state statutes regarding personnel.
26. Perceived that there is a "casual" or slow response by EMS personnel.
27. Individual department pride and union organizational initiatives.
28. Do we have other fire equipment centers to improve response times? - i.e. city vs. unincorporated areas.
29. Use resources outside department to assist in fire origin and cause investigation.
30. Ability to coexist with Fox River District and provide safe service for all.
31. North end of town - response times.
32. Adequate pay and benefits to attract top professionals.
33. Direct interface with members of the public. They are mostly invisible.
34. Inspection and review services - timelines and turnaround workload and ability to follow up timely.
35. Water system - wells don't get Lake Michigan water.
36. Peak service periods - can we meet demands?
37. Top heavy - lots of ranks.

External 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 St. Charles Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)

- Excellent response times.
- Excellent response of equipment and resources.
- Professionalism.
- Many very positive interactions with many department members.
- Demonstrated that they are very well trained and professional.
- Provide an impressive array of service and are always willing to provide assistance with code compliance.
- Employees / firefighters / paramedics.
- Chief.
- The outreach of using the simulation lab to hone the crews that are working together.
- The fact that they are reaching out to the community to receive this feedback.
- High quality leadership.
- Good relationship with the union.
- Strong staff – professional and committed to the department.
- Chief Schelstreet.
- Leadership below chief.
- Cooperative attitude between union and management.
- Focuses on practices that build staff morale (cookouts).
- Engages in worthwhile community events (Veteran's Day).
- People - great staff.
- Well trained.
- Command staff.
- Equipment.
- Well-funded by city.

- Have been very responsive to our community, especially medical services.
- Since I am not aware of domestic fires or EMT issues – you are doing well in these areas.
- Public image is positive.
- Response time is great.
- Command staff is experienced.
- Department is well respected regionally.
- Chief appears to be very proficient.
- Houses and equipment well maintained.
- Timely fire suppression and EMS.
- Education and interaction with the public.
- Competent personnel.
- Dedication; I feel we have a tremendous group of firefighters who care about our city and they are willing to do whatever it takes to protect us.
- Approachable; our firefighters are available to the public in a variety of venues, they support many causes and spread their goodwill often.
- Equipped; I feel the department is well equipped.
- Proactive; the department often searches for ways to stay connected and keeps current with the community changes in St. Charles.
- Outstanding partnership with D303 and fire.
- Strong communication with supports in place – ROE / Planning / Architects.
- Strong planning in all site safety and interaction through the years.
- Fire / Police interaction with / principal and staff is always positive.
- HLS partnership is a daily expectant and is continually reinforced by all fire.
- Professionalism of the department – from the chief, to the office staff onto the guys on the department – top notch and totally helpful as a responder and community resource.
- The department appears, from an outsider's view, very well trained. Frequently the equipment is out on mock rescues occurring on the river and in ponds, this is reassuring to all who witness.
- The fire department is always very visible and involved with the community.
- They have the proper coverage, staff, equipment, and fleet to sufficiently service St. Charles. Support should always be given to maintain that level of service.
- Professionalism and knowledge of personnel.

- Capable and competent administration – Emphasis on excellence.
- Leadership and vision.
- Planning and proactive approach – they are rarely caught unprepared.
- Equipment.
- St. Charles FD always presents itself in a positive way to the community.
- Appears to be up-to-date with a wide range of needs. Hazmat, fire, auto accidents, and other emergencies.
- Department pride and support for the city at large.
- Teamwork with peer city departments and fire and police commissions.
- Chief Schelstreet and his team work together.
- Working relationship with adjacent departments in other cities.
- Training…solid effort and documentation.
- Very responsive.
- Presence at large city events is valuable.
- Very respectful during inspections. Leadership is very professional.
- Well respected within the community and by other surrounding communities.
- Strong and proud history within the community.
- Excellent resources and use of those resources.
- Comprehensive set of fire department services.
- Excellent coordination with Kane County on coordination of emergency management needs.
- Prompt and professional, courteous, and friendly response to emergencies. Completely dependable.
- Based on newspaper reports, St. Charles FD is highly qualified, attaining an unusual level of certification.
- Response times always prompt.
- Very knowledgeable staff, level headed, kind, and caring.

Other Thoughts and Comments

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

Other Community Comments about the St. Charles Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)

- I think our community needs to recognize the dedicated and talented fire department we have. Too much focus is on the negative and that leads to distrust.
- Accredited, always striving to exceed expectations.
- How do you plan to use the emerging technology of unarmed airborne vehicles (drones)?
- Suggestion; a public education program - we need to retire old fire extinguishers and a local disposal site for public to bring the old expired extinguishers.
- It would be nice to have the department have a collection point for old / expired fire extinguishers.
- This process is another example of the care and concern our fire department illustrates for this community.
- It is a pleasure to work with our team of fire professionals.
- In response to the eight services and their respective rank of priority, I feel there are certain tasks that only the fire department can do. Civil and structural engineering can review plans, non-profits and D303 can provide education and inspectors can report non-compliance of building codes and suppression systems. But only the fire department will rescue trapped people or mitigate the destruction from a natural disaster and that should be a priority. Thank you for your willingness to ask these questions, not an easy thing to do, to open yourself / department up for review and comments, thank you for all you do!!
- Very good department overall. I hear very good things about the service and the people all the time.
- Department seems to be headed in the right direction.
- Interest to be accountable.
- Risk – need to make sure we don't foster an environment that creates a sense of entitlement and a "club" environment.
- Citizens fire academy would be a good thing to consider.
- Much / all of the community input could have been done online.

External Stakeholders Work Session

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.

St. Charles Fire Department Internal Stakeholder Representatives			
Brian Byrne Battalion Chief	*Tony Centimano* Lieutenant	*Kevin Christensen* Assistant Chief	*Dave Evans* EMA Technician
Marty Friel Battalion Chief	*Stephanie Hanson* Tri-City Ambulance Coordinator	*John Kessler* Lieutenant	*Emily Kies* EMA Coordinator
Jim Kurczek Battalion Chief	*Jeremy Mauthe* Lieutenant	*Trent Moser* Paramedic Services of Illinois Coordinator	*Carole Murphy* Senior Administrative Assistant
Mike Neumaier Lieutenant	*Joe Schelstreet* Fire Chief	*Scott Swanson* Assistant Chief	*Chad Tinsley* Firefighter

Agency Internal 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 purpose statement and ensure the mission statement best suits SCFD. After presentation and discussion by all internal stakeholders, the consensus was to accept the following:

To create and foster a safe and secure community through exemplary protection, prevention, and education.

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. The agency's internal stakeholders agreed to the following:

Integrity
• **Trust** • **Respect** • **Do the right thing**
Courage
• **To act** • **To care** • **To take ownership**
Commitment
• **To serve the community** • **To each other** • **To self** • **To the highest level of professionalism**
Excellence
• **Always getting better** • **Striving to be the best** • **Recognized for performance**

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 St. Charles Fire Department are guided by them in the accomplishment of the goals, objectives, and day-to-day tasks.

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 St. Charles Fire Department		
• Emergency Medical Services	• Fire Suppression	• Rescue – Basic and Technical
• Community Risk Reduction	• Domestic Preparedness Planning and Response	• Hazardous Materials Mitigation
• Fire Investigation	• Public Fire and Life Safety Education	

Supporting Services of St. Charles Fire Department		
• Emergency Telephone System Board	• Foreign Fire Insurance Tax – 2% Board	• Illinois Department Public Health
• Tri-City Ambulance	• Local 3322, IAFF	• Tri Com Central Dispatch
• Southern Fox Valley Emergency Medical System	• Mutual/Automatic Aid - MABAS	• Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI)
• CFAI/CPSE	• Homeowners Associations	• IEMA
• Training	• Emergency Communications	• Hospitals
• Association for Individual Development		• Kane County OEM
• Public Works	• Finance	• Illinois EPA
• Human Resources	• Tax base	• City Electrical
• City Public Relations	• Red Cross	• Towing Companies
• Salvation Army	• Vendors	• VOAD
• Governance	• Community Development	• Nicor Gas
• GIS	• Water Department	• COAD
• Employee Assistance Plan	• Information Technology	• Kane County Board
• USFA	• Streets Department	• International Code Council
• Illinois Fire Chiefs	• Chaplain	• Law Enforcement
• AFFI – Peer Assistance	• National Fire Academy	• PSI
• Office of the State Fire Marshal	• Emergency Management Institute	• Great Lakes Accreditation Consortium

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 assure that it is capable of providing the services requested by the community and to ensure 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 internal stakeholders identified the agency's strengths as follows:

Strengths of the St. Charles Fire Department	
Relationships (labor/management and city)	Workforce- well rounded, full experience
Good compensation and benefits allows for quality employee retention	Open communication (general meetings, official fire department communication)
Policies and procedures	Facilities
Apparatus	Equipment
Use of community feedback	Department ratings (ISO, accreditation)
"Good placed to work"	Rich history
People who care	Delegation of duties
Career longevity	Leadership at all levels
Succession planning	Morale - leadership
Quality / pride in workmanship	Ownership of department
Special teams	Upward mobility
Progressive environment – desire to excel/succeed	Professional development of personnel
Staffing levels	Fire prevention staffing / programs
On scene performance	Support of innovation
Department budget	Training opportunities
Administrative staff	Pace of work

Weaknesses

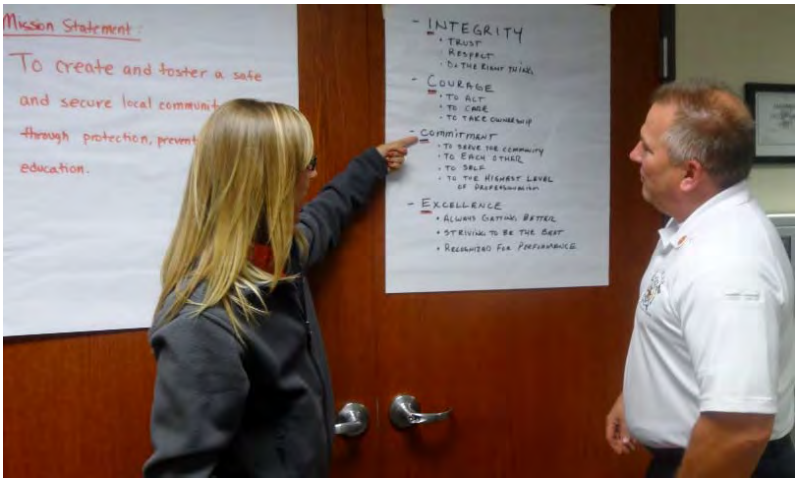
For any organization to either begin or to continue to move progressively forward, it must not only be able to identify its strengths, but also those areas where it functions poorly or not at all. These areas of needed enhancements are not the same as threats to be identified later in this document,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

Weaknesses of the St. Charles Fire Department	
Retirements – age of members / experience	Generational differences
Poor time management – lack of training in area	Reduction in multi-company training (all three stations)
Underutilization of medics (152 & 153)	Lacking pride and ownership
Lack of technical expertise	Sense of unity
Personal accountability	Use of chain of command
Timely communication	Recalls
Pace of work – so much going on	Volume of work
Understanding the history and culture of the department	Non-resident employees (see pride and ownership)
Training – quality vs quantity – consistency of training	In need of but don't have a daytime training officer
Lack of lateral mobility	PSI transport medic turnover rate too high
Disparate voluntary participation of the membership in different projects and opportunities	Emotional intelligence – lack of understanding
	No mentorship program (new hire or newly promoted)
Amount of officer development training	

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 internal stakeholders identified the following potential opportunities:

Opportunities for the St. Charles Fire Department	
Community outreach	Mobile integrated health care
Senior citizens' programs	Ethnically diverse educational programs
Citizens fire academy	More diversity in recruiting
Intra -departmental outreach	Fire prevention
Small business self-inspection program	Expand extinguisher training program
Move toward expanding use of digital processes	Consolidation of resources – dispatch, fire services, EMS, special teams
Expand use of social media to provide FD information (or collect) – surveys/notifications	Provide expertise to train other departments
	Education with the police department
	Training with outside departments
Officer development	Utilization of outside groups for training
Credentialing (EMA)	Exercises with other departments
Public education	Expand presence at special events
Company inspections	FD rapport with businesses and products
Elected official relationships – Fire Ops 101	Safety Town
Collection programs – fire extinguisher, sharps	Firefighter development – probation / recruitment
Expand CPR – external classes and health care providers	



Internal Stakeholders Work Session

Threats

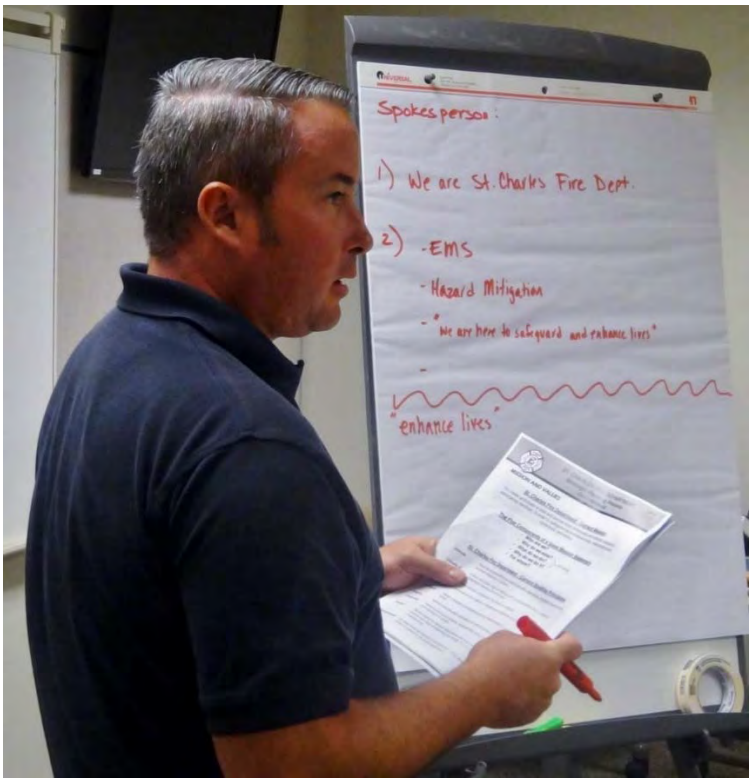
By recognizing possible threats, an organization can reduce the potential for loss. Fundamental to the success of any strategic plan is the understanding that threats are not completely and/or directly controlled by the organization. Some of the current and potential threats identified by the internal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

Threats to the St. Charles Fire Department	
Budget reductions	State and federal funding reductions
Increasing operational costs / rising pension costs – capital costs	Legislation – mandated services and training – unfunded mandates
Natural disasters	Manmade disasters
Terrorists	Staffing turnover / succession / experience
Affordable healthcare (home health)	Failure to remain current with technology
Maintain professional service as the world evolves	Additional professional requirements – training / certifications
Staffing reductions / consolidation	Politics – election and perception
High hazard uses	Undocumented changes in building use - commercial/residential (single resident occupancy)
Downtown expansion leading to larger buildings and higher population density	
Businesses relocating	Increased traffic due to regional growth
Private ambulance and fire services	Change in public perception
Social media	Building construction materials
Complacent	More dangerous furnishings, fire loads
Tech hazards (electric cars)	Social work
Psych calls	Development types
Aging community	Additional medical exposures - pandemics
Residential care facilities	

Critical Issues and Service Gaps

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

Critical and Service Gap Issues Identified by the Internal Workgroup	
Training	Community outreach
Culture / ownership	Workforce development
Internal communications	Community health evolution
Positional development skills	Social media utilization
Community risk reduction	Diversity programs
Defining community needs	Chain of command consistency
Time management	Succession planning
Mentoring program	Expectations
Mobile integrated healthcare	Rental licensing
Social issues	Technology utilization



Internal Stakeholder Work Session

Strategic Initiatives

Having reviewed the agency's critical issues and service gaps, the following strategic initiatives were identified as the foundation for the development of goals and objectives.

St. Charles Fire Department's Strategic Initiatives	
Training	Community Outreach
Culture / Ownership	Workforce Development
Internal Communication	Community Health Evolution

Goals and Objectives

In order to continuously achieve the mission of SCFD, 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 SCFD'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 SCFD leadership.

> ***"Goals allow you to control the direction of change in your favor."***
>
> Brian Tracy,
> Author

Internal Stakeholders Work Session

Goal 1	**Expand the current internal training program in order to continually strive for ever increasing levels of performance.**			
Objective 1A	**Identify the obstacles present for the sharing of institutional knowledge and the provision of consistent and high quality training.**			
Timeframe	3 months	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Identify and analyze current training programs and support systems in use. • Utilize a feedback tool in order to gather input on the effectiveness of current training offerings and support systems to determine gaps in delivery. • Build or enhance programs and support systems that bridge identified gaps. • Evaluate the data gathered in the feedback tool monthly to determine effectiveness and adjust where needed.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 1B	**Create the position of full time drill master in order to maintain the current high level of department standards and ensure that training offerings are high quality and consistency.**			
Timeframe	One year	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Identify position cost. • Build job description. • Submit the request for a new position in the Fire Department budget. • Update policies and procedures to reflect the new position and its roles and responsibilities.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 1C	**Conduct a feasibility study regarding the relocation of the current training facility in order to improve the accessibility to all three stations.**			
Timeframe	One year	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Identify the scope of the study. • Determine the cost. • Build and issue an RFP. • Evaluate proposals. • Evaluate the results of the study.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Goal 2	Improve community outreach through more effective and relevant communication and programs.			
Objective 2A	**Define community needs and expectations.**			
Timeframe	4 months	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Assign a committee/team. • Define / obtain demographic data to determine target audience(s) needs & expectations. • Survey community concerning needs and expectations of the fire department. • Prioritize needs determined from the target audience data. • Determine resources and personnel needs (part/fulltime staff, outside contractors, budget etc.).			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 2B	**Develop effective and relevant communications.**			
Timeframe	1 year	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Assign work group. • Evaluate and modify current communications to meet the needs & expectations identified. • Identify new communication opportunities/outlet. • Create and develop content for new communication. • Obtain approval to move to implementation.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 2C	**Implement communications system(s).**			
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Assign work group • Identify and evaluate all currently used and other available communications outlets. • Determine best method(s) based on target audience data. • Receive/complete needed training (if applicable). • Format content specific to method of delivery. • Pilot program and evaluate communication efficacy and relevance. • Modify and improve as needed, then rollout.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 2D	**Develop effective and relevant programs.**				
Timeframe	1 year	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**	
Critical Tasks	• Assign work group. • Evaluate and modify current programs to meet the needs & expectations identified. • Identify new program opportunities/outlets. • Create and develop new content and programs. • Obtain approval to move to implementation.				
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:			Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 2E	**Implement community programs.**				
Timeframe	1 year +	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**	
Critical Tasks	• Assign work group. • Identify and evaluate all currently used and other available programs. • Determine the best programs based on target audience data. • Receive/complete needed training (if applicable). • Pilot program(s) and evaluate program efficacy and relevance. • Modify and improve as needed, then roll out program(s).				
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:			Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 2F	**Evaluate communications and programs for efficacy and relevance.**				
Timeframe	3 months / ongoing	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**	
Critical Tasks	• Identify evaluation team members. • Determine measurement metrics and methods. • Evaluate performance based on metrics/methods. • Make recommendations for improvements/modifications, continuation of systems and programs annually.				
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:			Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Goal 3	Develop a culture of ownership within the department.			
Objective 3A	**Identify the obstructions which impede individuals from expressing a sense of ownership within the department.**			
Timeframe	4 months	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Determine the selection criteria and establish a Peer Review Committee (PRC). • PRC creates and distributes a survey instrument to department members. • Collect, organize and format the survey data. • PRC communicates the survey data results to all department members and solicits feedback.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 3B	**Develop ownership program initiatives based upon survey data results.**			
Timeframe	Ongoing	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Peer Review Committee (PRC) analyzes the survey data and feedback results. • PRC determines core program elements, design and implementation. • Develop measures to assess and continually improve the program.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 3C	**Develop a department mentoring program.**			
Timeframe	Ongoing	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Determine the selection criteria, identify potential mentors, and establish a Peer Mentoring Committee (PMC). • PMC identifies and creates program content for each rank (position). • Emphasis on fire department history, culture, mission, values, responsibilities and chain-of-command. • PMC establishes mentor / mentee criteria. • Program implementation. • Implement 360-degree feedback. • Assign work group. • Evaluate program, modify as needed based on results/feedback.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Goal 4	Continually develop personnel for enhanced career performance and organizational succession.			
Objective 4A	**Identify and define current needs and practices.**			
Timeframe	4 months	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Assign a committee/team. • Define current situation. • Survey entire membership – needs assessment. • Determine organizational requirements. • Prioritize and categorize results for implementation.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 4B	**Determine organizational needs and formalize a succession plan.**			
Timeframe	8 months	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Assign work group. • Define current situation and project potential future challenges. • Evaluate situation and identify gaps. • Develop and formalize the succession plan. • Provide feedback to individuals and guidance in addressing gaps			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 4C	**Create comprehensive individual development practices.**			
Timeframe	12 months	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Assign work group. • Review best practices and other methods for individual development. • Evaluate results and align with organizational needs. • Identify internal/external resources available. • Develop a formal information document. • Obtain approvals for implementation. • Implement practices. • Evaluate then modify and improve as needed.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 4D	**Identify certification and educational pathways.**				
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**	
Critical Tasks	• Assign work group. • Review organizational needs /requirements and best practices. • Identify internal/external resources. • Identify budgetary challenges and develop program budget. • Obtain approval to move to implementation. • Implement comprehensive education and certification program. • Evaluate program, modify as needed based on results/feedback.				
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:		
Objective 4E	**Evaluate programs, practices, and methods to modify existing and/or implement additional elements for organizational improvement.**				
Timeframe	Ongoing	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**	
Critical Tasks	• Identify evaluation team members. • Determine measurement metrics and methods. • Evaluate performance for benefits and improvement based on metrics/methods. • Make recommendations for improvements/modifications, continuation of mentoring program, mentors, and ranks to be included on an annual basis.				
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:		

Goal 5	Improve internal and external department communications.			
Objective 5A	**Define the appropriate use for an Official Fire Department Correspondence (OFDC) and Standard Operating Guideline (SOG).**			
Timeframe	4 months	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Define criteria for OFDC and SOG usage (short-term vs. permanent). • Shorten the process and establish a timeline from the creation to publishing an SOG. • Timely updates made to SOG's.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 5B	**Improve accessibility of information within the department.**			
Timeframe	4 months	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Provide and make available minutes from department meetings and post on the shared drive. • Ensure effective utilization of the chain-of-command. • Provide access to email and work rules for personnel off-duty.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 5C	**Promote the department through external media.**			
Timeframe	On-going	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Determine and review external promotional options. • Select options best suited to promote the department. • Develop promotional materials, programs, or processes that fit department needs. • Increase the department's presence through social media. • Re-design and keep current the department's website. • Capture and analyze contact and interaction data to measure objective progress. • Create needed changes and implement based on objective measures.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Goal 6	Develop a comprehensive program that addresses the evolving health and safety needs of the community.			
Objective 6A	**Identify the various community health and safety needs.**			
Timeframe	6 months	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Build a community based subject matter expert focus group to develop a needs assessment tool. • Conduct the community needs assessment. • Based upon the needs assessment prioritize community needs with available resources.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 6B	**Develop a mobile integrated health care program.**			
Timeframe	1 year	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Match the level of service to the community need. • Establish funding sources. • Obtain approval from Illinois Department of Public Health. • Educate and train staff. • Allocate resources and market the program. • Annually evaluate program effectiveness in order to identify reductions in 911 call volume for non-emergent issues.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 6C	**Develop a rental licensing program for residential occupancies.**			
Timeframe	1 year	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Identify the number of rental units in the community. • Establish funding sources. • Obtain approval from the City Council. • Educate and train staff and allocate resources. • Educate property owners and tenants. • Annually evaluate program effectiveness to identify reductions in complaints to the elected officials and 911 call volume.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 6D	**Develop a program that matches available resources to individual need.**			
Timeframe	1 year	**Assigned to:**		**Completed:**
Critical Tasks	• Identify the repeat 911 system users. • Utilize the resources available through the Police Department. • Train staff on the proper process for referral to the Social Worker. • Track the number and type of referrals. • Monthly evaluate the effectiveness of the program through the reduction in 911calls.			
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Vision

On the final day of the process, the CPSE presented the agency with a vision of where the organization 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 its goals and objectives.

St. Charles Fire Department's 2021 Vision

is to be widely known for providing exemplary service through protection, prevention and education; and for our excellence in all we do.

Staying focused on our community, we will continue to honor them through enhanced outreach initiatives that further connect us and provide mutual understanding and support. We will also continue to align our department to meet their demands, specifically in the evolving community health areas to ensure a more holistic approach to healing.

Commitment to our greatest assets, our members, will be shown as we strive for greater pride and ownership, ensuring our culture embraces tradition and continuous improvement. This, along with greater internal communication systems, will help ensure departmental and personal integrity.

For continuous improvement and change to become reality for all of our stakeholders, we will further develop and train our workforce in a strategic manner to prepare for today and the future. All of these initiatives will further support the safety and security of our public and ourselves.

Dedication to our future will be evident as we continue to personify and commit to the courage to deliver our mission, live our values, accomplish our goals, and bring our vision to fruition.

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.

- **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

> . . . 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]

In order 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.

[3] Collins Good to Great and the Social Sectors. Boulder, 2009
[4] Sorkin, Ferris and Hudak. Strategies for Cities and Counties. Public Technology, 1984.

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 a 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 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. To assist in the development of this plan, the agency used professional guidance to conduct a community-driven strategic planning process. 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*

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.
AFFI	Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois
CFAI	Commission on Fire Accreditation International
COAD	Community Organizations Active in Disasters
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).
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
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 Association
GIS	Geographic Information System
HLS	Health and life safety
IAFF	International Association of Fire Fighters
IEMA	Illinois Emergency Management Agency
Input	A performance indication where the value of resources are used to produce an output.
ISO	Insurance Services Office
MSBAS	Mutual Aid Box Alarm System
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.
OEM	Office of Emergency Management

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.
PSI	Paramedic Services of Illinois
Performance Measure	A specific measurable result for each goal and/or program that indicates achievement.
ROE	Regional Office of Education
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.
USFA	United States Fire Administration
VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters
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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