



NORTH RIDGEVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

2018-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN



Facilitated by



Center for
Public Safety
Excellence

I am not here for me,

I am here for we,

and we are here for them.

Introduction

The North Ridgeville Fire Department (NRFD) provides an all-hazards approach in the protection of the lives and property of the residents, businesses, and visitors of North Ridgeville, Ohio. NRFD is consistently working to achieve and/or maintain the highest level of professionalism and efficiency on behalf of those it serves, and thus, contracted with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) to facilitate a method to document the department's path into the future via a "Community-Driven Strategic Plan." The following strategic plan was written in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Commission on Fire Accreditation (CFAI) *Fire & Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual 9th Ed.* and is intended to guide the organization within established parameters set forth by the authority having jurisdiction.

The CPSE utilized the community-driven strategic planning process to go beyond just the development of a document. It challenged the department's members to critically examine paradigms, values, philosophies, beliefs and desires, and challenged individuals to work in the best interest of the "team." It further provided the department with an opportunity to participate in the development of their organization's long-term direction and focus. Members of the community and department stakeholders' groups demonstrated commitment to this important project and remain committed to the document's completion and future plan execution.

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STRATEGIC PLAN

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Organizational Background

The area that is now the City of North Ridgeville, Ohio was originally settled in 1810. Today, the City of North Ridgeville, Ohio boasts an estimated population of 33,436 within its 25 square miles. North Ridgeville is the fastest growing city in the Greater Cleveland area and the area is realizing a future of double population and industry growth. The city is mixed with residential, commercial, and industrial properties.



The department's genesis dates back to February 1931 when the Ridgeville Township Trustees held a meeting to consider the purchase of bonds to purchase fire equipment and for the appointment of volunteers to form its first fire company. Within the same month, a fire chief was appointed by the trustees, which sealed the start of the Ridgeville Township Fire Department. The organization remained a volunteer fire company until August 1967 when the first full-time firefighters were sworn into service to

staff the single fire station to cover the entire jurisdiction.

In 1970, the department began its evolution with the rest of the industry by providing basic life support ambulance service to the North Ridgeville residents, businesses, and visitors. The North Ridgeville Fire department has continued to evolve to meet the demands and growth of the city. Through this proactive evolution, the department has continued to focus strategically and to understand change.



Today, the department remembers its history and remains committed to protecting the lives and property of its community and providing great customer service. The North Ridgeville Fire Department continues to deliver proactive, all-hazards, public safety services to its risks from two stations that are located strategically throughout its jurisdiction. Staffed with 37 uniformed and civilian professionals, the department embraces quality service and excellence in all they do.



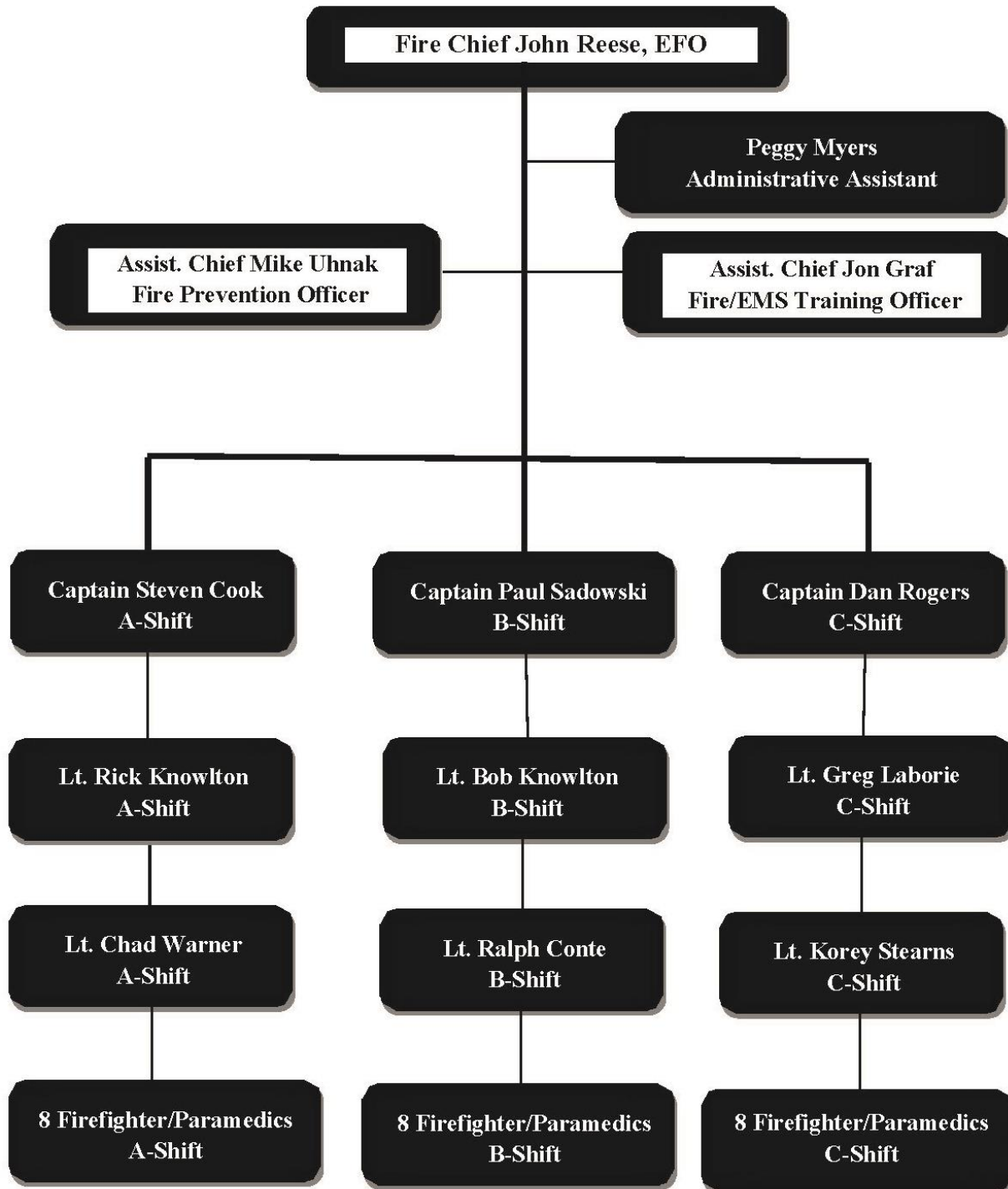


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Organizational Structure

North Ridgeville Fire Organizational Chart





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Community-Driven Strategic Planning

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

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

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



Community Stakeholders Work Session

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





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The Community-Driven Strategic Planning Process Outline

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



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Process and Acknowledgements

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

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

North Ridgeville Fire Department Community Stakeholders				
Bruce Abens	Steve Ali	Jeff Armbruster	Wanda Baldwin	Ronald Barlow
David Bogner	Mary Beth Bogner	Joy Bomba	Dennis Boose	Mike Borow
John Butkowski	Bob Chapek	Kevin Corcoran	Kevin Crow	Dan Ellenberger
Verona Evans	Dave Gillock	Tom Himes	Michelle Hung	Joseph Kalt
Gary Krone	Toni Krone	Joe Lucas	Brendan McCool	Dwayne Prelipp
Robyn Ringwall	Michelle Robertson	Andrea M. Vance	John Vrtachnik	Jim White
Adam Wujnovich	June Yost	Matt Yunker		

Community Group Findings

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





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Community Priorities

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

Programs	Ranking	Score
Emergency Medical Services	1	201
Fire Suppression	2	156
Technical Rescue	3	134
Domestic Preparedness Planning and Response	4	96
Hazardous Materials Mitigation	5	89
Community Risk Reduction	6	82
Public Fire and Life Safety Education	7	64
Fire Investigation	8	46

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



Community Stakeholders Work Session





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Department Stakeholder Group Findings

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

North Ridgeville Fire Department Stakeholders			
Gary Chase <i>Firefighter</i>	Ralph Conte <i>Lieutenant</i>	Barry Cook <i>Captain</i>	Chris Federan <i>Firefighter</i>
Gabe Gerbasi <i>Firefighter</i>	Jon Graf <i>Assistant Chief</i>	Bob Knowlton <i>Lieutenant</i>	Rick Knowlton <i>Lieutenant</i>
Greg Laborie <i>Lieutenant</i>	Kevin Pocos <i>Firefighter</i>	John Reese <i>Fire Chief</i>	Dan Rogers <i>Captain</i>
Justin Silvi <i>Firefighter</i>	Dean Souris <i>Firefighter</i>	Matt Sullivan <i>Firefighter</i>	Mike Uhnak <i>Assistant Chief</i>



Department Stakeholders





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Mission

The purpose of the mission is to answer the questions:

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

A workgroup met to revisit the existing mission and, after ensuring it answered the questions, the following mission statement was created, discussed, and accepted by the entire group:

The North Ridgeville Fire Department is a professional, customer-based organization, focused on protecting the lives and property of our residents, visitors, and businesses. Our mission is to provide the highest level of public safety services through effective planning, preparedness, rapid response, and risk management, while remaining fiscally responsible to our community.



Department Stakeholders Work Session





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Values

Values embraced by all members of an organization are extremely important, as they recognize the features that make up the personality and culture of the organization. A workgroup met to revisit the existing values and proposed a revision that was discussed, enhanced further, and agreed upon by the entire group:

Integrity
Professional Excellence

Compassion
Accountability

Efficiency
Community-Oriented

The mission and values are the foundation of this organization. Thus, every effort will be made to keep these current and meaningful so that the individuals who make up the North Ridgeville Fire Department are guided by them in the accomplishment of the goals, objectives, and day-to-day tasks.



Department Stakeholders Work Session

Programs and Services

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

Core Programs of the North Ridgeville Fire Department

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





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SWOT Analysis

Through a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), an organization candidly identifies its positive and negative attributes. The SWOT analysis also provides an opportunity for an organization to evaluate its operating environment for areas in which it can capitalize, as well as those that pose a danger. Department stakeholders participated in this activity to record NRFD's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the possible opportunities and potential threats.

Information gathered through this analysis provides guidance toward the larger issues and gaps that exist within the agency. The information gleaned will assist the agency in finding its broader critical issues and service gaps.

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



Department Stakeholders Work Session

Critical Issues and Service Gaps

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

Strategic Initiatives

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

North Ridgeville Fire Department's Strategic Initiatives		
Staffing	Community Risk Assessment / Standards of Cover	Community Risk Reduction
Safety, Health and Wellness		Succession Planning





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Goals and Objectives

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

Goal 1	Determine the optimal staffing levels in order to successfully accomplish the mission of the NRFD.	
Objective 1A	Determine the amount of staff hours actually needed to accomplish the department's mission.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all services to be provided in order to accomplish the mission. • Research services provided in the previous task. • Evaluate the services provided in the previous task. • Prioritize the services provided. • Create a report reflecting staffing hours required to provide services established within this objective. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1B	Determine if current staffing model meets the current services provided to the community.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all previous reports and data to determine the number of staff hours worked. • Analyze the current services provided to the community. • Compare the results with the data from the staffing hours required. • Create a report to determine if the current model is effective or if recommendations are needed for further consideration. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:





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Objective 1C Determine future staffing levels of the NRFD to meet both the mission of the department and the needs of the community over the next five years.		
Timeframe	1 year	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the mission and determine positions that need to be filled, including tasks and duties. Evaluate the department history of staffing hours required, based on the previously completed time study, to accomplish current duties. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study and evaluate potential residential, commercial, and industrial growth over the length of the plan. Determine the number of staffing hours required to meet future needs. Determine the number of personnel needed in each defined position in order to accomplish the mission of the department. 	
	Funding	Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:
	Estimate	Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1D Develop a cost-effective plan for the NRFD to obtain staffing levels as determined within this goal.		
Timeframe	1 year	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current costs for all current staff functions to include all elements of compensation. Evaluate the costs for future services that have been previously described and determined. Research current revenue streams. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze and estimate future review streams. Compare and analyze the current costs versus current revenue. Compare and analyze the future costs versus future revenue. Create a report detailing the outcomes from the analyses. Present the financial analysis to the administration. 	
	Funding	Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:
	Estimate	Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 1E Implement the plan to obtain the determined staffing levels.		
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute organizational changes as described in the previously established plan. Create and revise all affected job descriptions and job performance requirements. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new curriculum for training of new positions, personnel, and services. Recruit, vet, and hire personnel to fulfill previously determined positions. Provide training, orientation, and mentoring for all affected personnel. 	
	Funding	Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:
	Estimate	Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:





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Objective 1F	Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine which elements of the staffing model have been implemented. • Compare and analyze data from previous staffing model outcomes versus new staffing model outcomes. • Conduct quality assurance and quality improvement analyses for services provided from both internal and external stakeholders. • Create a report with recommendations. • Present the report to the administration. • Revise the staffing model based on approved recommendations of the administration. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:



Department Stakeholders Work Session





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Goal 2	Create a plan of deployment for the NRFD to mitigate the hazards identified by the risk assessment study.	
Objective 2A	Identify and analyze the hazards and risks of the community.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing data to develop a baseline of risks and hazards. • Identify new risks and hazards, to include but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community growth ○ Community aging ○ Business growth and turnover ○ Infrastructure ○ Topography ○ Code changes • Evaluate and categorize the hazards and risks. • Create an updated hazard profile of the community. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2B	Identify and analyze the department's current deployment associated with mitigating the hazards and risks identified in the community.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the existing deployment plan per SOG. • Research deficiencies and near misses. • Compare the current deployment plan versus industry standards such as NFPA. • Identify potential categories of concern to include, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resources ○ Personnel ○ Points of distribution ○ Budget ○ Equipment 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2C	Develop a model to identify the levels and types of risks and hazards.	
Timeframe	1 year	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research various tools and software to quantify risks. • Gather community data from various government agencies. • Gather historical data from past incidents. • Examine the level and types of risk in comparison to neighboring communities. • Integrate all data to create a risks and hazards plan. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:





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Objective 2D	Measure the performance of the updated deployment plan.	
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the parameters for measurement of the updated deployment plan. • Collect data from the updated deployment plan. • Evaluate the deployment plan data. • Make necessary changes based on the deployment plan data. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 2E	Develop a method to maintain and improve the updated deployment plan.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain an effective quality assurance and quality improvement program to continuously evaluate the deployment plan. • Survey department personnel to improve efficiency. • Integrate and enhance parts of the community risk reduction program to positively affect the deployment plan. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:



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Goal 3	Develop and implement a community risk reduction and outreach program to create a safer, more educated city.	
Objective 3A	Identify current system process associated with risk reduction and community outreach.	
Timeframe	1 month	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a committee to analyze the current state of community risk reduction and community outreach. List what programs are currently done and then decide upon scope of any new programs. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current programs and collect detailed notes. Research other community programs and determine what the department wants to include. Evaluate how the results will benefit the department and support its mission. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3B	Identify the needs and processes for community risk reduction and community outreach programs.	
Timeframe	2 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divide the focus of the identification into two branches – community risk reduction and community outreach. Identify which programs to institute based on community needs and feedback. Assign the appropriate program to its branch. Assign program leaders for each branch. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3C	Develop and/or enhance programs for community risk reduction and community outreach based on the identified needs of the department.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the needs for each program. Enhance the current programs based on needs and desired outcomes. Create any new programs based on research results and community needs. Vet the programs based on national standards and best practices. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3D	Conduct a staffing study to determine any implementation needs for the programs and assign personnel to the branch leaders.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine what staffing levels currently exist to implement programs. Determine the staffing needs for current and proposed programs. Solicit participation to meet the composition of the teams as divided by branch. Assign personnel to the program and respective leaders. Continuously re-evaluate in order to ensure adequacy and the achievement of desired outcomes. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:





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Objective 3E	Develop and deliver the training curriculum for staff members who will be conducting the community risk reduction and community outreach programs.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the proper credentialing of teams and leaders, to include maintaining continuing education. • Research industry best practices on newly developed programs. • Send members to train-the-trainer programs as needed. • Outline and document curriculum in writing. • Deliver the required training and credentialing. • Evaluate the effectiveness of the training based on participant feedback. • Adjust the curriculum using quality improvement results and participant feedback. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3F	Introduce, advertise, and execute the community outreach and community risk reduction programs to the public.	
Timeframe	1 year	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the means by which the department can advertise the new programs. • Determine which advertisement means are most efficient and effective. • Deliver the advertisement by the means determined. • Determine a schedule of programs that works for the department and the community. • Execute the community outreach programs and implement the improved community risk reduction systems. • Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the new or improved programs. • Make adjustments based on the results from program evaluations and departmental feedback. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 3G	Review the success of the programs and distinguish which areas can be improved.	
Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile all evaluations from each objective. • Analyze evaluations, making improvements where possible. • Update the curriculum and instate the improvements. • Continue the evaluation process into the future to keep the programs effective and relevant. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:





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Goal 4	Develop a safety, health, and wellness program in order to reduce injuries, minimize illness, and promote the overall well-being of the members of the NRFD.	
Objective 4A	Utilize the current safety committee to research and identify agencies with established wellness plans.	
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect the current wellness plans from other fire departments. • Research OSHA, ADA, and BWC regulations as well as NFPA standards. • Review the City of North Ridgeville human resource and fire department policies. • Compile and report the findings to the administration. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4B	Identify the health and safety needs and concerns of the members of the NRFD.	
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey department members to establish a consensus of what is important to them. • Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current plan. • Establish a list of needs based on compiled information. • Identify resources needed to meet the needs of the program. • Compile and analyze the gathered information and present to the department administration. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4C	Develop the safety, health, and wellness plan based on the needs identified.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List the key areas to be addressed in the safety, health, and wellness initiative. • Identify risks and benefits to be addressed within each key area. • Develop processes to mitigate and prevent the hazards identified. • Create guidelines with supporting references to address each category of the program. • Present to the administration for revision or approval. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 4D	Outline and create a training program based on the developed plan.	
Timeframe	2 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key components of the safety, health, and wellness program to present to the department. • Outline and develop the lesson plan to present. • Present the lesson to each shift and administration. • Provide an avenue for feedback regarding the safety, health, and wellness program. • Compile feedback on the training. • Analyze and report the feedback for further revision needs. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:





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Objective 4E Implement the safety, health, and wellness plan for desired outcomes.

Timeframe 1 month **Assigned to:**

- Determine the anticipated launch date.

Critical Tasks

- Disseminate all required supporting documents and lists of resources.
- Launch the program.

Funding Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:
Estimate Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 4F Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and revise as needed.

Timeframe Ongoing **Assigned to:**

- Compile anonymous feedback evaluations from employees semi-annually.
- Review all information collected.
- Make a list of recommendations for overall improvement.
- Report the findings and recommendations to the administration.
- Make needed changes.
- Implement the changes.

Funding Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:
Estimate Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:



Department Stakeholders Work Session





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Goal 5	Develop a succession plan in order to disseminate the required knowledge, skills and abilities to all department personnel.	
Objective 5A	Research and identify other agencies that have succession plans in place.	
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a committee to compile the needed information by use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web-based research Direct fire department contact Compile the data and information collected. Conduct an analysis of the data and information collected. Create a report of findings from the analysis, to include recommendations. Provide the report of findings and recommendations to the administration. Secure the approval from the administration. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5B	Identify levels and disciplines within the department for applicability of the succession plan.	
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a department-wide consensus to determine the areas where succession planning will be implemented through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveying all personnel; Open forum discussions; Shift meetings. Compile the data and information collected. Conduct an analysis and interpret the data. Create a report of findings from the analysis to include recommendations. Provide the report of findings and recommendations to the administration. Secure the approval from the administration. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5C	Develop a succession plan with component consideration given to rank or position, based on identified needs.	
Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish the current required knowledge, skills, and abilities for each position and rank. Determine what credentials, knowledge, skills, and abilities that are needed and desired for each position and rank. Conduct a gap analysis to set goals to close the gap. Develop a transitional period of mentorship to obtain a level of competence in all positions and ranks. Strive to maintain a valid and current promotional list to meet the timeline benchmarks of the succession plan. Develop the required curriculum of mentorship to establish uniformity throughout the succession process. 	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:





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Objective 5D	Educate and train the department on the new succession plan.	
Timeframe	1 month	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the curriculum to the department on the new succession plan. • Utilize breakout sessions for more specific training for each level of mentorship. • Compile feedback through evaluations to ensure complete understanding of the new succession plan. • Analyze and report the findings to the administration for future revision or further consideration. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5E	Implement the succession plan to meet desired outcomes.	
Timeframe	1 year	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the positions in need of succession. • Determine the individuals who will be included in the program. • Gather pertinent materials that are applicable for the positions and disseminate accordingly. • Meet with individuals to review goals and benchmarks. • Establish a feasible timeline to evaluate and re-assess programs. • Report the progress to the administration for revision or future consideration. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 5F	Evaluate the effectiveness of the succession plan and arrange for revision as needed.	
Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain feedback from mentors and those being mentored regarding the process. • Include established probationary evaluations as a reference to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. • Review all complied information collected. • Make a list of recommendations to the administration and department personnel for feedback. • Make needed revisions and corrections. • Implement any changes as directed. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:





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Vision

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

North Ridgeville Fire Department's 2023 Vision

is to continue to be widely known as a community-oriented fire service agency that provides the highest level of public safety services to the residents, businesses, and visitors of our city.

Needing to always be our best, our strategic pursuit of greater community risk reduction will support our accountability and compassion to the people of North Ridgeville. We will endeavor to reduce the risks encountered to create a safer place to live, work, and play.

Remembering our commitment to serve while always embracing efficiency and fiscal responsibility, our initiative for staffing will ensure we can meet demand and growth in order to provide the best for our community. Through greater understanding of the risks within the city, we will strive to perfect our deployment model with an emphasis on timeliness in our response.

For us to personify our integrity, we will invest in our greatest asset, our members through an initiative anchored in safety, health, and wellness. We will also invest in our department with a greater focus on succession planning. Both will provide a greater return to those we serve, while always proving our dedication to longevity.

Dedicated to professional excellence always, we will respect our great history and embrace our futurity by holding each other accountable for fulfilling our mission, living our values, accomplishing our goals, and making this vision a reality.





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Performance Measurement

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

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

Reinventing Government

David Osborn and Ted Gaebler

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

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

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





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A “family of measures” typically utilized to indicate and measure performance includes:

- **Inputs** - Value of resource used to produce an output.
- **Outputs** – Quantifiable units produced which are activity-oriented and measurable.
- **Efficiency** - Inputs used per output (or outputs per input).
- **Service Quality** - The degree to which customers are satisfied with a program, or how accurately or timely a service is provided.
- **Outcome** - Qualitative consequences associated with a program/service; i.e., the ultimate benefit to the customer. Focused on the “why” of providing a service.

The Success of the Strategic Plan

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

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

Good to Great and the Social Sectors
Jim Collins

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

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





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Glossary of Terms, Acronyms, and Initialisms

ACBC	Aluminum Cans for Burned Children
Accreditation	A process by which an association or agency evaluates and recognizes a program of study or an institution as meeting certain predetermined standards or qualifications. It applies only to institutions or agencies and their programs of study or their services. Accreditation ensures a basic level of quality in the services received from an agency.
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BWC	Bureau of Workers' Compensation
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
CFAI	Commission on Fire Accreditation International
CPR	Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation
CPSE	Center for Public Safety Excellence
Customer(s)	The person or group who establishes the requirement of a process and receives or uses the outputs of that process; or the person or entity directly served by the department or agency.
Efficiency	A performance indication where inputs are measured per unit of output (or vice versa).
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
Environment	Circumstances and conditions that interact with and affect an organization. These can include economic, political, cultural, and physical conditions inside or outside the boundaries of the organization.
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IAFF	International Association of Fire Fighters
ISO	Insurance Services Office
Input	A performance indication where the value of resources is used to produce an output.
Mission	An enduring statement of purpose; the organization's reason for existence. Describes what the organization does, for whom it does it, and how it does it.
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NRFD	North Ridgeville Fire Department
OIC	Officer in Charge





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OOS	Out of Service
OSHA	Occupational Health and Safety Administration
Outcome	A performance indication where qualitative consequences are associated with a program/service; i.e., the ultimate benefit to the customer.
Output	A performance indication where a quality or number of units produced is identified.
Stakeholder	Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on, or influence the organization's resources or outputs, is affected by those outputs, or has an interest in or expectation of the organization.
Strategic Goal	A broad target that defines how the agency will carry out its mission over a specific period of time. An aim. The final result of an action. Something to accomplish in assisting the agency to move forward.
Strategic Objective	A specific, measurable accomplishment required to realize the successful completion of a strategic goal.
Strategic Plan	A long-range planning document that defines the mission of the agency and broadly identifies how it will be accomplished, and that provides the framework for more detailed annual and operational plans.
Strategic Planning	The continuous and systematic process whereby guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future, develop procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is to be measured.
Strategy	A description of how a strategic objective will be achieved. A possibility. A plan or methodology for achieving a goal.
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
Vision	An idealized view of a desirable and potentially achievable future state - where or what an organization would like to be in the future.





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Appendix 1 – Community Comments

Community Expectations

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

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

Community Expectations of the North Ridgeville Fire Department (in priority order)

1. Speed of reaction time. Fast response time to the scene. Quick response time - less than five minutes. Timely response. Short response time. Reasonable response times. Quick response times. (133)
2. Well-trained firefighters/paramedics. Well-trained paramedics and fire personnel. Well-trained. Department has the proper, updated training. High level of training. Continuous training. (54)
3. Well-maintained equipment/supplies. Modern equipment to meet the needs of the growing population. Up-to-date equipment. Adequate amount of equipment and personnel to respond to an event involving 500+ employees. State-of-the-art equipment. (45)
4. Protect the lives of the North Ridgeville citizens (ambulance services). Save lives. High-quality medical care. (23)
5. Community communication. Give the community proper information on contacting the fire department. Education of services available to all of the community. (23)
6. Personnel that are involved in the community. Visibility in the community. Community involvement. Public outreach - touch a truck. Need for more community interaction. (20)





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7. Being able to perform the job/task that you are here to do...put out fires, car accidents, EMS, etc. Knowing their stuff - whether it be medical/fire/other, employees who know what to do and do the right thing. (13)
8. Emergency availability. Availability on staffing when needed. (11)
9. Train citizens/employers/employees for medical/fire emergencies. Working with our youth to caution them about drug and alcohol addiction. (11)
10. Preparedness - in large-scale emergency event. Critical incident management, i.e. flooding, tornadoes, etc. (10)
11. Protect the property (homes) of the North Ridgeville citizens (fire response). Limit property loss. (9)
12. Inspection for safety. Safety inspections. (8)
13. Protect employees - life safety. Execute in a safe manner. (7)
14. Professionalism - attitude goes a long way. Professionalism among staff. (6)
15. Fully staffed - nobody is over-worked, tired, burning the midnight oil so to speak to affect their ability to do their job. Continue to grow in size and staffing. (5)
16. Knowledge of infrastructure, i.e. fire hydrant locations, water valve locations, size of mains. Knowledge of buildings and properties. (5)
17. Adequately staffed for size of the community. (5)
18. Able to cover entire community when they are called. (4)
19. Assessing the situation - fire or medical. (4)
20. Support in maintaining fire/sprinkler ponds. (4)
21. Ease of access. They must be able to get ahold of the department and the department needs to be able to react. This requires contacting them and transportation back to the scene. (4)
22. Collaborative efforts with the police department. (4)
23. Partnering with other agencies to put on programs. (4)
24. Staff to be compassionate and competent to the residents. (4)
25. Efficient management. Strong leadership. (4)
26. Ease of dealing with 911. (4)
27. Serve our community at a high standards. (3)
28. Use our tax dollars properly. Operate within budget. (3)





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29. Emphasis on customer service. (3)
30. Knowledge and experience with current NFPA regulations and the ability to provide guidance. (3)
31. Maintain relationship with city administration - open line of communication. (3)
32. Assist with safety of the school district. (3)
33. North Ridgeville Public Forum (for fire and police only). (3)
34. Best qualified people on staff. (3)
35. Kind, caring firemen during a stressful time. (3)
36. Continuing education. (2)
37. Keep your great image. (2)
38. Support with construction/modifications (inspections). (2)
39. Keeping the community safe. (2)
40. Top technology/communications. (2)
41. Personnel that are calm and friendly. (2)
42. Awareness solutions - being aware of surroundings in an emergency. (1)
43. Managing trends to responses and having a CQI program for monitoring trends and operations.
(1)



Community Stakeholders Work Session





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Areas of Community Concern

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

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

Areas of Community Concern about the North Ridgeville Fire Department (verbatim, in priority order)

1. Do we need more fire stations - we are going fast? That we may not have enough departments for our growing city. As costs rise and the community grows, will choices have to be made regarding the services provided? Long-term costs - we are a growing city and it is going to be expensive to expand. Possibly look to district-style coverage with other cities to help alleviate costs. Inspection capabilities for the growing business community? As North Ridgeville grows and traffic increases, can the current department continue to meet demand without sacrificing quality or level of service? (102)
2. Do we have enough firefighters? Staffing levels. Being able to find/hire the correct staff. Staffing - enough employees to do the jobs. Age of the current force - based on expected growth in the next five years, how many firefighters will retire, how many new hires? (42)
3. Is our equipment state-of-the-art? Any updating needed? Do they have proper and updated equipment? Not enough equipment to reach location. (39)
4. Enough funding to provide for the increased number of runs. Person-power, funding. Have enough money for proper equipment. Is the current budget adequate? Lack of sufficient consideration by city to address and appropriate funds toward safety services needs of the community. (36)





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5. Response time. Response time to the northwest part of the city. Are response times at minimum levels and/or could they be compressed with additional station locations? (33)
6. Training. Do they get the proper training? Current training. Training keeping up with technology. (27)
7. Cost of buildings and equipment. Cost of providing service. Most efficient use of budget. Cost of ambulance. (22)
8. Awareness/skills - children. Lack of community programs (CPR, Stop the Bleed) and if this is available, it is not advertised well. Continued education for seniors. CPR class available? (18)
9. Getting around the city with all of the roadwork going on at one time. How have you been handling the Center Ridge Road widening during calls? Does construction prevent routes from being taken? (15)
10. Safety. Your safety - fake 911 calls to 1st responders. Firefighter stress/burnout. (15)
11. Making sure we are prepared for large-scale emergency events. Training for active shooter/natural disasters response. (14)
12. Responding to emergencies when going through developments. Traffic pattern at new fire station - especially during school drop off and pick up hours - major concern. (10)
13. Let council know what the department needs for the future budget, so we can prepare - (we aren't fond of surprises - we like being included, share with us). Do they get the needed backing from city administration? Is there clear communication between the city and the fire department? (8)
14. Does the railroad stand in the way of preventing timeliness? (5)
15. Familiar with facility. (5)
16. Mutual aid. High dependence on mutual aid. (5)
17. Notify public on how they can utilize replaced smoke alarms - i.e. I'm replacing 10-year batteries, but nothing wrong with the current ones. Could someone use them? (5)
18. Do we truly understand your expectations, both current and in the future? (5)
19. Equal opportunity employment, i.e. women on staff, not having proper living quarters, etc. (4)
20. Water volume at hydrants. (4)
21. How have non-growth factors put new demands on the department? - (increased traffic, opioid crisis, etc.). (4)





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22. North Ridgeville has a key access (for your home in emergency. How many people know about it? (4)
23. Ability to respond to potential plastics fire. (3)
24. Availability of staffing with several EMS calls and major working fire. (3)
25. Training on updated code changes/compliance. (3)
26. Access to fire department building when dropping something off. (3)
27. Location - space. (2)
28. Days worked versus days off. (2)
29. As a building owner, sometimes the government rules are onerous. - You may not be able to fix this, but it is a concern. (2)
30. Not enough communication about issues or concerns other than levy times. (2)
31. Increasing number of nursing homes requiring more EMS calls. (2)
32. Knowledgeable staff in all areas of services to the aging population. (1)
33. Not being able to maintain the low insurance rates due to the inability of the fire department to respond to calls. (1)
34. Keeping staff focused on the mission and values as the department's staff turns over. (1)



Community Stakeholders Work Session





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Positive Community Feedback

The CPSE promotes the belief that, for a strategic plan to be valid, the community's view on the organization's strengths must be established. Needless efforts are often put forth in over-developing areas that are already successful. However, proper utilization and promotion of the strengths may often help the organization overcome or offset some of the identified weaknesses.

Positive Community Comments about the North Ridgeville Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)

- Compassionate personnel – personalities.
- Response times.
- Well trained.
- Well trained, very professional personnel.
- Modern, well maintained equipment.
- EMS transports to Avon Hospital.
- EMS response times (very good).
- People friendly fire dept. and EMS.
- Involve the community – (today's meeting).
- We have well trained firefighters/paramedics.
- Community oriented.
- Response times.
- Always there, response is excellent.
- Great image! Staff and equipment.
- Very involved in city events.
- You guys are doing a great job!
- Good shape – able to handle any task.
- Community involvement.
- Open communication.
- Well trained.
- Response times.
- I have never had to utilize NRFD in a personal setting, although I do have experience with several members in a professional setting. Overall it is a solid department in my opinion.





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- Under the leadership of Chief Reese – our fire department has a very good reputation in/by the public. This is important. The chief has done a very good job and he and his staff are very approachable and conversational.
- Please keep doing that (above) the public loves that.
- The fire department responds to calls in timely matter.
- Use of mutual aid of other departments when working fire.
- Very good to work with during and after construction of our building.
- Great support during/after annual inspection.
- Good communication with business.
- Prompt response for EMS.
- Quality and professional personnel.
- Has great leadership (chief).
- Has good chain of command.
- Response time is good.
- Has good community relationship.
- Excellent response time – on three occasions I have had to call 911 in last 10 years. Always there in a flash.
- Their bedside manner – excellent service. They are very professional.
- Modernizing – getting new facility that will allow department to address needs more effectively.
- Leadership – Chief Reese is very approachable and knowledgeable and cares for our community.
- Feedback – they ask how they can get better.
- Most efficient use of available resources.
- Community outreach.
- Effective personnel recruiting.
- Continuous training and education of personnel.
- Management team evolving - searching for better ways – methods.
- Great communication with chain of command.
- Firemen kind and friendly.
- Fire administration works with business and community.
- Their willingness to participate in demonstrations, events, and activities.





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- It is very reassuring to see firsthand the knowledge of the NRFD training throughout the city.
- Always quick to respond back.
- Always cautious while driving through city.
- Always has been at the Northridge Apartments for quick response.
- Very knowledgeable staff. Friendly and caring staff.
- Long standing employees that the community can grow with.
- Important to know who to call for emergencies.
- Excellent response from paramedics when called in regard to my wife. Many, many times called.
- Concerned and friendly approach to incident, if only a question that needs to be answered.
- The service in North Ridgeville is very good. Usually responsive (quickly) quality and with good “customer service.”
- The fire department is involved in the community and easy to work with.
- Rules are obeyed (government restrictions) but extra mandates are kept under control. And when changes have to be made, explanations are forthcoming.
- I am not a resident but have the highest regard for the department based on my experience at Lake Ridge Academy, in terms of response time, education and public outreach.
- Everyone is very accessible/open to meet.
- I’ve never heard of any issue / concern relating to the fire department.
- If they are reaching out in this setting, they are open to suggestion and feedback. Not all cities want feedback.
- There is always opportunity with growth.
- Outstanding training, formal goals, certification.
- Relationship with our residents – highly respected and appreciated.
- Willingness of our firefighters to be involved in the community, i.e. safety fair, fishing derby.
- Strong leadership, regional recognition and respect.
- Quality of personnel, fit, engaged proud.
- Chief has the vision as a leader and keeping the focus on providing emergency services to the community.
- Staff goes above and beyond.
- Equipment is new and in working condition.





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- Mayor's support to the fire department.
- Firefighters appear to be engaged in the community.
- They are presently a group of professional paramedics and firefighters.
- Their response times to calls is excellent.
- Their services rendered are the best in class.
- All equipped to ready to serve. All medical equipment top notch.
- Leadership in the fire department is excellent.
- Willingness to be part of the community.
- Leadership of NRFD appears strong.
- New fire house should provide needed resources.
- Collaboration with local school district.
- The department is very easy to work with and communicate with.
- The department is very responsive on any questions or issues / concerns when new challenges are presented.
- Impressed with support given with annual testing.
- Ability to educate those that have questions regarding fire protection.
- Knowledgeable.
- They have always been available for any preventative maintenance our business requires.
- Community presence, they have been at community events.
- They will be getting a new headquarters with new equipment.
- Their response time to any incident at our business has always been timely and effective.
- They are very nice and courteous.
- Visible in the community.
- Great rapport and friendly with community.
- Knowledgeable and friendly staff.
- Excellent community ambassadors.
- Seem to be well trained.
- Their response time seems to be okay.
- They seem to be efficient.
- They are friendly.





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- They seem to be community-minded.
- I am a kid person – the event on October 6th is a great way for kids to see the firemen – not be afraid, have fun.
- I do think there is a presence in the community.
- I've not needed an ambulance, but I have heard the people are kind.
- This event shows that they care about the community.
- Speakers for events.
- I believe the leadership of the department is second-to-none within the entire city.
- Have shown good use of tax dollars – often utilizing grants and other alternative forms of generating income for service/equipment needs.
- Good overall communication with the community/residents.
- Works well with having less staff than likely required.
- Great leadership. Feel John Reese is doing a great job.
- “Youthful” department.
- Involvement with fire education in schools.
- Seem to be constantly upgrading equipment.
- Building the new station is a good sign of community support.
- Strong leadership – Chief Reese, Assistant Chief Graf, and Assistant Chief Uhnak provide a great command structure for NRFD.
- Highly trained/professional membership – some of the best trained/skilled firefighters in the area.
- “Customer service” – great department/community involvement is excellent.
- Technology/communication – Westcom gives NRFD the ability to continue providing superior service even when “the barn is empty.”
- We couldn't ask for better medical attention when my husband and I were both hospitalized early this year and had to be transported to the hospital.





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Other Thoughts and Comments

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

Other Community Comments about the North Ridgeville Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)

- As a local funeral director, we appreciate staff staying on scene of home deaths. This is comforting to the family of deceased and very helpful to funeral home personnel. We greatly appreciate their assistance. Sometimes we are unable to get to the house within 45 minutes. Can we work out a way to pay fire department to transport to funeral home to allow department unit back in service quicker?
- Siren for tornado warnings.
- In general, the department has a good reputation for providing the necessary services to the community and their safety fair has been a welcome addition to their outreach efforts.
- Why does the ambulance seem to always run to the hospital lights and sirens? Do we have a high percentage of people that sick? Is it policy? A lack of confidence amongst NRFD medics?
- Optional membership style program. In addition to what we pay, a homeowner pays a small extra yearly fee. If NRFD is utilized, it is not billed. If it is not, money goes to NRFD budget.
- Will the fire department be able to keep up with growth in the city without additional/increase in tax dollars?
- CPR and first aid training class for citizens.
- Chief and inspection team are great to work with.
- Do the people of the community give the department adequate backing?
- Develop a team that would meet semi-annually to review NFPA code changes and update key individuals from area businesses NRFD.
- Use this team to visit other facilities to implement best practices.
- I truly appreciate our fire department. They have helped my family on a number of occasions. I do have concerns about the traffic at the new station which I'm sure will be addressed. They do a wonderful job.
- This department needs another location to better serve western North Ridgeville. The citizens are very supportive due to management's commitment to reaching out.
- What can we – business and residents do to make your job easier? How can we help?





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- My biggest concern for the community is the fastness of the community growing and trying to keep up with the need and services of the kids and senior living in the community.
- I feel there needs to be more education on 911 calls and response for seniors.... senior aids and services help for those who cannot afford services.
- We have worked with the fire department many times and our experiences are almost always incredibly positive. The few moments of difficulty have valid reasons (the night of my wreck, there were three other wrecks at the same time) or, so I was told.
- I commend you for asking for feedback.
- Outstanding department and longing to be even better.
- NRFD is a great department and needs to continue to grow.
- I'm glad they are looking to stay ahead of the game with this strategic planning process.
- I would love to see more forums and opportunities to have input. It would have been helpful to hear the positives and concerns of the department.
- Firefighters are working with and excel with what they have to work with. We feel the city does not consider adequately, the future growth of the city's needs requirements. Safety is paramount in our community for our residents and should take precedence over extraneous and superficial programs (aquatic center) as an example. Our residents and firefighters are and should be priority.
- Very favorable overall impression.
- They act very professional.
- I got concerned for them sometimes when watching drivers respond when they are on a call.
- To be honest, I have been fortunate that I haven't had to use the service. My neighbor always needs the ambulance and said it is costly. I've heard that from many people, so would like to have that addressed. I truly think everyone seems very kind.
- Chief Reese and his team have been a good foundation for exemplary service to community with the resources they have been provided.
- Strategic planning process is very important. Glad to see they are doing it!
- NRFD is the best in the west. If given the opportunity, i.e. staffing/funding for technology/communications/training equipment, they will continue to be the standard in fire/EMS in Northeast Ohio.





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Appendix 2 – Supporting Services

Supporting Services of the North Ridgeville Fire Department		
Training	Westcom	Public Works
Law Enforcement	IAFF, Local 2129	Ohio Department of Transportation
Red Cross	Vendors	Human Resources
Civic Organizations	Finance	School District
Colleges and Universities	Faith-Based Groups	FEMA
National Fire Academy	Hospital(s)	Automatic/Mutual Aid Partners
Utility Purveyors	Information Technology	Fleet Services
Railroads	Lorain County EMA	Ohio Turnpike
Helicopter Services	Lorain County Specialty Teams	Lorain County Fire Chiefs' Association
State Fire Marshal's Office	Veterans of Foreign Wars	Ohio Department of Public Safety
Coast Guard	Towing Companies	Environmental Protection Agency
Lorain County Coroner	Great Lakes Billing	Senior Center
National Registry	ACBC	Lorain County Fire Investigators
Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation		





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Appendix 3 - SWOT

Strengths

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

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

Strengths of the North Ridgeville Fire Department	
Quality of equipment – well-maintained, user friendly, good state of readiness	Technology – ERS, Active 911, iPads, power cots and load systems, Lucas devices, capnography, Facebook
Public image – positive and supportive, no failed levies	Our staff – well-trained, capable, proficient, seasoned and young combined
Community involvement – CPR, fishing derby, Santa visit, open house, ACBC	Good relationships – administration and line, line and officers, interdepartmental and external agencies.
Leadership – quality, progressive, respect in both directions, actually cares, non-complacent	Empathy toward demographic – seniors, pediatrics, economically challenged
	Quality of EMS care – involved medical direction
Low turnover rate	General competence through ongoing training
Versatility between different members	Attitude - positive
Humor	Personnel adaptability - situational
Bi-annual physicals	Work well together
New fire station	Fit testing – respirator evaluation
Fire Museum	Positive attitude across all ranks – increased morale
Mike Williams – ACBC	Westcom – helps with mutual aid, Pulse Point
Funding for vehicles	Ambulance billing – all revenue comes to the department





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Weaknesses

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

Weaknesses of the North Ridgeville Fire Department	
2 stations versus 25 square miles	1 person in fire prevention
2-person companies	Lack of fully functional (equipped) reserve vehicles
Lack of updated maps	Facilities (condition and size)
Personnel versus anticipated growth	Jump companies
Lack of succession planning	ISO rating
Tool reconditioning – replacement	911 redundancies – extended alarm handling time
Lack of disaster planning	No active shooter training
Planning for road closures and construction	Overlapping call volume demands
Closing Station 2 for certain trainings – fix video conference equipment	Lack of communications with other agencies – law enforcement, MARCs with mutual aid
Timely apparatus repairs - 1 mechanic or OOS vehicles for long periods	Call volume inhibits ability to complete daily and annual tasks – training, hydrants, lose testing
Shift cohesiveness	Dispatching both stations – rest deprivation
Interdepartmental/shift communication at shift change due to call volume	Possibility of having the OIC out on EMS call when structure fire comes in
Lack of a formal inventory processes (supplies) – creating delays	Interdepartmental communications on a daily basis – Stations 1 and 2
Radio communications – three systems – 800 MHz, UHF, VHF	Non-emergent responses (lights and sirens) – fire and medical
Reliance on technology – loss of internet or IT service, computers (age, speed, reliability)	The amount of equipment versus anticipated growth of the city
Lack of recognition program	No dedicated shift officer
Limitations to the promotional process due to law and contract	





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Opportunities

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

Opportunities for the North Ridgeville Fire Department	
Community preparedness and CERT, first aid – become more involved via programs	Expansion of fire prevention to help facilitate needs of community businesses
Educational opportunities – Blue Card, Fire Officer – specialized training	Community education opportunities on what we do, what we have
Education	Staffing, grants, etc.
ISO rating improvement	Develop code review for local businesses
Community paramedicine – reducing calls by educating citizens	Accreditation to provide certified classes such as CPR, first aid, Lorain County Fire Chiefs
Stronger relationship with the police department	Department accreditation
Community involvement – block party visits, Girls and Boys Club, Fire Explorers program	Utilize new facility to full potential – training, community education, disaster/MCI incidents
Fire officer accreditation	EMS technology improvements
Non-emergency medical transports for residents	Mobile integrated healthcare
Growth – take department in positive direction	Social media
Collaborative training with other departments, agencies, cities, active shooter – police, EMA, mutual aid fire departments	Improved customer service – flu shots, non-emergency return transports, smoke detector program
Blood pressure checks, school safety talks – increased visibility in the community	





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Threats

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

Potential Threats to the North Ridgeville Fire Department	
Negative public opinion	Distracted drivers
Increased community demand – population, call volume increase, commercial growth	Increased response times due to construction and infrastructure improvements
Natural disasters – flooding	Lack of fires – experience
Lack of industry – North Ridgeville is a bedroom community	Transportation – railway, turnpike – hazardous materials potential
Social media	Misinformed residents
Future turnover – lack of experience	Lack of resources – vehicles and staffing
Competition for hiring and recruitment for new employees	Financial restraints – levy based, reducing general fund
Cancer, health and mental wellness	City water supply – reduced due to growth
Age of department members due to insurance costs	Increase costs of vehicles
Aging population (run volume)	School shootings and media portrayal
Opioid epidemic, marijuana legalization	Training requirements
Federal regulations	Terrorism
Technology	Increased amount of firearms
Communicable diseases	Downturn in the economy
Change in city administrations and governance	Loss of public support (levies, incidents)
Community events that exhaust resources – Cornfest, Victory Park events, July 4 th , Harvest Ridge event at South Central	





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Appendix 4 – Critical and Service Gap Issues

Critical and Service Gap Issues Identified by the Department Stakeholders			
Group 1		Group 2	
Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Run volume ○ Increased and aging population ○ Public wants more involvement ○ Deployment of assets ○ Increased daily responsibilities ○ Mutual aid ○ Shift commander acts as a company officer – line duties ○ Fire prevention 		Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two-person companies ○ Jump companies ○ Fire prevention – one person ○ Overlapping emergencies (calls) ○ OIC encumbered during other emergencies ○ Too few officers ○ Concern from community members ○ ISO rating increase ○ Decline in customer service ability 	
ISO Rating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staffing ○ Water supply ○ Response times ○ Training ○ Equipment ○ Stations – number and locations 		ISO Rating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Risk reduction ○ Documentation ○ Staffing ○ Training ○ Fire prevention ○ Water supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two stations ○ Twenty-five square miles ○ Equipment ○ Administrative support ○ Customer service
Response Times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staffing ○ Stations – number and location ○ Costs and funding ○ Multiple calls 		Response Times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two fire stations ○ Dispatch delay ○ Jump companies ○ Road construction ○ Twenty-five square miles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multiple calls ○ Turnout time ○ ISO rating increasing ○ Mutual aid ○ Staffing decrease ○ Customer service
Fire Prevention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual inspections ○ Staffing ○ Fire investigation ○ Public education ○ Availability ○ Pre-plans ○ Education/training 		Emergency/Non-emergency Responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No formal SOG ○ Dispatch ○ Traffic ○ Training ○ Liability ○ Obligation ○ Public education ○ Turnaround time 	





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

Group 1	Group 2
Community Involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of communication and advertising ○ Volunteerism ○ Staffing ○ Increased programs 	Community Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call volume ○ Staffing ○ Fire prevention – one person ○ Financial restraints ○ Education/certification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilities ○ Customer service ○ Relationship with schools ○ External communication ○ Text emergency communication
Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Run volume ○ Cost ○ Facilities ○ Accreditation ○ Relay on outside sources ○ Information technology 	Firefighter Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Injury prevention ○ Staffing ○ Cancer ○ Wellness program ○ Human resources department ○ Increased calls ○ Facilities ○ Communicable diseases ○ Bed bugs ○ Radio communications
Succession Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of training/mentoring ○ Cost and funding ○ Knowledge not passed down ○ Lack of preparation ○ Restricted by charter 	Succession Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Retirements ○ Healthcare costs ○ Call volume ○ Explorer program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Labor pool ○ Credentialing ○ Participation ○ Lack of interest ○ Planning
Emergency Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multiple radios ○ Two dispatch centers ○ Multiple ICS ○ Hardware not user-friendly ○ Lack of training with mutual aid 	Equipment and Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aging population ○ Increasing population ○ No plan ○ Disaster plan ○ Railway/turnpike ○ One mechanic ○ Finances ○ Preventive maintenance ○ Documentation

