

FIRE CHIEF'S MESSAGE

I am honored to present the Santa Monica Fire Department 2023–2028 Strategic Plan. The development of this document was a collaborative effort that included input from members of a cross-section of our organization and external stakeholders. This Strategic Plan focuses on the Department's strategic initiatives aligned with the community's expectations. It is designed to provide the organization and community members with a five-year planning document capable of being evaluated, reviewed, and adjusted annually depending on our ability to meet the objectives listed in the plan.



The Santa Monica Fire Department is fortunate to serve a diverse, engaged community that values public safety. I want to thank our community members and external stakeholders that provided valuable input during this process. In addition, I am humbled and grateful for the commitment displayed by the dedicated staff members of the Santa Monica Fire Department in developing this plan.

This plan represents a shared vision for our entire organization and will serve as our roadmap as we continue providing high-quality emergency services to our community.

DANNY ALVAREZ
FIRE CHIEF

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SECTION 1—EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



1.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Santa Monica (City) Fire Department (Department) retained Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate) to facilitate a Strategic Planning process to guide Department planning and decision-making over the next five years.

1.2 STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic planning involves a deliberate effort to achieve organizational alignment around a shared vision for the future and identify the steps necessary to achieve that future. Ideally, an effective strategic plan informs the budget process, organizational priorities, and decision-making over the planning period. While this may seem daunting, the planning *process* is more important than the resultant plan because the assumptions and factors under which a strategic plan is developed are likely to change over time, sometimes very rapidly.

The Department’s Strategic Planning Committee worked collaboratively over three months through the following six-step process to create this Plan.

1. **Planning to Plan** – Selection of the Planning Committee, identifying the planning period, determining when and how to initiate the planning process, assessing

organizational support for the process, establishing the time frame for the process, and determining the extent of and process for stakeholder involvement.

2. **Environmental Scan** – Identification of critical elements to be considered in developing the Strategic Plan including current programs and services, critical issues / service gaps and unmet organizational needs; review of the Department’s current Task Plan; and identifying project stakeholders and how they should be included in the process.
3. **Performance Audit** – Conducting a detailed assessment of the organization’s current state and/or performance.
4. **Envisioning Success** – Identifying what success ideally looks like by the end of the planning horizon with desired end states or outcomes.
5. **Strategic Initiatives** – Clearly articulating the desired goals (end states) and the strategies and objectives to achieve them over the planning horizon.
6. **Plan Implementation and Measuring Progress** – Prioritizing the implementation sequence of the strategic objectives, developing a detailed action plan for each objective, determining the interval for periodic review/updating of the Plan, and introducing the completed Plan to the organization.

In Citygate’s experience, this strategic planning model results in a plan that is “owned” by the Planning Committee and organization, with a higher probability that it will be implemented and successfully achieve one or more of its strategic goals than other planning models because guiding members of the organization created the Plan themselves. An added benefit of this model is that the Planning Committee learns *how* to conduct strategic planning and can monitor those factors likely to impact the Plan, making appropriate future changes without external assistance.

1.3 STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The following Department personnel—representing the various organizational and functional perspectives of the Department and serving as the Strategic Planning Committee—invested considerable time and energy developing this Strategic Plan with Citygate’s facilitation and coaching.

Table 1—Santa Monica Fire Department Strategic Planning Committee

1. Training Chief James Altman	12. Captain Eric Nagao
2. Fire Chief Danny Alvarez	13. Deputy Chief John Nevandro
3. EMS Coordinator Catherine Borman	14. Admin. Captain Patrick Nulty
4. Fire Marshal Joe Cavin	15. Training Captain Walter Patton
5. Deputy Chief Tom Clemo	16. FCEO Jason Puklus
6. Battalion Chief Jeff Connor	17. Captain Matt Randleman
7. Firefighter Ty Connor	18. Engineer Mike Rivera
8. Paramedic Coordinator Justin Crosson	19. Engineer Mark Anthony Rizzo
9. Engineer Walter Gonzales	20. Captain Ryan Shook
10. Engineer Evan McManus	21. Captain Jonathan Sly
11. Engineer Trevor Mustin	22. Principal Admin. Analyst Terese Toomey

1.4 PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

In a focused effort to include all Department personnel and other key City and community stakeholders in the planning process, the Department developed an online survey to capture input from various stakeholder perspectives (see: **Appendices A through D—Stakeholder Surveys**). The surveys were initiated on January 4, 2023, and closed on February 6, 2023. A summary of survey results can be found in **Section 5.5**.

1.4.1 Fire Department Personnel

All Fire Department personnel were invited to participate in the online survey by internal memorandum and direct email. By the close of the survey on February 6, 2023, eighty-eight of the one hundred thirty-six members (65 percent) had completed the survey.

1.4.2 Key Allied City Departments’ Stakeholders

The following key allied City Department stakeholders were invited by direct email to provide input through the online stakeholder survey. Fifteen individuals from this stakeholder group completed the survey.

Table 2—Key Allied City Departments’ Stakeholders

1. Information Services Department	7. Community Development Department
2. Finance Department	8. Community Services Department
3. Human Resources Department	9. Chief Resiliency Officer/OEM
4. Department of Transportation (DOT)	10. City Attorney’s Office
5. City Manager’s Office	11. Public Works Department
6. Police Department	

1.4.3 City Council

Email invitations were sent to all seven City Council members to solicit their input through an online survey with four Council members completing the survey.

1.4.4 Community Stakeholders

The following community individuals and groups were also invited to contribute to this Plan through the online stakeholder survey. Invitation to participate in the survey was by direct email or personal distribution with a QR code to access the survey. One hundred fifty surveys were completed from this stakeholder group. The survey was also made available to the entire community via the Department’s social media platforms and website.

Table 3—Community Stakeholders

1. Chamber of Commerce	17. Mid Cities Neighbors
2. Downtown Santa Monica	18. Friends of Sunset Park
3. Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School Dist.	19. Pico Neighborhood
4. Santa Monica Pier	20. Pico HRC
5. Pacific Park	21. Northeast Neighbors
6. Santa Monica Place	22. Human Relations Council
7. Fairmont Hotel	23. Committee for Racial Justice
8. Santa Monica Travel and Tourism	24. Wilshire Montana Neighborhood Coalition
9. Santa Monica History Museum	25. Rotary Club International
10. Ocean Park Association	26. Kiwanis Club
11. Rand Corporation	27. The People Concern
12. North of Montana Association	28. UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center
13. UCLA	29. Providence St. Johns
14. NAACP	30. Santa Monica Interfaith Council
15. Santa Monica Police Officers Association	31. Santa Monica Bay Area Human Relations Council
16. Santa Monica College	

1.5 STRATEGIC GOALS

This Strategic Plan identifies the following four strategic goals the Department will pursue over the next five years.

- Goal 1: An Organization Closely Aligned with Community Values, Needs, and Service Expectations**
- Goal 2: Services, Programs, and Resources Appropriate to Carry Out SMFD’s Mission**
- Goal 3: Sustained Organizational Vitality**
- Goal 4: Improved Organizational Systems and Processes**

The Strategic Plan further identifies 14 strategies and 38 measurable objectives to achieve these goals over the next several years and beyond, as well as an Implementation Plan to ensure the contents of the Plan are integrated into the Department’s annual planning, budget, and work cycle. Sample Detailed Action Plans are included in **Appendix E**.

1.6 ANNUAL WORK PLAN

Annual work plans are critical to creating and maintaining momentum and making continued progress on any long-term plan. The Planning Committee established the desire to develop an annual work plan corresponding with the City’s biennial budget cycle and incorporating those strategies and objectives that will receive intentional focus and effort over that 12-month period considering anticipated organizational capacity and availability of needed resources. Strategies and objectives need not be accomplished in any specific priority or sequence; however, they should be initiated individually or in parallel to ensure logical and incremental progress toward achievement of a particular strategy or goal. Annual Work Plan progress will be reviewed at each monthly Command and General Staff meeting.

The Planning Committee established the following Annual Work Plan schedule.

Table 4—Annual Work Plan Development Schedule

Objective	Date
Initiate Annual Work Plan development	January 2
Complete Draft Annual Work Plan	January 24
Complete Detailed Action Plans for included Strategic Objectives	June 1
Final City Budget adopted	Second Tuesday in June
Finalize Annual Work Plan	June 30
Implement Annual Work Plan	July 1

1.7 PLAN MAINTENANCE

To ensure continuing progress and the effectiveness and relevance of the Strategic Plan, an individual or group to be identified by the Fire Chief, in collaboration with the Executive Management Team, will be tasked to review this Plan at least quarterly for the first year, and thereafter as determined by the Fire Chief and/or Review Team. The Strategic Plan will be revised as needed to provide maximum utilization of available resources to achieve the identified strategic goals, and to add or modify strategies and/or objectives as needed to address changes in the political, fiscal, organizational, or City environment.

SECTION 2—SANTA MONICA FIRE DEPARTMENT



SMFD Paramedic Squad

2.1 DEPARTMENT ORIGIN AND HISTORY

Fire protection in Santa Monica began in October 1875 when six citizens organized the Crawford Hook and Ladder Company. In March 1889, another small group of citizens gathered at the town hall to adopt the Constitution of the newly formed Santa Monica Hose and Ladder Company, which was the beginning of the Santa Monica Fire Department.

Over the ensuing 100 years, hand-drawn carts and buckets were replaced with horse-drawn vehicles and steam pumpers, which eventually gave way to gasoline and ultimately diesel-powered vehicles. In 1974, the Department became the first fire department in the nation to deliver paramedic services by an engine company. Since then, the organization has grown to become a Class 1 Department¹, providing specialized services including a full-time hazardous materials response unit, an urban search and rescue team, dedicated airport response cadre, an accredited fire academy, and a comprehensive all-hazards fire prevention division.

¹ Public Protection Class 1 as determined by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO).

2.2 AUTHORITY AND SERVICES

Operating under authority provided by the City Charter, the Department provides fire suppression, pre-hospital emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, search and rescue, fire prevention and fire code compliance, arson investigation, community outreach and education, and other fire and life safety-related services. The Department serves more than 92,000 residents over the 8.3 square-mile City area, with a total staff of 138 personnel operating from five fire stations. An annual operating budget of \$46.5 million was adopted for Fiscal Years 2021–23.

2.3 ORGANIZATION

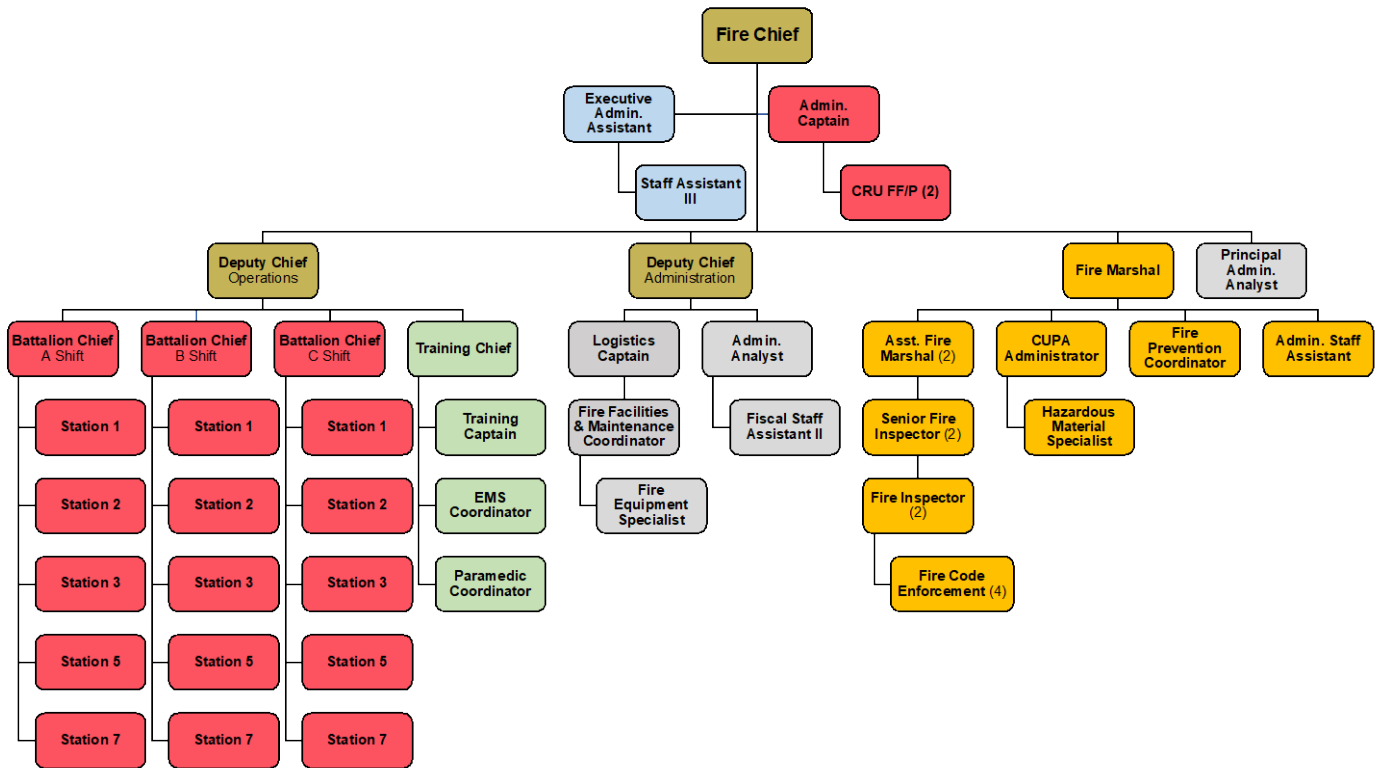
As summarized in the following table and organizational chart, the Department is organized into four divisions that are organized under a Fire Chief who is appointed by the City Manager.

Table 5—Fiscal Year 2021–23 Positions

Operating Division	Authorized FTE¹ Personnel
Administration	14
Suppression & Rescue	105
Fire Prevention	15
Training	4
Total	138

¹ FTE = Full-Time Equivalent

Figure 1—Santa Monica Fire Department Organization Chart



2.4 SERVICE CAPACITY

The Department’s service capacity for fire and non-fire hazards consists of a daily minimum of 35 response personnel staffing seven engines with four personnel each (including at least two paramedics), one aerial ladder truck staffed with five personnel (including at least one paramedic), and one Battalion Chief Command Team operating from five fire stations, as summarized in the following table.

The Department also deploys a Rescue Utility, Type I Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) apparatus, Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) apparatus, Type I Hazardous Materials Unit, Crash Rescue Utility, and one Medical Response All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) as needed based on the type of incident.

In addition, the Department launched a pilot Community Response Unit (CRU) in September 2021 to better address the needs of vulnerable populations in the City, including those experiencing homelessness. The CRU is staffed with two personnel, including at least one paramedic, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. every other Thursday. The CRU works in collaboration with other City departments, regional agencies, and

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non-profits to help bridge the gap for housing and other support services. The CRU is funded through June 2023 at the time of this Plan.

Table 6—Fire Department Facilities and Response Resources

Station	Address	Year Built	Assigned Resources ¹	Minimum Daily Staffing
1	1337 7 th Street	2020	Engine 1 Engine 6 Truck 1 Battalion 1 Community Response Unit ² Rescue Utility 1	4 4 5 2
2	222 Hollister Avenue	2003	Engine 2 USAR 2 Utility 2	4
3	1302 19 th Street	1971	Engine 3 Engine 4	4 4
5	2450 Ashland Avenue	1980	Engine 5 HazMat 5 Crash Rescue 5 HazMat Utility 5 Crash Rescue Utility 5	4
7	1100 Palisades Beach Road	2019	Engine 7 Med Cart 1 Utility 7	4
Total Daily Staffing				35

¹ Staffed resources are shown in **bold**; other resources are staffed as needed by on-duty station personnel or recalled off-duty personnel

² Staffed with two personnel including at least one paramedic Monday through Wednesday and every other Thursday

The Department’s Effective Response Force (ERF) to mitigate more serious or complex emergencies—including confirmed building fires, wildland fires, multiple-patient medical emergencies, vehicle collisions with extrication required, and technical rescue incidents—consists of four engines, one ladder truck, one Emergency Incident Technician, and one Battalion Chief for a total of 23 personnel. As noted, the Department also has specialized capability for hazardous materials, urban search and rescue, and aircraft emergencies. The Department also has a mutual aid agreement with the City of Los Angeles Fire Department and is a signatory to the Los Angeles County Mutual Aid Plan and California Master Mutual Aid Agreement.

SECTION 3—VALUES AND MISSION



This section identifies the Department’s core values and mission statement, adopted in 2018.

3.1 CORE VALUES

- Integrity:** We adhere to the highest standard of conduct at all times.
- Compassion:** We treat those we serve as we want our own family treated. We are courteous and respectful to all, every time, every call.
- Teamwork:** Teamwork is the cornerstone of the fire service. We are committed to constantly working together and supporting each other toward a common goal of excellence in achieving our mission.
- Accountability:** We strive to meet the highest standard of the fire service, both personally and professionally. We are accountable to those we serve and to each other in all that we do.
- Trust:** Since 1889 we have faithfully served our community. We earn trust through our actions and behavior.

3.2 MISSION STATEMENT

We believe in helping people by preserving and improving the safety, health, and wellbeing of our community.

We provide collaborative and innovative fire protection, emergency medical care, and life safety services.

We make a difference every day.

SECTION 4—PLANNING TO PLAN



The first step in the strategic planning process is Planning to Plan. In this step, the Planning Committee is identified—ideally to represent a broad cross-section of organizational levels, functions, programs, and perspectives. The Planning Committee then reviews the planning process in detail to ensure an understanding of the entire process, including the time and effort required. The Committee then determines a workshop schedule that best accommodates its members and the overall project schedule. Finally, a schedule of deliverables to which Planning Committee and Department leadership mutually agree is identified. These steps were completed at the Department All Hands and Command/General Staff Strategic Plan orientation meetings on January 23, 2023, and reviewed at the first Planning Workshop on January 30th.

4.1 PLANNING SCHEDULE

The following table shows the planning schedule established by the Department and Strategic Planning Committee.

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Table 7—Strategic Planning Workshop Schedule

Planning Element	Date	Time
All Hands and Command/General Staff Orientation Meetings	January 23, 2023	9:30 AM – 2:30 PM
Planning Workshop #1	January 30, 2023	9:30 AM – 2:30 PM
Planning Workshop #2	February 6, 2023	9:30 AM – 2:30 PM
Planning Workshop #3	February 23, 2023	9:30 AM – 2:30 PM
Draft Strategic Plan Submitted	By March 3, 2023	5:00 PM
Draft Strategic Plan Review	March 28, 2023	9:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Final Strategic Plan Submitted	By April 31, 2023	5:00 PM
Final Strategic Plan Presentation	May 17, 2023	9:30 AM – 12:00 Noon

SECTION 5—ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN



This section summarizes the Planning Committee’s review of critical elements to be considered in developing the Strategic Plan including current programs and services, critical issues / service gaps, unmet organizational needs, and potential collaboration and partnership opportunities, reviewing the Department’s current Project Plan, 2019 Standards of Cover Study results, and identifying project stakeholders and how they will be included in the process. The following elements were completed at the first planning workshop on January 30, 2023.

5.1 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

5.1.1 Mandated Programs/Services

The Department is required to provide the following programs and services by federal or state law, regulation, or local ordinance, formal agreement, policy, or procedure.

- ◆ Fire suppression
- ◆ Local/regional automatic aid
- ◆ Fire hydrant testing
- ◆ Enforcement of California Fire Code
 - Inspection of regulated occupancies
 - Inspection and permitting of regulated operations
 - New development plan review
 - Fire protection and life safety systems plan review, installation, and operational inspection
 - Hazardous materials program management (Certified Unified Program Agency [CUPA] for the City)
 - Fire origin and cause investigation
- ◆ Training
 - New firefighters
 - Recurrent training in specified subject areas
 - EMS skills
- ◆ Provision of a certified Safety Officer at emergency incidents
- ◆ Ambulance fleet inspection and maintenance coordination
- ◆ Respiratory Protection program
- ◆ Department-level finance services
 - Budget development/management
 - Contracts management
 - Procurement

- Accounts receivable
- Accounts payable
- Payroll
- Grant management
- Staff reports
- ◆ Department-level administrative support services
 - Meeting management
 - Public counter services
 - Public Records Act requests
 - Department-level recruitment/hiring/onboarding
 - Telephone calls
 - Employee support services
 - General administrative/clerical support
- ◆ Large-scale event planning
- ◆ Emergency Operations Center support
- ◆ Emergency Medical Services quality assurance / quality improvement program
- ◆ Department-level infectious disease control program

5.1.2 Best Practice Programs/Services

The following programs and services provided by the Department, although not mandated, are considered best practices.

- ◆ Technical rescue response (USAR)
- ◆ Hazardous Material release/spill response/mitigation (HazMat)
- ◆ Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF)
- ◆ Pre-hospital EMS services
- ◆ Statewide mutual aid
- ◆ Non-mandated occupancy/operations inspection and permitting
- ◆ Non-mandated occupancy inspections

- ◆ Non-mandated recurrent training to maintain/enhance operational skills and knowledge
- ◆ Coordination of communications equipment testing and maintenance
- ◆ Continued execution of the Information Technology Strategic Plan
- ◆ Pre-incident planning
- ◆ Coordination with the City Public Safety Communications Center
- ◆ Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification Program
- ◆ Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) / Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) fire agency accreditation management

5.1.3 Value Added Programs/Services

Although not required or considered best practice, the Department provides the following programs and services to enhance the safety and quality of life for City residents, businesses, and visitors.

- ◆ Community Response Unit (CRU)
- ◆ Rapid Extrication Module (REM)
- ◆ Regional/statewide wildland fire response
- ◆ Homeless / behavioral / mental health issues response
- ◆ Department Honor Guard
- ◆ Department chaplaincy program
- ◆ Traffic calming advisory support
- ◆ CPR/first-aid training for other City Departments
- ◆ Succession planning /mentorship
- ◆ Facilities maintenance coordination
- ◆ Community outreach/communication
- ◆ Public Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) program

5.2 CRITICAL ISSUES / SERVICE GAPS

5.2.1 Critical Issues

The Planning Committee identified the following critical issues facing the Department.

- ◆ Low-acuity EMS incidents

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- Service demand volume and increasing call trend
- Crew safety on EMS calls involving individuals that are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or experiencing a behavioral health emergency
- ◆ Ambulance availability
 - Hospital emergency department wait times
 - Number of ambulances deployed daily by the City’s ambulance contract provider
 - Need to provide Department-staffed ambulances for surge demand
- ◆ Number of Department paramedics
- ◆ Administrative workload capacity, particularly relative to:
 - Procurement and the complexity of procurement
 - Contracts
 - Grant management
- ◆ Recruitment/hiring challenges
- ◆ Availability for local/regional mutual aid
- ◆ Daily response staffing level
- ◆ Lack of development impact fees to help fund Department capital infrastructure and equipment impacted by development
- ◆ Station personnel workload capacity
- ◆ Program management
- ◆ Daily population fluctuations
- ◆ Facilities management
- ◆ Planned future development
- ◆ Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) challenges
- ◆ Public Safety Communications Center staffing shortages
- ◆ Employee mental health services
- ◆ Succession planning
 - Narrowing qualified instructor gap
- ◆ Inter-departmental collaboration
- ◆ Injury prevention

- ◆ Fire incidents trending upward
- ◆ Traffic signal to facilitate Station 7 access onto Highway 1 (Pacific Coast Highway)

5.2.2 Service Gaps

The Planning Committee further identified the following service gaps.

- ◆ Adequate information technology support
- ◆ Inefficient Fire Prevention fee billing, collection, and reconciliation processes
- ◆ Fire station first-due districts
 - Too large
 - Inequitable first-due service demand
- ◆ Understanding other City departments' roles and functions
- ◆ EMS support capacity
- ◆ Prosecution of intentionally set fires
- ◆ Community paramedicine program

5.3 UNMET ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS

The following unmet organizational needs were identified by the Planning Committee.

- ◆ Funding to complete the new Training Center facility
- ◆ Ongoing funding for Fire Facility Capital Improvement Plan
- ◆ Additional staffing capacity, particularly relative to the following Department functions:
 - Logistics
 - Finance
- ◆ Affordable local housing for employees
- ◆ Health/wellness program for non-uniformed personnel
- ◆ Expedited workers' compensation treatment and return-to-work process
- ◆ Adequately matching resource needs to community risks
 - Staffing levels (operational and administrative functions)
 - Response apparatus types

- ◆ Permanent, long-term solution(s) to address unhoused and vulnerable population impacts on service demand and operational capacity
 - CRU authority to refer patients to alternative treatment other than hospital emergency room
- ◆ Facilities
 - Station 3 upgrades
 - Permanent Station 7
 - Public Safety Facility tenant improvements

5.4 DEPARTMENT PROJECT TASK PLAN

In recent years, the Department has maintained a Project Task Plan to monitor and manage ongoing projects. At the start of this process, the plan included 179 individual tasks prioritized as follows. The Project Task Plan was intended to be an overall management tool that will sunset upon adoption of this Strategic Plan.

5.4.1 High Priority Tasks (21)

- ◆ 1 completed
- ◆ 19 in progress
- ◆ 1 no progress

5.4.2 Medium Priority Tasks (8)

- ◆ 1 in progress
- ◆ 2 behind schedule
- ◆ 4 not started

5.4.3 Unprioritized Tasks (150)

- ◆ 21 completed
- ◆ 122 in progress
- ◆ 1 behind schedule
- ◆ 4 on hold
- ◆ 2 not started

5.5 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

In a focused, intentional effort to engage all Department personnel and other key City and community stakeholders in this process, Department staff developed an online survey to capture input from the various stakeholder perspectives as follows.

5.5.1 Fire Department Personnel

All Fire Department personnel were invited to participate in an online survey (**Appendix A**) by internal memorandum distributed via email on January 4, 2023. By the close of the survey on February 6, 2023, eighty-eight of the one hundred thirty-six personnel (65 percent) completed the survey with results summarized as follows.

Question 1: Physical Asset Quality

The following table summarizes the responses to the request to rate the quality of the following physical assets.

Table 8—Fire Department Survey Response Summary – Physical Assets

Physical Asset	Percent Responding Somewhat Good or Very Good
Building/Facilities	61%
Apparatus Fleet	84%
Light-Duty Vehicle Fleet	72%
Tools/Equipment	95%
Technology	61%
Access to Training	63%
PPE	93%
Uniform	77%

Comments to this question included:

- ◆ Stations 3 and 7 need improvements
- ◆ Station 5 has long-standing plumbing issues
- ◆ Concern over recent apparatus out-of-service time
- ◆ Continue to stay ahead of apparatus replacements

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- ◆ All stations requesting to all have utility trucks
- ◆ Tools and equipment are high quality and recent timely purchases are appreciated
- ◆ Information technology has greatly improved over the past years; however, concerns expressed over time it takes to get technology repairs and responses from Information Services Department (ISD)
- ◆ Concerns about the timeliness of the training approval process, inconsistent access to training, and lack of training opportunities
- ◆ Many employees concerned with the newer structural turnout clothing design
- ◆ Dissatisfaction with the uniform ordering process

Question 2: Significant Changes Needing Department Adaptation

The responses to the question asking, “What significant changes are occurring or have occurred in Santa Monica that the Department needs to adapt to?” included:

- ◆ Risk profile changes with increased development and multi-story buildings
- ◆ Increasing call volume
- ◆ Increased EMS low-acuity calls / response model
- ◆ Facilitation of unhoused and mental health issues
- ◆ Increased demand for services with limited resources

Question 3: Three Ways the Department Could Improve Services

The following table summarizes responses to the request for respondents to check the top three ways the Department could improve its services to the community.

Table 9—Fire Department Survey Response Summary – Service Improvements

Suggested Improvement	Percent
Increase communications and visibility to the community	29%
Strategically enhance services	62%
Provide more staff training	29%
Offer more public education	31%
Collaborate more with regional partners	42%
Seek to diversify staff with future hires	11%
Provide improved career ladders or succession planning	65%
Increase communications and visibility to the community	0%

Questions 4–6: Employee Workplace Satisfaction

The following table summarizes the responses to three questions rating satisfaction with specific workplace factors.

Table 10—Fire Department Survey Response Summary – Workplace Satisfaction

Workplace Factor	Percent Responding Somewhat Good or Very Good
Support for your physical wellbeing	81%
Support for your emotional/mental wellbeing	65%
Compensation, including benefits	91%
Diversity, equity, and inclusion	63%
Workload	57%
Quantity/quality of practical hands-on skills training	66%
Computer-based training	54%
Professional development opportunities	61%
A clear career development path	63%
Succession planning and promotional development	64%
Communications within your crew/team members	95%
Communications within your shift/team	91%
Bottom-up communication across the organization	70%
Top-down communication by senior leadership	73%

Question 7: Employee Perception

The following table summarizes the responses to the following questions.

Table 11—Fire Department Survey Response Summary – Employee Perception

Perception Factor	Percent Responding Yes or Definitely Yes
Do you feel a sense of belonging within the Department?	88%
Is the Department’s culture inclusive and respectful of individual differences?	79%
Do you feel valued?	77%
Do you feel trusted by your peers?	95%
Do you trust your peers?	86%
Are you treated respectfully by Department leadership?	91%
Do you trust the Department’s leadership?	79%
Do you feel the Department leadership has your best interest in mind?	79%
Are you treated respectfully by your peers?	84%
Do you respect your peers?	95%
Is morale high on your shift/team?	79%
Can you raise concerns or express criticisms of the Department without fear of retribution?	74%
If you raise ideas for innovation or improvement, will they be carefully considered and implemented if appropriate?	54%

Service Priorities

The following table summarizes the responses asking for service priorities over the next 5–10 years.

Table 12—Fire Department Survey Response Summary – Service Priorities

Service Priority	Percent
None of the following	8%
Medical emergency response times	30%
Fire emergency response times	6%
Terrorism or natural disaster planning	8%
Facilitation of homeless or mental health services	48%

Comments to this question included:

- ◆ Increased staffing
- ◆ EMS and fire responses and possible changes to the service delivery model

Other Comments

Following are common themes to the responses requesting any other comments.

- ◆ Succession planning for civilian personnel
- ◆ Improved accountability
- ◆ Increased training opportunities

5.5.2 Key Allied City Department Stakeholders

Stakeholders from the following key allied City departments were invited by direct email sent on January 4, 2023, to provide input through an online stakeholder survey (**Appendix B**).

Table 13—Key Allied City Departments

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Information Services Department | 7. Community Development Department |
| 2. Finance Department | 8. Community Services Department |
| 3. Human Resources Department | 9. Chief Resiliency Officer / OEM |
| 4. Department of Transportation (DOT) | 10. City Attorney's Office |
| 5. City Manager's Office | 11. Public Works Department |
| 6. Police Department | |

Question 1: Satisfaction with Fire Department Interaction

Of the responses received, eighty-two percent rated their interaction with the Department over the past year as satisfied or very satisfied.

Question 2: Improving Fire Department Interaction

Of the survey responses received, 60 percent provided responses suggesting ways the Fire Department could improve its interaction with the respondent's department, summarized by theme as follows:

- ◆ Ensure City policies and procedures are followed
- ◆ Be better partners and actively participate in collaboration

Question 3: Satisfaction with Fire Department Communications

Eighty-two percent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with Fire Department communications with their department.

Improving Fire Department Communications

Sixty percent of the responses received suggested ways the Fire Department could improve communications with the respondent’s department, summarized by theme as follows.

- ◆ In-person or phone call explanations/clarifications
- ◆ Identify the Department’s technology liaison
- ◆ Be present and attend meetings when part of a City team
- ◆ Including fire updates and messages in other departments’ communications (newsletters, email blasts to City business partners, etc.)

Improving Fire Department Collaboration

Responses also included suggestions regarding how the Department should better collaborate with City partners, summarized as follows.

- ◆ More regular scheduled communications for coordination on shared issues (SUS/overdoses, suicide prevention, high users)
- ◆ Determine the appropriate level to right size the Fire Department budget and eliminate or control unnecessary spending to avoid going over budget. Using DART or the homelessness teams as current examples, Fire should continue to collaborate with other departments
- ◆ Collaborate on programs that will help better educate our community on fire safety and/or addressing health or fire-related situations in the home
- ◆ Provide public information and communications updates to relevant City partners

Understanding of Fire Department Core Services

All survey responses indicated moderate or extensive knowledge of the Department’s core services.

Fire Department Strengths

Responses to the question, “From your perspective, what does the Fire Department do well?” are summarized as follows:

- ◆ They work very independently and have very well-defined procedures to deal with outages and other incidents
- ◆ The planning I have seen with known, upcoming maintenance and downtime situations has been spectacular. Other departments could learn from the Fire Department’s methodologies
- ◆ Community service and engagement

- ◆ Outstanding at responding to emergency calls for service and delivering lifesaving care
- ◆ Very friendly, approachable, and collaborative

Suggested Improvements

Responses to the question, “What can the Fire Department do to improve itself?” included:

- ◆ Be more proactive and less reactive; more scheduled conversations around shared issues
- ◆ Improved administrative staffing levels
- ◆ Capitalize on the goodwill and trust the Department has with the community and other City departments to address the issues surrounding the unhoused population
- ◆ Ensure City policies are followed
- ◆ The Department could benefit greatly by improving its diversity
- ◆ Continued community outreach and public awareness of core services and safety tips

5.5.3 City Council

The seven City Council members were invited to participate in the survey (**Appendix C**) by direct email invitation on January 4, 2023, with four responses (57 percent) having been received when the survey closed on February 6, 2023.

Fire Department Service Experience

The following table summarizes responses to the question, “What services have you received from the Fire Department and how would you rate the Department’s performance relative to services received?”

Table 14—Rating of Fire Department Service Experience

Fire Department Service	No Experience	Above Average	Excellent
Fire emergency	1	1	1
Medical emergency	1	1	1
Other emergency	1	1	1
Fire or life safety inspection – business or residential	1	1	1
Plan review	2	1	0
School tour	1	1	1
Station tour	1	1	1
Other public outreach	1	1	1

Secondary Fire Department Service Priorities

The following table summarizes responses to the question, “Other than extinguishing fires and responding to medical emergencies, what are the most important service priorities the Department should focus on?”

Table 15—Secondary Fire Department Service Priorities

Fire Department Service	Responses
Preventing fires through building and property inspections	3
Teaching hands only Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	1
Providing public fire and life safety education	1

Preferred Customer Service Characteristics

The following table summarizes responses to the question, “Please select the top three characteristics you feel make for an excellent customer service experience as they relate to services you need from the Santa Monica Fire Department.”

Table 16—Preferred Characteristics for an Excellent Customer Service Experience

Characteristic	Responses
Level of Training/Proficiency	2
Timely Response	2
Responsiveness	3
Professionalism	0
Problem Solving Skills	1
Communication with Customers	0
Compassion	1
Empathy	0
Courtesy/Politeness	0
Adaptability	0
Helpfulness	0

Satisfaction with Current Department Communications

To the question asking Council members’ satisfaction with the current weekly update provided to the City Manager’s Office, one response was neutral, one satisfied, and one very satisfied.

Social Media Use

The following table summarizes responses to the question, “Do you follow the Santa Monica Fire Department on any of the following social media platforms?”

Table 17—Social Media Platforms Followed

Social Media Platform	Responses
Facebook	1
Twitter	1
Nextdoor	0
Instagram	3
SMFD Website	0

Department Strengths

The following responses were received to the question, “From your perspective, what does the Santa Monica Fire Department currently do well?”

- ◆ Amazing staff that is very well trained and compassionate; they also have amazing response times
- ◆ Very responsive and easy to work with

Challenges Ahead

The following responses were received to the question, “List two challenges for the Santa Monica Fire Department over the next five years.”

- ◆ Addressing homelessness
- ◆ Recruitment
- ◆ Funding
- ◆ Adapting to more social, mental, and medical problems/emergencies than fires

Suggested Improvements

The following responses were received to the question, “What can the Santa Monica Fire Department do to improve itself?”

- ◆ Staff CRU team and advocate for more funds and resources to staff CRU with tenured staff
- ◆ Ensure Fire is out in the community at events, similar to the Police Department

5.5.4 Community Stakeholders

The following thirty-one key community individuals or groups were also invited to contribute to this Plan through an online survey. Invitation to participate in the survey was sent by direct email on January 4, 2023, or personal distribution of a QR code to access the survey. The survey was also made available to the public via the Department’s social media platforms and website. At the close of the survey on February 6, 2023, one hundred fifty responses had been received from this stakeholder group.

Table 18—Community Stakeholders

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Downtown Santa Monica 2. Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School Dist. 3. Santa Monica Pier 4. Pacific Park 5. Santa Monica Place 6. Fairmont Hotel 7. Santa Monica Travel and Tourism 8. Santa Monica History Museum 9. Ocean Park Association 10. Rand Corporation 11. North of Montana Association 12. UCLA 13. NAACP 14. Santa Monica Police Officers Association 15. Santa Monica College 16. Mid Cities Neighbors | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Friends of Sunset Park 18. Pico Neighborhood 19. Pico HRC 20. Northeast Neighbors 21. Human Relations Council 22. Committee for Racial Justice 23. Wilshire Montana Neighborhood Coalition 24. Rotary Club International 25. Kiwanis Club 26. The People Concern 27. UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center 28. Providence St. Johns 29. Santa Monica Interfaith Council 30. Santa Monica Bay Area Human Relations Council 31. Chamber of Commerce |
|--|--|

City Connection

The following table summarizes the community survey responses regarding the respondent’s connection with the City.

Table 19—Stakeholder Connections to City

City Connection	Percent
Live in City	51%
Work in City	15%
Live and work in City	30%
Other	4%

Fire Department Service Experience

The following table shows the percentage of the *above average* or *excellent* responses to the question, “What services have you received from the Department and how would you rate the Department’s performance relative to services received?”

Table 20—Rating of Fire Department Service Experience Summary

Fire Department Service	Above Average or Excellent Percentage
Fire emergency	93%
Medical emergency	89%
Other emergency	74%
Fire or life safety inspection – business or residential	86%
Plan review	77%
School tour	88%
Station tour	96%
Other public outreach	83%

Service Satisfaction

The following table shows the percentage of the responses receiving a 4 or 5 satisfaction rating on a 1–5 scale to the question, “How satisfied are you with the Department relative to each of the following?”

Table 21—Fire Department Service Satisfaction Summary

Fire Department Service Factor	Above Average or Excellent Percentage
Quality of Service	91%
Personnel	86%
Timeliness of Response	85%
Ability to Work with Diverse Populations and Groups	74%
Communications	80%
Professionalism	88%
Fire Prevention Inspections/Plan Check Services	68%
Public Education Programs	63%

Secondary Fire Department Service Priorities

The following table summarizes the percentage of responses requesting the most important service priorities the Department should focus on other than extinguishing fires and responding to medical emergencies.

Table 22—Secondary Fire Department Service Priorities

Fire Department Service	Percent
Preventing fires through building and property inspections	63%
Teaching hands only Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	52%
Providing public fire and life safety education	61%
Other: Community outreach and education; fire hazards; when to call 9-1-1	16%

Fire Department Website Use

Of responses received, 29 percent of respondents had visited the Department website versus 71 percent who had not.

Website Recommendations

Following are key themes of the responses received to the request for any comments/recommendations related to the Fire Department website:

- ◆ Additional information about Department staff and their duties
- ◆ More information on the 3-1-1 system and how people can get follow-up from the Fire Department
- ◆ The City website in general is not easy to navigate; it can be difficult to find information when you need it

Social Media Use

The following table summarizes responses to the question, “Do you follow the Santa Monica Fire Department on any of the following social media platforms?”

Table 23—Social Media Platforms Followed

Social Media Platform	Responses
Facebook	9
Twitter	23
Instagram	18
Nextdoor	5

Information Platform Preference

The following table summarizes the responses received to the question, “How would you prefer to receive information from the Fire Department?”

Table 24—Fire Department Information Platform Preference

Communication Platform	Percent
Email	54%
USPS Mail	4%
Text Message	12%
Facebook	4%
Instagram	8%
Nextdoor	1%
Twitter	5%
Public Meetings/Events	4%
Not interested in receiving information	6%
Other	2%

Familiarity with SMAAlerts

Of the responses received to the question, “Are you familiar with SMAAlerts?” 71 percent responded, “yes” and 29 percent, “no.”

SMAAlerts Registration

To the survey question, “Have you registered your mobile telephone number with SMAAlerts?” Of the responses received, eighty percent responded, “yes” and 20 percent responded, “no.”

Preferred Customer Service Characteristics

The following table summarizes responses to the survey question, “Please select the top three characteristics you feel make for an excellent customer service experience as they relate to services you need from the Santa Monica Fire Department.”

Table 25—Preferred Customer Service Characteristics

Characteristic	Percent
Timely Response	68%
Level of Training/Proficiency	58%
Responsiveness	29%
Professionalism	27%
Communication with Customers	24%
Helpfulness	20%
Problem Solving Skills	21%
Empathy	17%
Compassion	11%
Courtesy/Politeness	11%
Adaptability	6%

Suggested Improvements

The following is a summary of responses received to the question, “What can the Santa Monica Fire Department do to improve itself?”

- ◆ Assist the public in knowing how to respond to/report issues related to people experiencing homelessness
- ◆ Additional fire resources to address homelessness and people experiencing homelessness
- ◆ Increased community outreach, engagement, and visibility in non-response capacities
- ◆ Increased fire education programming

Other Comments

The following is a summary of responses to the question, “Are there any other comments regarding the Santa Monica Fire Department and the level of service it provides to the City that you would like us to consider in the development of our five-year strategic plan?”

- ◆ Improved response times
- ◆ Continue to provide high-quality services
- ◆ Improved community classes like CERT, DART, Civilian Fire Academy, Cadet program, and ongoing public training
- ◆ Accessibility issues regarding traffic and response vehicles
- ◆ Impact that the unhoused population has on the fire service

SECTION 6—PERFORMANCE AUDIT



The Planning Committee assessed the Department’s current state and performance as follows.

6.1 EMERGENCY SERVICES PERFORMANCE

In 2019, the Department retained Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate) to conduct a Standards of Coverage (SOC) study to review the adequacy of its current fire station deployment system, the risks to be protected, and the emergency incident outcomes desired by the community. The Planning Committee reviewed this study as one component of the Department’s current state and performance.

6.1.1 Assessment Methodology

The core methodology used by Citygate for this deployment analysis was the “Standards of Response Coverage,” which is a systems-based approach to fire department deployment as published by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). This approach uses local risk factors and demographics to determine the level of protection best fitting the Department’s needs and evaluates deployment using risk and community expectations on outcomes to help elected officials make informed decisions on fire and EMS deployment levels.

Fire service deployment, simply summarized, is about the *speed* and *weight* of response. *Speed* refers to initial response (first-due) of all-risk intervention resources (e.g., engines, ladder trucks, rescues, ambulances) strategically deployed across a jurisdiction for response to emergencies within a travel time sufficient to control routine to moderate emergencies without the incident escalating to greater size or severity. *Weight* refers to multiple-unit responses for more serious emergencies, such as building fires, multiple-patient medical emergencies, vehicle collisions with extrication required, or technical rescue incidents where more firefighters must be assembled within a time interval to safely control the emergency and prevent it from escalating into an even more serious event.

The Standards of Response Coverage process consists of the following eight elements:

Table 26—Standards of Response Coverage Process Elements

SOC Element		Description
1	Existing Deployment Policies	A review of current agency deployment policies.
2	Community Outcome Expectations	A review of the community’s expectations relative to the agency’s response to emergencies.
3	Community Risk Assessment	A review of the assets at risk within the community.
4	Critical Task Study	Identification of the essential tasks that must be performed and the personnel required to deliver a stated outcome for an ERF.
5	Distribution Analysis	Analysis of the spacing of initial response (first-due) resources (typically engines) to control routine emergencies.
6	Concentration Analysis	Analysis of the spacing of fire stations so that larger or more complex emergencies receive sufficient resources in a timely manner to prevent escalation (ERF).
7	Reliability and Historical Response Effectiveness Studies	Using recent prior response statistics, determining the percentage of conformance to established response performance goals the existing deployment system delivers.
8	Overall Evaluation	Proposing Standard of Cover statements by risk type as appropriate.

Source: CFAI *Standards of Cover*, 6th Edition

6.1.2 Standard of Cover Findings and Recommendations

Pursuant to the 2019 assessment, Citygate made seventeen findings and seven recommendations.

SOC Findings

- Finding #1:** The Department’s response unit types are appropriate to protect against the hazards likely to impact the City. The daily staffing of 35 personnel provides a minimum ERF for one emerging to serious incident with remaining staffing capacity for two concurrent moderate incidents requiring only a single engine response.
- Finding #2:** The Department has established response performance objectives partially consistent with best practice recommendations as published by the CFAI. However, the City Council has not recently adopted a complete, best practice-based response time goal that begins with the 9-1-1 call receipt, nor goals for all types of emergency risk outcomes.
- Finding #3:** The Department has a standard response plan that considers risk and establishes an appropriate initial response for each incident type; each type of call for service receives the combination of engines, trucks, specialty units, and command officers customarily needed to effectively control that type of incident based on Department experience.
- Finding #4:** The geographic mapping coverage analysis shows the current City fire station locations are too closely spaced to provide best practice first responder travel times to all neighborhoods. Prompt travel from the stations to the outer neighborhoods is hampered by dense zoning and cars parked on streets and exacerbated by traffic congestion at peak commute or recreational activity periods.
- Finding #5:** At least two simultaneous incidents are occurring more than fifty-seven percent of the time. This primarily impacts station areas 1 and 3.
- Finding #6:** The annual number of simultaneous incidents has been relatively constant over the past four years. As simultaneous incidents increase, the coverage provided by the busiest companies to their own station areas and adjacent station areas diminishes, which further shifts workload to other companies.
- Finding #7:** While the GIS map model of 4:00-minute travel time coverage reaches the pier and beach areas, due to visitor congestion, the area is very difficult to get to quickly. For incidents in the temporary Station 7 area, the travel time is 5:47 minutes from Station 1 and 5:55 minutes from Station 2. Both times are significantly slower than a 4:00-minute goal.
- Finding #8:** Santa Monica’s dispatch processing time of 2:36 to 2:50 minutes is *far slower* than a fire service best practice of 1:30 minutes.

- Finding #9:** Santa Monica has not been measuring PSC processing performance from the earliest possible time stamp of PSAP receipt. The City must rectify this as soon as possible.
- Finding #10:** At 2:50 minutes, 90th percentile crew turnout performance is 50 seconds *slower* than a Citygate-recommended goal of 2:00 minutes or less.
- Finding #11:** At 5:19 minutes, 90th percentile first-unit travel time performance is thirty-three percent *slower* than the 4:00-minute best practice goal for urban areas.
- Finding #12:** There are serious medical emergencies in all of the City’s zip codes. Even if counts vary by area, all have the same EMS risks to be protected equally.
- Finding #13:** Zip codes 90402 and 90403 are too far from a fire station to receive travel time coverage in less than 5:00 minutes, especially during periods of traffic congestion.
- Finding #14:** Outdoor EMS emergencies are slowing dispatch and travel times due to their volume and difficult-to-determine locations and emergency types. The quantity is large enough Citywide to justify a separate response-time measure to ensure these emergencies do not inadvertently lengthen Department performance measures to buildings and other surface street (not freeway) locations.
- Finding #15:** EMS incidents involving unhoused persons cluster into fifteen principal types found predominately downtown and the oceanfront. These incidents would benefit from a non-traditional EMS health care approach.
- Finding #16:** At a realistic (inclusive of full dispatch time) measure of 9:10 minutes, 90th percentile first-unit call-to-arrival performance is significantly slower than a best practice and Citygate-recommended goal of 7:30 minutes.
- Finding #17:** At a realistic (inclusive of full dispatch time) measure of 11:16 minutes, the 90th percentile ERF (First Alarm) call-to-arrival performance *is faster than* the Citygate-recommended goal of 11:30 minutes for urban areas. This is due to there being multiple fire stations in the core of the City where most of the more serious events occur.

SOC Recommendations

- Recommendation #1:** Use existing resources to improve incident data capture and decrease 9-1-1 dispatch and fire crew turnout times to best practices levels.

- Recommendation #2:** Deploy at least one four-firefighter engine company in a station located in the northern 25 percent of the City. If this is not possible, deploy a two-firefighter/paramedic FRU from a smaller, commercial location in the northern 25 percent of the City.
- Recommendation #3:** Given the longer response/travel times to the pier and beach areas, the Department should continue to provide at least a small FRU located in the immediate area.
- Recommendation #4:** Develop a program that includes non-Departmental stakeholders to deploy an outdoor medical specialty response team of firefighter/paramedics and allied health care personnel to meet the needs of the patients presenting in Santa Monica.
- Recommendation #5:** It is critically important for the City team to conduct a detailed follow-up regarding incidents taking longer than 3:00 minutes to process in the PSC, and determine which factors, if any, causing delays can be mitigated.
- Recommendation #6:** Given the high volume of outdoor emergencies overall, in addition to the pier and beach areas, the City should adopt a two-tier dispatch measure: one for in-building EMS events and another for outdoor, oceanfront, and freeway emergencies.
- Recommendation #7:** **Adopt Updated Deployment Policies:** The City Council should adopt *updated*, complete performance measures to aid deployment planning and to monitor performance. The measures of time should be designed to deliver outcomes that will save patients, when possible, upon arrival and keep small and expanding fires from becoming more serious. With this in mind, Citygate recommends the following measures:
- 7.1 **Distribution of Fire Stations:** To treat pre-hospital medical emergencies and control small fires, the first-due unit should arrive within 7:30 minutes, 90 percent of the time from the receipt of the 9-1-1 call at the City’s PSC; this equates to a 90-second dispatch time, a 2:00-minute company turnout time, and a 4:00-minute travel time.
 - 7.2 **Multiple-Unit Effective Response Force (ERF) for Serious Emergencies:** To confine building fires near the room of origin, keep vegetation fires under one acre in size, and treat multiple medical patients at a single incident, a multiple-unit ERF of at least 23

personnel, including at least one Battalion Chief, should arrive within 11:30 minutes from the time of 9-1-1 call receipt at the City’s PSC 90 percent of the time. This equates to a 90-second dispatch time, 2:00-minute company turnout time, and 8:00-minute travel time.

7.3 Hazardous Materials Response: To protect the City from the hazards associated with uncontrolled release of hazardous and toxic materials, a multiple-unit ERF of at least 20 personnel, including on-duty hazardous materials specialists, the Department’s hazardous materials response unit, and at least one Chief Officer, should arrive within 11:30 minutes from the time of 9-1-1 call receipt at the City’s PSC 90 percent of the time. This equates to a 90-second dispatch time, 2:00-minute company turnout time, and 8:00-minute travel time.

7.4 Technical Rescue: To provide technical rescue services as needed with enough trained personnel to facilitate a successful rescue, a multiple-unit ERF of at least 25 personnel, including on-duty technical rescue specialists and at least one Chief Officer, should arrive within 11:30 minutes from the time of 9-1-1 call receipt at the City’s PSC 90 percent of the time. This equates to a 90-second dispatch time, 2:00-minute company turnout time, and 8:00-minute travel time to facilitate safe rescue/extrication and delivery of the victim to the appropriate emergency medical care facility.

6.2 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS ASSESSMENT

As a second component of the Department’s current state and performance, Citygate facilitated an assessment of Department Strengths, Weaknesses/Limitations, Opportunities, and Threats (S.W.O.T.) through small group exercises during the second planning workshop on February 6, 2023. The assessment provided the following results.

6.2.1 Strengths

- ◆ Personnel knowledge and engagement
- ◆ Apparatus fleet
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Specialized response services (USAR, HazMat, ARFF, CRU, REM)
- ◆ Customer service
- ◆ Headquarters location (downtown services coverage)
- ◆ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- ◆ Organizational culture/wellness
- ◆ Community support
- ◆ Organizational flexibility / pilot programs
- ◆ Police Department relationship
- ◆ Pre-planning
- ◆ Self-sufficiency
- ◆ Opportunities for varied assignments
- ◆ Firefighter rank evaluation process
- ◆ Low turnover
- ◆ Robust Capital Improvement Project process
- ◆ Logistics section
- ◆ Motivated workforce
- ◆ City support resources
- ◆ EMS response model
- ◆ Participation in the Los Angeles Area Fire Chiefs Association
- ◆ Regional fire agency relationships
- ◆ Labor-management relationship
- ◆ Recruit training academy accreditation
- ◆ Use of technology
- ◆ Emergency incident mitigation
- ◆ Staff/personnel

6.2.2 Weaknesses/Limitations

- ◆ Staffing shortages / workload capacity
 - Operations
 - Administration
 - Fire Prevention
- ◆ Long-term solution to houseless crisis
- ◆ Facilities

- Public Safety Facility improvements
- Station 3
- Station 7
- Training Facility CIP
- ◆ The size of response districts
- ◆ EMS ambulance transport contract with McCormick Ambulance
 - Contract compliance
- ◆ No dedicated EMS division
- ◆ Budget limitations
- ◆ Service fees collection
- ◆ Number of Department firefighter paramedics
- ◆ No community paramedicine program
- ◆ Availability of employee mental health counseling and therapy services from providers familiar with public safety challenges
- ◆ A need for a more comprehensive preventive cancer screening
- ◆ Organizational culture relative to PPE hygiene
- ◆ Lack of disposable booties for contaminated scenes
- ◆ Infectious disease exposure awareness and hygiene when responding to skilled nursing / rehabilitation facilities
- ◆ Uneven incident workload
- ◆ Response resource distribution/locations (e.g., north of Montana Avenue)
- ◆ Recruitment outreach capacity
- ◆ Recruitment diversity
- ◆ Number of qualified Engine Strike Team leaders
- ◆ Fire Department collaboration/presence in the Public Safety Communications Center

6.2.3 Opportunities

The Planning Committee identified the following opportunities with a focus on potential collaborative partnerships.

- ◆ Local hospitals
 - Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA) policy awareness/education
 - Field response resource funding
 - Improved collaboration
- ◆ Elementary/middle/high schools
 - Cadet program
 - ROP program
 - Career days
 - Mentorships
- ◆ Parent-Teacher organizations
- ◆ Neighborhood groups
- ◆ Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency
 - Advocate for policy changes impacting pre-hospital healthcare system
- ◆ Creative solutions to provide medication for unhoused individuals
- ◆ On-call professional physical/mental health therapists
- ◆ On duty Physician’s Assistant / Nurse Practitioner with authority to issue on-site prescriptions to patients not needing transport to the emergency department
- ◆ Sponsorships opportunities (company logos on apparatus)
- ◆ Sponsorships to fund socks, blankets, shoes, etc. for homeless
- ◆ Embedded Fire Department member on City Outreach Team
- ◆ Revenue to offset the cost of facilitating large events in City/region (e.g., World Cup, Olympics)
- ◆ Airport re-use plan / Station 5 location
- ◆ Additional truck company

6.2.4 Threats

- ◆ EMS
 - Citywide staffing shortages
 - External staffing shortages (hospitals, McCormick, etc.)

- Supply chain shortages
- Ambulance availability
- Hospital emergency department wait times
- Unknown virus exposures
- Loss of authority to provide ambulance services
- ◆ Finance
 - Loss of revenue due to changing EMS payor mix
 - Department program funding
 - Inability to increase Department budget
 - Loss of grant funding
 - Taxpayer ballot measures
 - Staffing/workload capacity
- ◆ Operations
 - Alternative response models
 - Decommissioning of some existing response resources
 - Facility security
 - Technology hacking
 - Council support of strategic goals
- ◆ Safety
 - Personnel safety (active shooter, mental illness, behavioral issues)
 - Synthetic drug exposure
 - Unknown disease exposures
 - Employee workload fatigue/burnout
- ◆ Fire Prevention
 - Staffing/workload capacity
 - Ordinance changes
 - International Code Council (ICC) scalar structural changes
 - Impacts of traffic calming measures on response performance

- ◆ Political landscape
 - Public image and perception
 - Shifting priorities

SECTION 7—ENVISIONING SUCCESS



The Planning Committee was tasked to identify what success should look like at the end of the five-year planning horizon. Through multiple small group exercises, the Committee envisioned the following outcomes / end states considering all preceding planning elements including Department program and service priorities, critical issues / service gaps, unmet organizational needs, potential collaboration/partnership opportunities, the Department’s current Project Task Plan, the performance audit, and stakeholder outreach results.

- ◆ Increased staffing
 - Operational response staffing
 - Administrative functions staffing
 - Effective Response Force (ERF) staffing
- ◆ Right-sized Department budget
- ◆ Continued updating/work of Department-level plans

- ◆ Solid succession plan
- ◆ Career pathways plan
- ◆ Resilient, sustainable response model meeting best practices
- ◆ Funding/support to accomplish strategic goals
- ◆ Satisfied workforce
- ◆ 360-degree evaluations
- ◆ Comprehensive employee mental health/wellness program
- ◆ Agency accreditation
- ◆ Appropriate resources to address the impacts that homelessness has on service demand and capacity
- ◆ Improved understanding of SMFD programs and services (internal and external awareness)
- ◆ Facility needs addressed
- ◆ Dedicated EMS division with appropriate staffing capacity to address current needs and potential future services
- ◆ Organizational culture shift relative to health, wellness, and safety practices
- ◆ Upward mobility / career pathways for civilian staff
- ◆ A comprehensive Community Risk Reduction Plan
- ◆ Improved recruitment outreach
- ◆ Measured Strategic Plan success
- ◆ Maintain current response unit staffing levels
- ◆ Improved relationships with allied City departments
- ◆ Maintain high employee retention
- ◆ Improved Public Safety Communications Center fire dispatch services

SECTION 8—STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



8.1 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES OVERVIEW

In the context of this Strategic Plan:

- ◆ **Goal** – a desired end state or outcome.
- ◆ **Strategy** – the broad approach or framework used to achieve a goal.
- ◆ **Objectives** – the measurable steps needed to fully execute a strategy.

8.2 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND OBJECTIVES

Following the performance audit and envisioned success exercises, the Planning Committee developed and refined the following four overarching goals, 14 strategies to achieve those goals, and 38 measurable objectives needed to fully execute those strategies. These goals, strategies, and objectives were developed and refined over two workshops to address critical issues; performance/service gaps; unmet organizational needs; organizational strengths, weaknesses/limitations, opportunities, and threats; and stakeholder survey results over the next five years.

8.2.1 Goal 1: An Organization Closely Aligned with Community Values, Needs, and Service Expectations

Strategy 1A—Improve Community Outreach and Communications

Objective 1A-1: Develop and implement a community outreach, communications, and engagement plan to facilitate enhanced engagement with community stakeholders including neighborhood associations.

Objective 1A-2: Explore opportunities to make alterations to enhance the Department website to include additional content.

Strategy 1B—A Holistic Focus on Community Risk Reduction

Objective 1B-1: Develop and implement a comprehensive Community Risk Reduction Plan.

Strategy 1C—A Long-Term Solution to the Impacts that Unhoused and Vulnerable Populations have on Operational Capacity and Service Levels

Objective 1C-1: Continue to evaluate and evolve the Community Response Unit (CRU) to include development of a comprehensive program that addresses the operational impacts of calls for service and resultant case management.

Strategy 1D—Improved Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration with Allied City Departments

Objective 1D-1: Continued involvement in Citywide committees and work groups.

Objective 1D-2: Evaluate other opportunities to build and improve relationships and collaborate with other City departments.

8.2.2 Goal 2: Services, Programs, and Resources Appropriate to Carry Out Our Mission

Strategy 2A—Programs and Services that Protect the Values at Risk and Meet Community Needs and Expectations

Objective 2A-1: A dedicated Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division with appropriate staffing to manage existing EMS services and evaluate SMFD’s current deployment/response models, including in-house ambulance transport services, a community paramedicine program, etc.

Objective 2A-2: A sustainable operational deployment model that meets best practices.

Objective 2A-3: Operational response performance goals that facilitate desired emergency incident outcomes.

Objective 2A-4: Update the 2019 Standards of Cover Study.

Strategy 2B—Appropriate Operational Response, Support, and Administrative Services Staffing Capacity

Objective 2B-1: Operational response services and staffing capacity appropriate to protect the values at risk from expected hazards and meet community service expectations to include EMS and special operations.

Objective 2B-2: Adequate administrative, training, and fire prevention staffing capacity to meet current and anticipated future City and Department needs and workload demand.

Objective 2B-3: Collaborate with Office of Emergency Management (OEM) management to identify service enhancement opportunities relative to Fire Department dispatch including a thorough review of the 2023 Federal Engineering *Regional Fire Dispatch Consolidation Study*.

Strategy 2C—Safe, Reliable Facilities Adequate for Current and Projected Future Needs

Objective 2C-1: Response resource locations or station spacing that facilitate desired outcomes and adopted response performance goals.

Objective 2C-2: Continue to pursue Fire Facilities Master Plan goals to include tenant improvements in the Fire Department section of the Public Safety Facility to better accommodate Department administrative staff, a Station 3 upgrade, and construction of a permanent Station 7.

Objective 2C-3: Seek reliable funding for the Fire Facilities Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Strategy 2D—Safe, Reliable Apparatus and Equipment Appropriate to Meet Current and Future Needs

Objective 2D-1: Continue to maintain and periodically update the Apparatus Replacement Plan and required CIP funding.

8.2.3 Goal 3: Sustained Organizational Vitality

Strategy 3A—An Organizational and Individual Focus on Employee Health, Safety, and Wellness

- Objective 3A-1:** Develop and support a comprehensive employee mental health/wellness program that recognizes the unique needs of public safety personnel.
- Objective 3A-2:** Update the Safety Program to conform with recognized industry best practices where possible.
- Objective 3A-3:** Identify opportunities to reduce work-related injuries and improve injury case management and return to work processes.

Strategy 3B—An Adaptable Organization Open to Change, Innovation, Accountability, and Continuous Improvement

- Objective 3B-1:** Foster an inclusive culture that welcomes and supports diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Objective 3B-2:** Improved organizational awareness relative to employee health, wellness, and safety practices.
- Objective 3B-3:** An organizational structure that provides appropriate workload distribution, supervision, skills/competencies, and job title and descriptions.
- Objective 3B-4:** Continued development and execution of Department-level plans.
- Objective 3B-5:** Attain Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) / Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) accreditation.
- Objective 3B-6:** Measurable Strategic Plan implementation progress.
- Objective 3B-7:** Provide team building opportunities throughout the organization that foster and promote leadership, motivation, professionalism, accountability, and strengthened connections among all staff.
- Objective 3B-8:** Improved use of data to address emerging issues and plan for service delivery challenges.

Strategy 3C—An Organizational Environment that Fosters and Supports Personal and Professional Growth and Development

- Objective 3C-1:** Establish clear career pathways for each division/function including required and desired knowledge, skills, and competencies for each position.
- Objective 3C-2:** Provide effective succession planning and training throughout all levels of the organization, including better utilization of Department instructors and providing all employees the tools they need for continuous improvement.
- Objective 3C-3:** Ensure equity of opportunity for assignments, training, education, and promotion.
- Objective 3C-4:** Explore opportunities to implement a more comprehensive performance evaluation process to include 360-degree reviews.
- Objective 3C-5:** Firefighter recruitment efforts focused on middle school through college outreach to educate and encourage students into fire service career pathways, potentially including an Explorer or Cadet program.

8.2.4 Goal 4: Improved Organizational Systems and Processes

Strategy 4A—Improve Fee Collection Workflow

- Objective 4A-1:** Employ fiscal best practices in all SMFD billing processes.
- Objective 4A-2:** Implement software upgrades and/or third-party billing solutions.

Strategy 4B—Ensure Sustainable Funding for Mission-Critical Programs, Services, and Capital Facilities and Equipment

- Objective 4B-1:** Collaborate with other City departments to establish a Citywide Developer Impact Fee.
- Objective 4B-2:** Explore potential alternative funding and other cost-recovery options.

Strategy 4C—Leverage Technology to Improve Organizational Systems and Processes

- Objective 4C-1:** Update Technology Strategic Plan to include findings from the February 2023 Moss Adams Risk Assessment Survey.

SECTION 9—PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURING PROGRESS



The final step of the planning process involves initially prioritizing the implementation sequence of the strategic objectives, developing a Detailed Action Plan for each strategic objective, determining the interval for periodic review, updating of Strategic Plan elements as needed, and determining how and when the Plan will be introduced to the organization and stakeholders.

9.1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES IMPLEMENTATION SEQUENCE

To provide opportunity for early success—and to build and maintain momentum—the Planning Committee identified the following three categories to guide implementation of the thirty-eight strategic objectives.

- ◆ **Category A** Can be achieved with existing Department resources.
- ◆ **Category B** Can be initiated with existing department resources but will require additional resources to fully achieve.
- ◆ **Category C** Cannot be initiated without additional resources.

It should be noted that implementation may change as available organizational capacity, needed resources, and/or strategic objectives evolve over the five-year planning term.

Table 27—Initial Strategic Objectives Implementation Priority

Goal		Strategy	Objectives		Implementation Category
1	An Organization Closely Aligned with Community Values, Needs, and Service Expectations	<i>A: Improve Community Outreach and Communication</i>	1A-1	Develop and implement a Community Outreach, Communications, and Engagement Plan to facilitate enhanced engagement with community stakeholders including neighborhood group associations.	A
			1A-2	Explore opportunities to make alterations to enhance the Department website including additional content.	B
		<i>B: A Holistic Focus on Community Risk Reduction</i>	1B-1	Develop and implement a comprehensive Community Risk Reduction Plan.	B
		<i>C: A Long-Term Solution to the Impacts the Unhoused and Vulnerable Populations have on Operational Capacity and Service Levels</i>	1C-1	Continue to evaluate and evolve the Community Response Unit (CRU) to include development of a comprehensive program that addresses the operational impacts of calls for service and resultant case management.	B
		<i>D: Improved Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration with Allied City Departments</i>	1D-1	Continued involvement in Citywide committees and work groups.	A
			1D-2	Evaluate other opportunities to build/improve relationships and collaborate with other City departments.	A

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Goal		Strategy	Objectives		Implementation Category
2	Services, Programs, and Resources Appropriate to Carry Out Our Mission	A: Programs and Services that Protect the Values at Risk and Meet Community Needs and Expectations	2A-1	A dedicated Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division with appropriate staffing to manage existing EMS services and evaluate SMFD’s current deployment/response models, including in-house ambulance transport services, a community paramedicine program, etc.	C
			2A-2	A sustainable operational deployment model that meets best practices.	B
			2A-3	Operational response performance goals that facilitate desired emergency incident outcomes.	A
			2A-4	Update 2019 Standards of Cover Study.	A
		B: Appropriate Operational Response, Support, and Administrative Services Staffing Capacity	2B-1	Operational response services and staffing capacity appropriate to protect the values at risk from expected hazards and meet community service expectations to include EMS and special operations.	B
			2B-2	Adequate administrative, training, and fire prevention staffing capacity to meet current and anticipated City and Department needs and workload demand.	B
			2B-3	Evaluate fire dispatch services.	A
		C: Safe, Reliable Facilities Adequate for Current and Projected Future Needs	2C-1	Response resource locations or station spacing that facilitate desired outcomes and adopted response performance goals.	C
			2C-2	Continue to pursue Fire Facilities Master Plan goals to include a tenant improvement to the Public Safety Facility to better accommodate Department administrative staff, a Station 3 replacement, and construction of a permanent Station 7.	C
			2C-3	Seek reliable funding for Fire Facilities Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).	B
		D: Safe, Reliable Apparatus and Equipment Appropriate to Meet Current and Future Needs	2D-1	Continue to maintain and periodically update the Apparatus Replacement Plan and required CIP funding.	A

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Goal		Strategy	Objectives		Implementation Category
3	Sustained Organizational Vitality	A: An Organizational and Individual Focus on Employee Health, Safety and Wellness	3A-1	Develop and support a comprehensive employee mental health/wellness program that recognizes the unique needs of public safety personnel.	C
			3A-2	Update the Safety Program to conform with recognized industry best practices where possible.	A
			3A-3	Identify opportunities to reduce work-related injuries and improve injury case management and return to work processes.	C
		B: An Adaptable Organization Open to Change, Innovation, Accountability, Continuous Improvement	3B-1	Foster an organizational culture that welcomes and supports diversity and inclusivity.	A
			3B-2	Improved organizational awareness relative to employee health, wellness, and safety practices.	A
			3B-3	An organizational structure that provides appropriate workload distribution, supervision, skill/competencies, and job titles/descriptions.	B
			3B-4	Continued development and execution of department-level plans.	A
			3B-5	Attain Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)/Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) accreditation.	A
			3B-6	Measurable Strategic Plan implementation progress.	A
			3B-7	Provide team building opportunities throughout the organization that foster and promote leadership, motivation, professionalism, accountability, and strengthened connections among all staff.	A
			3B-8	Improved use of data to address emerging issues and plan for service delivery challenges.	A
		C: An Organizational Environment that Fosters and Supports Personal and Professional Growth and Development	3C-1	Establish clear career pathways for each division/function including required and desired knowledge, skills, and competencies for each position.	A
			3C-2	Provide effective succession planning and training throughout all levels of the organization, including better utilization of SMFD instructors and providing all employees the tools they need for continuous improvement.	A

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Goal		Strategy	Objectives	Implementation Category
			3C-3 Ensure equity of opportunity for assignments, training, education, and promotion.	A
			3C-4 Explore opportunities to implement a more comprehensive performance evaluation process to include 360-degree reviews.	B
			3C-5 Firefighter recruitment efforts focused on middle school through college outreach to educate and encourage students into fire service career pathways, potentially including an Explorer or Cadet Program.	C
4	Improved Organizational Systems and Processes	A: Improve Fee Collection Workflow	4A-1 Employ fiscal best practices in all SMFD billing processes.	A
			4A-2 Implement software upgrades and/or third-party billing solutions.	A
		B: Ensure Sustainable Funding for Mission Critical Programs, Services, and Capital Facilities and Equipment	4B-1 Collaborate with other City departments to establish a Citywide Developer Impact Fee.	A
			4B-2 Explore potential alternative funding and/or other cost recovery options.	B
			C: Leverage technology to improve organizational systems and processes	4C-1 Update Technology Strategic Plan to include findings from the February 2023 Moss Adams Risk Assessment Survey.

9.2 DETAILED ACTION PLANS

Detailed Action Plans clearly articulate the sequential steps needed to fully achieve an objective, including a description of each step, the metric for success, whether governing body policy action is required, estimated cost and funding source(s), other resources needed, who or what specific position is responsible for each step, and the expected timeline for completion.

In a facilitated exercise, the Planning Committee identified some of the sequential steps needed to achieve selected higher priority objectives of this Plan; however, additional work will be needed to fully complete these. The Fire Chief, in collaboration with the Executive Management Team, will designate which individuals or group will be responsible for developing the annual work plan (as discussed in the following sub-section) as well as developing detailed action plans for those objectives identified for inclusion in the initial and succeeding annual work plans. Examples of detailed action plans are included in **Appendix E** for reference.

9.3 ANNUAL WORK PLAN

Annual work plans are critical to creating and maintaining momentum and making continued progress on any long-term plan. The Planning Committee established the desire to develop an annual work plan corresponding with the City’s biennial budget cycle and incorporating those strategies and objectives that will receive intentional focus and effort over that 12-month period considering anticipated organizational capacity and availability of needed resources. Strategies and objectives need not be accomplished in any specific priority or sequence; however, they should be initiated individually or in parallel to ensure logical and incremental progress toward achievement of a particular strategy or goal. The Planning Committee established the following Annual Work Plan schedule with Annual Work Plan progress to be reviewed at each monthly Command and General Staff meeting.

Table 28—Annual Work Plan Development Schedule

Objective	Date
Initiate Annual Work Plan development	January 2
Complete Draft Annual Work Plan	January 24
Complete Detailed Action Plans for included Strategic Objectives	June 1
Final City Budget adopted	Second Tuesday in June
Finalize Annual Work Plan	June 30
Implement Annual Work Plan	July 1

9.4 PLAN MAINTENANCE

To ensure continuing progress and the effectiveness and relevance of the Strategic Plan, an individual or group—to be identified by the Fire Chief in collaboration with the Executive Management Team—will be tasked to review this Plan at least quarterly for the first year, and thereafter as determined by the Fire Chief and/or Review Team. The Strategic Plan will be revised as needed (1) to provide maximum utilization of available resources to achieve the identified strategic goals, and (2) to add or modify strategies and objectives as needed to address changes in the political, fiscal, organizational, or overall City environment.

9.5 STRATEGIC PLAN ROLLOUT

The final Strategic Plan will be presented to the Department’s Command and General Staff at their May 17, 2023 meeting. The Fire Chief will determine how the Plan will subsequently be introduced to the following project stakeholders.

- ◆ All Fire Department staff
- ◆ City Manager
- ◆ City Council
- ◆ Other City Departments
- ◆ Santa Monica community stakeholder groups