

2019-2024



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



Facilitated by



Center for
Public Safety
Excellence

This page intentionally left blank.

Introduction

The Palo Alto Fire Department (PAFD) provides an all-hazards approach in the protection of the lives and property of the residents, businesses, and visitors of Palo Alto, California. PAFD is consistently working to achieve and/or maintain the highest level of professionalism and efficiency on behalf of those it serves, and thus, contracted with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) to facilitate a method to document the department's path into the future via a "Community-Driven Strategic Plan." The following strategic plan was written in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Commission on Fire Accreditation (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 department'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 department with an opportunity to participate in the development of their organization's long-term direction and focus. Members of the organization's community and department stakeholders' groups demonstrated commitment to this important project and remain committed to the document's completion and future plan execution.



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN

Table of Contents

Organizational Background.....	1
Organizational Structure	2
Community-Driven Strategic Planning.....	3
Process and Acknowledgements.....	4
Community Group Findings.....	5
Community Priorities.....	6
Department Stakeholder Group Findings	7
Mission.....	8
Values.....	9
Programs and Services	10
SWOT Analysis.....	11
Critical Issues and Service Gaps.....	11
Strategic Initiatives	11
Goals and Objectives	12
Vision.....	27
Performance Measurement.....	28
The Success of the Strategic Plan	29
Glossary of Terms, Acronyms, and Initialisms.....	30
Works Cited	32
Appendix 1	33
Community Expectations.....	33
Areas of Community Concern.....	35
Positive Community Feedback.....	37
Other Thoughts and Comments.....	39
Appendix 2	40
Appendix 3	41
Strengths.....	41
Weaknesses.....	42
Opportunities	43
Threats	44
Appendix 4	45

PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Organizational Background

The City of Palo Alto, California is a landmark known historically in the founding of Stanford University, and in its diverse focus on technology today. The history of the city boasts a heavy Spanish heritage to include its name, which comes from a 1000-year-old coastal redwood tree along San Francisquito Creek. Incorporated as a city on April 16, 1894, Palo Alto has grown and evolved, making its place in the history of the state, as well as nationally and internationally.



Today, Palo Alto is a thriving community of approximately 65,000 residing within approximately 39 square miles. Stanford University provides an approximate additional 16,000 in residence and an additional 13 square miles to which the fire department provides services. As part of and known as the birthplace of Silicon Valley, Palo Alto is home to industry focusing on expanded technology, quality education, and sustainable businesses that feed a robust economy.



Prior to 1920 when the city hired its first professional firefighter, the Palo Alto Fire Department operated as a volunteer fire service organization that served the community. The department, over its existence, has continued to evolve to remain cutting-edge as the community has changed. Because of a growing demand in the industry, the Palo Alto Fire Department

began providing paramedic services in 1975 and also began providing fire-rescue and ambulance services to Stanford University under contract. The Palo Alto Fire Department has continued to keep pace with the industry, as demands changed within the city and as further service offerings were made available for the community.

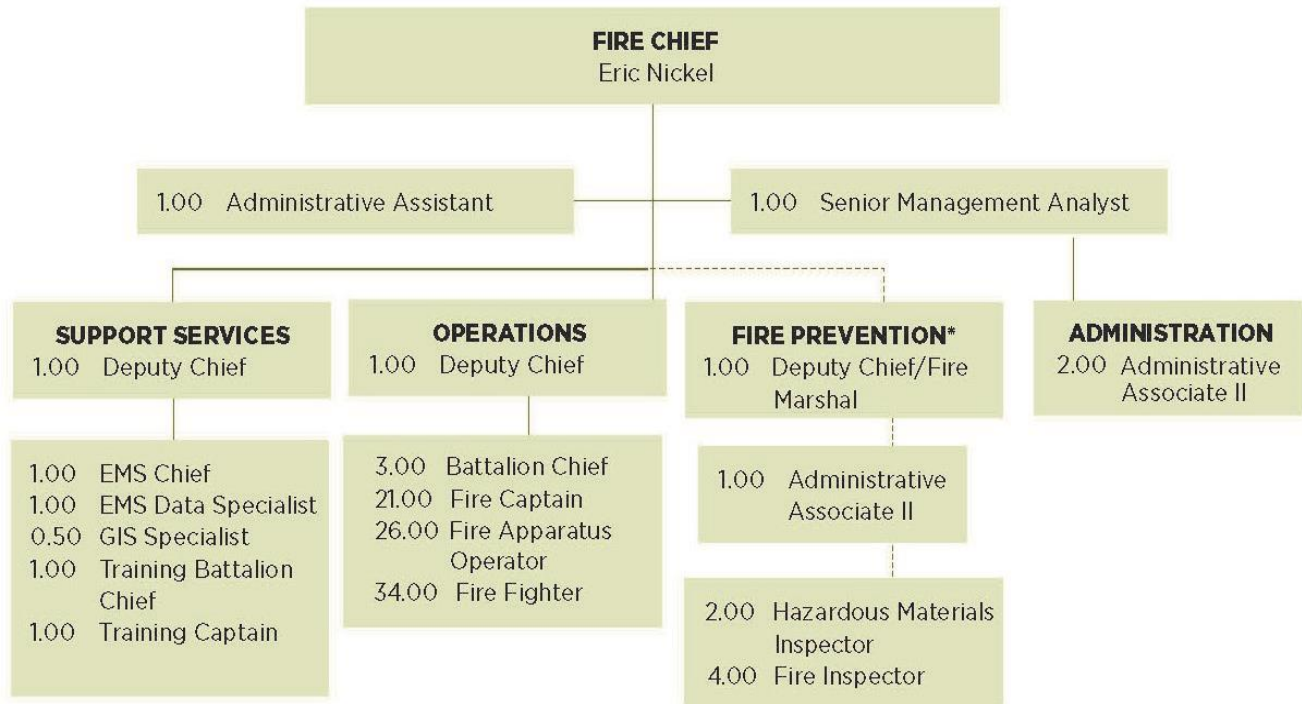
Today the department provides its services from six fire stations, located strategically throughout the city. Staffed with 96 uniformed and 8 civilian professionals, the department provides its various services and programs, while dedicated to safeguarding and enriching the lives of anyone, anytime, and anywhere. The Palo Alto Fire Department continues to remain mission-focused as evidenced by its international accredited status as well as its commitment to “strategic doing.” The department embraces excellence in all that it does and continues to be dedicated to those it serves.





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Organizational Structure



FY 2019 POSITION TOTALS

103.70 - Full-time
0.55 - Hourly

This organizational chart represents citywide Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) for this department. The Department Summary tables summarize FTEs by position allocation.

* Fire Prevention is functionally a part of the Development Services Department. The Fire Department retains administrative oversight over department personnel.



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Community-Driven Strategic Planning

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

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

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



Community Stakeholders Work Session

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





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

The Community–Driven Strategic Planning Process Outline

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

Process and Acknowledgements

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

Development of this strategic plan took place in November 2018, beginning with meetings hosted by a representative from the CPSE for members of the community (as named in the following table). The department identified community stakeholders to ensure broad representation. The community stakeholders were comprised of some who reside or work within the PAFD's coverage area, and some who were recipients of the department's service(s).

Palo Alto Fire Department Community Stakeholders			
Chris Cohendet	Peter D'Souza, M.D.	Len Filppu	Dan Ghiorso
Jake Hess	Iris Korol	Aaron McCarthy	Ken Miller, M.D., Ph.D.
Mark Nadim	Roxy Rapp	Camelia Sutorius	Derick Witmer



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Community Group Findings

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



Community Stakeholders Work Session





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Priorities

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

Programs	Ranking	Score
Emergency Medical Services	1	78
Fire Suppression	2	73
Technical Rescue	3	55
Wildland Fire Services	4	49
Hazardous Materials Mitigation	5	35
Community Risk Reduction	6	32
Domestic Preparedness Planning and Response	7	29
Fire Investigation	8	24
Public Fire and Life Safety Education	9	21

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



Community Stakeholders Work Session



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Department Stakeholder Group Findings

The department stakeholder work sessions were conducted over the course of three days. These sessions served to discuss the organization's approach to community-driven strategic planning, focusing on the department's mission, values, core programs and support services. Additionally, focus was given to the organization's perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The work sessions involved participation by a stakeholder group that represented a broad cross-section of the department, as named and pictured below.

Palo Alto Fire Department Stakeholders			
Jesse Aguilar <i>Captain</i>	Marcus Arana <i>Captain</i>	Brian Baggott <i>Captain</i>	Geo Blackshire <i>Deputy Chief – Operations</i>
Amber Cameron <i>Strategic Operations</i>	David Dahl <i>Captain</i>	Bill Dale <i>Captain</i>	Bobby Davis <i>Battalion Chief</i>
Chuck Ferry <i>Captain</i>	Hugo Godoy <i>Captain</i>	AnaBella Gonzalez <i>Fire Chief's Assistant</i>	James Henrikson <i>Deputy Chief – Fire Marshal</i>
Nate Heydorff <i>Firefighter - Paramedic</i>	Sunny Johnson-Gutter <i>Apparatus Operator - Paramedic</i>	Adam King <i>Apparatus Operator – Paramedic</i>	Stephen Lindsey <i>Captain</i>
Kevin McNally <i>Deputy Chief – Support Services</i>	Eric Nickel <i>Fire Chief</i>	Kim Roderick <i>EMS Chief</i>	Doug Slezak <i>Firefighter - Paramedic</i>
Ryan Stoddard <i>Battalion Chief</i>		Shane Yarbrough <i>Battalion Chief</i>	



Department Stakeholders





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Mission

The purpose of the mission is to answer the questions:

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

A workgroup met to revisit the existing mission and, after good, quality deliberation and ensuring it answered the questions, the entire group determined that the PAFD mission would remain:

**We are a professional team of men and women
dedicated to safeguarding and enriching the lives of anyone, anytime, anywhere
with compassion and pride.**



Department Stakeholders Work Session



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

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, after good, quality deliberation and ensuring they truly were representative of the department, the entire group determined that the PAFD values would remain:

The men and women of the Palo Alto Fire Department commit to the following values in serving our communities and each other:

Integrity - We serve our community and support each other with respect and honesty. We approach our commitment with Dignity and Courage. We are accountable through our every-day actions and communication.

Innovation - We creatively integrate tradition with technology acknowledging the wealth of resources available in our community and department to improve health, safety and welfare.

Professionalism - We are dedicated to providing quality service in the delivery of a cost effective and superior service. Our attitude, appearance, knowledge, skills and abilities are reflective of our commitment to excellence.

Diversity - The members of our department exemplify diversity on multiple levels. Our skills, backgrounds and experiences allow us to effectively respond to the vast range of emergencies and outreach opportunities.

Compassion - We exist to serve our communities and support each other with empathy, sincerity and respect.

Education - We strive to continually improve ourselves and our skills to increase our own safety and better protect the communities we serve. We strive to stay abreast of the latest developments in emergency response. We provide educational opportunities through community outreach to help increase knowledge of preparedness and personal, family and home safety.

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





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Programs and Services

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

Core Programs of the Palo Alto Fire Department

Emergency Medical Services	Fire Suppression	Technical Rescue
Wildland Fire Services	Hazardous Materials Mitigation	Community Risk Reduction
Domestic Preparedness Planning and Response	Fire Investigation	Public Fire and Life Safety Education



Department Stakeholders Work Session



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

SWOT Analysis

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

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

Critical Issues and Service Gaps

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

Strategic Initiatives

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

Palo Alto Fire Department's Strategic Initiatives		
Internal Communication	Recruitment and Retention	Health and Wellness
Succession Planning	Training	Outreach





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Goals and Objectives

To continuously achieve the mission of the Palo Alto Fire Department, realistic goals and objectives with timelines for completion must be established. These will serve to enhance strengths, address identified weaknesses, provide a clear direction, and address the concerns of the community. These should become a focus of the department's efforts, as they will direct the organization to its desired future while reducing the obstacles and distractions along the way. Leadership-established work groups should meet and manage progress toward accomplishing these goals and objectives and adjust timelines as needs and the environment change. Regular reports of progress and changes should be shared with the PAFD's leadership.

Goal 1	Develop methods to connect and inform the members to unify and engage the workforce.	
Objective 1A	Identify the information the department is currently disseminating, not disseminating, and the priority of the information.	
Timeframe	1 – 3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Categorize the information that is sent internally to the department. • Determine the frequency of information dissemination. • Rank the level of importance. • Determine the various audiences. • Identify the current information that is not disseminated. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1B	Identify the current delivery systems utilized and their effectiveness.	
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Inventory all current systems used by the department. • Assess the effectiveness of each system based on department needs and wants. • Review prior survey results as available. • Create a new survey with open-ended questions to gather current feedback. • Research current systems to unutilized capabilities. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Objective 1C	Identify potential new delivery systems.	
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Research SMS information delivery programs. • Research conference call lines and systems dedicated for the battalion chiefs and captains. • Develop a quarterly newsletter. • Research other alternative delivery systems. • Brainstorm ways to use the current/old delivery systems to further meet the needs of the department. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1D	Identify and match the appropriate information with a corresponding delivery method.	
Timeframe	1 month	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Review all results from prior research. • Create a matrix of resources and information needs. • Match the resource to the need. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1E	Create applicable policies to support the identified new delivery systems.	
Timeframe	6 – 12 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Identify what systems and methods need policies. • Review and identify current policies and eliminate or update as needed. • Create new policies if needed. • Collaborate, meet, and confer as needed with labor. • Provide any needed training on any new or revised policies. • Implement the policies as directed.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective 1F	Identify and conduct needed training to support the current and new information methods.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Identify the training needs based on the old and new systems. • Identify the target audience. • Identify who will conduct the training. • Develop the curriculum if required. • Conduct the training and collect feedback for future review.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1G	Create a process to identify the effectiveness of new methods.	
Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Survey users to see if the new systems are working and meeting the department's needs. • Review the communications at the staff level. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance. • Make any adjustments to the systems as needed and as directed.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



Department Stakeholders Work Session



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Goal 2	Develop recruitment and retention programs to maintain a diverse, talented, and engaged workforce.	
Objective 2A	Identify and analyze programs or processes already in place for recruitment and retention to establish a baseline.	
Timeframe	1 month	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Review previous three hiring processes to determine practices and candidate pools utilized. • Interview Human Resources (fire department liaison) to identify any retention programs in place for fire and other city departments. • Conduct an analysis of the data and make determinations. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2B	Identify alternative recruitment avenues and additional opportunities within current processes to provide the best pool of candidates.	
Timeframe	2 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Interview other departments in the bay area to identify how they recruit and from where. • Analyze the use of colleges and other schools to provide recruitment avenues (College of San Mateo, South Bay Regional, EMS/paramedic schools). • Interview departments with cadet/intern programs to determine if/how they have created a path for recruitment and hiring. • Interview other departments to determine if they have pursued sponsorships of personnel to the Firefighter 1 Academy, to increase pool of candidates. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective 2C	Identify different paths in hiring to provide alternative timelines and options when hiring.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Interview other departments in the area to determine if they use alternative ways to onboard (academy, in-house, on the job training, etc.). • Create a list of onboarding processes with timelines and associated costs, personnel needs, and logistical requirements. (Example: New hire with no experience require full academy, laterals, Firefighter 1 candidates, etc.). • Determine cost effectiveness of hiring a mix and varied academies to provide a diverse group of personnel. • Detail the most logical and cost-effective means of hiring to meet the short term and long-term hiring needs. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2D	Develop hiring practices that allow for hiring from multiple pools, with different levels of experience to provide the best possible applicant pool to meet the department's needs.	
Timeframe	2 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Establish hiring processes for multiple avenues and varied lists (based on previous findings to include: ○ Cadets ○ New hire candidates ○ Academy students. • Create a document that includes its expiration, all qualifications required to be on any list, suggested academy processes for list, etc. • Establish onboarding processes that meet the varied needs of the candidates to include in-house, JFA, and contract academy (south bay regional). • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Objective 2E Identify benchmarks to measure success of the recruitment program to determine the effectiveness.		
Timeframe	2 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Identify and detail goals for diversity. - Determine the basis for these goals to include mirroring Palo Alto population and other benchmarks deemed best practices, etc. - Monitor and measure the percentage of cadets hired with the department against baseline. - Evaluate, on an annual basis, if there was a constant pool of qualified applicants to hire from. Were there good candidates missed due to timing? Were onboarding processes delayed due to lack of candidates?	
	Evaluate if the mix of EMT and paramedic candidates meet the department's needs, with regards to the minimum 60/40 ratio of medics to EMTs.	
	Use evaluation of hiring above to start back at Objective 2A in the process to continuously improve the recruitment process.	
	Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2F Identify trends and statistics related to personnel leaving the department prior to the retirement age to be able to address them and reduce the number of departures.		
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Develop a robust exit interview questionnaire that allows for the ability to fully understand the reasons for leaving and opportunities that may have allowed for retention of the employee. - Interview employees who left to understand reasons and thoughts on what may have changed their decision.	
	Discuss with those candidates if they would be interested in a re-hire processes and reasons why or why not.	
	Conduct stay interviews with those at risk of leaving and those who are happy in staying, to further understand the dynamics that are part of the decision-making process for employees.	
	Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective 2G	Analyze response from exit and stay interviews to be able to address issues we can to better retain good employees.	
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Review responses from all interviews and identify trends in responses to questions. • Prioritize those responses based on number of occurrences. • Identify where the department has a measure of opportunity to affect change vs those that are outside of control. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2H	Develop programs or process to affect change where the department has the ability to do so, to reduce the number of personnel leaving prior to retirement age.	
Timeframe	2 months, ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Review areas of opportunity noted in 2G and develop programs that would discourage premature departures. • Identify budgetary, personnel and logistical requirements of each program or process. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance. • Implement programs as possible to address the issues noted.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2I	Develop metrics to measure the trends and how they compare year to year as part of an ongoing effort to improve the retention of personnel in the department.	
Timeframe	2 months, ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Accumulate departures over the last five years as a baseline for measurement. • Compare the data on an annual basis to understand the impacts of programs implemented. • Continue to conduct interviews in 2F to determine if programs are working to address issues raised. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Goal 3	Enhance the current wellness program for long term sustainability.	
Objective 3A	Identify baseline physical, emotional, and behavioral health of the members.	
Timeframe	3 months, ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Develop a method of gathering baseline information through the use of industry experts such as BaySport, Kara, etc. • Gather any relevant information from human resources on basic use data for each category, if possible. • Establish a needs assessment. • Compare with IAFF data, if available. • Analyze the baseline to compare going forward. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3B	Identify the physical, emotional, and behavioral health needs of the members.	
Timeframe	3 months, ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Develop a method of gathering information to include process, but not limited to: ○ Survey personnel ○ Safety culture measurement ○ Organizational and operational safety review ○ Policy review • Gather input from the IAFF on labor matters to jointly adopt behavioral health and wellness. • Analyze data for program development. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3C	Support members and department culture to create and maintain organizational health and wellness.	
Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Establish as a benchmark principle, that firefighter behavioral health is a core occupational health and safety issue, just as urgent as traumatic injury, job-related cancer, and other critical safety issues. • Commit to working together as labor and management to meet this health and safety challenge. • Identify and update policies on health and wellness.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



Technical
Advisor
Program





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective 3D	Support the needs of individuals, teams, and department to create a safe and healthy workforce.	
Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Enhance existing, as well as identify and implement new programs to address personnel needs such as: - Physical and Behavioral Health and Wellness - Bullying and Workplace Violence Prevention - Mindfulness - Peer support group - CISM - EAP - Evaluate the outcome. - Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3E	Track wellness to maintain and evaluate improvement and efficacy of the program.	
Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	- Select a sample of personnel who have used the wellness programs. - Work with human resources to establish measurable physical and mental health data. - Evaluate the results. - Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance. - Make adjustments to programs as indicated and directed.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



Department Stakeholders Work Session



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Goal 4	Create a comprehensive succession plan for professional development to meet the department's needs.	
Objective 4A	Identify all positions within the department, to include administrative, prevention, EMS, suppression, etc.	
Timeframe	1 month	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Identify job descriptions for each position and update as needed. • Identify minimum requirements/qualification for each position and update as needed. • Create task books for appropriate positions. • Develop recommended timelines to achieve positions.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4B	Develop a consistent testing process, ensuring a fair and equitable tests.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Establish pre-scheduled timelines for testing. • Establish notifications of promotional dates. • Establish a rubric for each exam. • Determine and identify study materials for each exam. • Determine the scope of each test. • Identify department specific supplemental training resources, e.g. videos, policies, etc. • Provide all information department-wide to ensure understanding.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:



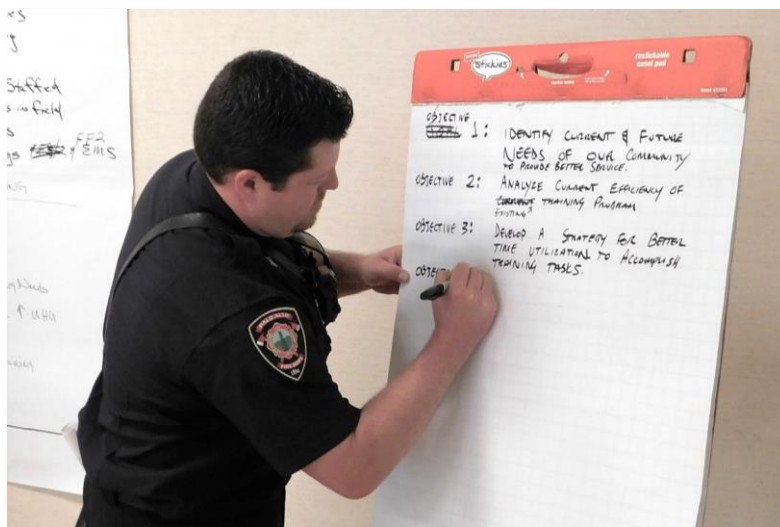
Department Stakeholders Work Session





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective 4C	Create a single guideline, including all positions for a roadmap to promotions and other positions.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Format the guideline with compiled documents. • Update and include an organization chart with potential options for each position available within the agency and roadmap to get there. • Create an easy to understand algorithm for each position to follow with references as needed. • Create required training and experience needed for each position. • Collect and review all task books and update as needed. • Labor and management review. • Provide all information department-wide to ensure understanding.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4D	Identify and address potential roadblocks for individuals working toward promotion or a specific position.	
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Identify timelines for classes/training (scheduling and required classes). • Develop cost analysis for backfilling, overtime, classes, etc., based on requirements of each position. • Create a budget request and backup documentation. • Adjust objectives and tasks based on analysis of roadblocks. • Provide all information department-wide to ensure understanding.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:



Department Stakeholders Work Session



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Goal 5	Develop a comprehensive training program to meet the evolving needs of our community.	
Objective 5A	Create an idea team with 5-8 members, coordinated by the Training Battalion Chief to implement the training goal and objectives.	
Timeframe	1 month	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Solicit members to be part of the team. • Draft an email and introduce the program. • Evaluate applications submitted. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance. • Announce selected team.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5B	Identify the current and future training needs to better serve our community.	
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Survey stakeholders and membership to determine current and future training needs. • Idea team will research new trends. • Identify subject matter experts (Fire/EMS). • Interview comparable fire departments and neighboring agencies to see if the department can share subject matter experts and resources. • Review state fire curriculum and industry trends/best practices. • Involve neighborhoods associations. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5C	Compare our existing training program with comparable and future identified training needs, finding efficiencies.	
Timeframe	3 – 6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Identify comparable training programs and needs. • Develop and conduct a survey to gather data. • Collate and review results of surveys. • Identify emerging technologies for financial efficiencies. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:



Technical
Advisor
Program





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective 5D	Explore different ways to deliver training to increase opportunity efficiency.	
Timeframe	3 – 6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Survey comparable ways to deliver training. • Research Target Solution’s capabilities. • Build bridges with Junior College and Online programs. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5E	Inventory current training resources and compare against future anticipated needs.	
Timeframe	6 – 9 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Create list of current resources. • Review past successes and failures. • Adapt current resources and facilities to evolving and future needs. • Forecast/anticipate future training needs and resources.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5G	Use Objectives A - E to come up with a new training strategy along with estimated cost/budget.	
Timeframe	9 – 12 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Develop the new (or adopted) training program. • Cost out proposed training program. • Develop budget request (work with OMB) to secure funding from city council.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5H	Continually re-assess program for ongoing quality control.	
Timeframe	Annually, ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Conduct an annual “check-in” survey with all: ○ Staff ○ City council ○ Stakeholders • Process results of survey and re-align goals/programs to meet evolving needs of community to and mankind at large. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance. • Conduct revisions as directed.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Goal 6	Establish a sustainable level of departmental presence in the community through education, service programs, and involvement.	
Objective 6A	Identify all potential outreach programs.	
Timeframe	1 – 2 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Research relevant best practices. • Contact neighboring departments and find out what they do. • Identify current and historical programs the department has conducted. • Survey/question the public to determine needs and desires for programs. • Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 6B	Conduct a cost analysis of each identified program, including time and resources.	
Timeframe	1 – 2 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Analyze the cost of each program to include: ○ Monetary costs ○ Personnel costs ○ Logistical costs • Determine which programs are achievable for the department based on the budget and other funding sources. • Create and disseminate a report of findings for analysis and future decision making.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 6C	Develop and implement training to support the programs.	
Timeframe	4 – 6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	• Identify all relevant training needs. • Budget for the training needs. • Develop train-the-trainer participants and a guide to deliver the training to the department. • Deliver the training to the target audience and gather feedback.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective 6D Reach out and engage stakeholders to gain support of the programs.

Timeframe 4 – 6 months

Assigned to:

Critical Tasks

- Seek input from legal to determine any city liability.
- Seek input from labor for issues of pay and liability.
- Seek input from the community on the programs and needs.
- Reach out to potential sponsors to see if alternative funding exists for the programs.
- Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.

Funding

Capital Costs:

Consumable Costs:

Estimate

Personnel Costs:

Contract Services Costs:

Objective 6E

Identify and develop a review process to evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of the programs.

Timeframe 1 – 2 months, ongoing

Assigned to:

Critical Tasks

- Measure the number of people in attendance of the various programs.
- Evaluate response on the program evaluations and delivery.
- Evaluate input on programs changes, additions, and elimination.
- Prepare a report and present to the leadership team for additional consideration and guidance.
- Make revisions as directed.

Funding

Capital Costs:

Consumable Costs:

Estimate

Personnel Costs:

Contract Services Costs:



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Vision

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

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

Ken Blanchard

Palo Alto Fire Department's 2024 Vision

is to continue to be widely known as an internationally accredited fire-service agency that remains dedicated to safeguarding and enriching the lives of the residents, businesses, and guests of Palo Alto.

Planning for the future, we will recognize the importance placed on our greatest asset, our members, through greater global focus. By embracing innovation, we will find better ways to safeguard their health and wellness, yielding a return to all who hold a stake in our department. By living our professionalism, we will prepare for a vibrant tomorrow through quality succession planning. Because we value education, we will enhance our training processes to provide the most effective services to Palo Alto.

As we must always exhibit integrity, our bolstered internal communications systems will help us further unify and become more efficient, with a concentrated effort on what is best for all concerned. To excel at serving our community and always completing our mission, we will pursue our initiative on recruitment and retention that will not only strengthen our roster with the best people but will help us strive toward diversity.

For us to display compassion, we will develop advanced ways of outreach to our public that bridge any gaps, develop partnerships, and find better ways to show that the Palo Alto Fire Department will always be there for anyone, anytime, and anywhere with a commitment to be Palo Alto's finest.

Dedicated to our calling, we will consider our history, while we endeavor for futurity, by holding each other accountable for fulfilling our mission, living our values, accomplishing our goals, and bringing this vision to fruition.





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Performance Measurement

To assess and ensure that an organization is delivering on the promises made in their strategic plan, the organization's leaders must determine performance measures for which they are fully accountable. As output measurement can be challenging, the organization must focus on the assessment of progress toward achieving improved output. Jim Collins states, "What matters is not finding the perfect indicator, but settling upon a *consistent and intelligent* method of assessing your output results, and then tracking your trajectory with rigor."² Organizations must further be prepared to revisit and revise their goals, objectives, and performance measures to keep up with accomplishments and environmental changes.

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

Reinventing Government

David Osborn and Ted Gaebler

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

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

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



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

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

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

Good to Great and the Social Sectors
Jim Collins

Provided the community-driven strategic planning process is kept dynamic and supported by effective leadership and active participation, it will be a considerable opportunity to unify department and community stakeholders. This can be accomplished through a jointly developed understanding of organizational direction, focusing on all vested parties working to achieve the mission, goals, and vision. Further consideration must be made on how the organization will measure and be accountable for its progress and successes.³

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





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

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.
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
CFAI	Commission on Fire Accreditation International
CISM	Critical Incident Stress Management
CPR	Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation
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.
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
Efficiency	A performance indication where inputs are measured per unit of output (or vice versa).
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
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.
FPB	Fire Prevention Bureau
HazMat	Hazardous Materials Mitigation
IAFF	International Association of Firefighters
Input	A performance indication where the value of resources is used to produce an output.
IT	Information Technology
LEMSA	Local EMS Agency
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.
OES	Office of Emergency Services



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

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.
PAFCF	Palo Alto Firefighters' Charitable Foundation
PAFD	Palo Alto Fire Department
PAUSD	Palo Alto Unified School District
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RMS	Records Management System
SMS	Short Message Service
Stakeholder	Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on, or influence the organization's resources or outputs, is affected by those outputs, or has an interest in or expectation of the organization.
Strategic Goal	A broad target that defines how the agency will carry out its mission over a specific period of time. An aim. The final result of an action. Something to accomplish in assisting the agency to move forward.
Strategic Objective	A specific, measurable accomplishment required to realize the successful completion of a strategic goal.
Strategic Plan	A long-range planning document that defines the mission of the agency and broadly identifies how it will be accomplished, and that provides the framework for more detailed annual and operational plans.
Strategic Planning	The continuous and systematic process whereby guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future, develop procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is to be measured.
Strategy	A description of how a strategic objective will be achieved. A possibility. A plan or methodology for achieving a goal.
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
VA	United States Department of Veterans Affairs
Vision	An idealized view of a desirable and potentially achievable future state - where or what an organization would like to be in the future.
WUI	Wildland-Urban Interface





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Works Cited

Bryson, John M. *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2018.

Collins, J. (2009). *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*. Boulder: Jim Collins.

Commission on Fire Accreditation International. (2015). *Fire & Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual*. (9th Ed.)

Matthews, Joseph (2005). *Strategic Planning and Management for Library Managers*. Libraries Unlimited.



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Appendix 1

Community Expectations

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

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

Community Expectations of the Palo Alto Fire Department (in priority order)

1. Prompt professional firefighting emergency response. Speed of response. Amount of time for response (fast). Respond to hazardous material incidents in a timely fashion. (35)
2. Stay on top of changing technology, climate change, techniques, population growth etc. Up to date on trends. To know our community and its members by meeting with them regularly, exploring all areas and neighborhoods. (17)
3. Engagement in fire associations, chiefs, EMS etc. Have a presence at county chiefs level to ensure all contemporary issues are on your radar. (13)
4. Educate public/children about fire safety. Fire safety. (11)
5. Up to date on equipment. Equipment - being modern and most up to date. (10)
6. Coordinate emergency planning with existing emergency preparation efforts. To protect our neighbors, homes and businesses from the dangers of nature - including weather, fire, man-made. (9)
7. Fire prevention. Promote safety/prevent fires in our community. (8)
8. Effective training of personnel. Well trained. (8)





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

9. Regional partner and vision - joint communication, purchasing etc. Work collaboratively with allied agencies i.e., FSC and road associations. (8)
10. True to mission of service and protection of the public and community. That they do the totality of their job. (7)
11. Wildland urban interface safety. Wildland pre-attack planning - evacuation planning. (5)
12. Safe and effective patient care in EMS. (4)
13. Communication of fire department needs. To be a member of our community via active participation and ideally by living here. (3)
14. To rescue members of our community when danger/incidents/injuries occur. (3)
15. Fiscal responsibility in providing quality service. (3)
16. Calming to residents in an emergency. (2)
17. Pleasant. (2)
18. Maintain presence of local 911 emergency dispatch. (2)
19. Maintain active and real time information on road impacts that may delay response. (2)
20. Offer classes in medical (CPR) safety along with education in community preparedness. (2)
21. Coordinate with city's comprehensive plan. (1)
22. Provide fire investigation services for root cause findings. (1)
23. Progressive leadership. (1)



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Areas of Community Concern

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

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

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

1. Deployment of resources in an emergency. Lack of response to wildfires in foothills along 280 at Sand Hill Road and Alpine Road (mutual aid?) (15)
2. Allocation of resources. Reduced staffing in the future - seems to be a trend in most cities. We do not want this. (13)
3. Worried that cost of living/housing in Palo Alto makes it difficult for staff to live here or nearby. Housing needs, how far away will fire personnel have to live. (10)
4. Worried that relationship with city regarding contract has or may hurt service/personnel choices. Service reductions. (10)
5. Cut back by city funds and council. Budget concerns. (10)
6. Their level of physical and mental fitness for their jobs. (9)
7. Personnel needs, where are you going to get employees. Understaffed. (8)
8. The ability of the fire department to interact with/participate/collaborate with and understand the community they serve. May not fully understand or connect with the community they are serving. (8)
9. Adequate budget to meet needs. (7)





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

10. Do you have pre-set evacuation plans? (6)
11. Worried about increasing fires due to drought and non-watering conservation efforts. Are you working to modify the fuel in your WUI area? (5)
12. Can PAFD get to emergencies on time with increasing traffic jams. Time to get to work. (5)
13. The level of education and training of members of the department. (5)
14. Succession planning. (5)
15. Are we capable of responding to major event that would task more than just Palo Alto, i.e., earthquake or fire. (5)
16. Lack of a formal pre-fire planning process with building owners. (4)
17. Employment stability - not leaving for other agencies. (4)
18. Has your vulnerable population been identified? (4)
19. Updated equipment and training opportunities. (3)
20. Health care costs for employees and customers. (3)
21. Are there or is there an ability to work with an ever-increasing aging population. (3)
22. Are we equipped to cover expected increases in Palo Alto housing and population growth. (2)
23. How well aligned are the values of the fire department versus residents of Palo Alto. (2)
24. Retirement costs - liabilities. (1)
25. Do surrounding agencies having a good working relations with our fire department. (1)



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

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 Palo Alto Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)

- Very approachable and easy to talk with.
- Seem to be responsive to calls for service in the surrounding area.
- Have assisted local agencies with training and support.
- Have heard firefighters are very respectful and work well.
- Understand we have a Class 1 certification, not sure what that means to me.
- Already a strong commitment to the EMS mission of the fire service.
- Strong leadership.
- PAFD has a great reputation of working well with other agencies.
- History and culture.
- Company involvement – EMS, prevention, programs.
- Accreditation.
- Local 911 dispatch center – helps to ensure response is to the correct location, mitigating delays.
- Online ability to schedule inspections.
- Online website – information is very helpful.
- Confined space services.
- Rescue services.
- Responsive to community outreach events and requests. Always show up for annual neighborhood association party. Big hit with kids of all ages.
- I've never heard a negative remark about any fire department person/action in this town.
- Will help with anything – even hold stray dogs brought to them by my wife.
- Friendly, outgoing, professional, hard working.
- Like the “baseball card” type cards handed out to kids at public events and station tours.





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

- Friendly.
- Responsible.
- Hope well informed.
- Well-trained.
- Fast response.
- Professionalism.
- Community outreach.
- Well-trained personnel.
- Responsive.
- Interactive.
- Well-trained and equipped.
- Stations through the city and available backup for one another.



Community Stakeholders Work Session



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Other Thoughts and Comments

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

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

- I know our response in fire engines have changed, but I do not understand what those changes are and why.
- Staff are very professional and care about their work.
- Staff are reasonable and communicate well.
- Teach citizens about cleaning dry brush around homes.
- More defibrillators around public places.
- Plan for use of Palo Alto airport in emergencies.
- Link to the city's comp plan.
- Feel very lucky to have a fire department in our community that we can call our own.
- Regionalization and sharing of high-risk/low-incidence resources (such as technical rescue, hazardous materials, wildland fire services) makes sense economically. Is Palo Alto planning more regionalization of services?



Community Stakeholders Work Session





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Appendix 2

Supporting Services of the Palo Alto Fire Department

Administrative Services	Airport	Arson Task Force
Budget Office	CalFire	CERT
Chaplain	CISM	City Utilities
City Legal	Coast Guard	Committees
County EMS	CPSE	Development Services
Dispatch	Employee Assistance Program	Environmental Protection Agency
Facilities Maintenance	Fire Associates	Fish and Game
Fleet Maintenance	Foothill Rangers	Honor Guard
Human Resources	IAFF Local 1319	Information Technology
Law Enforcement	Media	Mutual/Automatic Aid Agencies
National Guard	Office of Emergency Services	PAFCF
PAUSD	PG&E	Public Works
Railroads	Receiving Hospitals	Red Cross
Regional Task Force	Stanford Hospital	Stanford University
State Fire Marshal's Office	Training	VA Hospitals
Valley Transit Authority	Vendors	



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Appendix 3

Strengths

It is important for any organization to identify its strengths to ensure that it can provide the services requested by the community, and that strengths are consistent with the issues facing the organization. Often, identification of organizational strengths leads to the channeling of efforts toward primary community needs that match those strengths. Programs that do not match organizational strengths, or the primary function of the organization, should be seriously reviewed to evaluate the rate of return on staff time and allocated funds.

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

Strengths of the Palo Alto Fire Department	
Department family culture is strong	Apparatus – well spec'd, well maintained, new
Strong community approval	City's financial stability
More emphasis on technical proficiency than in the past	Encouraging culture for innovation – support for those who want to contribute
Highly-involved labor	Labor's relationship with governance
Stanford contract allows for independence	People who are passionate, diverse skill set.
Ambulance/EMS service – firemedics allows for greater community investment, greater flexibility in deployment	Willingness of members to go above and beyond on every call – white glove – level of concern not generally seen
Accreditation shows we are organized, well-managed, operate at an elite level	Personnel – diverse, trained, experience, subject matter experts
Culture – value, acceptance	Auto/mutual aid agreements are robust
Healthy – physical, strong – fitness equipment	Adaptability – open to change
Technology – PSTrax, CAD, hardware, software	Policy – current, updated
EMS delivery – modernized, lean forward	Excellent fire equipment
City leadership support	Hiring well
Diverse backgrounds – business, welder, mechanic, construction - creativity	FPB sworn/cross-trained – can work line/arson – career development
New stations 3 and 4	Reputation/training
Capturing more EMS transports – cross staff	Acting officer programs





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Weaknesses

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

Weaknesses of the Palo Alto Fire Department	
Public education – does not exist	Retention
HazMat program – staffing, equipment	Diversity – true reflection
Company inspections – cross-staff parking, pre-fire planning	Data collection – overall needed to support the agency
Time for training	Time/resource management
Hiring/promotion process – streamlining, assistant chief positions	Department involvement – housing, employee location
Traffic – too much – elongating response times	Injuries – prevention
Stations – old, ADA	Training tower – outdated
Lack of training facilities, location	Communication – internal, staff versus line, shifts
Dispatch – lack of department understanding, inconsistent	Lack of interaction (training) with neighboring agencies – mutual/automatic aid
No single resource program	Lack of dedicated wildland station
Upcoming retirements – succession plan	Probation – lack of consistency
Prioritizing fitness – allowing flexible workout period	Purchasing process – knowledge of
Staff support – need additional personnel to accomplish projects	Incentive – to take on extra work, back-fill, training, education pay
Lack of regional training – need coverage from other agencies	Documentation – ESO, RMS accuracy – consistent, completeness
Labor management meetings – feedback	Lack of resource typing
Equipment replacement plan	Number of captains/acting captains
Technology and IT – multiple programs, not enough technical support, operating system – glitchy, outdated mapping systems	Resiliency in the new deployment model
	Accountability
	Personnel burnout – medic burnout with deployment



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Opportunities

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

Opportunities for the Palo Alto Fire Department	
Grants – apply	Consolidation with other agencies
Regionalization of specialized resources – task force, technical rescue, HazMat, dispatch	Stanford relationship – programs, training, research, facilities
Increase of budget resources	Public education to include city council
Public/private partnerships to increase resources	State/county/other training opportunities
Political relationships that help department success	Training facilities with utilities
Regional training site – Moffet	Community medicine – Stanford Medical
State training curriculum	CalFire staffing – Station 8
Inter-agency talent exchange – cross training – CalFire ride with PAF, PAF to become sawyer	Utilizing unique/individual talent for the benefits of the entire department
Public safety building – consolidate staff	OES engine – training, deployments
Records department	EMS public education
Utilizing social media	Relationships – new city manager
Community outreach – CPR, fire aid training	Restart fire explorer program
Consolidate software – RMS, ESO	ESO user interface – opportunities to improve
Patient outcome data automated from hospital	Taskforce – attract new members, training support





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Threats

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

Potential Threats to the Palo Alto Fire Department	
Budget fluctuations	Council – decision makers, policy
Stanford – increased resources, increasing occupancies	Weather – hotter, dryer, increased resource draw
Traffic – increase, causing increased response times	IT/software – 3rd party service, need support
Technology – connectivity	Media – sway public opinion
Public opinion – compensation versus perception	Drug shortage – national supply
Economy – unknown, swing	Healthcare costs
Housing shortage – decreasing retention, decreasing call back, recruitment	Aging population – decreased revenue, increased demand
Pension liability	Increased construction
Firefighter 1 curriculum – increased transient workforce	State and local EMS regulatory agencies – regulations, increasing certifications
Increase in skilled nursing/retirement facilities	Lack of understanding of the role of the fire department
Service expectation of the public – engine only or ambulance only – Code 2 versus Code 3	Floods
Sea level rise	Decreased housing – homelessness
Domestic terrorism	Housing/job imbalance
Opioid crisis – addiction	Push for privatization
Consolidation – possible loss of control	Increase in population – increased in call volume
Do more with less – the mentality of city government	



PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2019-2024

Appendix 4

Critical and Service Gap Issues Identified by the Department Stakeholders	
Group 1	Group 2
Internal Communications ○ Create buy-in ○ Shift communication – staff to shift ○ Schedule ○ Email ○ Crew meetings ○ Consistent ○ Transparency	Communications – Internal and External ○ Good news – shared ○ Changes communicated ○ Update on processes and projects ○ Open communications for ideas ○ Expectations – top down, bottom up, 360° ○ Accountability ○ Communications for calls outside expectations ○ Marketing and outreach ○ Public education
Training Challenges ○ Deployment ○ Increase in call volume ○ Decreased resources ○ Cross-staffing ○ Time ○ Short-staffed ○ Increased probationary personnel in the field ○ Facilities ○ New regulations – Firefighter 2, EMS	Relationships/Outreach ○ Public/private partnerships ○ Sponsorships ○ Technical rescue – hire out services of our personnel ○ Mutual/automatic aid – regionalization ○ Neighborhood group – outreach ○ Special events – provide services ○ Bike teams
Recruitment/Retention ○ Compensation for the area ○ Cost of housing ○ Brand/reputation ○ Advertising/outreach ○ Lack of resources ○ Working conditions – ambulances ○ Funding	Training ○ Facilities ○ Budget ○ Overtime/backfill ○ Specialty training needs ○ Increased call volume and unit hour utilization ○ Cross-staffing ○ Regional training
Talent Engagement ○ Don't know who or what ○ Time constraints ○ Burnout ○ Budget ○ Appreciation/recognition ○ Staffing ○ Support	Workforce Planning ○ Diversity ○ Hiring ○ Training ○ Retention ○ Career development ○ Employee travel distances – commute ○ Specialty training needs – HazMat, technical rescue, truck





PALO ALTO FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

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

Group 1	Group 2
Succession Planning ○ Promotional testing ○ Regular scheduled testing ○ Internal recruitment ○ Written process – task books ○ Training opportunities – support ○ Dedicated resources – funding, backfill	Equipment/Facilities ○ Replacement plan for equipment, PPE ○ Apparatus ○ Training sites ○ Furniture, fixtures, appliances ○ Stations
Appreciation/Recognition ○ Communication of what's happening ○ Inconsistent gratitude ○ Time constraints ○ Ambiguous process ○ Budget ○ Policy ○ Individual motivations ○ Tailored recognition	Service Level Challenges ○ Increasing population ○ Increasing call volume ○ Increased constructions ○ Increased skilled nursing ○ Increased homelessness ○ Increased traffic ○ Increasing agency population with a heavy use of resources ○ Decreased parking ○ Drug shortages
Dispatch ○ Inconsistent application of policy ○ Turnover ○ Training with dispatch ○ Accountability ○ Recruitment ○ Adaptability ○ Feedback ○ Closed-loop communication	Outcomes ○ Patient outcomes ○ Training ○ Program outcomes ○ Property loss measurements – fire, smoke, water
Technology ○ Combining software – decrease redundancy ○ CAD delayed/PulsePoint faster ○ Connectivity ○ 24/7 support – dedicated ○ End-user – not reporting ○ Ease of use - repair	

