

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2024



**NORTHWEST  
FIRE DISTRICT**



**NORTHWEST  
FIRE DISTRICT**



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# MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



The mission of the Northwest Fire District is to save lives, protect property, and care for our community. This mission exists to align our diverse membership with a common purpose, and to assure that every action furthers our commitment to professional and dedicated service to our community. Without the trust of our community, and without the professional commitment of our members, mission success would not be possible.

Fiscal year 2018/2019 was my inaugural year as the District's Fire Chief. During this time, the District underwent numerous changes to position itself to better meet our mission. Initiatives were undertaken to manage future growth, provide for long-term stability,

and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the services we provide to our community and our members.

The 2020-2024 Strategic Plan was developed with the intent of building upon these initiatives. Inputs and guidance were gathered from a diverse cross section of community stakeholders and employees to ensure no critical factors were missed. The Strategic Plan provides an important guide and metric to drive continuous quality improvement within the myriad of services provided by the District. It also serves as an important community awareness tool. One that delivers greater transparency for our residents while also promoting feedback so that services can remain centered on community expectations.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'N' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish at the end.

Norman K. "Brad" Bradley, III



NORTHWEST  
**FIRE**  
DISTRICT

NORTHWEST  
**FIRE**  
DISTRICT



# MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

The mission, vision, and values statements were reviewed by the Governing Board and Strategic Planning Team as part of the plan development process. They were deemed to be relevant and in no need of revision.

## MISSION

The purpose of a mission statement is to define the reason for the organization's existence.

To save lives, protect property, and care for our community.

## VISION

A vision statement sets the direction for our organization in the future. It serves as our inspiration and sets the framework for our strategic planning.

Exemplary leadership and performance in serving our community.

## VALUES

Our values define how we approach our mission as an organization and elaborate more fully on how we go about doing what we do. The 2020-2024 Plan will mark the fifth strategic planning effort where our first five values remain intact. During the 2014-2016 Plan, the value of inclusivity was added.

### Honesty

We are forthright in our dealings; we stand by our word.

### Integrity

We hold ourselves to the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct; we do what's right.

### Trust

We firmly believe in each other to care for our community.

### Respect

We understand that being held in high regard by our community is something we earn every day.

### Humility

We serve selflessly to achieve our mission.

### Inclusivity

We value individual uniqueness.



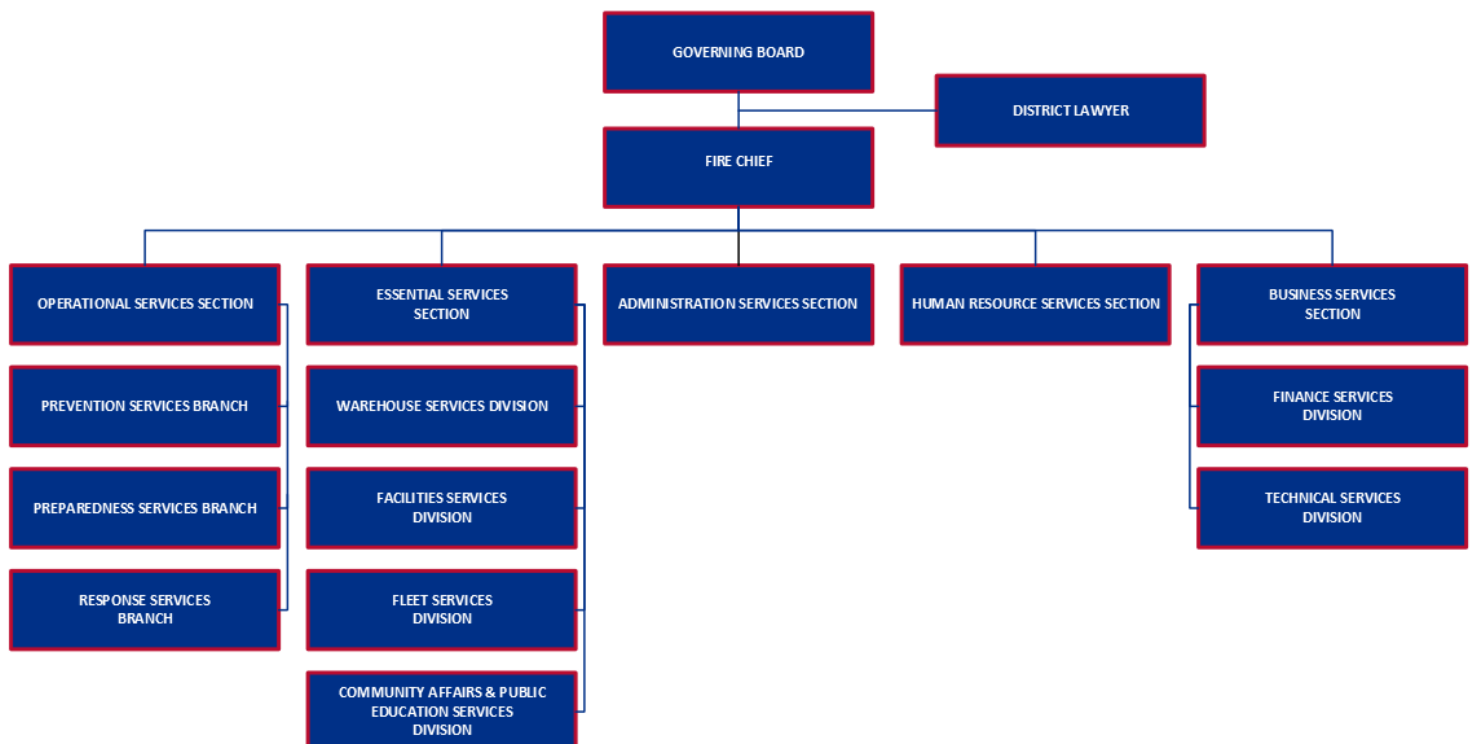


# ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The Northwest Fire District (NWFD) was established in 1983 by a group of conscientious residents in the unincorporated areas of northwest Tucson who were dissatisfied with fire and rescue services that, at the time, were provided by a private entity on a subscription basis. On August 23, 1983, an election was held for the purpose of creating the Northwest Fire District. On October 18, 1983, the Pima County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution allowing the formation of the Northwest Fire District.

NWFD has 250 full-time employees and 1 part-time employee. The District maintains a constant daily staffing minimum of 63 Operational Service personnel deployed from eleven fire stations. In addition, an adaptive response engine company that travels throughout the District is staffed during daytime hours Tuesday – Friday. Administration, Training, Fleet, Logistics, and EMS facilities are also maintained.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



NWFD provides all-risk emergency and non-emergency services to approximately 125,373 residents in areas of north Pima County and the Town of Marana that cover 155 square miles. In 2019, NWFD responded to 16,161 calls.

#### SERVICES PROVIDED INCLUDE

- Emergency Medical
- Fire Suppression
- Hazardous Materials Response
- Technical Rescue
- Community Assistance Program for post-emergency assistance
- Community Education and Information
- Fire Prevention and Code Compliance

More detailed information about the emergency services NWFD provides, including community risk assessment and response time data, may be found in our *Community Risk Assessment – Standards of Cover* document located on our website, [www.northwestfire.org](http://www.northwestfire.org).

## ACCREDITATION

NWFD is accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International<sup>1</sup>. The accreditation process includes assessment in eleven categories:

- Governance and Administration
- Assessment and Planning
- Goals and Objectives
- Financial Resources
- Community Risk Reduction Program
- Physical Resources
- Human Resources
- Training and Competency
- Essential Resources
- External Systems Relationships
- Health and Safety

<sup>1</sup><https://cpse.org/accreditation/>

Accreditation criteria in these areas include 252 performance indicators, of which 86 are core competencies. These core competencies must be met to achieve organizational accreditation. Reaccreditation is required every five years with NWFD's next accreditation process scheduled for 2023. This effort will signify the District's fourth consecutive five-year accreditation period. NWFD is one of only 284 fire/emergency medical agencies to be accredited in the United State as of June 2020. The 3rd edition of the District's *Community Risk Assessment – Standards of Cover* was developed as part of the reaccreditation process.

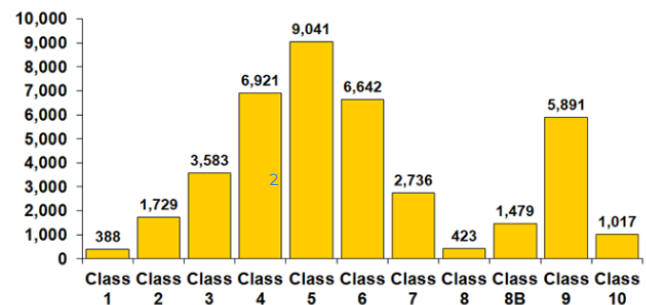


## ISO 1 RATING

Northwest Fire also received an Insurance Service Office (ISO) Public Protection Class (PPC) rating of 1 in 2019. According to Verisk, “ISO's expert staff collects information about municipal fire protection efforts in communities throughout the United States. In each of those communities, ISO analyzes the relevant data and assigns a Public Protection Classification (PPC®) — a number from 1 to 10. Class 1 generally represents superior property fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria”<sup>2</sup>. Out of 39,850 fire departments/districts assessed by ISO, NWFD is one of only 388 in the United States to receive an ISO 1 Rating.

<sup>2</sup>(<https://www.verisk.com/insurance/about/faq/the-public-protection-classification-ppc-program/>)

U.S. Fire Agencies by ISO Class



## REVENUE

The total assessed property value within NWFD is \$1,268,880,290 as reported for the 2020/21 fiscal year. Funding for the District is primarily provided through limited assessed value property taxes. Other funding sources include fees generated for ambulance transportation, state wildland firefighting contracts, and various other service fees (inspections, etc.). The District is also the recipient of various state and federal grants, and the Arizona State Fire District Assistance Tax.

The Northwest Fire District saw a decreased combined tax rate from \$3.07 in 2018 to \$2.99 for Fiscal year 20/21 while seeing an increase in the overall tax levy. This was made possible by an increase in assessed value during this period coupled with increased efficiency of service delivery, aggressive annexation campaigns, and diversified revenue streams. In the coming four years, NWFD expects property valuations to continue to increase at a modest pace. These anticipated modest gains in assessed values, the continued impact of Proposition 117 (a State of Arizona voter-approved resolution that limits property tax valuation increases), and continued increases in operational costs, will continue to have an impact on what the District can and will levy in future years. Any annexations by the City of Tucson into the Northwest Fire District would have an adverse financial impact on NWFD and could create a severe financial hardship.

# PLANNING METHODOLOGY

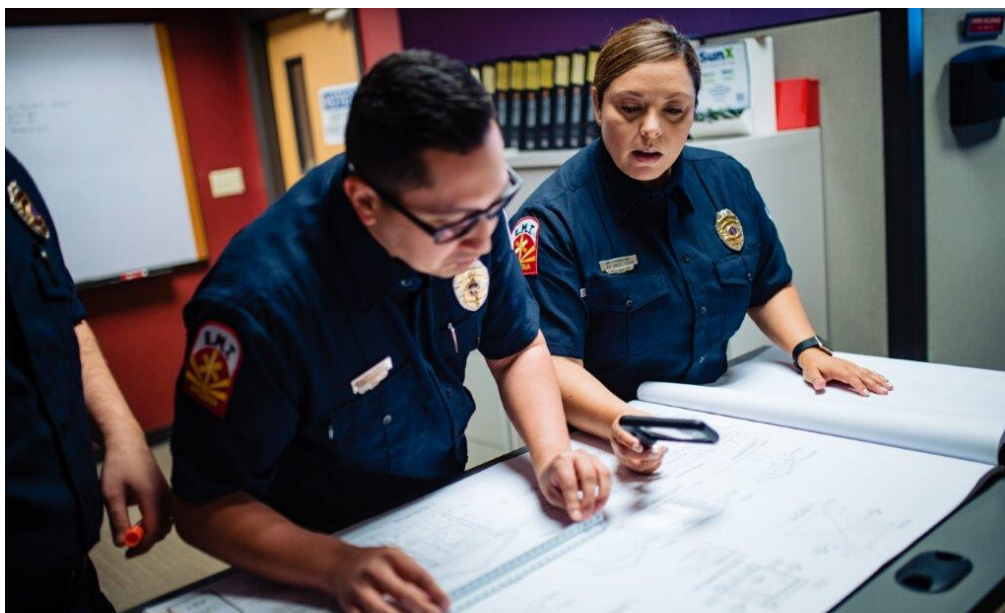
For over 20 years, NWFD has employed the strategic planning process to work towards its goals and meet the needs of the community. Strategic planning has many suitable definitions, but one that best fits our application is below:

**Strategic planning is a disciplined effort that produces fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, who it serves, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future.**

Effective strategic planning articulates not only where an organization is going and the actions needed to make progress, but also how it will know if it is successful. It is an opportunity to assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment.

When done effectively, strategic planning:

- Provides a road map to show where the District is going and how it will get there.
- Facilitates a process that results in the best allocation of resources (time, talent, and funding) that provides the most benefit for the taxpayers.
- Provides an opportunity to question the status quo.
- Identifies the District's potential through the identification of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Builds a shared vision that is mission-based and accountable to the community.
- Ensures that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, intended outcomes, and results.
- Creates a frame of reference for annual budget development







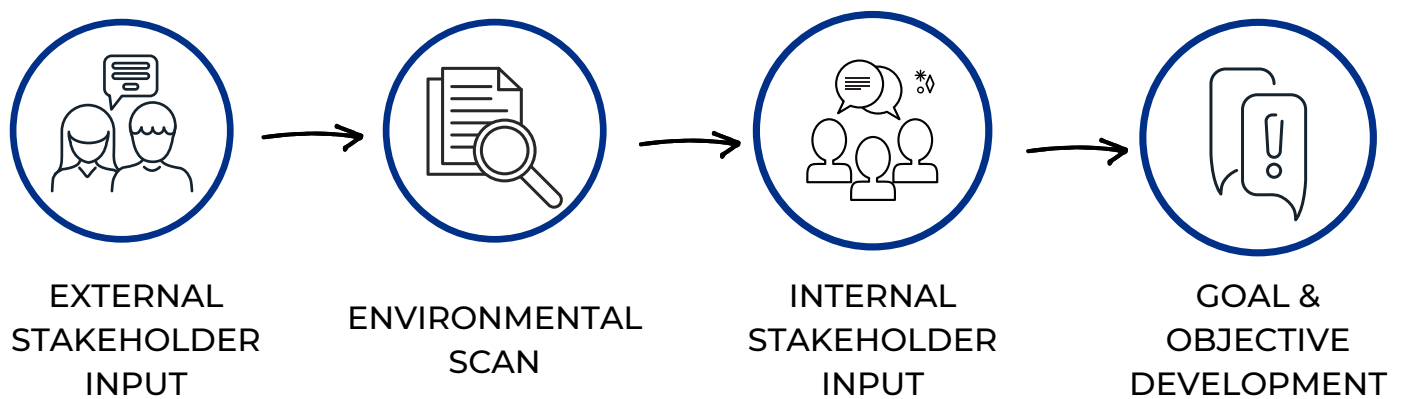
## FIRE CHIEF CRITERIA FOR THIS PLAN

Fire Chief Bradley gave direction to initiate a new Strategic Plan that would cover the fiscal years 2020-2024. The decision was made to shift from a calendar year to a fiscal year to better align the strategic planning and budget development processes. Chief Bradley communicated that the plan must be mission-focused and provide a solid foundation for the organization with focus on the following specific areas:

- Accountability
- Communication
- Driving better outcomes
- Strengthening core competencies in terms of accreditation
- Providing increased linkage between the Strategic Plan, Accreditation, and the Budget
- Improved data/analytics harvesting, sharing, and analysis
- Ensures internal and external stakeholder representation

# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process consisted of soliciting external stakeholder input, conducting an environmental scan, soliciting internal stakeholder (employee and Governing Board) input, and development of Goals and Objectives that incorporating stakeholder input and are mission-aligned. Each of these steps is explained in detail below.



## EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Understanding the needs and expectations of the community we serve is a prerequisite to creating a successful Strategic Plan. To help achieve an understanding of these needs and expectations, the first step taken in the strategic planning process was to gain input from our external stakeholders. One on one meetings were held with several external stakeholders including counterparts from other agencies, local and regional government members, and local business leaders. In addition, a 16-question survey was distributed to over 5,500 households in the NWFD community by mail and email in October 2019. Results of the community survey are included below.

**89% Satisfied** with Non-Emergency Services

**86% Satisfied** with Emergency Services Rendered

**TOP 3**  
MOST IMPORTANT  
FACTORS

1. Response Time
2. Crew Training
3. Individual Training

**TOP 3**  
EMERGENCY  
SERVICES

1. Firefighting
2. Ambulance Transport
3. Hazardous Materials

**TOP 3**  
NON-EMERGENCY  
SERVICES

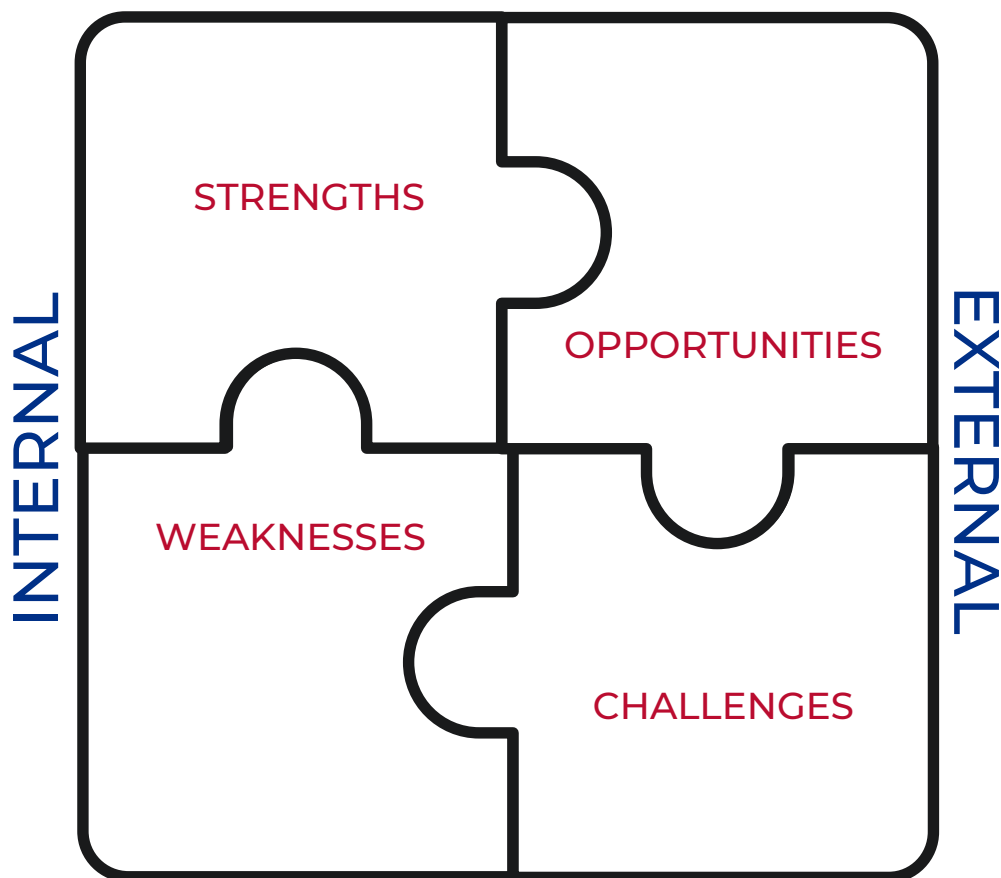
1. Smoke Detector
2. Child Car Seat
3. Fire Safety Inspection



# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Environmental scanning is the ongoing tracking of trends and occurrences in an organization's internal and external environment that bear on its success, currently and in the future. The aim of environmental scanning is to identify relevant information, both trends and weak signals of change appearing on the horizon, to broaden and deepen thinking about strategic options. Effective environmental scanning examines both quantitative and qualitative changes. The results are extremely useful in shaping goals and strategies.

A SWOC Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges) was utilized to meet this need. The strengths and weaknesses represent a measurement of the internal environment, while opportunities and challenges represent a measurement of the external environment.



The detailed results of the SWOC Analysis developed by the Strategic Planning Team can be found in the following section. These results were utilized throughout the Goals and Objectives development process and will continue to be referenced as Action Plans are created for the various Objectives listed in this document.





## FIRE SERVICE TRENDS

As part of the strategic planning process, we wanted to gain an understanding of relevant and common issues facing the fire service across the country and how those issues apply to NWFD's future. The 2017-2019 strategic plan referenced two articles which remain highly relevant today.

The first article, published by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), in December of 2012 is titled "Defining Relevance for the Fire Service in 2013." The article identifies the following topics as relevant for an effective fire service.

- AGILE
- ANALYTICAL
- ABLE TO PRIORITIZE
- COLLABORATIVE
- COMMUNITY-ORIENTED
- EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FOCUSED
- INNOVATIVE
- TECH SAVVY

The second article, also published by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (December, 2013) is titled "Five Wicked Issues We Can No Longer Ignore". Issues applicable to the modern fire service, include:

- COST EFFICIENCY
- DATA
- DEPLOYMENT AND STAFFING
- CULTURE
- POLITICAL ACUMEN

## STRATEGIC ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

In distilling some of these national trends and applying them to our organization, we began by defining a Strategic Issue as a fundamental challenge affecting NWFD's mission or core service, customers, costs, financing, organization or management about which something can be done. A larger list of strategic issues identified by the Strategic Planning Team was consolidated to six topics as seen below:

- Organizational Communication and Development
- Technology
- Community Partnerships
- Compliance with regulating and certifying authorities
- Financial efficiency, sustainability, and responsibility
- Personnel support and development

# SWOC ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

- Adaptability
- Individual acumen & knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs)
- Fire Chief who has a global perspective and values collaboration
- Leadership vision
- Leadership support
- Our “why” – Our mission
- Dispatch
- Political acumen
- Service minded
- Pride & ownership of individual crafts
- Open & honest communication
- Community support
- Commitment to excellence
- Internal & external customer service
- Members are committed to & understand the mission
- Members understand how their efforts contribute to the mission
- Evidence-based decision making
- Tools/resources provided to members to do their jobs
- Relationship between Leadership, Labor, & Governing Board
- Understanding of why we do what we do
- Willingness & ability to change

## WEAKNESSES

- Succession planning
- Lack of redundancy in systems in case of emergency
- Silos
- Organizational & informational fatigue
- Software platforms
- Systems perspective
- Involvement
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Staffing
- BLS providers providing patient care & documentation
- Confusion re: workflow – “who do I call for what?”
- Resistance to change
- Capturing institutional knowledge
- Reconciling proactive/reactive mindsets
- Loss of knowledge & experience to promotions & retirements
- Internal customer service / internal communication
- Policies & procedures
- Project management
- Effective Time Management
- Follow through
- Mentoring Process for continuity during/after promotions & retirements



## OPPORTUNITIES

- New technology
- Internships with the University of Arizona
- Strategic acquisitions
- Sale of District-owned property
- Health Information Exchange (HIE)
- Fresh perspective from new hires from outside District
- Consolidation & merger
- Cancer legislation
- Collaboration with auto aid partners
- Understanding fire industry specific benchmarking
- IGAs
- Grant \$
- New administration building
- Collaboration with community partners
- Marana Regional Airport
- Collaboration with other fire districts & departments
- Integrate technology & programs across the organization
- Collaboration with Town of Marana
- Continued growth
- Auto aid

## CHALLENGES

- Economy
- Healthcare
- Lack of shared vision with community partners
- Increased cost of products & services
- Mergers & consolidations
- Quality of supply chain
- Public trust & faith
- Opportunities for diverse revenue streams
- Cyber threats
- Political cycle & outcomes (federal, state, local level)
- Pension costs
- Large scale incidents such as pandemics, natural disasters, etc.
- Changing structure of vendors (stock to distribution model)
- Balance of meeting needs of organization while fulfilling fiduciary responsibility
- City annexation
- Lag of impact of strong economy & fast impact of weak economy
- Decreased funding

# PLAN DEVELOPMENT

A team approach combined with community input is a key element in successful strategic planning. The internal Strategic Planning Team was made up of over 20 members to represent all aspects of the organization. The team first met in February of 2020 to review the Mission, Vision, and Values of the organization; receive education regarding the strategic planning process; and conduct the SWOC analysis. In March 2020, a Governing Board Study Session was held to present the results of the SWOC analysis and solicit Governing Board feedback. This study session was open to the public. The team held a series of subsequent meetings, with the final development session held in June 2020.

Goal development followed the following guiding principles:

- Align mission, vision, and values with the core services
- Strategic in nature
- Built on consensus from the team
- Align with accreditation requirements
- Account for external and internal stakeholder input
- Health/Safety aspects remain a priority
- Technology is considered and integrated as applicable
- Ensure all applicable regulation, codes and standards are maintained

## DEFINITIONS

### GOAL

The component that addresses a strategic issue and significantly contributes to our Mission.

### OBJECTIVE

Clear statements that articulate specific actions needed to reach the associated Goal.

### DESIRED OUTCOME

A benchmark of ultimate performance from an internal perspective.

### GOAL LEAD

A member of the Strategic Planning Team assigned to manage the fulfillment of a Goal and associated Objectives. Goal Leads will assign Objective Leads to each Objective.

### ACTION PLANS

Although not published in this document due to their dynamic nature, Action Plan templates have been distributed to all Objective Leads and will be utilized to capture the tactical tasks necessary to achieve each Objective.



# GOAL 1

**Develop and document administrative processes to foster communication, collaboration, involvement, transparency, fiscal responsibility, and succession.**

## GOAL LEAD

Division Chief of Administration

## OBJECTIVES

- A.** Develop a formal process for communication development and delivery methods.
- B.** Create document workflows and flow paths of all responsibilities for all Divisions and Departments.
- C.** Implement project management techniques and software.
- D.** Incorporate data analysis into every Division and Department with an emphasis on Accreditation, ISO, and Annual Report reporting requirements.
- E.** Design, develop, and implement an annual reporting procedure to include the production and dissemination of a District Annual Report.
- F.** Identify, purchase, and implement a Contract Management System that integrates with other critical reporting platforms.
- G.** Design, develop, and implement an internal meeting process which fosters greater communication and engagement with the members.

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 1. Increased efficiency**
- 2. Reduced redundancy**
- 3. Effective time management**
- 4. Increased transparency**
- 5. Improved communication**
- 6. Increased accountability**

# GOAL 2

**Develop consistent functionality and security of all IT systems.**

## GOAL LEAD

Manager of Technical Services

### OBJECTIVES

- A.** Complete a need-gap analysis of current platforms, to include all divisions.
- B.** Implement changes to current information systems with an emphasis on integration and functionality across the organization.
- C.** Identify, purchase, and implement new software platforms with an emphasis on integration and functionality across the organization.
- D.** Audit all hardware and develop a replacement schedule.
- E.** Develop a process to regularly monitor, maintain, and back up critical systems to ensure reliability and security.
- F.** Identify and document responsibilities of hardware and software support of all technology systems (i.e. radios, MDTs, ImageTrend, etc.).
- G.** Centrally manage passwords for all personnel and programs.
- H.** Implement SharePoint as the District's main intranet site to include providing for initial and ongoing training for all District members.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 1. Increased efficiency**
- 2. Increased security**
- 3. Decreased system downtime**
- 4. Improved communication**

# GOAL 3

**Maximize collaboration with outside partners and stakeholders.**

## GOAL LEAD

Fire Chief

### OBJECTIVES

- A.** Utilize the U of A for internships and research studies.
- B.** Collaborate with surrounding municipalities to ensure consistent and uninterrupted service.
- C.** Collaborate through auto aid to build a dependable region-wide response system while reducing redundancies.
- D.** Reduce duplicate expenditures through agreements, consolidations, and/or mergers when beneficial to all involved agencies.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 1. Increased resiliency**
- 2. Increased collaboration**
- 3. Diverse perspective**
- 4. Financial sustainability**



# GOAL 4

**Establish systems to maintain compliance with regulating and certifying authorities.**

## GOAL LEAD

Assistant Chief of Operational Services

### OBJECTIVES

- A.** Design, develop, and implement an Office of Health and Safety to safeguard all employees from potential hazards.
- B.** Provide for a structured internal review of current Insurance Service Office rating requirements and identify and implement opportunities to maintain and strengthen the current rating of 1.
- C.** Maintain Accreditation status and implement all requirements into daily process.
- D.** Maintain annual recognition from the Government Finance Officers Association.
- E.** Create processes to protect HIPAA information and develop reporting systems in the event of a breach.
- F.** Develop monthly reporting process to assure compliance with Arizona Department of Health Services response time requirements.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 1. External verification of capabilities**
- 2. Organizational efficiency**
- 3. Compliance with Federal, State, and Local regulations**

# GOAL 5

**Create greater financial efficiencies and ensure financial sustainability and responsibility.**

## GOAL LEAD

Assistant Chief of Essential Services

### OBJECTIVES

- A.** Create a more flexible procurement process that takes advantage of a changing marketplace.
- B.** Create a centralized inventory/procurement system.
- C.** Design, develop, and construct a new District Administration facility, ensuring compliance with Governing Board and Bond Election financial parameters.
- D.** Design, develop, and implement a schedule for the sale of surplus District facilities, apparatus, and equipment.
- E.** Design, develop, and propose a plan to consolidate all essential service functions to one location.
- F.** Develop a conceptual plan to obtain full utilization of the District's training center to include consolidation of training personnel across the organization onto this site.
- G.** Design, develop, and implement a scope and schedule document for the utilization of remaining bond capacity.
- H.** Design, develop, and implement annual maintenance schedules for all facilities.
- I.** Develop a comprehensive vehicle replacement strategy which includes the development of strategic funding sources through the annual budget process.
- J.** Develop and implement a strategic funding strategy to manage long term pension rate increases.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 1. Maintained fiscal responsibility**
- 2. Increased procurement capabilities**
- 3. Fiscal compliance of bond expenditures**
- 4. Thoughtful development and expansion**

# GOAL 6

**Support and reinforce the critical functions of personnel related services.**

## GOAL LEAD

Director of Human Resource Services

### OBJECTIVES

- A.** Explore and implement regularly scheduled professional development for all non-uniformed members to include Executive Staff members.
- B.** Research and implement proven recruitment techniques to obtain quality staff.
- C.** Design, develop, and implement procedures to record and report staffing numbers and locations, assure accuracy and consistency with compensation, and develop triggers related to hiring needs.
- D.** Design, develop, and implement a procedure for onboarding of new personnel.
- E.** Design, develop, and implement a procedure for offboarding of existing personnel.
- F.** Design, develop, and implement succession planning processes for all civilian level positions.
- G.** Design, develop, and implement a procedure to audit all PCAs; conduct and annual audit of all policies, procedures, and job descriptions; and implement an annual review schedule.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 1. Continuous professional development of all employees**
- 2. Documented and consistent onboarding and offboarding processes**
- 3. Sustained internal succession and mentoring**
- 4. Sustainable review of critical human resource documentation**



# IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

The Strategic Plan is only useful as long as it achieves the desired results, and the only way to know if those results have been achieved is through periodic examination and performance measurement.

To accomplish the identified Goals and Objectives, Action Plans will need to be created. A template has been developed for this purpose for use by the Goal Lead. To manage the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and its associated Goals and Objectives, software will be used to generate meeting agendas, capture supporting documentation as objectives are completed, and provide a platform for reference and communication.

The Strategic Planning Team will meet quarterly to report on the progress of objectives. Relevance of objectives will be regularly evaluated at these meetings and adjustments to the Plan will be made as necessary. Minutes of these meetings will be made available to all NWFD employees. In addition, a Strategic Plan progress presentation will be made annually at a regularly scheduled Governing Board meeting to provide transparency to the Board, the community, and NWFD employees regarding the progress of the Plan.





# **NORTHWEST FIRE DISTRICT**

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