

# FIVE CITIES FIRE AUTHORITY

## FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN



prepare.

plan.

deliver.



**DRAFT VERSION** March, 2017

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### **Mission Statement**

“The Mission of the Five Cities Fire Authority is to provide the highest level of service possible by mitigating threats to life, property and the environment while meeting the growing needs of our communities.”

### **Vision Statement**

“The Five Cities Fire Authority is committed to serving our communities by providing emergency response, fire prevention and public education. We strive to accomplish this vision by ensuring that we will provide for all Fire Authority needs and professional development through a stable revenue source. We honor the respect we hold within our communities and are committed to maintaining that trust.”

### **Core Values**

Serve with pride, professionalism and integrity;  
Treat all people with respect and honor;  
Maximize community service through efficient resource management; and  
Strive for constant improvement.

# Acknowledgements

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Special thanks to the Five Cities Fire Authority Board of Directors, Staff, Employees and Community Members who generously gave their time and support to help create the Strategic Plan.

## **Board Members**

Karen White, Chair

Barbara Harmon, Vice Chair

John Shoals, Board Member

## **Community Representatives**

Dave Anderson

Glenn Hoving

Marlene Jeung

Chad Robertson

## **Consultant and Facilitator**

Guy Greco, Partner, Virtual CEO

## **Staff**

David Hale, General Counsel

Riki Heath, Battalion Chief

Patrick Ferguson, Captain

Jeff Lane, Firefighter

Stephen Lieberman, Fire Chief

Michael LoPresti, Firefighter

Debbie Malicoat, JPA Treasurer

Sean McMahon, Engineer

Tricia Meyers, Administrative Assistant

Brian Salce, Engineer

Joe Silva, Engineer

Randy Steffan, Acting Battalion Chief

Erin Wightton, Office Assistant

# Introduction

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## What is and what is not a Strategic Plan

The strategic planning process typically begins with a “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)” exercise. The SWOT is a process that identifies these four components of impact to the organization at a very topical level. The strategic planning process digs deeper into the identified issues from the SWOT analysis, identifying work programs, timelines for completion and cost impacts. The use of the word “strategic” is interesting in this process, as it can be debated that the strategic planning process is really a budgeting tool. According to the Harvard Business Review, “Virtually every time the word “strategy” is used, it is paired with some form of the word “plan,” as in the process of “strategic planning” or the resulting “strategic plan.”... This exercise arguably makes for more thoughtful and thorough budgets. However, it must not be confused with strategy. Planning typically isn’t explicit about what the organization chooses not to do and why. It does not question assumptions.” This document shares organizational information, identifies known risks, defines work programs, and offers forward looking resource needs along with cost estimates when available.

## The Need for a Strategic Plan

With the support of the Board of the Five Cities Fire Authority, the Fire Chief embarked upon a collaborative and methodical process to develop a 5-year Strategic Plan. The information contained in this document would not have been possible without the assistance of outside professionals, community members, and staff from both the Five Cities Fire Authority and member communities.

The Board of Directors and staff of the Fire Authority acknowledge the shifting expectations of the public, and accept the responsibility to provide information and data that is honest, open, and clear of confusing "industry speak." This Strategic Plan is intended to serve as a planning document for policy makers, and executive management on operational, management and fiscal decisions pertaining to the Five Cities Fire Authority.

The Strategic Plan is reasonable and cost-effective. The plan attempts to present the major cost components and organizational needs for a fire department serving a community of 37,000 people, and includes asset replacement schedules and staffing levels of similarly sized organizations.

## **The Process**

An initial Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis was completed by the Fire Chief in 2015, and has served as a platform document to assist with the definition of components of this Strategic Plan. Virtual CEO, a professional firm with experience in supporting both the public and private sectors was retained to assist in this planning process. Virtual CEO provided a Quad Strategic Assessment survey that was tailored for fire suppression, administrative, and management employees in the Fire Authority, as well as the Board. The Summary Assessment from the SWOT analysis is included as Schedule A in supporting documents. The results of this survey were used in the early phase of the two-day planning workshop held in April 2016. The workshop, facilitated by Virtual CEO was represented by Fire Authority employees, employees from member communities, and the Board Chair. Additionally, members of the community were asked to spend two hours with the assembled group to provide both additional input and validation of the defined components of the planning framework.

When performing forward planning, assumptions must be utilized to assist with the process. This document reviews the "current state" of staffing, the fleet, equipment and facilities to identify both current and future needs in a five year planning window. Staffing, apparatus, equipment and facilities are essential to both execute the mission of the Five Cities Fire Authority and to provide a level of service that is acceptable to our communities.

## **The Framework**

During the April 2016 workshop, a framework was developed and accepted by the group. The foundation of this framework was based on both the results of the Quad Strat Assessment, and open and honest dialogue during the workshop. The components are as follow:

### **Organizational Effectiveness**

- 1) Develop IT Master Plan
- 2) Develop Master Training Plan
- 3) Improve Internal Communication Plan
- 4) Develop Firefighter Wellness Program

## **Financial Sustainability**

- 1) Determine Capital Needs
- 2) Create Stakeholder Outreach Plan
- 3) Arrive at "End Game" after 5 Years

Each component has defined objectives (and related tasks). By working through each component, the strategic planning process will better define the needed next steps to continue the evolution of the Five Cities Fire Authority using a methodical process.

## **The Life of the Strategic Plan**

While this document provides a high level view of the balance between service levels and resource needs of the Five Cities Fire Authority, it will need to be reviewed and updated during the next five years. The Strategic Plan can be considered a "living document" that will continue to support policy decisions, fiscal planning, and additional analysis of the Fire Authority. At the conclusion of the five year span of this document (2021), another process will be needed to assess the "current state" in 2021 and measure that status to the "current needs" of the communities served by the Fire Authority.

# Background

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## The Five Cities Fire Authority at a Glance



In 2004, the cities of Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach collaboratively entered an agreement to share one fire chief and training officer. This agreement was expanded over the next several years to include equipment sharing, a consolidation of the reserve firefighter program and the introduction of "boundary drops," meaning that the closest fire resource would be dispatched to a 9-1-1 call without consideration of community boundary. In 2009, the Oceano Community Services District joined the other

communities and on July 9 2010, a complete fire department consolidation took place, resulting in the creation of the Five Cities Fire Authority. The Five Cities Fire Authority was created to increase service levels to citizens and visitors, to ensure consistent and professional training standards, and to increase operational efficiencies.

**Area Served:** 10 square miles, encompassing the communities of Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach and Oceano

**Population Served:** 37,000

**Number of Stations:** 3

**Call Volume (2016):** 3,497 (excludes 216 Automatic Aid responses outside of service area)

Fire:	83	2.4%
Emergency Medical Services:	2,361	67.5%
Hazardous Conditions:	109	3.1%
Service and Good Intent:	813	23.2%
False Alarm:	122	3.5%
Other:	9	0.3%

**Average Response Time:** 6 minutes

**Vehicles:**

Type I (Structural) Engines:	4	Type II USAR/BSU:	1
Type III (Wildland) Engines:	1	Staff/Fleet Vehicles:	4
Truck (100' Platform):	1	Command Vehicles:	2
Type VI Patrol:	1	State OES Engine:	1

**Organizational Structure**

The Authority is administered by the Board of Directors, comprised of one Councilmember or alternate from the City of Arroyo Grande, one Councilmember or alternate from the City of Grover Beach, and one Boardmember or alternate from the Oceano Community Services District. Individuals serving as alternates must be elected officials from the participating communities.

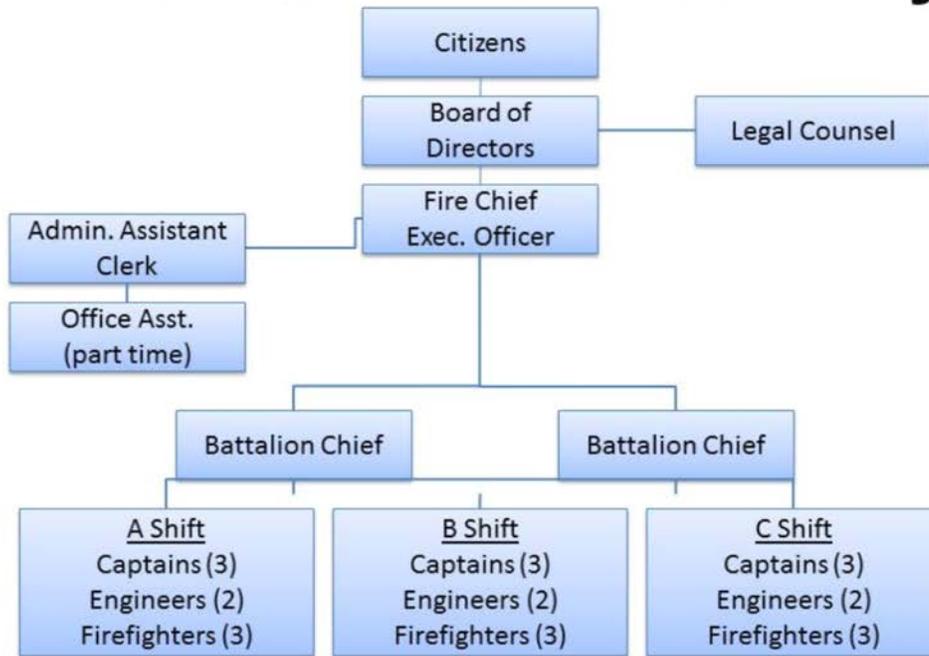
The Fire Chief reports to the Board of Directors and also serves as the Executive Officer for the Five Cities Fire Authority. The Administrative Services Director for the City of Arroyo Grande serves in the capacity of Treasurer to the Authority, and the Administrative Assistant for the Five Cities Fire Authority serves as Secretary/Clerk to the Board.

The Fire Chief may consult with the Executive Team, comprised of the managers from Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach and Oceano in order to discuss matters relevant to the communities or the Authority, and the managers may make recommendations to their boardmembers, based on matters discussed.

The following organizational charts are effective for calendar year 2017.



# Five Cities Fire Authority



February 2017

## Total Budgeted Headcount

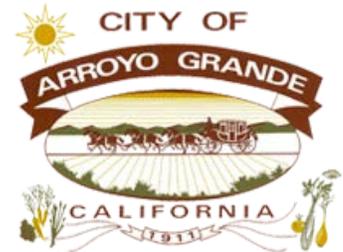
Full Time	19
Part Time	1
Reserve Firefighters	18
Total	38

# The Communities

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## Arroyo Grande

Residents enjoy a unique combination of rural and urban qualities - agriculturally productive farmlands, quality neighborhoods, a variety of shopping experiences, excellent parks and sports facilities, a performing arts center, and a local hospital. Incorporated in 1911, the City comprises 5.45 square miles and serves 17,252 residents. Arroyo Grande is a full-service city.



## Grover Beach

Incorporated in 1959, the City is located right on the beautiful coast. A beach community with a population of 13,067, Grover Beach is also a full-service city. Residents in the small-town community of 2.2 square miles enjoy opportunities for year-round recreational activities on land and sea, including horseback riding, surfing, kayaking, off-road access to the sand dunes, or a leisurely stroll along the Beach Boardwalk.



## Oceano

Also located on the beautiful coast, Oceano is best known as the gateway to the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation area where camping and four-wheeling activities are a major attraction. The Oceano Community Services District serves a population of 7,600 residents. The district provides its citizens with cost-effective services including fire protection, water, sewer, and street lighting.



# Community Risk

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The geographic setting of each of the communities present unique risks that must be considered for emergency planning and response. Within each identified risk are defined requirements for planning, mitigation, training, response and recovery operations. This means that the Five Cities Fire Authority must be properly trained and equipped to respond as an "All Hazards Fire Department."

## **The FEMA approved Hazard Mitigation Plan includes the following major risk categories:**

- Earthquake
- Dam Failure/ Inundation
- Tsunami / Coastal Flooding
- Wildfire

## **Additional risk considerations unique to the service area:**

- Oil and natural gas pipelines
- Highways 1 and 101
- Southern Pacific Railroad
- Diablo Canyon Power Plant
- Oceano Airport
- South County Sanitation District
- Agricultural processing facilities
- Manufacturing facilities

## **Frequent risk response:**

- Emergency medical
- Vehicle accidents and extrication
- Wildland fire
- Structure fire
- Hazardous materials

The Fire Authority is tasked with being the initial responding agency to these broad types of potential incidents. Specialized training for heavy rescue, hazardous materials, confined space rescue, mass casualty, and active shooter incidents are required in addition to more routine

training requirements for emergency medical, vehicle extrication and both structural and wildland firefighting.

## Emergency Medical Services

Emergency medical services (EMS) calls for service represent nearly 70% of total response activity for the Fire Authority, and the volume is consistent with national trends. Personnel with the Five Cities Fire Authority are licensed Emergency Medical Technicians (Basic Life Support). In San Luis Obispo County, there are a maximum of 14 ambulances serving the entire county on a daily basis; requiring a well-trained and continued fire department response. The



private ambulance contract is managed by the County of San Luis Obispo, and, requires that each ambulance is staffed with at least one Paramedic (Advanced Life Support). With the exception of Pismo Beach (contracted with CAL FIRE), the Five Cities Fire Authority is the only municipal fire department in San Luis Obispo County that does not provide advanced life support services to the community. The Advanced Life Support scope of practice includes:

- Administration of intravenous/interosseous fluids and medications
- Advanced cardiac monitoring including Cardioversion
- Advanced airway management (intubation)

## Wildland and Structure Fires

Each of the member communities has differing degrees of threat from wildland/vegetation fires. The interface between densely vegetated open space and residential development continues to present a threat to the communities served by the Fire Authority. Designated open space serves as a natural buffer between adjoining development and transportation corridors. This same vegetated land also presents a threat to residential and commercial development, with the risk dependent on fuel type, topography, weather, and structure proximity to the fuel load (vegetation).



A structure fire while infrequent, presents a significant risk to the people inside of the structure, those in the adjoining homes, personal property and the environment. Recent live burn studies have focused on the changing scientific dynamics of residential fire behavior (*Fire Department of New York, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL), 2012.*) The contents and construction of furnishings in American homes have changed significantly in the past few years, with plastics and other synthetic materials replacing the natural materials that once made up the bulk of these items. Modern living spaces tend to be more open in design and less compartmentalized. Finally, construction materials are more lightweight in design and manufacture. Synthetic materials burn at a higher temperature and the open space layout allows for more rapid fire spread.



A typical structure fire in a single family residence requires 15 firefighters arriving within eight minutes to extinguish the fire (*National Fire Protection Agency/NFPA 1710*).

Additionally, federal requirements (Office of Safety and Health Administration/OSHA), mandate that fire personnel will not enter a working structure fire until a backup team of additional personnel is available (unless there exists a credible report of a rescue situation). With a daily staffing pattern of 10 personnel (including two Battalion Chiefs), the Fire Authority relies on automatic and mutual aid agreements with surrounding agencies. The risk of this reliance is that there is no guarantee that additional assistance will be available to assist on a timely basis.



# Department Resources

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## *Fleet*

When the organization was formed in 2010, each member agency contributed the existing vehicles they had employed as a stand-alone fire department. A vehicle replacement funding program was discussed during the formation process, but never implemented. With the exception of the replacement purchase of Truck 5 (purchased with a federal grant and matching funds from the member communities), the fleet is aged and several vehicles remain in service although their age exceeds industry standards for service life. Thankfully, the member communities have funded two replacement fire engines, with the first due for delivery in March 2017. A long term strategy remains to be defined, and as the equipment continues to age, maintenance costs increase at a significant level.

## **Fire Engine (Type I)**

A fire engine is configured to transport firefighters to emergency incidents. This vehicle carries a water tank, a high capacity pump, fire hose and ground ladders. Additionally, the fire engine carries standard emergency medical equipment, forcible entry tools, and extrication equipment. The primary mission of a fire engine at a structure fire is to pump water to the hose lines and support an interior attack of the fire. Upon delivery of the new fire engines, there will exist a single reserve engine in the fleet.



## Fire Truck (Aerial)

A truck can come in several configurations. FCFA Truck 5 is similar to a fire engine in that it carries a water tank, pump and fire hose. The truck is designed with a focus on search and rescue, rooftop ventilation in the case of a fire, and extrication of victims entrapped in vehicle collisions. The truck is one of five in San Luis Obispo County, with the next nearest truck companies located in San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria. The extended ladder on the truck is a needed asset to access multistory residential, medical/office, hotel and “big-box” structures. While the 100 foot ladder length appears to be very large in comparison to existing and planned building heights, truck operations and ladder length are more about “reach” than “height.” The 100 foot ladder allows the truck to be positioned adjacent to a building with parked cars along the curb, or in the case of a heavily involved large structure fire, the truck must be positioned outside of a potential building collapse zone. There exists no reserve truck to maintain this capability in the event that Truck 5 is out of service for maintenance or repair.



### Wildland Engine (Type III)

A wildland engine's design configuration is based on the need for the vehicle to be able to access a fire in a vegetated area. The vehicle is designed with a shorter wheel-base to allow for maneuverability, has four-wheel drive, and also carries a limited amount of water, foam and hose. The Type III engine has the ability to "pump and roll," meaning that a firefighter is able to apply water to the fire while the engine follows them. This type of vehicle provides fire suppression capabilities to the open space areas of Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, and Oceano. There exists no reserve Type III engine in the event that Brush 1 is out of service for maintenance or repair.



### Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

The USAR carries specialized equipment that supports capabilities to respond to building collapse/stabilization, rope rescue, trench collapse, confined space rescue, mass casualty events and vehicle extrication. Associated with the USAR is a shoring trailer loaded with lumber. There is not another vehicle like the FCFA USAR in the southern portion of San Luis Obispo County. There exists no reserve USAR vehicle in the event that USAR 2 is out of service for maintenance or repair.



## Command Vehicles

The Battalion Chiefs are assigned command vehicles. They are designed to provide enhanced communications capabilities, and carry needed reference material to effectively manage an incident where it is occurring.



## Support Vehicles

Sedans are assigned to the Fire Chief and Arson Investigator. FCFA also operates two utility pick-up trucks.

## Future Needs

The Five Cities Fire Authority has several in-house committees, including an Apparatus Specification Committee. As part of the strategic planning process, committee members identified specific types of vehicles that would be needed in the future. This process was not based on what was contributed by the member agencies at the formation of the fire authority, but rather specific vehicle needs based on the service area and risk assessment. Based on the committee’s analysis, listed below are the future vehicle needs for the organization:

<b><u>Frontline Apparatus</u></b>	<b><u>Fire Station #1 Arroyo Grande</u></b>	<b><u>Fire Station #2 Grover Beach</u></b>	<b><u>Fire Station #3 Oceano</u></b>
	Truck Wildland Engine	Type I Engine	Type I Engine USAR

<b><u>Reserve Apparatus*</u></b>	Type I Engine Type III Engine Truck
<b><u>Support Vehicles</u></b>	(2) Pick-Up Trucks (4x4 Crew Cab) 1-Ton Stake Side truck with lift gate
<b><u>Command Vehicles</u></b>	(3) Command Vehicles
<b><u>Arson Investigator</u></b>	Pick-Up with Shell
<b><u>Staff</u></b>	Fire Chief

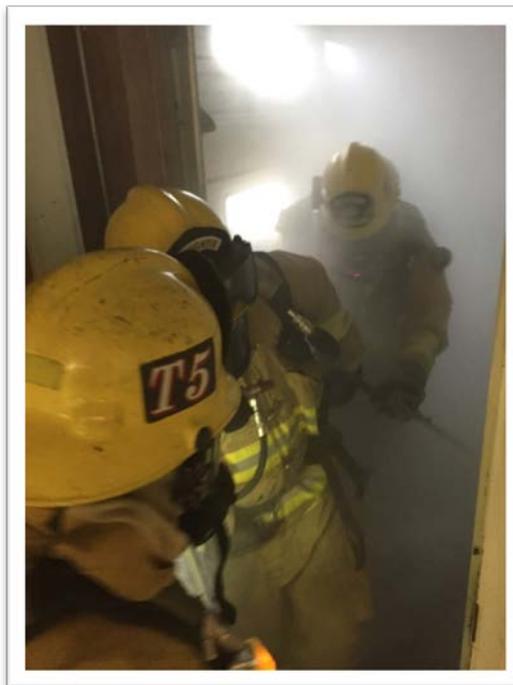
\* Assumes that front-line capabilities are maintained with redundant apparatus.

The industry standard related to useful life of a fire engine is 15-years front line service, and another 5 years in reserve status. At the end of 20 years, the apparatus should be sold as surplus.

## Capital Equipment

A group of employees were convened to identify specific needs for capital equipment with a replacement value of \$3,000 or more. Examples of this type of equipment include:

- Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)
- Rope Rescue Systems
- Thermal Imaging Cameras
- Gas Monitors
- Extrication Systems (“Jaws of Life”)
- Heavy Duty Airbags



## Human Capital

When the Five Cities Fire Authority was formed in 2010, the existing staffing model was adopted. This action did not take into account several factors including:

- Increasing call volume
- Aging population
- Socio-economic impacts
- First Responder safety
- Aging housing stock
- Development related impacts on fire prevention program

Since 2010, call volume had an average year over year growth of approximately 3%. In 2016, call volume increased by 6%. San Luis Obispo’s geographic location and Mediterranean climate make it an ideal retirement and vacation destination. With an aging population, the fire department responds to both emergency medical and good intention requests (lift assistance, smoke/carbon monoxide detector alarms) for service on a frequent basis.

## Emergency Response Staffing

In 2015, San Luis Obispo County adopted “High Performance CPR” as a cardiac arrest protocol. This method of cardio-pulmonary resuscitation has clinically proven an increased survival rate in patients who suffer a heart attack. To provide this life-saving technique effectively, fire department personnel, along with ambulance staff perform up to 20 minutes of rapid CPR compressions before transporting a patient to the hospital. When the patient is transported by ambulance, a firefighter (or two) accompanies the patient to the hospital in order to continue

CPR. Ideal staffing requirements would be three fire department personnel along with the ambulance staff. The Oceano Fire Station is currently staffed with a Fire Captain and Reserve Firefighter. When engaged in a CPR call, the Oceano crew will often request a second engine from either Grover Beach or Arroyo Grande to provide the needed staffing to care for the patient.

When responding to a structure fire, an engine company should have a minimum of three personnel. This allows the Engineer to remain at the fire engine to operate the pump panel and pull additional hose lines. The Captain and Firefighter will prepare to perform a rescue or primary search of the structure before attacking the fire. With a two person engine company, the Captain and Firefighter will be forced to leave the engine unattended, or wait for additional resources to arrive before attempting a rescue. A truck company should have a minimum of four personnel. This allows for the Engineer to operate the truck, and the Captain and two Firefighters to perform needed rooftop ventilation or rescue. Three Fire Engineers should be implemented at the Oceano Fire Station.

The Battalion Chief (BC) position provides several purposes. At the scene of a larger scale incident, the BC becomes the Incident Commander; providing global direction to the various fire personnel responding to the emergency. The Battalion Chief is also considered a “mid-level” management position, and is tasked with employee management and an administrative workload. The BC is on-call 24 hours per day, and the current positions are exempt, which means the employees are not compensated for after-hours response. A third Battalion Chief should be created to share the administrative workload, separate the Operations and Training programs, and split the management span of control to match the three shifts of engine company personnel.

The Firefighter role in the Five Cities Fire Authority is currently staffed by part-time employees. Recruitment and retention for the Reserve Firefighter position is extremely challenging with employees moving on to full-time/career firefighter positions. This position is extremely vital during a response to emergency medical situations, rescues and fire. Within the County of San Luis Obispo, there remain three fire departments with reserve firefighter programs. Atascadero Fire recently eliminated the program and hired full-time firefighters, and discussions are ongoing with the City of Pismo Beach to do the same. The Reserve Firefighter program is non-sustainable. As stated earlier in this document, the majority of current call volume for this organization (and a national trend) is in response to a medical emergency. The hire of permanent full-time Firefighters would present an opportunity to expand into an Advanced Life Support level of care to the community with the recruitment of Firefighter-Paramedic personnel.

## Fire Prevention Staffing

A Fire Prevention Bureau performs a variety of inspection and code enforcement duties to ensure compliance with fire and life safety codes including:

- Development plan checks
- Fire Safety Inspections of businesses, multifamily dwellings, and weed abatement
- Public Education and Prevention
- Fire/Arson Investigation
- Hazardous Materials Management
- Fireworks sales administration and inspections

Currently, the fire prevention program is managed with a Battalion Chief, a shift-based Fire Captain and the assistance of the administrative staff. To effectively insure compliance with required inspection activities, additional positions must be considered to support the requirements of the program. A Prevention Bureau is managed by a Fire Marshall, and is supported with non-sworn fire prevention specialists, sworn fire inspectors, and administrative support. Based on the volume of current activity, planned development, and the potential expansion of fire prevention inspection volume in Oceano and Arroyo Grande, consideration should be given for the creation of the Fire Marshall, Fire Prevention Specialist and Investigator positions.

The cost of a fire prevention program can be partially offset by the collection of fees. There exists an opportunity for the organization to work with the three member communities to standardize fire prevention activity and fee collection.

## Administrative Staffing

During early discussions surrounding the “intention” of this document, the interest in “fiscal and operational independence” surfaced. When the organization was formed in 2010, the cities of Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach made the decision to provide administrative overhead support to the new fire department. Six years later, there is interest in exploring the needed administrative resources required to support a “stand-alone” fire department.

Current administrative support is provided by 1.5 employees. The Administrative Assistant/Clerk to the Board position should be reclassified to a “Business Manager” or “Administrative Manager” position, similar in rank and responsibility to a Battalion Chief. Two additional administrative support staff could support the expanded workflow resulting from a prevention bureau, along with operations, training activity, and administrative functions such

as Accounts Payable. Human Resources and Payroll could be considered for outsourcing/contractual relationships.

### IT Staffing

IT support remains critical to the organization. Public Safety organizations are required to document incident information, must have remote access to mapping and fire pre-plan information, and the backbone of the organization’s IT infrastructure must be supported, upgraded and managed. Telecommunications; both radio networks and telephone systems would also be supported by this position. IT services could be initially contracted, but future consideration of an IT Specialist position will be warranted.

Based on the working group’s analysis, listed below is a summary:

#### Strategic Plan - Headcount Summary

<u>Title</u>	<u>Current State</u>	<u>End State</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Fire Chief	1	1	-
Battalion Chief	2	3	1
Fire Captain	9	9	-
Fire Engineer	6	9	3
Reserve Firefighter	18	0	(18)
Firefighter Paramedic	0	12	12
Fire Marshall	0	1	1
Fire Prevention Specialist	0	2	2
Fire Investigator *	0	1	1
Administrative Assistant/Clerk	1	0	(1)
Administrative Manager / Clerk	0	1	1
Office Assistant	0.5	2	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>3.5</b>

A proposed organizational chart (Schedule B), as well as a comparative summary analysis (Schedule C) are included in the supporting documents section of the report.

## Dispatch Services

When a 911 call is placed, the calling party is routed to a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). The Five Cities Fire Authority is dispatched to calls for service through a contractual agreement between the three communities and the Grover Beach Police Department (GBPD), a PSAP. GBPD works closely with the fire department to support specific dispatch needs, and provides staffing at levels that correspond to call volume trends, time of day / day of week, and known special or weather events.

There exist multiple PSAP's within San Luis Obispo county including:

- Atascadero Police Department – includes Atascadero Fire
- California Highway Patrol
- CAL FIRE / County Fire – also provides dispatch for Morro Bay, Cambria, Cayucos, San Miguel , Templeton and Santa Margarita
- Grover Beach Police Department – includes Five Cities Fire
- Paso Robles Police Department – includes Paso Robles Fire
- San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department – additionally dispatches for Morro Bay Police and private ambulances
- San Luis Obispo Police Department – includes San Luis Obispo Fire

A dispatch center is highly dependent on skilled Dispatchers and technology. As radio network components, dispatch software systems, and other related resources age and reach technological obsolescence, the FCFA will likely be impacted with the financial investment needed to maintain reliable dispatch services.

With the vast majority of 911 calls now originating from cellular phones, "Call Routing" delays are an issue that has risen to both State and Federal levels. When cellular phone technology initially launched, cellular sites were primarily located only along major highway corridors; and it made sense to have the California Highway Patrol handle the 911 calls and route them to the appropriate local agencies as needed. With many households using cellular technology as their primary means of communications, the existing cellular network design limitations still only allow 911 call routing on a very limited basis. The challenge to this network technology is that depending on where the 911 call for service originates will determine which cellular network antenna receives the cell phone call and where which pre-designated PSAP will take the callers information. This can create a situation where a cellular call for service is transferred from one PSAP to another, creating a delay in the dispatch of appropriate resources and a prolonged response time for units sent to assist the public. The Five Cities Fire Authority has been impacted by this technological challenge.

# Strategic Initiatives

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# Strategic Initiative I - Organizational Effectiveness

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Enhance organizational performance through improved technology, staff development, internal communications and employee injury reduction through health and fitness.

## Goal 1 - Develop Technology Master Plan

- 1.a) Improve Information Technology (IT) connectivity at fire stations
- 1.b) Initiate design and plan for capacity/redundancy connectivity requirements at all locations
  - Leverage Grover Beach municipal broadband network
  - Install air-fiber link to all fire stations
  - Plan and implement independent server
  - Install Wi-Fi at all stations
- 1.c) Improve FCFA communications
  - Enhance radio network (coverage and multiband)
  - Improve existing telephone system
  - Consider Bluetooth technology to integrate equipment
  - Participate in future Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) replacement with Grover Beach Police Department
- 1.d) Explore IT Upgrades
  - Obtain GIS support for preplanning and mapping
  - Install next generation / cloud based reporting system (Image Trend)
  - Identify and evaluate relevant software applications (i.e. CrewSense)

## Status, timelines and benchmarks

The existing IT environment is substandard in capacity, and reliant on administrative management and network connectivity through the City of Arroyo Grande. Master planning discussions with industry professionals and staff identified the following action items:

- Increase network bandwidth/speed and implement network switching – July 2017
- Migrate to cloud based reporting and staff scheduling solutions – July 2017
- Replace antiquated telephone system – July 2018
- Implement Wi-Fi at all station – July 2018
- Participate in future CAD replacement – Dependent on Grover Beach Police Department timing

- Enhance Radio Network – There remain areas within the service area in each of the communities that do not have adequate radio coverage. This presents a safety issue to both FCFA personnel and the public. Planned implementation – Fiscal Year 2018/2020

## **Goal 2 - Develop Training Plan**

- 2.a) Update/Organize Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG)
  - Ensure SOG and lesson plan binders are current and located at each station
  - Provide electronic format for SOG's and lesson plans
- 2.b) Provide increased outside training at all levels and ranks
  - Identify appropriate course opportunities by rank (Firefighter to Chief Officer)
- 2.c) Implement FCFA succession planning program
  - Implement task books for each rank
  - Create "acting position" program
  - Implement FCFA "red card" system
- 2.d) Research/Develop Training Grounds
  - Explore partnering opportunities (Law Enforcement, Public Works)
  - If inter-agency interest exists, establish taskforce to determine:
    - parcel size
    - potential for city owned parcels
    - facility needs (i.e. modular classroom)
    - training props
  - Design facility

## **Status, timeline and benchmarks**

A comprehensive training plan will require coordination with state and federal training curriculum, staff time, and additional funding. Given the current multi-generational demographics in the workforce, a succession planning program that clearly identifies required training for each position/rank would serve as a basis for a training budget. The Five Cities Fire Authority has no training facility; ladder training is performed at commercial business locations, roof ventilation training takes place in a small corporate yard, and required rope rescue training takes place at a fire station. A training facility that includes a training tower would allow for live fire training, rope rescue, ventilation, and search and rescue training. Additionally, a training facility with a modular classroom could provide an opportunity to host outside training and generate revenue for the organization.

- Update/Organize Standard Operating Guidelines – July 2018
- Adopt a Succession Planning program (collaboration with management and labor) – July 2018
- Identify and fund required internal/external training – Fiscal Year 2018/2020
- Identify potential training ground sites – Ongoing/Long Term

### **Goal 3 - Develop Staff Information/Communication Program**

- 3.a) Establish secure FCFA YouTube channel for monthly staff updates
- 3.b) Attach video links to Target Solutions training solution

#### **Status, timeline and benchmarks**

Effective communications among an employee base situated at different physical locations and employed on a shift schedule presents a challenge. In the past two years, staff has instituted “Shift Change” conference calls that take place every 48 hours. While this is an effective platform to share 48 hour shift-specific information, it does not provide a forum for comprehensive meetings. “All Hands” meetings occur a few times during the year, but are difficult to schedule and expensive to conduct (overtime expenditures for bringing off-duty employees in for the meeting). Additionally, communication with a multi-generational workforce is a known issue across the country (each generation has a preferred method of receiving information).

- Establish secure FCFA YouTube channel for monthly staff updates – December 2017
- Attach video links to Target Solutions training solution – Nexus with IT capacity improvements, December 2017.

### **Goal 4 - Develop Health/Fitness Plan**

- 4.a) Budget and implement NFPA 1582 firefighter physical examinations
- 4.b) Review the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) fitness program and implement as needed
- 4.c) Updating staffing plan to ensure adequate fitness program to support out of county assignments
  - All employees must be fit for strenuous activity
  - Ensure that physical fitness time allocations are used for physical fitness (develop fixed schedule for public education events)

## Status, timeline and benchmarks

Beginning with the culture of three different fire departments becoming the Five Cities Fire Authority, firefighter wellness has not been an elevated priority for the past six years. The profession in itself subjects employees to high levels of stress, and requires them to be physically fit in order to serve the community. The United States Fire Administration reported (*Firefighter Fatalities in the United States – October 2016*), that over a 10-year period, 54.89% of reported firefighter deaths were attributed to stress/over-exertion. In 2015, out of a total of 90 line of duty deaths, 60 died due to a heart attack or stroke (67%). A comprehensive wellness program that ultimately holds the employee accountable for their fitness is a vital need. The current budget includes the “re-introduction” (eliminated in previous budgets) of NFPA 1582 physical examinations for nine personnel.

- Budget and implement NFPA 1582 firefighter physical examinations – nine exams are included in both the current and proposed budgets - ongoing
- Investigate options for contracting with a professional firm to develop the fitness/wellness program (developed for multi-generational workforce) – July 2018
- Develop fixed schedule for public education events (allowing fitness time allocations) - completed

# Strategic Initiative II - Financial Sustainability

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Develop a plan to achieve FCFA financial independence.

## Goal 1 - Determine capital needs

- 1.a) Identify equipment needs
  - Prioritize equipment needs with life cycle
  - Establish depreciation schedule/replacement cost report
  - Include fleet and equipment with replacement cost of \$3,000 or higher
- 1.b) Identify staffing needs
  - Prioritize staffing needs (Engineers, Firefighters, Admin, Prevention)
  - Determine staffing costs
- 1.c) Identify infrastructure needs
  - Prioritize facility needs (IT, telecomm, stations, training grounds)
  - Determine infrastructure costs
- 1.d) Submit consolidated schedules for equipment, fleet, staffing and infrastructure to key stakeholders (Finance, Executive Team, Board)

## Status, timeline and benchmarks

Within this goal, there is mention of “FCFA financial independence.” This phrase is related to an interest in eliminating the current administrative support documented in the JPA agreement and provided by the Cities of Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach. These services include:

- Financial Services
  - Budget & Financial Planning
  - Payroll
  - Accounts Payable
- Human Resources
- Information Technology (IT)
- Legal Counsel (currently funded and paid by FCFA)

Based on interest in this concept of “financial independence,” a proposed organizational chart is included with this study.

The Five Cities Fire Authority recently “piggy-backed” onto a compensation study with the City of Arroyo Grande. Additional job classification information will be incorporated into the scope of the compensation study.

The FCFA Joint Powers Authority agreement assigns ownership and responsibility for maintenance of the existing fire stations to each member community. This document does not focus on the fire stations due to this provision of the agreement.

- Identify equipment needs – completed.
  - Vehicles - Due to the age of the existing fleet, vehicle replacement funds will be more substantial in the short term. Based on a five-year average, approximately \$800,000 would need to be set aside on an annual basis (see Schedule D in the supporting documents section of this report.) There exist several options to this issue including:
    - Partial Replacement funding (e.g. 50%)
    - Joint Purchases on an “as needed basis”
  - Capital Equipment - Due to the age of existing capital equipment (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus and Extrication Equipment), replacement funds will be more substantial in the short term. Based on a five-year average, approximately \$146,000 would need to be set aside on an annual basis (see Schedule E in the supporting documents section of this report). There exist several options to this issue including:
    - Partial Replacement funding (e.g. 50%)
    - Joint Purchases on an “as needed basis”
- Identify staffing needs – Cost estimates available by July 2018

### **Status, timeline and benchmarks**

- Identify infrastructure needs – The need for a training facility is identified in this plan. A cost estimate is unknown at this time. Based on the projects identified in the technology master plan (Strategic Initiative 1), listed below are the estimated cost components:
  - Increase network bandwidth/speed and switching – \$7,000
  - Migrate to cloud based reporting solutions – partially grant funded; Year 2 and following annual cost - \$14,000 (partially offset by current system)
  - Replace antiquated telephone system – \$30,000
  - Implement Wi-Fi at all station – \$15,000
  - Participate in future CAD replacement – Unknown

- Enhance Radio Network – \$20,000
- Submit consolidated schedules to stakeholders – July 2017

## **Goal 2 - Create stakeholder outreach plan**

- 2.a) Development framework of education and awareness plan
  - Public education lesson plans / consistency
- 2.b) Develop content of "community message" related to Fire Authority
  - Solicit advice from marketing/communication professional
  - Establish service level expectations based on "customer" feedback (focus groups)
  - Finalize message and the method for community education
- 2.c) Disseminate information (message) to public and county officials
  - Identify community groups, businesses, property owners
  - Educate dispatch
  - Educate public regarding safety issues
- 2.d) Identify political advocates
  - Develop plan to leverage support of influential political advocates

## **Status, timeline and benchmarks**

This goal is more strategic (rather than tactical) in nature, and will take time and resources to develop. The effort to develop consistent public education teaching documents is complete. Staff will work with the Board to determine a scope of work for a marketing/communications professional in Spring of 2017. It should be noted that a community support group was formed in 2016. "Friends of Five Cities Fire Authority," is an IRS designated 501c(3) non-profit organization, created to raise funds, solicit grants and assist with public education in support of Five Cities Fire.

## **Goal 3 - Arrive at "End Game" (3-5 year plan)**

- 3.a) Identify financing options for appropriately equipped Fire Authority
  - increased community contribution
  - revenue measure
  - independent fire district
- 3b.) Determine implementation plan/timing with key milestones

## **Status, timeline and benchmarks**

During the strategic planning process, there was much discussion about the desired ending result “end game” of this document. FCFA staff does not have the professional expertise or resources to develop an analysis that would provide various funding options to the Board. Staff will look to the Board for additional discussion and direction related to this section.

# Findings and Recommendations

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The work plan elements identified in the strategic plan reflect a young organization that is in need of capital investment. When the Five Cities Fire Authority was formed in 2010, the City/District Managers and board members acknowledged that long term funding strategies for operational sustainability and capital equipment/fleet replacement would need to be identified in the future. While the member communities have made significant investment in the past two years to replace two obsolete fire engines and hire a second Battalion Chief, a plan for fiscal sustainability must be developed. A summary of this report's finding can be found in the supporting documents section of this report under Schedule F.

The majority of the work plan elements identified in the planning process are task oriented and have been assigned completion dates. These dates are operationally feasible but will ultimately be driven by available funding from the member communities.

There also exist work plan elements that are both strategic and political in nature. Staff will look to the Board for additional discussion and direction related community engagement and a detailed financial analysis.

Lastly, this process and resulting document was created by Five Cities Fire staff; it must be acknowledged that while every effort was made to produce an unbiased document, the Board should strongly consider retaining a qualified professional firm to validate the findings, and complete both a "Standard of Cover" study and operational/financial analysis. This process would likely produce the detailed information needed to satisfy the "End Game" goal included in this report.

# Supplemental Documents

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# Schedule A

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## SWOT Analysis

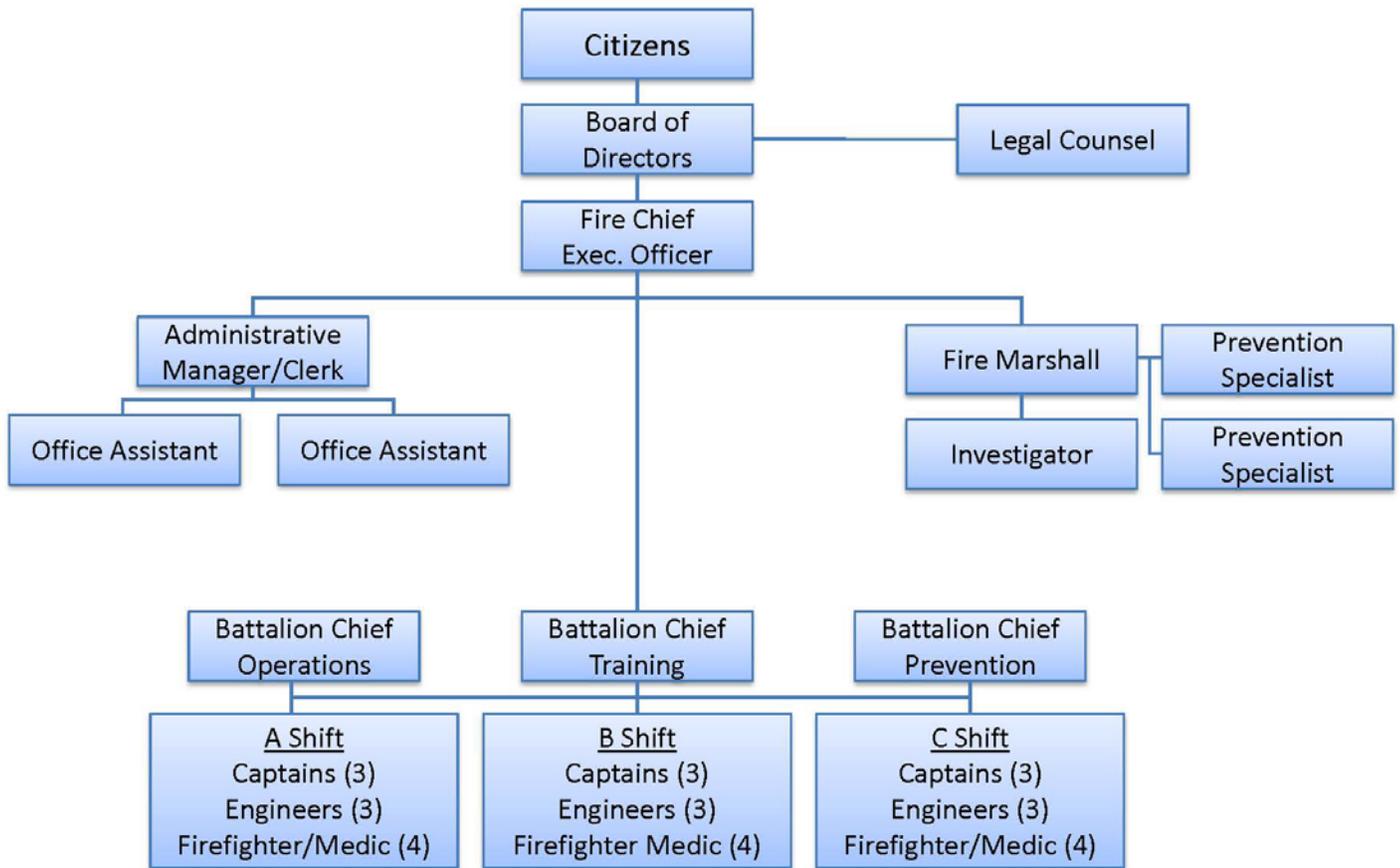
		Helpful	Harmful		
STRENGTHS	<b>Internal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Professional and Well Trained</li> <li>•Citizen Owned / Citizen Operated</li> <li>•Doing More with Less</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Staffing Levels</li> <li>•Aging Fleet &amp; Equipment</li> <li>•Long Term Operational Funding</li> </ul>	WEAKNESSES	
OPPORTUNITIES	<b>External</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Community Outreach</li> <li>•“Newness” of Organization / Smart Growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Aging Population</li> <li>•Public Perception of Government</li> <li>•Branding / Identity</li> <li>• Competing Priorities</li> </ul>	THREATS	



# Schedule B

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## Five Cities Fire Authority



2017 Strategic Plan

### Total Budgeted Headcount

Full Time	41
Part Time	0
Reserve Firefighters	0
Total	41

# Schedule C

Agency Based on	Paso Robles 14-15	Atascadero 14-15	SLO 14-15	Morro Bay 14-15	FCFA 15-16
Total Expenditures	\$5,858,000	\$3,734,090	\$9,563,700	\$1,991,818	\$3,921,500
Fire Cost vs Total Cost	23%	21%	18%	19%	N/A
<b>Cost per Capita</b>	<b>\$192.26</b>	<b>\$128.34</b>	<b>\$210.32</b>	<b>\$194.63</b>	<b>\$103.81</b>
Total General Fund Exp	\$25,901,000	\$17,538,670	\$51,909,100	\$10,591,390	N/A
Population	30,469	29,096	45,473	10,234	37,776
Sq Miles	19.9	26.7	12.9	10.3	9.7
Stations	2	2	4	1	3
Calls for Service (2015)	3,300	3,000	6,200	1,940	3,300
<b>Personnel</b>					
Chief	1	1	2	1	1
Battalion Chief	2	-	3	-	2
Captain	6	6	12	3	9
Engineer	-	9	15	6	6
Firefighter	21	3	12	2	-
Fire Prevention	-	1	5	-	-
Other	0.5	-	-	-	-
Admin Asst	1	1	2	0.50	2
<b>Full Time Total</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>20</b>
PT Fire Reserve	1	12	-	20	18





# Schedule F

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## Strategic Plan - Summary of Identified Cost Categories

### Initiative/Goal

#### **Financial Sustainability / Determine Capital Needs**

Vehicle Replacement Funding - 5 Year Avg Annual Set Aside	\$800,000
Capital Equipment Replacement Funding - 5 Year Avg Annual Set Aside	\$146,000
Staffing Needs (Dependent on Compensation Study - July 2017)	TBD

#### **Financial Sustainability / Determine Infrastructure Needs**

IT Network backbone	\$22,000
Replacement of obsolete Phone System	\$30,000
Enhance Radio Network Coverage	\$20,000
Migrate to Cloud-Based Reporting and Staffing solutions	\$14,000
Participate in Dispatch Computer Aided Dispatch Solution (Grover Beach Police)	TBD

3/22/2017