



ST. JOHN'S FIRE DISTRICT

2024-2029

STRATEGIC PLAN



Facilitated by



Center for
Public Safety
Excellence®

The CPSE acknowledges and thanks the community and agency stakeholders for their participation and input into this community-driven strategic planning process. The CPSE also recognizes Fire Chief Ryan Kunitzer and all who participated for their commitment to this process.

This community-driven strategic plan was developed in December 2023, beginning with a meeting facilitated by representatives from the CPSE for community members, as named below. The community stakeholders' feedback considered by agency stakeholders in developing this strategic plan can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Community Stakeholders

Abdullah Almehbash	Dan Curia	Brooks McGougan	William Thomae
Liz Ashley	Tony Elder	Pat Murphy	Stephanie Tillerson
Russ Berner	Craig Harris	Tom Nevin	Isiah White
Eric Britton	Michael Heidingsfelder	Heather Paton	Dwight Williams
Allyson Burrell	Yvonne Johnston	Nancy Robison	Kim Wynn
Joe Coates	Dan Kortvelesy	Steve Rolando	Bob Wright
Michael Cosworth	Debra Lehman	Mark Ruppel	

The agency stakeholder work sessions, conducted over three days, involved a group representing a broad cross-section of the STJFD, as named below.

Agency Stakeholders

Nathan Adams	Mike Derderian	Brandon Keener	Scott McCullough
David Auricchio	Shawn Flanagan	Ryan Kunitzer	Christopher Mitchell
Ramona Brown	Edward Gamard	Mat Lomas	Jackie Stanley
Randy Brown	Sean Gray	Josh Madden	Mason Underwood
Sam Brown	Rusty Grow	Steve Mantie	Robert Whaley
Danielle Chambers	Jason Hanks	Shane McCarthy	Brian Yuncker
Baxley Crosby	Kevin Henson		

Message from the Fire Chief

On behalf of the women and men of the St. John's Fire District, it is my pleasure to present the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan. St. John's Fire District is committed to providing excellent customer service to our residents and visitors throughout the sea islands.

To provide excellent, quality, and innovative services, the District must be proactive and committed to continuous improvement. We must assess the needs of our communities, collaborate with other stakeholders, and develop realistic solutions to complex problems.



We will accomplish this by using this Strategic Plan as a roadmap and guiding document. This living document will give our stakeholders and our personnel the ability to evaluate, review, and refine the strategy to be able to meet our objectives. The District has many strengths but also weaknesses. This plan will help us focus our time, energy, and resources on meeting the needs of our community and our staff.

I am immensely proud of the work and effort our team has undertaken to develop and implement this plan. They are firm in their standing and commitment to the success of the organization. Additionally, this group developed the mission and core values of the organization. These are living words that are more than something written on a piece of paper. These are the measuring stick for success and our accountability tool.

Over the next five years, the District will work hard to accomplish the goals outlined in this plan and celebrate its success. I have no doubt that over these next several years we will be a stronger, diverse, and effective service provider.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Kunitzer', written in a cursive style.

Ryan Kunitzer, Fire Chief

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Introduction

The community serviced by the St. John's Fire District (STJFD) receives high levels of professionalism and efficiency from the agency's proactive approach to risk reduction and emergency mitigation. As such, the STJFD contracted with the Center for Public Safety Excellence® (CPSE®) to facilitate a community-driven strategic plan. The process utilized by CPSE aligns with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International's (CFAI®) fire and emergency services accreditation model but also considers all parameters prescribed by the authority having jurisdiction.

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

Process

Understanding what the customer desires is vital to the success of any organization. In this case, the customer is the community that the St. John's Fire District serves. This applies even if the service organization is a governmental entity. Community-driven strategic planning ensures the community remains a focus of the organization's direction and community feedback is at the heart of all deliberations and development of this strategic plan.

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

Community Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Identify, from the community perspective, things the agency should and should not change.
- ✓ Identify the community's expectations for the agency, concerns about or for the agency, and aspects the community views as strengths or positives.
- ✓ Define the programs provided to the community.
- ✓ Establish the community's prioritized view of the programs and services provided by the agency.



Community Stakeholder Work Session

Agency Stakeholder Work

- ✓ Identify the agency's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results.
- ✓ Revisit the mission statement, giving careful attention to the services and programs currently provided and which logically can be provided in the future.
- ✓ Determine the values of the agency's membership.
- ✓ Determine the agency's current vision considering the consensus built from the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and desired results.
- ✓ Identify the agency's challenges, service gaps, and causal effects through a thematic sifting process.
- ✓ Determine, by consensus, strategic initiatives for outcome-based organizational improvement.
- ✓ Develop strategic goals, SMART objectives with relative timelines, and comprehensive critical task concepts focusing on outcomes.

Agency Background

The South Carolina Legislative Act 369 created the St. John's Fire District in April of 1959. The district is comprised of four barrier islands covering a land mass of approximately 185 square miles. These islands are Johns, Kiawah, Seabrook, and Wadmalaw.



The St. John's Fire District is governed by a nine-member commission that the Governor appoints based on recommendations by the Charleston County Council. Each of the four islands has representation on the commission, which participates in monthly commission meetings and other functions as necessary.

The St. John's Fire District currently has seven fully staffed fire stations. There are three stations located on John's Island, two stations located on Kiawah Island, one station located on Seabrook Island, and one station located on Wadmalaw Island. The district has seven front-line pumper/tankers, two aerial apparatus, one rescue apparatus, and one tender.

The St. John's Fire District currently employs 144 personnel, of whom 126 are fire suppression certified. The district also maintains a maintenance division with three personnel and an administrative staff with five personnel.

The St. John's Fire District utilizes a three-shift rotation, providing emergency services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The minimum daily staffing is thirty-five fire suppression-rated personnel and two battalion chiefs to perform all emergency services and maintain the daily operations throughout the district. An officer is assigned to each fire station to manage the operation throughout the day.

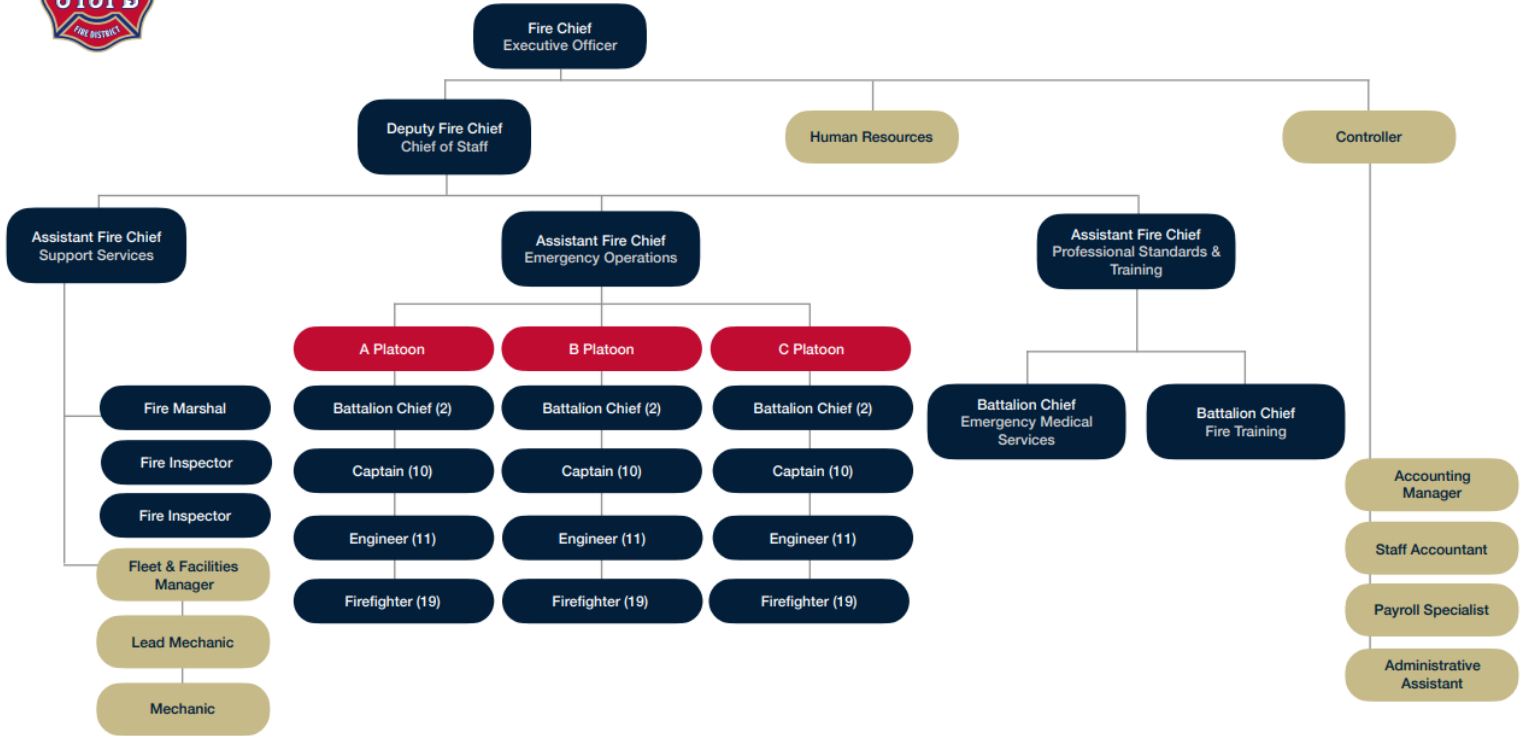


The St. John's Fire District is made up of a group of dedicated men and women striving to improve the level of life and fire safety for the residents and guests of our community. It is constantly seeking ways to improve on the standards set forth by the Federal, State, and local governments, as well as National Consensus Standards.

Organizational Chart



Organization Chart



Agency Stakeholder Work Session Participants

Mission

The mission provides an internal aspect of the existence of an organization and, to a degree, an empowering consideration for all STJFD members. The purpose of the mission is to answer the questions:

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

A workgroup met to revisit an existing mission and after ensuring it answered the questions, it was accepted by the entire group.

R O O T E D I N T R A D I T I O N .



**D R I V E N B Y
P R O G R E S S .**

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 agreed upon by the entire group.

We are rooted in tradition, driven by progress, and held ACCOUNTABLE with integrity.

We are committed to providing SERVICE to our community with trust, compassion, and empathy.

We will provide an INCLUSIVE environment exemplified by honesty, respect, and equity.

We will achieve EXCELLENCE through professional development, dedication, and honor.

Vision

An organizational vision exists to keep all agency members focused on the successful futurity of the St. John's Fire District and to guide quality change and improvement in alignment with the community. In support of the futurity created within the community-driven strategic planning process, CPSE facilitated the development of the STJFD's vision for the future. The agency will support the reality of this vision through successful plan implementation and goal achievement.

We will meet the changing needs of our community through a proactive approach. We will move the District forward through an inclusive, family-oriented, and customer service based culture. This will be accomplished with open communication, innovative technology, high professional standards, and a team-based approach.

Goals

Community feedback and the SOAR process led to the determination of strategic initiatives representing the high-level issues the agency stakeholders developed into goals. The STJFD must now make these goals a focus of efforts that will direct the agency to its desired future. Goals with complete objectives, tasks, timelines, and assignments are included in a separate **Management and Implementation Guide**.



Effectively recruit qualified candidates and retain skilled and committed personnel to meet the growing needs of the District.



Establish metrics to determine reach, engagement, and effectiveness.



Design and maintain a professional career path that fosters an individual's development.



Effectively procure and maintain District capital resources.



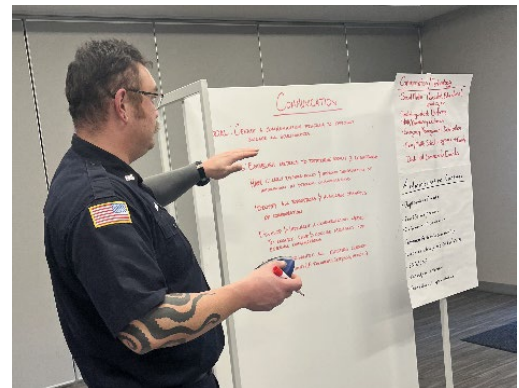
Enhance all aspects of emergency medical services to meet the growing needs of the stakeholders.



Prepare for, pursue, achieve, and maintain international accreditation to better serve our community and embrace excellence through continuous improvement management.

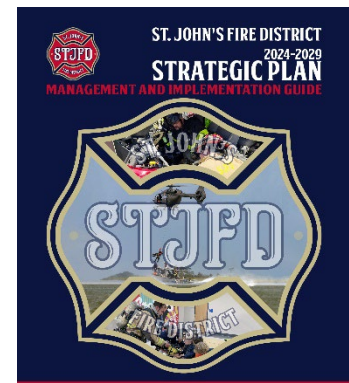


Agency Stakeholders Work Sessions



Conclusion

Working with community and department members from all levels, this strategic plan was developed...but the work is truly just beginning. Agency stakeholders must now execute and institutionalize the plan to ensure the community's expectations and the St. John's Fire District's vision remain congruent. The accompanying **Management and Implementation Guide** will assist the STJFD in the mechanics of implementation. The guide is not intended to be all-inclusive; rather, it provides flexibility to ensure future success.



"...we will chase perfection, and we will chase it relentlessly, knowing all the while we can never attain it. But along the way, we shall catch excellence."

Vince Lombardi

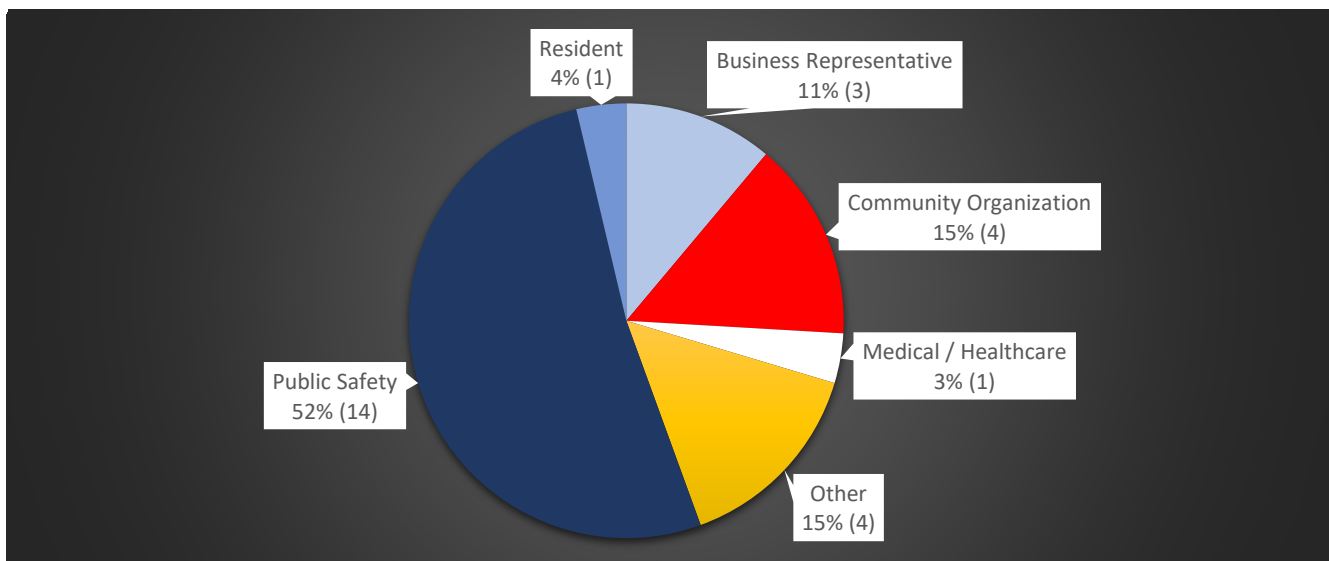
It must be remembered that during this journey of regeneration through change and improvement, recalculation may need to occur to find the success desired. This strategic plan is a roadmap to help the St. John's Fire District navigate that change and futurity. The ability to pivot to meet the current environment as institutionalization and implementation occur provides a greater likelihood that the desired outcomes and efficacies will be realized as envisioned.

Appendices

A. Community Stakeholder Findings

The St. John's Fire District demonstrates a commitment to its community via a focus on community input and satisfaction. A community stakeholder session was held to gather feedback from the respondents on the agency and its various services delivered. The information gathered from the community stakeholder feedback provided understanding to the agency stakeholders of any misalignment with its organizational foundation and performance or values-based expectations or concerns from which new improvement strategies and processes may be created.

Community stakeholders were identified by the agency to ensure broad representation. The breakdown of groups represented is presented here:



Respondents were asked to list, in priority order, up to three subjects relative to expectations, concerns, and strengths or positives for the STJFD. Expectations and concerns were then analyzed for themes and weighted. The numbers in the parentheses are the cumulative weighted value that correlate with the themes identified. While the themes are listed in prioritized, weighted order, all responses were important in the planning process. Strengths or positives are listed verbatim and may be repeated based on different respondents.

The specific data and findings from the community stakeholder respondents are provided to follow.

Community Expectations of the St. John's Fire District (in priority order)

1. Experience, competency, and training. Expand expertise (ongoing education, current thought) in emergency service areas. Operational readiness/training standards. Properly trained to mitigate all needs of the community as a whole. Educate more personnel FD personnel to be full paramedics. Well-trained personnel. Consistent training for different situations. Well-trained staff. (38)

2. Fast response time. Response time. Reasonable response times. Response time. Maintaining or decreasing response times. Respond to calls in a quick manner. To arrive at the scene within 5 minutes. (38)
3. Maintain fire/EMS coverage and response times throughout entire service area. Provide emergency services. I expect the fire department to be a high-performing team of professionals who ensure safety in our community. To provide excellent customer service to stakeholders. Protect life and home/property. Response to fire and other emergencies. (28)
4. Professionalism. Professionalism. (14)
5. Better medical services, i.e., paramedics and advanced EMT and ambulance services. Patient care. Ability to render medical aid until EMS arrives. Bring at least one full-time EMS truck onto the island. (12)
6. Community education and outreach. More community outreach, perhaps an open house or ride-along. Proactive training for our local businesses - set up training classes at town hall. (10)
7. Adequate community risk reduction outcomes. Safety at the amenities (Sandcastle, Beach Club, future Cape Club) need to be monitored and enforced more. Fire safety and prevention. (9)
8. I expect the district will find ways to recruit the next generation of firefighters so that the community is not left unprotected. Continue to improve salary ranges and benefits to attract quality staff. Full staffing of fire fighters-cost, hiring, retention. (9)
9. Coverage of the community - reducing response times. Station location to provide the best response time. (8)
10. Proper equipment to complete the task at hand. Well-equipped / best tools and PPE for the job. Up-to-date equipment. Have necessary equipment for adverse situations based on the location of Kiawah Island. (8)
11. I expect the district to have open and ongoing communication with the community and other public safety partners. To communicate with other agencies that are responding to your jurisdiction and utilizing incident management tools. (6)
12. Empathy. Integrity, courage. (6)
13. Adequate staffing. Staffing. (6)
14. To constantly and consistently improve in their results and to adapt to the needs of the community. (3)
15. Extinguish fires. (3)
16. Financial support from town. (3)
17. Maintain/enhance diversity in the department. To reflect our community and be representative (race, ethnicity, education level. (2)
18. I expect the district to strive to meet national standards to mitigate issues experienced by the community. (1)
19. After action review with responders to the incident. (1)
20. Leader role on EM and public safety weather events. (1)
21. Partnerships. (1)
22. Help all citizens and visitors within their community. (1)

Areas of Community Concern about the St. John's Fire District (verbatim, in priority order)

1. Response capabilities of medical service delivery. Is there enough EMS to service multiple calls in/on Seabrook/Kiawah area, (when transporting downtown/west Ashley). Level of patient care. Increased medical training for STJFD staff due to CCEMS prolonged response times. Ability of each member to respond to a medical emergency. (25)
2. I am concerned that the district may have issues finding staff to fill vacancies, particularly if the cost of living is not affordable in the district. The workforce challenges when trying to fill all vacant positions. level of pay/employee retention. Staffing-

difficulty in finding and retaining staff. Recruitment and retention of employees or lack of. Inability to find quality personnel. Staff retention. Staff retention. (24)

3. Ability to communicate on scene. Integrated comms with town and other vetted entities. Communications with community on road closures because of accidents, more publications and education. Communication. Some residents do not understand how our emergency response services work - who does what? Given our aging community, increased communications with elderly regarding how to contact FD is required. (24)
4. Maintaining service in the modern environment with pay/benefits, station, and apparatus costs etc. Adequate financing. Funding to allow STJFD to be all they strive to be, oftentimes with limited access to enough tools in their toolbox. (11)
5. Training (advance). Medical training. Additional training for medical, active shooter, bomb threats, and hazardous situations. Proper training on the new fire boat. (10)
6. Ability to be staffed. Staffing levels. (10)
7. I am concerned that as the community grows, but infrastructure does not, that the district will be challenged to meet standards. Expansion of stations as the community grows. Ability to keep up with the growth with equipment, stations, and personnel. (9)
8. Lack of timely cooperation from Charleston County planning related to the need for new fire stations. Teamwork involving county government and police department. Better relationship with Charleston County Public Safety. Given the slow response time of police, how will the fire department control crowds and traffic while waiting for police. (9)
9. Maintaining response service delivery within national standards. Priority given to different communities in the district. (6)
10. Hurricane/storm protocol. Moving fire apparatus during king tides and strong tropical force winds to keep them in station and not driving through high water. (6)
11. Too many “bosses” for departmental leadership to cater to and placate. (5)
12. I am concerned that politics sometimes prevents the district from doing what is right and necessary to appease the community. (5)
13. Traffic from one-lane road. (5)
14. Maintaining and improving response times, especially to outlying areas. Response times. (4)
15. The need for job support rather than personal gain, the term “company man” has gone by the wayside. (3)
16. Maintaining high level of equipment. (3)
17. Technology going too far (e.g., all electronics or equipment failing and personnel not being able to function). (3)
18. A concern I have about this fire department is the opportunities available to develop leadership skills beyond operational skills and duties. (3)
19. Kiawah Island being cut off from the County during an event. (3)
20. Attempting to do all this without assistance from outside stakeholders. (3)
21. Taking care of personnel to retain employees. (1)

Positive Community Comments about the St. John’s Fire District (verbatim, in no order)

- 90% EMS certified.
- Kicking off EMS advanced program.
- Under Chief Kunitzer’s leadership, the department’s professionalism has grown tremendously.

- The district is always at the table with its partners supporting them.
- The department goes out in the community, helping in many ways.
- Good community outreach/participation.
- Responsive to community requests/concerns.
- Emergency medical services.
- Willingness to always go above and beyond.
- Strength in leadership.
- Teamwork they exhibit.
- Communication.
- Leadership.
- Community involvement.
- Leadership.
- Communication.
- Easy to work with partnership.
- Great command structure is in place.
- Willingness to help other agencies.
- Being proactive instead of reactive to problems, events, and incidents.
- Young leadership.
- Eagerness to grow to be the best.
- Excellent and timely response after major storms.
- Fast response in emergencies, including EMS treatment of residents.
- Good participation with other community agencies.
- Professionalism.
- Empathy.
- Two stations on Kiawah Island.
- Leadership team.
- Training and professionalism.
- Experienced/competent/well-trained.
- Professional.
- Overall excellence.
- Excellent long-range planning for new equipment and buildings.
- Strong culture and dedication to serving the community.
- State-of-the-art equipment.
- Leadership.
- Response time.
- Good leadership.
- Good partners within the Charleston-Area Mutual Aid Group.
- Good compensation packages.

- Works great with all strategic partners.
- Fantastic use of social media.
- Willingness to share and provide information.
- Job knowledge.
- Community-oriented.
- Core values.
- Adding a B/C 702.
- New boat and water assets.
- Leadership.
- Willingness to grow.
- Excellent training division
- Command staff that worked its way through the ranks.
- Strong leadership at the top tier.
- I have never heard a negative word or comment from anybody in the community about the fire department, everybody speaks very highly about the entire team.
- Educated department.
- Sense of cohesiveness, working together.
- Building the department with proper equipment.
- In my experience, the fire chief and command staff are involved in a significant growth stage that demonstrates a personal and professional commitment to excellence.
- This strategic process demonstrates their desire to collaborate with staff and the community toward improved outcomes.

Other Community Comments about the St. John's Fire District (verbatim, in no particular order)

- I would like to see an increased partnership with Kiawah Security and your team.
- Thank you for your service, look forward to our future partnership.
- Poor interface between the county and the district, county is more of a problem than a solution.
- About their response time, I have seen it personally, but also heard from people about how quickly they get to a call, keep it up, and thank you.
- One of the best fire agencies in the low country

Things the Community Feels the St. John's Fire District Should Change (verbatim, in priority order)

1. Level of medical training to EMT-P. Color of hydrants on Kiawah Island. Additional quality of medical resources. Great department; improve/enhance medical response capabilities. More EMS and cross-training with other public safety. (5)
2. Improve retention. Increase diversity. Additional personnel (experts). Run at full staffing. (4)
3. Participate with County HAZMAT more. A member or members from the commission should be on the various committees at the firefight level, for example, apparatus. More real-time communication with public safety. (3)
4. Provide training for the community. More community outreach, perhaps CPR classes, training for community. They could offer community CPR/First Aid classes. (3)
5. Communication with community. (1)

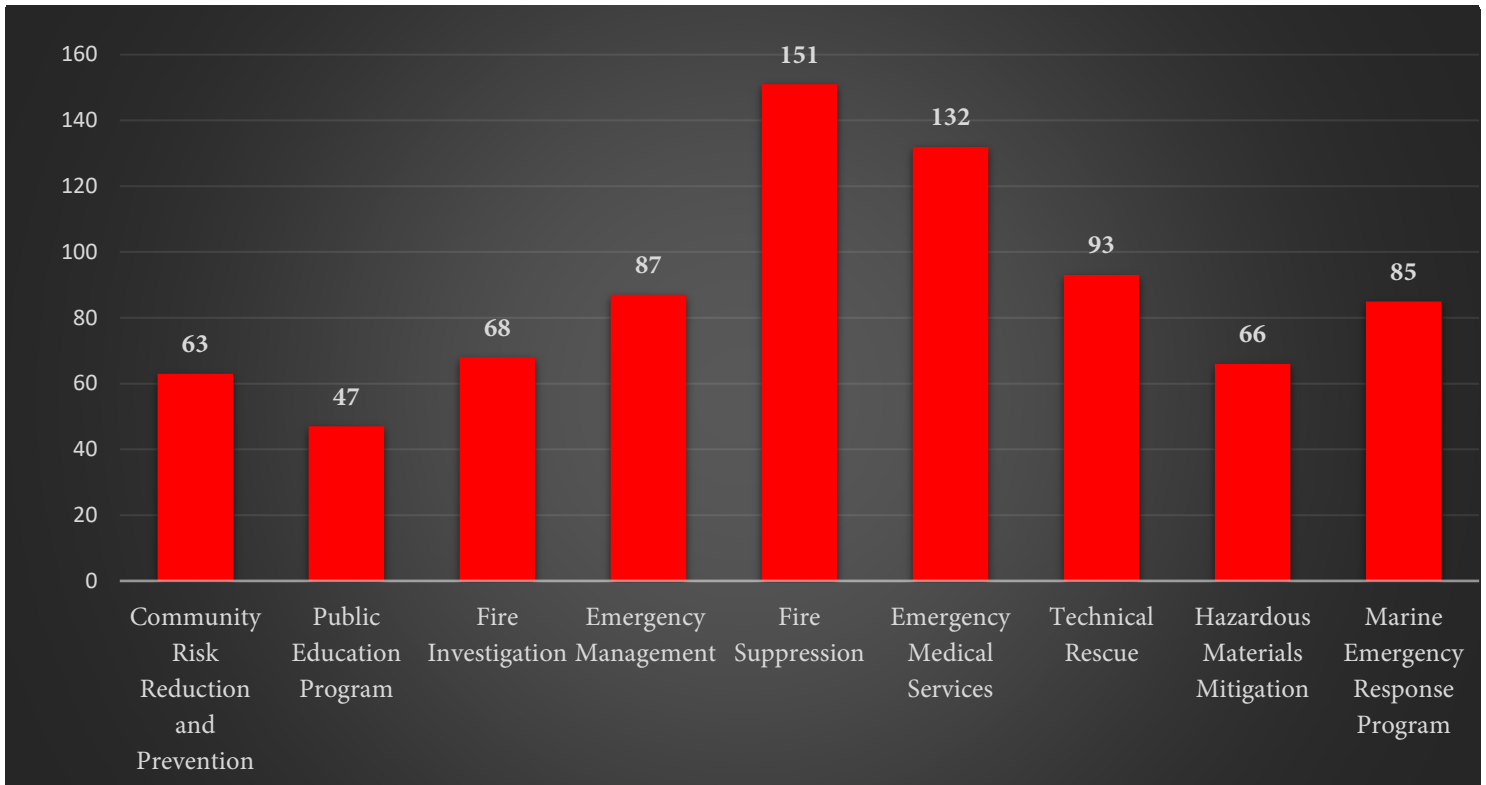
Things the Community Feels the St. John’s Fire District Should NOT Change

(verbatim, in priority order)

1. Community first focus. Interaction with local community. Assisting with planned events. Community involvement. The way they assist communities. Community outreach. Customer service attitude. (7)
2. Leadership. Level of professionalism. Progressive leadership. Culture. (4)
3. Ensuring emergency medical capabilities. Response time (Seabrook Station). Maintain level of service delivery. Station locations and numbers. (4)
4. Investing in equipment and technology. The various community programs and equipment specifications and purchase. (2)
5. Not shorting training. Providing professional development and training to all staff. (2)

Community-Prioritized Programs

Understanding how the community prioritizes the agency’s programs and services allows the St. John’s Fire District to ensure its focus on resource allocation aligns. With that, prioritization feedback was garnered with an instrument that compared the prioritization of the programs and services offered by the STJFD. The results were as follows:



B. Agency Stakeholder Work

A group of agency stakeholders representing the various segments of the STJFD attended a three-day work session to review the community feedback, develop or revise the agency’s mission and values, and establish a quality focus on the way forward in developing this community-driven strategic plan. Additionally, the process included an environmental scan in the form of a strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results (SOAR) analysis to better understand the current situational aspects impacting the agency.

SOAR

The agency’s internal stakeholders utilized a strategic environmental analytic method known as SOAR: where members consider the organization’s current strengths, opportunities, future aspirations, and strategic results to formulate a path for continuous improvement. The SOAR process was conducted for reflection, focus, and alignment with the organization’s set of values, its vision, and its mission. This appreciative inquiry process provided environmental scanning for strategic direction, associated plans through the application of innovative ideas, and a positive strategic framework that brings clarity to the agency’s vision for leadership in day-to-day functions.

Strengths

Our budget allows for Commission support, benefits, competitive pay, apparatus, equipment, and new technology.	A growing mindset to allow for change and integration of technology not hindered by the way things have “always” been.
Large enough as a department to meet objectives and goals but small enough that personnel are not just numbers.	Organization provides an evolving career path(s) process and will provide training for personnel to take these paths.
Diversity of response area allows for personnel to practice all facets of fire response.	Personnel continue to dedicate themselves to the job and regularly operate beyond defined roles.
We continuously attract talented candidates and maintain a higher comparative level of minimum staffing.	Work well with outside agencies with auto/mutual aid response, training, and communication.
Ability to grow with our surrounding infrastructure	Healthy budget to create and expand on departmental needs and wants.
High public opinion/interaction with the community.	
Current planned infrastructure practices prevent dependence on aging fleet/facilities.	Identify the need to meet performance standards and educational requirements.
Recent increase in morale/work environment – changes to benefits/salaries.	Investment in technical rescue, tools, training, frequency of use.
Successful growth of community risk reduction/public events.	Increase in communication between rank and external communications/social media.
Stronger buy-in to leadership direction and change.	Higher qualifications of support staff and administrators.
Sound revenue base that withstands economics.	Investment in apparatus and equipment.
We are not afraid of change/submitting ideas.	

Opportunities

Communication/use of technology; social media has increased; internal/external communications, road closures, CPR classes or other classes, birthday parties, emergency management.	Expanding the commercial identity of the district allows us to improve and increase our commercial response to all hazards. Allow for temporary volunteers to test out the department.
Training facility- expand to run our academy for internal/external curriculums.	Explore the opportunity to recruit future firefighters from high school or youth programs.
Develop organizational chart review process for roles/responsibilities and lines of authority.	More communication with residents regarding operations (routine and emergency).
Explore additional training opportunities, internal and external stakeholders.	Educating the public on hurricane kits, roads, and better communications through social media.
Develop a distinguishable and consistent identity for the district that meets stakeholder expectations.	Recruit candidates with life experience, former profession, former athletes, former military.
Partner with outside agencies for training, equipment, and services provided to the community.	Provide advanced medical care with the utilization of quick response vehicles through a medical partnership.
Create consistent and equitable employee development and promotional advantages.	Partner with builders for workforce housing to enhance the organization's benefits package.
Organizing recruiting strategies to take advantage of the surrounding area.	Explorers program to identify candidates able to succeed at the job.
Better relationship with Charleston County as a whole (permitting).	Expand the training department with the development of FTOs.
Retention/recruitment - stay with them through the entire process, mentor/mentee.	

Aspirations

In three to five years, have an internal academy system that decreases forced overtime) and promotes higher training levels.	By partnering with district governance, a completed assessment of the value of a four-shift model on service delivery is completed.
Use NFPA 1710 staffing standards to improve the ability to meet district-effective response force assembly benchmarks.	In five years, create strong connections with education facilities to promote fire service career for next-generation/local recruitment/military.
Create a development program for all promoting positions (i.e., engineer, etc.).	Create a proactive, professional, aggressive workforce to stand out in the job environment.
Stay on top of workforce issues and adapt to market trends	Officer development program outside of SCFA classes.
In so many years, raise minimum staffing to ensure full staffing on all apparatus.	Create a corps of technical specialists to address all local hazards.
Pay increase to match current cost of living.	Bring back some form of longevity.
Update maintenance programs and computer software to cut down on outside contractors and downtime.	Place commercial-grade appliances and equipment in all stations to prevent breakage due to 24/7 utilization.
Individualized uniforms to designate rank and certification level.	Employ support from an internal financial support specialist.

(continued)

Develop a stronger culture to include families and spending time together outside of work.	Provide a top-level resource in the rescue field and include the training required.
Win “Best Place to Work” Award	Ladder companies are developed as a career path.
In five years, create an initial basic preventive maintenance process at all stations and appropriate personnel to handle.	Ensure our values align with the growing community and that our organization reflects our diverse community.
Have a plan in place for the new and growing infrastructure coming to our district.	Utilize the available grant programs to help offset budget constraints.
Larger training program, facility, and full-time staffing.	Enhance PPE to face current and upcoming challenges.

In the future, have renovated facilities that align with community expectations, create in-house training capacity, and improve member health and safety.

Results

- Identification of new technology and feedback from personnel involved in technical rescue
- Chief-level officers have been promoted from within
- Programs have been developed to respond to the needs of the community
- Increase in morale
- Successful audit process
- Offering a larger curriculum of classes to be offered
- New personnel would have aligning values of the district
- Provide housing for personnel to live
- A trained workforce capable of working multiple positions and ready to promote when desired
- Benefits fair for vendors and providers to discuss financial, and health and wellness
- Increased attendance at company functions
- Personnel are better prepared to accept the responsibilities of new positions.
- Firefighters could be career firefighters as opposed to being forced to promote to afford the cost of living

- Social Interaction and frequency
- Staffing and increase in tenure (program recruit hires)
- Grant application approvals
- Public organizational result
- Rebranding with distinguishable uniforms and PPE
- Meeting FTO goal
- Decrease work injuries and workers compensation claims.
- Increasing salaries to match or exceed reported annual COLA.
- Streamline purchases throughout the year and more money for other priorities.
- Increased confidence in employee skillset and more cohesion when all skills and responsibilities are understood across all ranks.
- 4-5 new apparatus secured recently (established vehicle replacement plan)
- Set standards and education requirements for each position.
- Increased retention and morale from having a sense of direction and feeling of helping “steer the boat.”
- More opportunities for employee advancement
- Positive impact of prevention efforts

- Creation and implementation of career development program
- Increased revenue from multiple sources (tourism budget)
- Increased staffing
- More documentation (data) – Accurate
- Consensus on what success looks like as a district – Core Values
- Understanding the process required to achieve success.
- Buy-in across the department in regard to all job duties.
- Changes in policy for the better (sick leave, promotions)
- No decrease in budget over the years
- New stations, apparatus, facilities, and equipment within last ten years, plus new apparatus and stations planned.
- Overtime budget down less forced overtime
- ALS certification
- Higher standard of employees and higher retention
- More opportunities for outside training and events with other agencies
- Super Seven, SSSF SOG

Programs and Services

It is imperative that agency stakeholders distinguish between the core deliverables (programs and services) provided by the St. John’s Fire District and those supporting services that help the agency provide the core programs and services. With this understanding, the agency stakeholders can further define where the issues and gaps exist within the organization and provide more basis for the environmental scan that is conducted. To bring this understanding to fruition, CPSE provided guidance and gained consensus understanding with the entire group so that the difference between the deliverables and the supporting functions were understood.

Challenges and Service Gaps

After sifting through data and feedback provided by the community stakeholders, and the internal environmental scan conducted, the agency stakeholders, by consensus and group effort, determined that the following challenges and service gaps exist within the St. John’s Fire District. Each challenge or gap listed is accompanied by the causal effects determined by the two groups. They are then linked to the strategic initiative identified by the agency stakeholders.

Group 1	Group 2	Initiative Link
<p>Recruitment/Retention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Forced overtime ○ Training opportunities ○ Cost of living ○ Stand out in job marking ○ Effective recruitment programs ○ Longevity/incentive programs ○ Educational opportunities <p>Quality of Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overtime/forcing ○ Cost of living ○ Work/life balance ○ Burnout ○ Limited funding ○ Training opportunities 	<p>Retention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruitment ○ Pay ○ Schedule ○ Morale ○ COVID culture ○ Lack of mentoring ○ Economy COL ○ Values ○ Lack of family culture ○ Childcare ○ Change ○ Training opportunities ○ Cost of living 	<p>Recruitment /Retention</p>
<p>Communication/Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social media- consistent, educational, updates, etc. ○ Indistinguishable uniforms ○ HOA/Community outreach ○ Emergency management distribution ○ Elementary/middle school programs – family ○ Department-led community events 	<p>Administrative Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Duplication of tasks ○ Inefficient process ○ Information dissemination ○ Personal accountability ○ Lack of clearly defined roles ○ SOG/SOP ○ Hierarchy of priorities ○ Technological implementation 	<p>Communication</p>

Group 1	Group 2	Initiative Link
Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal academy ○ Provide higher levels of training ○ Specialized training ○ Specialized career path ○ Higher level EMS ○ Training division staffing ○ Facilities ○ Specialized equipment ○ Incentive programs to drive higher certification levels (EMS/Special Operations, etc.) 	Professional Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of benchmarks ○ No measurable metrics ○ No evaluation process ○ Cost/funding ○ Facilities Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improper facility ○ Lack of personnel ○ Scheduling ○ Lack of equipment ○ COVID culture ○ Geographical location ○ Coverage 	Professional Development
Fleet and Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding/sustainment ○ Lack of preventive maintenance scheduling ○ Long build times ○ Development of new technology ○ COVID culture ○ Aging equipment and property 	n/a	Fleet and Facilities
EMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of training ○ Poor education ○ Level of education ○ In-service delivery ○ Lack of foresight ○ No patient follow-up ○ Lack of consistency ○ Job mentality 	n/a	EMS
Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Area development ○ Outdated infrastructure (response) ○ Training ○ Staffing/turnover ○ Equipment ○ Limited funding ○ External stakeholders ○ Lack of cohesion ○ Lack of forward-thinking 	Department Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annexation ○ Coverage ○ Funding ○ Property ○ Staffing ○ Inflation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruitment ○ Retention ○ Planning ○ Lack of foresight ○ Lack of communication 	Accreditation

Strategic Initiatives

Based on all previously captured information and determining critical issues and service gaps, the following strategic initiatives were identified as the foundation for developing goals and objectives.

Recruitment/Retention
Fleet and Facilities

Communication
EMS

Professional Development
Accreditation

Complete goals with objectives, tasks, and outcomes can be found in the accompanying **Management and Implementation Guide**.



2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN