

CITY OF ST CHARLES

FIRE DEPARTMENT

STATION ONE

ENGINE 101

BATTALION 100

ST. CHARLES
FIRE RESCUE



2022-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN



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Introduction

The community serviced by the St. Charles Fire Department (SCFD) receives high levels of professionalism and efficiencies through the department's proactive approach to emergency mitigation and risk reduction. In consideration of this, the SCFD contracted with the Center for Public Safety Excellence® (CPSE) to facilitate a community-driven strategic plan. The process utilized by CPSE aligns with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International's® (CFAI) fire and emergency service accreditation model and considers all parameters prescribed by the authority having jurisdiction.

CPSE's approach to community-driven strategic planning gathers feedback and input from community and agency stakeholders while focusing on future change beyond the status quo. Beliefs, concepts, current processes, and values were among the many pieces considered and questioned to bring this planning document to reality. The SCFD exhibited a commitment to implementing and executing this plan to become more efficient and effective in alignment with its community.

ST. CHARLES FIRE DEPARTMENT | STRATEGIC PLAN

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Organizational Background

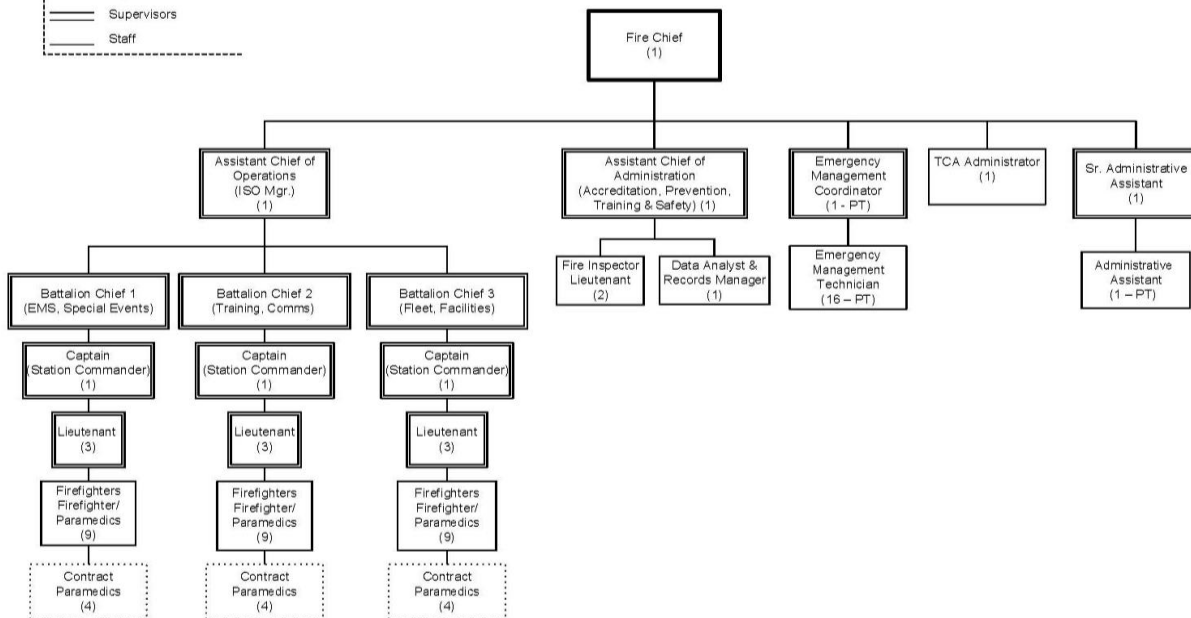
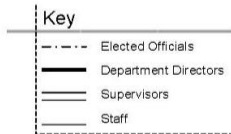
The City of St. Charles is approximately 40 miles west of Chicago and is dissected by the Fox River. Because of the river, the city is known as “the Pride of the Fox.” The city stands within DuPage and Kane Counties and is part of the tri-city area, including Geneva and Batavia. Established in 1834, St. Charles has become a thriving city with a long-sought great way of life for all its communities.



The St. Charles Fire Department (SCFD) found its genesis as the Lafayette Fire company around 1842, which consisted of 56 volunteer members. In 1888, the name was formally changed to the St. Charles Fire Department and remained a volunteer organization until 1959 when the city started the transition to a career department. The department found full career status in 2011. During its evolution, the department has continued to progressively change to meet the needs of the community and the risks encountered.

Today, the SCFD remains strategic through its uniformed and civilian workforce, including its working relationship with Tri-City Ambulance from three strategically located stations throughout the city. Dedicated to excellence, the department has embraced continuous improvement in all it does by virtue of being an internationally accredited agency.

The St. Charles Fire Department is committed to promoting a safe and secure community by delivering excellent services to enhance the well-being of those who live, work, and play within St. Charles. The department remains focused on its mission and embraces its core values, supporting all served.



St. Charles Fire Department Organizational Structure

Community-Driven Strategic Planning

Understanding what the customer desires is vital to the success of any organization. In this case, the customer is the community that the St. Charles Fire Department serves. Less important focus on the customer does not apply because the service organization is a governmental entity. Community-driven strategic planning ensures the community remains a focus of the organization's direction and community feedback is at the heart of all deliberations and development of this strategic plan.

The process of strategic planning and the plan itself represent the embrace of transition away from how an organization has always done things, seeking to find efficacies and outcomes based on change. The strategic plan provides a management roadmap built on a shared vision and is set up for measurable results. With the involvement of a diverse group of agency stakeholders, the St. Charles Fire Department's strategic plan encompasses various experiences, perceptions, and perspectives that can also work to build more internal organizational symbiosis. For the desired, measurable results to be realized, the process and the strategic plan must focus on substance and not form. Only then can the SCFD genuinely benefit from the process and realize its ultimate vision.

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 and 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 strategic planning process was conducted in April 2022 after extensive preparation work by the SCFD to ensure broad representation from its community and agency stakeholders. The Center for Public Safety Excellence would like to commend all of the department’s members who assisted in the preparation and execution of the process, ensuring quality representation and a strategic plan that provides the future roadmap for improvement.

The CPSE would also like to acknowledge those community stakeholders (as named below) and agency stakeholders (as named later) for their candor, involvement, and support of SCFD’s future improvement and success.

St. Charles Fire Department Community Stakeholders

Ed Bessner	Jeanne Harms	Heather McGuire	Janet Roman
Denice Brogan	Tony Hyler	Jennifer McMahon	Laura Rudow
Derek Conley	James Keegan	Rita Anne Payleitner	Joe Schelstreet
John Ducharme	Michael Kies	Father David Peck	Ronald Silkaitis
Allen Fennell	Colleen Lavery	Charles Pierce	Peter Suhr
Mimi Flores	Paul Lencioni	AJ Reineking	Steve Weishaar
Lisa Garhan	Erik Mahan	Ray Rogina	Tim Wilson
Larry Gunderson	Eric Majewski		



Community Stakeholders Work Session

Community Group Findings

The St. Charles Fire Department exhibits a high level of commitment to its community by virtue of placing an important focus on satisfaction and the desire to know what the community thinks. Community stakeholder sessions were held to gather feedback from the respondents on the department and its various services delivered.

The information gathered and processed from the community stakeholder feedback provided understanding to the agency stakeholders of any misalignment with its organizational foundation and performance or values-based expectations or concerns from which new improvement strategies and processes may be created. The specific data and findings received by the community stakeholder respondents are provided in [Appendix 1](#) of

this document.

Agency Stakeholder Group Findings

The agency stakeholder work sessions were conducted over 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 representing a broad cross-section of the department, as named and pictured below.

St. Charles Fire Department’s Agency Stakeholders

Tony Cavallo
Assistant Chief

Stephanie Hanson
TCA Administrator

Jason Peterson
Captain

Chris Thomas
Firefighter/Paramedic

Tony Centimano
Battalion Chief

Jim Kurczek
Battalion Chief

Paul Pfothenauer
EMA Assistant Coordinator

Chad Tinsley
Lieutenant

Kevin Christensen
Assistant Chief

Jeremy Mauthe
Battalion Chief

Mike Pyzyna
Lieutenant

Chip Voelsch
Captain

Ben Gore
Firefighter/Paramedic

Carole Murphy
Senior Administrative Assistant

Steve Rehak
Firefighter/Paramedic

Steve Williams
Paramedic

Guy Gresser
Lieutenant

Mike Neumaier
Lieutenant

Scott Swanson, CFO
Fire Chief



Agency Stakeholders

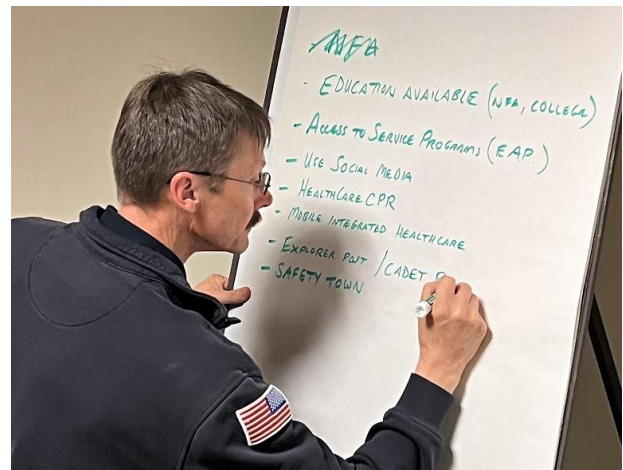
Mission

The mission provides an internal aspect of the existence of an organization and, to a degree, an empowering consideration for all department members. 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 St. Charles Fire Department is to promote a safe and secure community by delivering excellent services to enhance community well-being.



Agency 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:

Commitment – to serve the community

Integrity – to do the right thing

Courage – to act and persevere

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



Agency Stakeholders Work Session

Programs and Services

To ensure a deeper focus exists in determining issues and gaps within an organization, there must be a delineation between core programs and supporting services. Core programs are those core deliverables provided by the department. Supporting services are all the internal and external programs and services that help the SCFD deliver its core programs.

The importance of understanding the difference is that issues and gaps may exist in core programs or supporting services, and the department's strategic approach may bring forth different considerations for improvement. Additionally, supporting services may be internal or external to the organization and requires an understanding of how the difference impacts their location within the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats if identified. Finally, it is important that the agency stakeholders understand that many local, state, and national services support its delivery of the identified core programs.

Through a facilitated brainstorming session, the agency stakeholders agreed upon the core programs provided to the community and many of the supporting services that support the programs. This session provided the sought understanding of the differences and the key elements of the delineation.

SWOT Analysis

An organization candidly identifies its positive and negative attributes through a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). The SWOT analysis also provides an opportunity for an organization to evaluate its operating environment for areas it can capitalize on and those that pose a danger. Agency stakeholders participated in recording SCFD's strengths and weaknesses and the possible opportunities and potential threats. Information gathered through this analysis guides the larger issues and gaps within the agency. The information gleaned will assist the agency in finding its broader critical issues and service gaps.

[Appendix 2](#) consists of the SWOT data and analysis collected by the agency stakeholders.

Critical Issues and Service Gaps

Following the identification and review of the department's SWOT, two separate groups of agency stakeholders met to identify themes as primary critical issues and service gaps (found in [Appendix 3](#)). The critical issues and services gaps identified by the stakeholders provide further guidance toward identifying the strategic initiatives, which will ultimately lend direction to 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 developing goals and objectives.

Internal Communications

Workforce Development and Management

External Relationships

Training

Health and Wellness

EMS Service Delivery



Agency Stakeholders Work Session

Goals and Objectives

To continuously achieve the mission of the St. Charles Fire Department, realistic goals and objectives with timelines for completion must be established. These will enhance strengths, address identified weaknesses, provide a clear direction, and address the community’s concerns. 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 workgroups 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 SCFD’s leadership.

Goal 1

Improve oral and written communications and direction to ensure clarity and positive messaging within the department.

Objective 1A	Develop a consistent and effective method for the timely release of information to all affected members.		
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:	A/C Christensen
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify current methods used to communicate information. • Analyze said methods to determine the most effective route(s). • Research other best practices for transmitting the information. • Create and deliver a report to the leadership team with recommendations for further understanding and guidance. • Develop a written procedure for the dissemination of information. • Implement the procedure and solicit feedback from all users. • Conduct an annual review and revise as needed and approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 1B	Formalize a procedure to create and update standard operating guidelines to reflect current departmental practices, policies, and procedures.		
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:	A/C Cavallo with SOG Committee
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify problems with the previous standard operating guideline update procedure. • Analyze why it was not effective. • Create and deliver a report to the leadership team with recommendations for further understanding and guidance. • Develop a formal procedure for standard operating guideline updates. • Implement the update procedure by adding the overall procedure to the standard operating guideline manual. • Conduct a bi-annual review and revise as needed and approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 1C	Develop a program to increase the emotional intelligence of all department members.		
Timeframe	2 years	Assigned to:	A/C Christensen and B/C Mauthe
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a committee comprised of members from all areas of the department. • Identify areas of the department that could benefit from increasing emotional intelligence. • Research available outside resources that can provide expertise in emotional intelligence training. • Create and deliver a report to the leadership team with recommendations for further understanding and guidance. • Develop an ongoing program to continually improve the emotional intelligence of department members. • Seek funding sources for the training and program. • Implement a continuous program to accomplish this goal. • Review the program’s effectiveness at least annually and revise as needed and approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Goal 2 Create a workforce development and management plan to recruit and retain a highly-skilled workforce.

Objective 2A	Create and implement a recruitment program to increase the number of potential candidates.		
Timeframe	12 months	Assigned to:	A/C Cavallo with Recruitment Team
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a committee, including other city departments, with the makeup of administration and firefighters of various seniority. • Analyze the existing hiring (recruitment) process. • Research other like size and scope fire departments’ recruitment processes. • Develop a recruitment and retention program. • Create and deliver a report to the leadership team with recommendations for further understanding and guidance. • Obtain program approval and funding. • Implement the program. • Conduct an annual review of the program and revise as approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 2B	Engage all employees in department responsibilities to create a more efficient workforce.		
Timeframe	18 months	Assigned to:	A/C Cavallo and Lt. Rehak
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a committee comprised of department members of all ranks. • Determine individual workloads and department needs. • Analyze all data and create a workload plan based on the department’s needs and specific skillsets. • Develop a plan to distribute the workload as evenly as possible. • Create and deliver a report to the leadership team with recommendations for further understanding and guidance. • Fire chief approval and implement the plan and hold all members accountable for carrying their workload. • Conduct an annual plan review and revision based on member feedback and organizational needs, as approved by administration. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2C	Develop and implement a succession program that ensures seamless transition of department services.		
Timeframe	18 months	Assigned to:	Fire Chief
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a committee comprised of department members of all ranks. • Determine all job assignments for all ranks. • Analyze all job assignments to determine time/workload and responsibilities of each assignment. • Develop a plan to assign responsibilities to each rank. • Obtain union and chief input. • Fire chief approval and implementation. • Conduct an annual review of the plan and revise as approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2D	Research, develop, and implement a standardized approach to time management to promote an efficient workday.		
Timeframe	12 months	Assigned to:	A/C Cavallo and Battalion Chiefs
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a committee comprised of department members of all ranks. • Analyze the current workflow schedule to determine typical/average daily workload. • Develop a best practice work schedule policy. • Seek union and Fire Chief support. • Seek fire chief approval and implementation. • Conduct an annual review of the plan and revise as approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Goal 3

Enhance external relationships of the St. Charles Fire Department to better serve and engage with the community and all stakeholders.

Objective 3A	Improve and encourage positive community interactions at all customer service levels to project a professional image of the fire department.		
Timeframe	24 months	Assigned to:	A/C Cavallo and Battalion Chiefs
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a committee and include members from every position in the department. • Identify opportunities for improvement within the department. • Provide customer service training opportunities to all personnel, including the importance of positive interactions and professional appearance. • Committee shall evaluate customer service delivery bi-annually and modify as needed. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 3B	Expand and refine communication resources available to the fire department and optimize the use of social media to better communicate with the community.		
Timeframe	12 months	Assigned to:	A/C Christensen and Public Education Team
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a PIO committee comprised of fire department administration and public education team members. • Review efficacy of current information outlets. • Develop streamlined communication templates and timelines to standardize communications with the community. • Identify personnel with matching skill sets to assign specific responsibilities. • Implement increased social media messages on scheduled timelines. • Evaluate the overall effectiveness of communication by reviewing social media feedback, website metrics, and city communications director on a quarterly basis. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 3C	Improve communication with area fire departments to increase interaction and training opportunities.		
Timeframe	12 months	Assigned to:	A/C Cavallo and B/C Mauthe
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the assistant chief of operations and battalion chief assigned to training to increase communications with area training officers. • Identify opportunities to increase the frequency and quality of mutual aid training. • Obtain agreement and implement quarterly training with mutual aid partners. • Review communications and training with area fire departments annually and modify as needed. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
Objective 3D	Develop a systemic approach to engage and inform stakeholders on all aspects of daily fire department responsibilities.		
Timeframe	18 months	Assigned to:	Command Staff and Union Executive Board
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a committee consisting of fire department administration and union leadership. • Identify opportunities to further engage and inform stakeholders. • Develop opportunities for stakeholders, including Fire Ops 101, station and apparatus tours, and participation in company training. • Invite stakeholders to participate in established programs. • Review feedback from participating stakeholders. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Goal 4

Enhance the fire department training program to continually develop personnel and improve service performance.

Objective 4A	Create a performance development program for each position within the organization for career progression.		
Timeframe	18 months	Assigned to:	A/C Cavallo and Battalion Chiefs
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a training committee to include members from every position in the department. • Research internal and external positional needs and expectations. • Survey department members to identify positional needs and expectations. • Evaluate and modify current training programs, including task books. • Create and deliver a report to the SCFD leadership team with recommendations for further understanding and guidance. • Create a performance development program with handbooks specific to each position. • Implement a performance development program. • Training committee shall evaluate the performance development program on an annual basis. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4B	Evaluate the need for a full-time training officer to improve the quality and diversity of training.		
Timeframe	2 years	Assigned to:	A/C Christensen and B/C Mauthe
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the training committee previously established to research internal training needs and evaluate external training demands from OSFM, ISO, IDPH, OSHA, SFVEMSS, etc. • Research effectiveness and benefits from fire departments utilizing a full-time training officer. • Develop a job description and positional responsibilities utilizing research and identified organizational needs. • Submit findings to the fire department leadership for inclusion in the budget approval process. • If approved, implement a full-time training officer position. • Evaluate the overall effectiveness of the training officer by surveying the quality and diversity of training on an annual basis. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 4C	Develop a modern fireground training facility, readily accessible to all fire companies, to support all-hazard training requirements.		
Timeframe	5 years	Assigned to:	Command Staff
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the training committee previously established to research the benefits of a modernized training facility to meet demands. • Research effectiveness and benefits from fire departments with modern training facilities. • Develop design proposals, including possible locations. • Research grants and other funding sources. • Submit findings to fire department leadership for inclusion in budget approval process. • If approved, proceed with implementation utilizing the established capital budget process. • Review the construction process and revise the proposed design as needed. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4D	Identify and update internal and external training requirements to meet evolving continuing education requirements.		
Timeframe	12 months	Assigned to:	B/C Mauthe with Training Committee
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the training committee previously established to research internal training needs and evaluate external training demands from OSFM, ISO, IDPH, OSHA, SFVEMSS, etc. • Develop a list of required ongoing training requirements. • Develop tracking systems to ensure compliance. • Implement ongoing requirements into an annual training program. • Review training demands on an annual basis for any required updates. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4E	Develop and implement a fire inspection program that provides a standard of consistency.		
Timeframe	2 years	Assigned to:	A/C Christensen with Inspection Committee
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an inspection committee comprised of training committee members, fire prevention staff, and the assistant chief of administration. • Survey department members to identify positional needs and expectations. • Evaluate and modify current training programs to include requirements for company inspections and code enforcement. • Implement a new company inspection program to improve consistency and performance. • Coordinate between fire administration and the union to further develop fire prevention bureau staffing if necessary to assist with succession planning. • Inspection committee shall evaluate fire inspection program on an annual basis and revise as needed. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 4F	Develop and implement a fire service leadership program to provide a standard of desirable leadership traits.		
Timeframe	18 months	Assigned to:	Command Staff with Training Committee
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize training committee to create a leadership program for all department levels to help instill desirable leadership traits. • Identify leadership training resources to incorporate into department training. • Develop a list of classes and seminars, and establish a department reading list for personnel to utilize. • Incorporate leadership training in the required monthly training. • Bring in outside speakers on leadership-related topics. • Training committee shall evaluate fire service leadership program on an annual basis and revise as needed. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Goal 5 **Ensure high-quality programs that enhance active and former employees’ physical and emotional well-being and long-term viability.**

Objective 5A	Evaluate and improve the current physical fitness program for the improved physical health of employees		
Timeframe	1 year	Assigned to:	A/C Cavallo with Physical Fitness Committee
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a physical fitness committee composed of the operations chief, peer fitness trainers, union representative, and physical fitness professionals. • Identify and recruit peer fitness trainers from shift personnel. • Develop an assessment tool to identify the physical fitness needs of the organization. • Design a physical fitness training program that improves the needs of the organization. • Design a nutritional program that improves the needs of the organization. • Seek sustainable funding for the programs. • Review and update the program every six months as approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 5B	Evaluate and improve the current mental and emotional health program to ensure the well-being of employees.		
Timeframe	1 year	Assigned to:	A/C Christensen with Behavioral Health Committee
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a behavioral health committee composed of the chief of support services, peer support personnel, behavioral health professionals, and a union representative. • Identify and recruit peer support personnel from shift personnel. • Develop an assessment tool(s) to identify the mental and emotional needs of the organization. • Design a behavioral health program that improves the needs of the organization. • Seek sustainable funding for the program. • Review and update the program annually and revise as needed and approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 5C	Develop and implement a process for fire department personnel to ensure the longevity of all employees.		
Timeframe	3 years	Assigned to:	A/C Christensen with Behavioral Health Committee
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and identify disease processes negatively impacting fire service personnel’s physical and behavioral well-being. • Review fire service standards and recommended best practices, i.e., NFPA, IAFF, IAFC, etc. • Research and identify non-punitive screening tools that improve the early detection of adverse disease processes. • Research and develop practices aimed at rehabilitative methods for personnel. • Create and implement an educational program to improve knowledge pertaining to well-being initiatives. • Secure approval to implement screening, rehabilitative, and educational initiatives. • Create and implement a data repository that identifies the long-term efficacy of the initiatives. • Create and implement a program that analyzes the data and identifies and corrects negative trends. • Review and update the program annually and revise as needed and approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 5D	Evaluate and enhance the current firefighter safety program for the improved overall health and safety of all employees.		
Timeframe	2 years	Assigned to:	A/C Christensen with Safety Committee
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile and analyze all health and safety initiatives affecting all fire department personnel. • Identify and improve any health and safety initiatives to ensure they are contemporary. • Create and implement new health and safety initiatives to improve the health and safety of personnel. • Engage external stakeholders to improve the established new health and safety initiatives. • Gain approval for funding if needed. • Create and present reports to the health and safety committee from areas including the SCBA committee, physical fitness committee, station captains, behavioral health committee, and fire department safety officer. • Continue fire department health and safety monthly meetings. • Review and update the program annually and revise as needed and approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Goal 6 **Ensure continuous high-quality and professional EMS services to enhance the safety, security, and well-being of the community.**

Objective 6A	Evaluate and improve current EMS delivery to ensure the foremost professional standard for the community.		
Timeframe	18 months	Assigned to:	A/C Cavallo with EMS Committee
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a formal EMS committee composed of the operations chief, TCA administrator, two current facilitators, EMS chief, EMS coordinator, and contract coordinator. • Collect and analyze data on the current service model, including finance, performance, and personnel data (recruitment, retention, and empowerment considerations). • Review all state and national EMS standards and regulations pertaining to EMS service delivery. • Survey comparable communities that have fire-based EMS service delivery. • Create and deliver a report to the SCFD leadership team with recommendations for further understanding and guidance. • Review and update collected data annually and report changes to SCFD leadership. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 6B	Improve the educational opportunities to enhance the knowledge base of EMS personnel for the improved health of the community.		
Timeframe	12 months	Assigned to:	Battalion Chiefs
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing the EMS and training committees, collect and analyze the current EMS educational opportunities and identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. • Identify state and national requirements pertaining to EMS education. • Review the EMS committee’s data and develop educational opportunities to align the organization to the community’s needs. • Develop performance metrics to establish educational objectives. • Create and deliver a report to the SCFD leadership team with recommendations for further understanding and guidance. • Conduct any process revisions or implementations as approved. • Annually review performance data pertaining to EMS delivery and revise, as needed, educational opportunities to improve in those performance areas and revise as needed and approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 6C	Analyze and improve the retention rates among contract paramedics to ensure excellent continuity of EMS services to the community.		
Timeframe	18 months	Assigned to:	Fire Chief with TCA Administrator
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a survey to identify the causes leading to high turnover rates among contract paramedics. • Analyze the survey data and develop a report outlining the major themes leading to turnover. • Develop a performance standard of retention rate metric. • Create and deliver a report to the SCFD leadership team with recommendations for further understanding and guidance. • Review, report on, and revise the metrics and standards annually, as directed. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	

Objective 6D	Research, develop, and implement a new model of community-based healthcare to provide needs-based, non-urgent care.		
Timeframe	3 years	Assigned to:	Battalion Chiefs
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing the EMS committee and accreditation team, complete an EMS community risk analysis. • Analyze the data collected and identify major themes that are affecting the community. • Develop community needs-based healthcare initiatives, including performance metrics, and present them to the fire chief. • Develop and secure funding for the actionable initiatives. • Create an educational program to train the appropriate personnel. • Deliver the program to the identified community members. • Review the program(s) annually and revise as needed and approved. 		
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:		Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 6E	Develop and improve relationships between external agencies to ensure continuity and excellent EMS services to the community.		
Timeframe	2 years	Assigned to:	A/C Christensen with EMS Committee
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing the EMS committee and accreditation team to identify all external stakeholders that are part of the total EMS platform. • Develop a needs-based assessment for each stakeholder group. • Conduct focus group meetings with stakeholder groups to develop a needs-based assessment for each group. • Analyze the data collected from the focus group meetings. • Develop joint initiatives that improve EMS relationships with stakeholders. • Create and deliver a report to the SCFD leadership team with recommendations for further understanding and guidance. • As approved, implement joint programs that have been developed with stakeholders. • Review the program(s) annually and revise as needed and approved. 		
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 to confirm the futurity of the work that the agency stakeholders designed. 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

The St. Charles Fire Department: A professional fire service organization committed to compassionate duty and an example of integrity and courage in the community.

Our vision is that, by 2027, we will continue to be known as an ISO Class 1 and internationally accredited fire service organization. We will have clearly demonstrated our commitment to our citizens through enhanced external relationships and superb fire and EMS delivery. This service will be provided by a healthy and fit workforce, further supported by a world-class training program. Our daily tasks will be more efficient and effective with improved use of our most valuable assets - our workforce. Efficiencies in all of our processes will be realized by enhanced internal communication and workforce development and management programs designed to enhance the quality of life of those who serve within this organization.

We endeavor to live our purpose and values as we deliver our mission, accomplish our goals, and bring this vision to fruition.

Performance Measurement

To assess and ensure that an organization is delivering on the promises made in its strategic plan, leaders must determine performance measures for which they are fully accountable. As output measurement can be challenging, the organization must assess progress toward achieving improved output. Organizations must further be prepared to revisit and revise their goals, objectives, and performance measures to keep up with accomplishments and environmental changes.

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 analysis and evaluation of performance data; and
- The use of that data to drive continuous improvement in the organization.

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.

- 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

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 organization members during the development stage of the planning process. To assist in developing 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 goals and related objectives but on support from the authority having jurisdiction, the members of the organization, and the community-at-large.

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 agency 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.

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.
AED	Automated Electronic Defibrillator
CAAS	Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
CFAI	Commission on Fire Accreditation International
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.
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
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
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
Environment	Circumstances and conditions that interact with and affect an organization. These can include economic, political, cultural, and physical conditions inside or outside the organization's boundaries.
IDPH	Illinois Department of Public Health
Input	A performance indication where the value of resources is used to produce an output.
ISO	Insurance Services Office
Mission	An enduring statement of purpose; the organization's reason for existence. Describes what the organization does, for whom it does it, and how.
OSFM	Office of the State Fire Marshal
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Outcome	A performance indication where qualitative consequences are associated with a program/service, i.e., the ultimate benefit to the customer.
Output	A performance indication where the quality or number of units produced is identified.
SFVEMSS	Southern Fox Valley Emergency Medical Services System
SOG	Standard Operating Guideline

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. An aim. The final result of an action. Something to accomplish in assisting the agency in moving 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 agency's mission 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 measured.
Strategy	A description of how a strategic objective will be achieved. A possibility. A plan or methodology for achieving a goal.
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TCA	Tri-City Ambulance
Vision	An idealized view of a desirable and potentially achievable future state - where or what an organization would like to be in the future.

Appendix 1 – Community Feedback

Understanding the community’s perspective allows the department to change or bolster processes and strategies to fulfill community needs. The following includes feedback from participating community stakeholders, collected and processed by CPSE on behalf of the St. Charles Fire Department.

Should Change

Respondents were asked to provide one thing the department should change. The data were processed thematically and listed with the number of responses matched the theme, as represented by the number in the parentheses. The following are the responses related to what the department should change:

1. Frequency of inspections. (1)
2. Look for new recruitment opportunities. (1)
3. Possibly location? (1)
4. Conduct quarterly open houses. (1)
5. More community engagement. (1)
6. Be open to change. (1)
7. More focus on investigation. (1)
8. Become more receptive to input and direction from internal stakeholders. (1)
9. Larger prevention bureau. (1)
10. More authority with river safety with the DNR. (1)
11. Possible consolidation of stations. (1)
12. Just an observation - we seem too heavy in the higher ranks. (1)
13. Add another fire station. (1)

Should *Not* Change

Respondents were asked to provide one thing the department should *not* change. The data were processed thematically and listed with the number of responses matched the theme, as represented by the number in the parentheses. The following are the responses related to what the department should change:

1. Participation in community events. Community involvement. Community presence for Fox River Rescue training. Great resident interaction with the department. Sense of community. Public/customer service. Community outreach. (6)
2. Response time measures. Their response time is great. (2)
3. Keep being very available and responsive. Responsiveness. (1)
4. Color of the fire engines. (1)
5. Do not change the focus on continuous improvement. (1)
6. Their commitment to the city - public. Its professional, compassionate dealings with customers (recipients of services). (1)
7. ISO goals. (1)
8. Continue to work with all entities of the community. (1)
9. Positive working relationships between union and administration. (1)
10. They are always great. (1)
11. Continue to be a professional, top-notch fire department. (1)
12. Communication and resident/stakeholder interaction. (1)
13. I like TCA. (1)
14. Professionalism and compassion. (1)
15. Commitment to training. (1)
16. Training + Culture + The Respect. (1)
17. Standards of conduct. (1)
18. Keep Tri-City Ambulance. (1)

Community Expectations

Respondents were asked to list, in priority order, up to three subjects relative to expectations for the St. Charles Fire Department. Responses were then analyzed for themes and weighted. 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 (in priority order):

1. Fast response times. Provide timely fire suppression services. Provide timely and required EMS services. Quick response times at all times. Quick response times. Respond to calls quickly and timely fashion. Respond when called - quickly. Low response time. Response times. Appropriate response times. "When I need help, that they show up fast. Timely emergency response. Safety, fast response to all calls. Timely response. Quick response times. (41)
2. Knowledgeable - well trained. Their knowledge. Their knowledge. Continue education for the department. Maintain certifications. Well-trained staff in all areas and willingness to train for future trends in public safety. The men and women of the department are trained on all the modern techniques of their jobs. Professionally trained and educated. Highly trained personnel. Knowledge and expertise in rescue. Continued education and training - stay sharp! Well-trained professional staff - customer service oriented. Well-trained. Qualified employees. (29)
3. Professionalism. Be professional - able. Safe, professional service at the highest level. Friendly, yet professional when responding to incidents/ambulance calls. Look and act professional. (11)
4. Education and prevention opportunities. Provide education to the community. Community-wide education for the purpose of safety and fire prevention. Public education for the community. Provide preventative services or educate. (9)
5. Teamwork with other departments. Collaboration with other city departments on broad issues. Communication with internal departments on topics relevant to those departments. Coordination on projects that involve other departments. (9)
6. Maintain public safety. Providing excellent public safety services - emergency medical, fire suppression, technical rescue teams. Provide safety services in time of need. (9)
7. Customer interaction and engagement with residents, guests, and community. Extracurricular engagement with the community. Involved with the community. Engaged with the community - neighborhoods and businesses. Continued communication and public relations with the community - strong community relations. (8)
8. Best equipment and well maintained. Up-to-date maintenance for all buildings, vehicles, and equipment. Have the appropriate/reliable tools to do their job. (6)
9. Maintain adequate staffing. Hire the best people for the job. Attentive, knowledgeable staff – professional (6)
10. Safety and response to emergency process, training, and execution. Take care of each other. (4)
11. Fire protection has good cost-benefit. (3)
12. Continued improvement of the department - growth. Services that are provided meet the changing needs of the community. (3)

13. Easy to reach and navigate when help is needed. (3)
14. Lifesaving EMS skills. (3)
15. Be ready and competent. (3)
16. Lead the city's overall emergency management and response. Provide emergency management services. (2)
17. They do their job to decrease community risk to an acceptable (not absolute!) level. (2)
18. Have integrity. High moral, ethical conduct while representing the community. (2)
19. Follow all policies/rules/regulations. (2)
20. Using training skills to give the best service they can. (2)
21. Sympathetic and empathy where most situations warrant it. (2)
22. Location center of the community. (2)
23. Funded to the level that apparatus, tools, and equipment are supplied and replaced according to need. (2)
24. To provide good customer service to other departments. Good customer service - at all levels, for all calls. (2)
25. respect for the St. Charles community. (2)
26. Ensuring the safety of property and persons. (1)
27. Adaptability - able to meet changing needs throughout the city. (1)
28. Make sure we have sustainable execution (don't take on programs or solutions that can't endure). (1)
29. Support other department goals, projects that have a positive impact for fire. (1)
30. Prioritizing community needs. (1)
31. input and assistance with special events - road closures and set up. (1)
32. Respect for each other in the SCFD. (1)
33. Great leadership. (1)

Areas of Community Concern

Respondents were asked to list, in priority order, up to three concerns they have about or for the department. Responses were then analyzed for themes and weighted. 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 (verbatim, in priority order):

1. Adequate staffing. Are they experiencing staffing issues, and if so, how does that impact shifts? Retirements - staffing. Drawing in new applicants/employees. Being able to hire the best people - due to job market. Availability of potential, new candidates. Staffing - low volume of applicants for entry-level testing. How can we attract the future of the department? Keeping good quality personnel. Ability to recruit in today's environment. We may be overstaffed for calls we actually receive. Employee retention. (23)
2. Funding for top-of-the-line equipment, technology, and training. Budget and being able to afford the training they need. Justifiable budget - not specific to this department. Ensuring adequate funding. Ability to provide services with limited resources. (12)
3. That fire protection costs will outpace the value of risk mitigation. Salary cost sustainability. Cost of labor. Rising costs of equipment, supplies, and personnel. Cost of service to the taxpayer. (11)
4. EMA (and EOC) operations may not have the facilities and technology to coordinate an EMA response or EOC activation. EMA events and the prevalence of community events locally and large incidents nationally. (6)
5. Retirement - making sure good team members get opportunities to advance...change in leadership. Aging staff. Leadership changes with retirements. (6)
6. Domestic terrorism. Changing world, national, state, and local threats. (6)
7. Labor's increasing control over management responsibilities. We may be too influenced by the unions. Labor relations. (6)
8. Ensuring firefighter safety. Their safety on calls. (6)
9. Efficient use of resources, efficiency of operation. That we overspend on protection against low-probability events. (5)
10. Location of stations - response times. Location of houses - response time versus growth in the city. Response times in outlier areas. (5)
11. Changing State of Illinois mandates that create risk for personnel. Legislative pressures. (4)
12. Lack of code knowledge on safety inspections. (3)
13. Contract medics - is that the best use of personnel? (3)
14. Always concerned about downtime and productivity. (3)
15. Consistent morals through the department and ranks. (3)
16. Location - is it easy to get in and out of? (3)
17. Staying up to date with technology and best practices. (3)
18. Using increased social services expertise when necessary, especially for EMT calls. (3)

19. Many levels of positions within the fire department could hurt communication flow when dealing with firefighters. (3)
20. Possible lack of familiarity with property. (3)
21. Morale. (3)
22. Loss of institutional knowledge and experience from retirements. (2)
23. Making sure work culture is high to retain and attain the best. (2)
24. Do they require additional support from the community and city entities? (2)
25. Is there cooperation with Countryside Fire Protection? (2)
26. Lack of response and general rising of public incivility toward public servants. (2)
27. Opportunities for emergency response training - evacuation procedures, CPR/AED training. (2)
28. Enhancing fire department communication. (2)
29. Administration knowledge of staff for purchasing policies/practices. (2)
30. Mental health issues staff encounters on calls. How can they be prepared to handle? (2)
31. That today's policies and plans cannot endure or won't serve tomorrow's world. (1)
32. Working relationship between TCA and firefighters. (1)
33. Opportunities for women in the fire/ambulance services? (1)
34. Field communication/emergency operations. (1)
35. Up to date on all tools and equipment needed to do their jobs safely. Modernization for the current times. (1)
36. Fire department operates as a silo and doesn't always engage with outside departments. (1)
37. Coordinating agency resources. (1)
38. Storage - they have a lot of specialized equipment that needs winter storage every year. (1)
39. Succession planning for leadership roles in the department. (1)
40. Keeping up-to-date equipment. (1)
41. Are all trained for all circumstances? (Maybe there's room for efficiency in specialization per house, per firefighter). (1)

Positive Community Feedback

The CPSE promotes the belief that the community's view on the organization's strengths must be established for a strategic plan to be valid. 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 identified weaknesses. The following are the identified strengths recognized by the community stakeholders (verbatim, in no particular order):

- Interactions are professional.
- Very knowledgeable on code-related issues with a willingness to correct any issues.
- Skilled, well-trained.
- Professional services.
- Personable/great with the public.
- High-performing – accredited, ISO 1, CAAS accreditation, EMA accreditation.
- Excellent level and type of services provided.
- Strong group of professionals leading the department.
- Participates in community events.
- Good collaboration with other departments.
- Their commitment to doing a good job and provided excellent care.
- Knowledgeable.
- Friendly and active in the community.
- Stay up to date with training.
- Always willing to take a phone call, respond to a request, or work with an intergovernmental partner.
- Partnerships for large community or special events.
- Seem to have a viable succession plan. Last few chiefs have been internal promotions – consistent.
- Always represent the community in a positive manner.
- Professional operations.
- Team-oriented and approach.
- Accreditation and ISO certification.
- Relationships with the community.
- Professionalism and compassion.
- Great employees with great attitudes.
- Vested interested in the safety of the community.
- Solid leadership from management staff.
- Well-trained.
- Very helpful and responsive.
- Willingness to work with outside agencies.

- Very respectful.
- Very proactive approach.
- Respectful.
- Very proactive approach.
- Community involvement. Many were born and raised here – vested within the community.
- Resources – nice equipment and training.
- Low turnover – fire department personnel are content, staying in St. Charles.
- The guys and girls are great! Wonderful people, hardworking and dedicated.
- Great customer service.
- Always seem and are effective and professional.
- Great leadership.
- Group that is well paid and appreciates such (does bargain collaboratively with management.)
- Staff experience.
- Willing to work with other groups.
- Accreditation, awards.
- Response times.
- Community involvement.
- Wonderful to work with – point of pride for the community.
- Clean – the building/trucks always look clean, organized.
- Well-trained – I often see them training along the river. Feels good to know they are prepared.
- Great customer service.
- Training seems to be a very important aspect of their jobs.
- I feel safe knowing the fire department is part of our organization.
- Commitment by staff to the community and field.
- High-level of knowledge and expertise.
- Always looking towards the future.
- Highest standards/accredited.
- Great public relations.
- Excellent equipment, facilities, resources, and staff.
- Integrity/dedication
- Communication.
- Flexibility and adaptability.
- Community outreach at schools, Open House, etc.
- All staff are professional and eager to help in any way I've needed. Also, open to outside opinions.
- The equipment and facilities, despite age, are very well cared for.

- Well-trained, professional staff.
- Collaboration with all city departments.
- St. Charles is a destination department/employer.
- Well-trained.
- Personnel are top notch.
- Management is the best.
- Professionalism.
- Dedication.
- Community involvement.
- Community outreach – inform, education, introduce – especially to kids – could save a life someday.
- In an emergency, knowledge and expertise are huge – but so is compassion – saw all in my experiences.
- Great fire rating.
- Good leadership.
- Well-funded department.

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 (verbatim, in no particular order):

- St. Charles is fortunate to have a fire chief with the education, experience, and motivation of Chief Swanson.
- Appreciate being invited to stay aware.
- Every interaction I have ever had, the member of the department, regardless of title, has been professional and helpful.
- The fire department has the best entry in the parade by far.
- I have enjoyed my dealings with the fire department. And appreciate the opportunity to discuss strategic ideas with the fire department.
- My kids love the open house every year.
- Would like to see more organization-wide EMS drills and training.
- I am proud of SCFD.

Community Priorities

Understanding how the community prioritizes the department’s programs and services allows the SCFD to ensure its focus on resource allocation aligns. With that, prioritization feedback was garnered using an instrument that allowed for the comparison of all programs and services offered by the department. The results were as follows:

Programs	Ranking	Score
Emergency Medical Services Program	1	175

Fire Suppression Program	2	160
Technical Rescue Program	3	127
Fire Prevention Program	4	108
Emergency Management Program	5	100
Hazardous Materials Mitigation Program	6	68
Fire Investigation, Origin and Cause Program	7	57
Public Education Program	8	45

Appendix 2 - SWOT

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 its strengths are consistent with the issues facing the organization. Often, identifying organizational strengths leads to channeling efforts toward primary community needs that match those strengths. Programs that do not match organizational strengths, or the organization’s primary function, should be seriously reviewed to evaluate the rate of return on staff time and allocated funds.

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

External training availability	Continuous training
Level of experience	Well-equipped (tools/equipment)
Best apparatus (funded)	Fire department records
Standard operating guidelines	Own fire department specialty team assets
Mutual/automatic aid relationships	Fire prevention bureau - quality
Strong communication technology	Support from internal city departments
Active/educated fire union – community involvement	Quality/motivated personnel
Low fire department turnover – destination department	Location of fire stations
City water system	Tri-Com relations/quality dispatch partner
Interpersonal relationships	Willingness to work/resolve conflicts/issues
Redevelopment of internal training – hands-on, EMS, internal training	Department history – longstanding, with groundwork by previous generations
Community support	New hire onboarding
Strong commitment to serve/do more for the community	Promotional process – known outline
Additional opportunities – committees, responsibilities	Staffing model
Desire for self-improvement – fire department	Fire officer development
Geographic location of the city	Accredited emergency management agency
Relationships with local businesses	Well respected among peers
Union contract/negotiations/communication	

Weaknesses

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

Generational differences	Lack/loss of institutional knowledge
Lack of recruiting program	Poor contract medic retention
Increased call volume/inspections/work without increased personnel	Internal communications poor between administration and line
Lack of modernized policies	Lack of emotional intelligence
Lack of use of modern technologies	Lack of succession planning
Inefficient use of personnel to share total workload 80/20	Lack of brotherhood
Data creating outcomes that lack substance/meaning	Cultural disenfranchisement
Outdated training facility	Lack of TCA employee longevity
Officer development program	Lack of personal engagement and commitment
Full-time training officer	Formal fire inspector training
Fire prevention bureau success	Sterile environment
Shift shakeups!	Lack of E-101 permanent staffing
Lack of live fire training	Disinterest in promotion at higher ranks
Senior-level micromanagement	Lack of mutual respect

Different employee groups – firefighters/TCA – creating grievances

Opportunities

The opportunities for an organization depend on identifying 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 inside and beyond the traditional service area. The agency stakeholders identified the following potential opportunities:

Education available – IFSI, NFA, college	Access to service programs – EAP
Use of social media	Healthcare CPR
Mobile integrated healthcare	Explorer post – cadet program
Safety Town	Senior outreach
Fire Ops 101	Automatic aid training
Delnor SimLab training	Air ambulance training
State/federal/private grants	Diversity engagement for recruiting
Community development of relationships	Hosting fire service events
Better branding	Guest speakers – Pride & Ownership
Recruitment of future staff	Leadership training/development
Improve communication between city departments	Better use of public relations avenues
New technology training – electric, propane, solar panels	Community engagement – at-risk population
Joint agency training – public works, police department	

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 entirely and/or directly controlled by the organization. Some of the current and potential threats identified by the agency stakeholders were as follows:

TCA – inexperience	Economy – revenue shortfalls
Continuing education requirements by outside agencies	Supply chain issues
Lack of recruitment pool	Negative media impact
Privatization of the fire department	Mental health/violent patients
Inability to expand – landlocked	Another pandemic
Aging infrastructure	Economic recession
Legislation – police department psych assist	Consolidation – absorbing St. Charles
Rapid growth	Social media
Aging population	Extension of financial incentives
Unsafe buildings – previous Arcada owner	Lack of revenue growth
Change in city management – change in the political environment	

Appendix 3 - Critical and Service Gap Issues

The following information is the raw data comprised from the deliberation of the two agency workgroups. The information in each table is linked to a strategic initiative that the overall group, by consensus, determined was something the department should pursue for change and continuous improvement.

Initiative Link	Group 1	Group 2
Internal Communication	Internal Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emotional intelligence ○ SOGs ○ Inconsistent communications 	Internal Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of brotherhood ○ Lack of mutual respect ○ Senior-level management ○ Lack of emotional intelligence/awareness ○ Internal communications poor – administration to line ○ Positive working relationships – union/administration ○ Lack of modernized policies
Workforce Development and Management	Workforce Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Succession planning ○ Daily time management ○ Recruitment ○ Contract medic retention ○ Share of the total workload ○ Contract medic roles and responsibilities ○ Fire prevention bureau staffing ○ Deployment model for contract medics 	Workforce Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of recruiting program ○ Lack of succession plan ○ Shift share ups ○ Officer development program ○ Lack/loss of institutional knowledge ○ Lack of personal engagement ○ Disenfranchisement ○ Continuing education requirements – outside agencies ○ Staffing model
External Relationships	External Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Underutilization of social media ○ Community interaction ○ Customer service ○ Fire Ops ○ Engagement with other fire departments ○ Policy on uniform/presentation/appearance 	N/A
Training	Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outside continuing education requirements ○ Officer development ○ Daytime training officer ○ Training facility ○ Inspector training ○ Leadership training ○ Quality/diversity of training 	N/A

Critical and Service Gap Issues Identified by the Agency Stakeholders (continued)

Initiative Link	Group 1	Group 2
Health and Wellness	Health and Wellness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physical fitness ○ Mental health ○ Physicals ○ Chemical dependency ○ Gambling ○ Firefighter safety ○ Generational differences ○ Personal protective equipment use/maintenance/replacement 	N/A
EMS Service Delivery	N/A	EMS Service Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Level of experience (+/-) ○ Overall EMS training ○ Teamwork – fire department/EMS/police department (external agencies) ○ Professionalism ○ Current model versus “other(s)” ○ Behavioral health ○ Mobile integrated healthcare ○ Adaptability ○ Prevention – education ○ Resource hospital limitations ○ Legislative framework



2022-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN