

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



1.0

9:00 a.m. being the time set for The Fire Department's Strategic Plan Workshop, the Chairman called for the matter.

Chief John Hawkins, presented the Strategic Plan:

Supervisor Buster commented on Communications, meeting demands, firefighters ratio to population.

Supervisor Tavaglione commented on working on an annual basis with CALFIRE and backup for dispatch in the community.

Supervisor Benoit commented on volunteer services and EMS versus Fire.

Supervisor Tavaglione questioned updates of apparatus Fire V EMS.

Executive Officer Bill Luna mentioned maintaining staffing.

Supervisor Ashley asked a question regarding statistics of paramedics on engines.



RIVERSIDE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 – 2029

November 2009



MANAGEMENT PARTNERS
INCORPORATED

Mon. 3/15/10



MANAGEMENT PARTNERS

I N C O R P O R A T E D

November 10, 2009

Chief John R. Hawkins
Riverside County Fire Department
210 West San Jacinto Ave.
Perris, CA 92570

Dear Chief Hawkins:

Management Partners is pleased to provide this report on the Riverside County Fire Department strategic plan. This document is the result of collaboration between you, your staff and Management Partners.

A significant amount of work has been accomplished including: several workshops; an environmental scan; development of the department mission, vision and values statements; high level performance review; identification of goals and strategies; preparation of a draft implementation action plan; development of a fire station location methodology; and the development of an outline for the Standards of Cover document as well as a step by step process on how to develop the document.

After the strategic plan is finalized by the department, we would recommend developing a communications plan for internal use. Communicating the final strategic plan to all members of the department is important for its ultimate success. We recommend that the department develop a communications plan for this purpose. Suggestions for communicating the plan include:

- Having the Strategic Planning Bureau prepare quarterly updates on the strategic plan and implementation action plan for all department personnel;
- Assigning responsibility to each of the battalion chiefs to discuss the plan with the captains;
- Asking the captains to discuss the plan with the career and volunteer staff;
- Having the Volunteer Coordinator periodically update the volunteers on the strategic plan implementation;
- Scheduling a discussion regarding the strategic plan and implementation action plan at the Executive Team meetings;
- Developing a report schedule for tracking progress on the strategies and implementation tasks included in the plan; and,
- Establishing a timeline and process for updating the plan annually.

Sincerely,

Gerald E. Newfarmer
President and CEO

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD) is one of the largest regional fire service organizations in California. It is staffed with a combination of County of Riverside and State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) personnel, and responds to both urban and wildland emergencies. RCFD serves a vast geographic area and diverse communities. The Department, a unique partnership between CAL FIRE and the County of Riverside, serves 19 partner agencies and maintains a roster of approximately 700 volunteers.

The Riverside County Fire Department initiated its strategic planning process to set goals and priorities for its future. Department and County leadership decided that a strategic planning process was particularly important during these economic times, since difficult choices had to be made to ensure that limited financial resources would be used most effectively. Through the strategic planning process, the department has been able to assess its organization, create a blueprint for the future and develop a plan to accomplish the new direction and goals. The strategic plan defines current and future needs and recommends goals and strategies to meet those needs during the next 20 years.

A collaborative process was used to create this strategic plan. A variety of department members and others were involved throughout the process, including the department's Strategic Planning Committee, other key staff members, its union president, a representative of the volunteer firefighters, and a member of the County Executive's Office. Management Partners provided expertise in strategic planning and best practices in fire service to help the department develop its strategic plan. The process involved an extensive review of documents, interviews with many individuals in the department and other County offices, electronic opinion surveys of career and volunteers, preparation of an environmental scan, two workshops to discuss the department's goals for the future, a high level organizational review and performance audit and preparation of the strategic plan contained in this document. In addition, we developed a fire station location methodology, reviewed the department's mutual and automatic aid agreements and developed an outline for a Standards of Cover process.

The RCFD strategic plan contains the following elements:

- Organizational mission, vision and values
- Six goals
- Strategies for each goal
- Implementation action plan
- Supporting analysis of the organization and performance audit

The draft implementation action plan (Attachment A) contains key steps for implementing each of the strategies, identifies the individual responsible for completing the strategy and resources needed (e.g., financial and staff), as well as a timeline and success indicators.

The department's six goals are:

Goal 1: The RCFD seeks fiscal sustainability to ensure uninterrupted services.

Goal 2: The RCFD seeks to have well-trained and certified individuals to enable the department to carry out its mission and all responsibilities.

Goal 3: The RCFD seeks efficient and effective performance in its operations, measures its performance, and continuously improves its work methods.

Goal 4: The RCFD is committed to maintaining a strong relationship with its cooperative partners and providing cost effective services while maintaining the highest level of customer service.

Goal 5: The RCFD seeks to ensure that effective and efficient support services are in place to support the mission of the department.

Goal 6: The RCFD seeks to have well maintained facilities, equipment, technology and apparatus that enable personnel to perform their jobs safely and efficiently.

Performance Audit

As part of the strategic planning process, Management Partners conducted a high-level organizational review of specific areas within the department to identify areas for consideration as the goals and strategies were created. The performance audit covered the following areas:

- Fire station location methodology
- Standards of cover preparation
- Mutual aid and automatic aid agreements
- Business practices within the department

A brief summary of these sections is listed below.

Fire Station Location Methodology

As part of this study, Management Partners reviewed a draft fire station location methodology prepared by the RCFD. Management Partners refined the process for identifying future stations into a six-step process, which is provided below. A more complete description of the process is provided later in this report.

1. Identify the geographic area of concern on a regional map.
2. Using computer response mapping software, locate a hypothetical station at or near the center of the geographic area or near a major response route.
3. Using a realistic safe response speed or appropriately varied response speeds, plot color-coded, timed distances on all streets and roads emanating from the hypothetical station extending out to the response area boundary.
4. Determine the number of responders and types of apparatus that would respond from that station for various types of calls and compare with department standards of cover for that type of area and its hazards.
5. Evaluate the response time and resources that would be dispatched to fire and EMS calls from other stations to make up the first alarm assignment "standards of cover" set by policy for that area.
6. Adjust the hypothetical station location, if necessary, while maintaining the station location as close to the center of that geographical area as possible to maintain equity of response time.

Standards of Cover

This report includes a detailed outline of the standards of cover (SOC) process as well as the elements that should be included in the SOC report. This information will assist in determining the number of personnel, best combination of equipment and the maximum response times for initial arrival and full assignment arrival to adequately protect a particular fire service jurisdictional area.

Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreements

Management Partners completed a review of all of the mutual and automatic aid agreements in the department. We determined that in addition to several of these agreements being over nine years old, they do not include provisions for automatic reviews by either party. We recommend these agreements be reviewed annually to ensure they are meeting the needs of both parties.

Business Practices

The following sections in the department were reviewed at a high level. Opportunities for change and improvement were identified in each area. The areas reviewed were:

1. Emergency Medical Services
2. Dispatch
3. Fleet
4. Training
5. Fire Prevention
6. Office of Emergency Services
7. Communications/Technology
8. Human Resources
9. Risk Management
10. Purchasing
11. Budgeting and Accounts Payable
12. Volunteer Firefighter Program
13. Performance Measurement
14. Battalion Chief Incident Command Guidelines

Listed below are important issues resulting from the performance audit. These issues were used to develop the goal and strategies for the strategic plan.

Emergency Medical Services

- Review and improve the inventory control system for drug orders, storage, use, and other medical supplies.
- Track personnel certifications and state required continuing education hours effective immediately.

Dispatch

- Implement a back-up hardware and software system for the dispatch equipment.
- Review the recruitment process, compensation and benefit package for dispatchers as they relate to recruitment and retention.

Fleet

- Implement procedures to ensure that all equipment is inspected in the required timeframe.
- Evaluate the use of technology in the bureau to increase efficiency.

Training

- Evaluate the training priorities for the department and re-prioritize as needed.
- Hold supervisors accountable to ensure that all personnel undergo basic fire training and certification requirements and that the training is properly documented according to NFPA Standard 1401.

Fire Prevention

- Update the fee schedule.
- Identify and interview employees expressing a desire to be assigned to arson investigation and provide those selected with the training and education necessary for that assignment.

Office of Emergency Services

- Conduct a cost/benefit analysis for filling the vacant grant writer positions.
- Prepare a special response plan to be used in the event of a major earthquake which impacts standard access routes for emergency response.

Communications/Technology

- Assess the current County Information Technology staff workload to ensure that it is sufficiently balanced to respond to the department's geographically deployed facilities and its priorities.
- Install a new HVAC system in the data center.

Human Resources

- Develop and implement consistent personnel policies for all County and State employees, including a consistent background check process.
- Analyze the turnover and retirement data to identify trends that can assist the department in recruitment efforts and preparing succession plans.

Risk Management

- Develop and implement consistent risk management policies throughout the department.
- Collect and analyze the risk management data throughout the department to identify trends which the department can use to develop training programs and reduce liability.

Purchasing/Service Center

- Analyze capabilities of the existing inventory software system to ensure that all of the features are being utilized to enhance inventory tracking and control, improve accuracy of the requests and increase the timeliness of the requests.
- Itemize and check purchases for accountability and budget control purposes throughout the department.

Budgeting/Accounts Payable

- Include the RCFD divisions in the budget development process and provide feedback to them regarding their requests and suggestions.
- Analyze revenue and expenditure trends and prepare five-year projections each year to forecast future budget issues and concerns.

Volunteer Fire Fighter Program

- Update and disseminate the Volunteer Fire Fighter Program operating manual.
- Create a temporary type County position for Volunteer Firefighters and associated positions, using the assistance of Riverside County Human Resources.

Performance Measurement Practices

Performance measurement is the process of identifying indicators that demonstrate an organization's efficiency and effectiveness in delivering a program or service, systematically collecting data, and analyzing that data to assess program performance. It is a tool for identifying successes and needed improvements, and is a method to gauge customer satisfaction. This report describes how the department can use performance measures to become more efficient and effective. In addition, examples of performance measures for the RCFD are included in this report.

Battalion Chief Incident Command Guidelines

According to industry best practices, a battalion chief should arrive on scene for a "working alarm" in his or her assigned area within 10 minutes of the arrival of the first engine company to be the incident commander. Because of the geography, covering more than one battalion at a time, multiple calls and other duties, achieving this standard in RCFD is challenging.

One way to improve battalion chief incident response time, ensure manageable station and crew oversight, ensure sufficient coverage for shift days-off and multiple alarms is to redraw the boundary lines to reduce the size of the existing battalion areas. However, that would result in additional battalions and the need for additional staff. Given the difficult economy and the financial situation the state and all local governments are faced with, this solution is impractical.

In order to ensure that there is a trained incident commander at the scene within 10 minutes of the arrival of the first engine company to direct the operations, the RCFD should adopt a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which states that if the area Battalion Chief cannot be at the scene within approximately 10 minutes of the arrival of the first engine company, the company captain, who is the interim incident commander, must assume the full incident command function until relieved by a higher ranking officer. The department also needs to include incident command training as part of the training program for all department captains to ensure that staff is properly trained to carry out this function.

OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT

In this section we will provide an overview of the Riverside County Fire Department in terms of organization size, workload/calls for service, customers served and the budget.

Description of the Department

The Riverside County Fire Department is one of the largest regional fire service organizations in California. The County of Riverside supplements its staff of 175 employees by contracting with the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to provide fire protection services with an additional 1,077 employees.

The department responded to over 114,000 calls for service during the 2007 calendar year. The department serves approximately 1.3 million residents in an area of 7,004 square miles. This service area consists of the unincorporated county areas, 18 contract cities and one contract Community Services District. In addition, the department provides dispatch services for four contract agencies.

The department operates 93 fire stations in six divisions comprised of 17 line battalions, providing fire suppression, emergency medical, technical rescue, fire prevention and related services. The equipment used by the department has the versatility to respond to both urban and wildland emergencies. Table 1 contains a list of services provided by the department.



TABLE 1: RCFD SERVICES PROVIDED

RCFD Services	
Operations	Administration
Fire Suppression	Support Services
Emergency Medical Services	OES
Hazardous Materials Response	Fire Prevention/Life Safety
Air Attack Program	Training and Education
	Public Affairs

Organization

The department has two operational divisions, East Operations and West Operations, which include 17 battalions. The department also has five other divisions: administration, special operations, fire marshal (East and West) and emergency services.

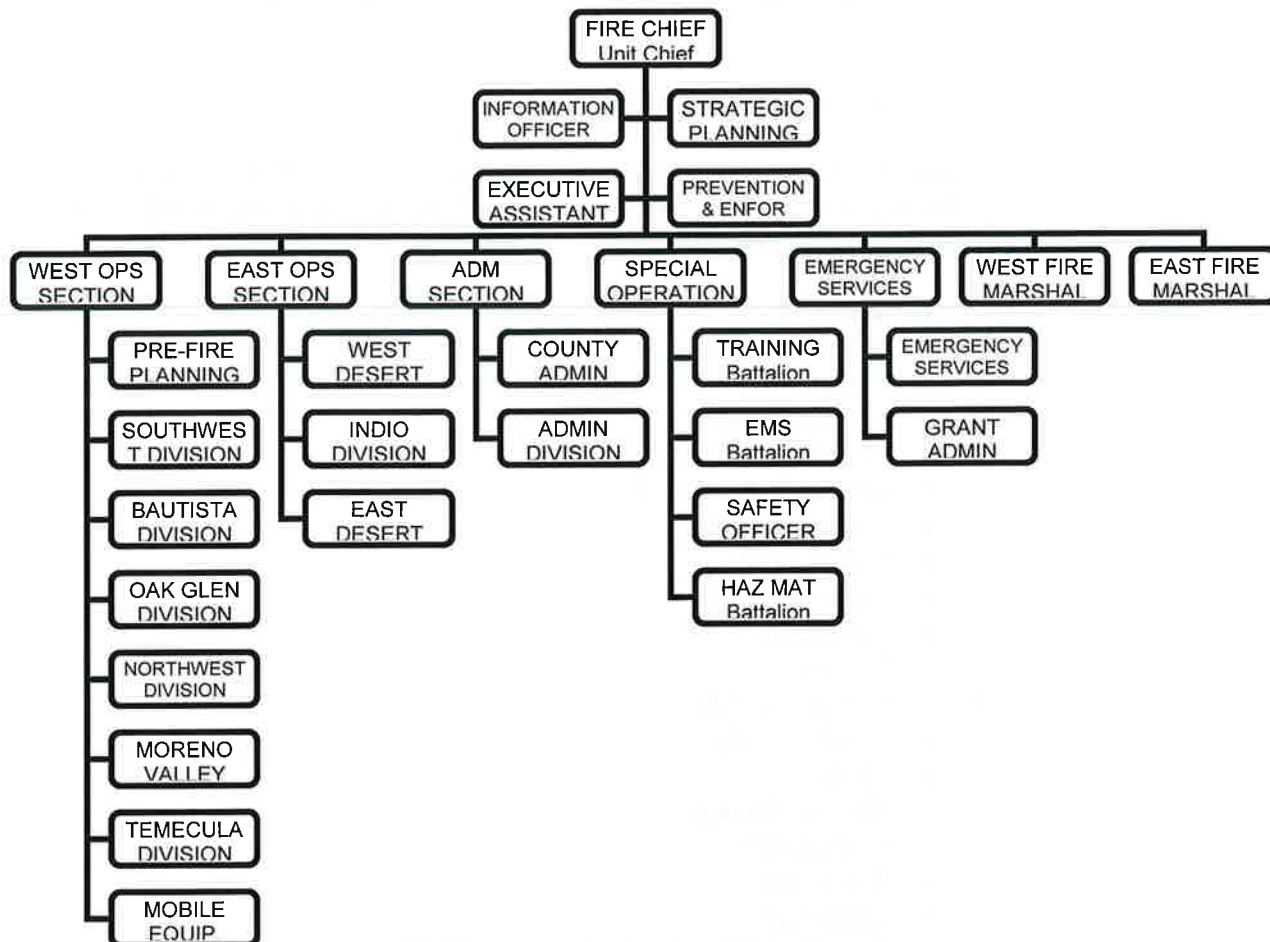
The department is comprised of a combination of County of Riverside and CAL FIRE employees. Table 2 below shows the number of employees of each agency which, in total, comprise the Riverside County Fire Department.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES BY EMPLOYER

Employer	Number of Employees
County Employees	175
State/CAL FIRE Employees	1,077
Total Employees	1,252

Figure 1 shows the Riverside County Fire Department organizational chart.

FIGURE 1: ORGANIZATION CHART



Volunteers

Riverside County’s volunteer fire service dates back over 130 years. Today, the Riverside County Fire Department has approximately 55 volunteer fire companies with a roster of approximately 700 volunteer firefighters who serve Riverside County, including numerous contract cities. Volunteers respond with career firefighters to wildland fires, structure and vehicle fires, medical emergencies, traffic collisions, hazardous materials, floods and other emergencies.

Volunteer fire companies respond on Riverside County Fire Department fire engines, water tenders and breathing support units. Additionally, the volunteer fire companies own and operate 22 squad vehicles, which are purchased and maintained with community donations and grants. Many of these squads carry specialized equipment, including Jaws of Life and other firefighting and rescue tools. The department also utilizes volunteer support teams to provide additional staffing and services at the Ben Clark Training Center, Indio and Riverside Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), Perris Emergency Command Center (ECC), and the Mobile Emergency Operations Center (MEOC) command post vehicle.

Fire Stations

RCFD provides services from 93 fire stations located throughout the service area. Attachment B shows lists the location of each station.

Cooperative Partners

Riverside County Fire provides contract fire protection services to the following 19 agencies. Of these, 18 are municipal governments and one is a community services district.

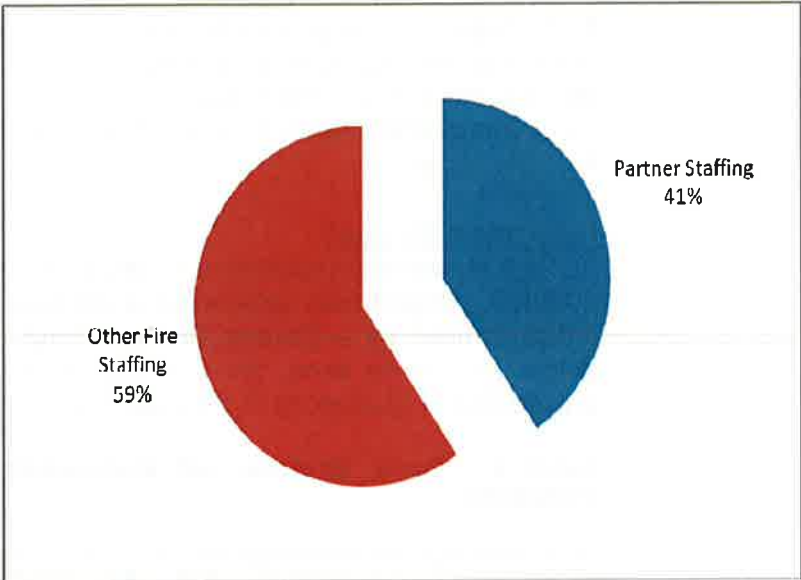
- Banning
- Beaumont
- Calimesa
- Canyon Lake
- Coachella
- Desert Hot Springs
- Lake Elsinore
- Indian Wells
- Indio
- La Quinta
- Menifee
- Moreno Valley
- Palm Desert
- Perris
- Rancho Mirage
- San Jacinto
- Temecula
- Wildomar
- Rubidoux Community Services District

The department provides dispatch services to the following four agencies:

- Idyllwild Fire Protection District
- Morongo Fire Department
- Pechanga Fire Department
- Riverside County Environmental Health

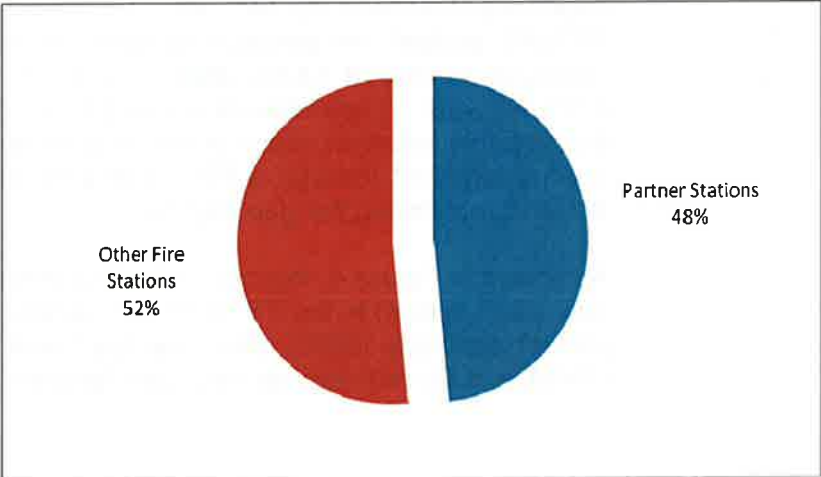
The rates charged to each cooperative partner are adjusted annually based on the costs of providing the service, as well as any capital projects investments made for the particular contract partner. The cooperative partner contracts are a major revenue source for the department, comprising of approximately \$81 million (36% of its total revenues). As shown in Figure 2, cooperative partners represent 41% of total department staffing assignments.

FIGURE 2: COOPERATIVE PARTNERS AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL STAFFING



Almost half of the department’s fire stations (48%) provide service for cooperative partner agencies, as shown in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3: STATIONS SERVING COOPERATIVE PARTNERS AS A PERCENT OF ALL STATIONS



Fire Department Budget

Fiscal trends are important in making strategic planning decisions. While the current economic climate makes it difficult to make future predictions, the department can make informed plans for the future by examining its fiscal foundation. The following information provides an overview of the RCFD's budget.

Operating Budget

Table 3 shows the department's operating budget from FY 2006/07 to FY 2009/10. Department expenditures exceed revenues in every year; this deficit is filled by a County General Fund infusion, shown in the table below. As can be seen, the County General Fund paid over \$53 million toward RCFD operations in FY 2007/08.

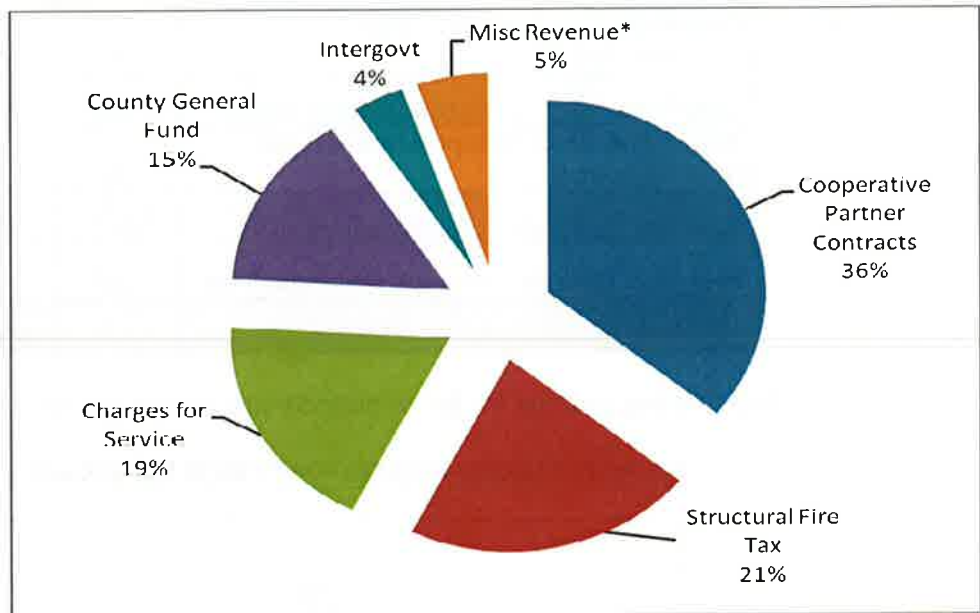
TABLE 3: TOTAL REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES FOR FY 2006/07 THROUGH FY2009/10

SUMMARY	Actual FY 2006/07	Actual FY 2007/08	FY 2008/09 Projected	FY 2009/10 Recommended
Total Revenues	\$177,668,900	\$190,958,635	\$210,978,598	\$201,637,693
Total Expenses	\$208,042,155	\$244,412,517	\$252,526,425	\$237,145,839
Balance	(\$30,373,255)	(\$53,453,882)	(\$41,547,827)	(\$35,508,146)

Expenses increased by 14% from FY 2006/07 to the recommended FY 2009/10 budget, an average increase of 4.7% per year. Conversely, revenues increased 13.5% during the same time period, an average of 4.5% per year. Expenditures are outpacing revenues. In previous years the disparity between expenditures and revenues was worse but this has been addressed through a 6% cut in total department expenses for FY 2009/10, narrowing the gap slightly.

As shown in Figure 4, the department's primary revenue sources (totaling over \$237 million) in the FY2009/10 proposed budget include cooperative partner contracts (36%), structural fire taxes (21%), charges for service (19%), and County general fund contribution (15%).

FIGURE 4: MAJOR REVENUE SOURCES FOR FY 2009/10



**Miscellaneous revenue includes County Budget document categories "Miscellaneous Revenue," "Use of Assets – Rents and Concessions," and "Other."*

Capital Budget

The department plans for the replacement of stations and equipment and these costs are accounted for in the capital budget. Each year the Fire Department staff prepares a spreadsheet containing the recommended capital projects and potential funding sources. This information is then submitted to the County as part of its annual capital budget process for review and consideration.

In the FY 2009/10 budget, the County approved the following RCFD projects, as shown in Table 4. The funding comes from three sources, the Redevelopment Agency (RDA), Development Impact Fees (DIF) and capital improvement program (CIP)

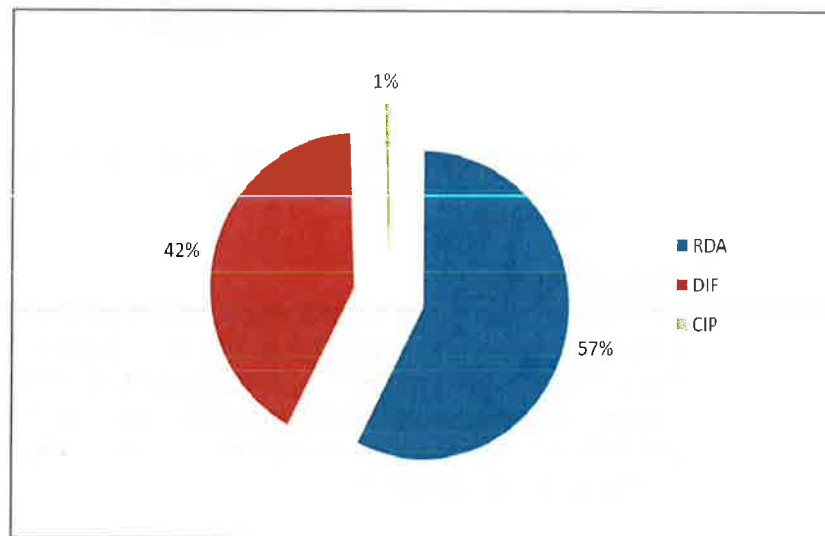
TABLE 4: RCFD APPROVED CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR FY 2009/10

Project	Source	Amount	Percent of Total
Thermal Fire Station Replacement	RDA	\$7,000,000	19.66%
Thousand Palms Fire Station Replacement & Training Center	RDA	\$7,000,000	19.66%
Mecca Fire Station Replacement (split funding source)	RDA	\$2,981,500	8.37%
North Shore Fire Station Replacement	RDA	\$3,500,000	9.83%
Eastvale/Hamner Fire Station	DIF	\$3,100,000	8.71%

Project	Source	Amount	Percent of Total
Glen Oaks Fire Station Design & Construction	DIF	\$5,300,000	14.88%
Lake Riverside Fire Station Replacement	DIF	\$2,600,000	7.30%
Mecca Fire Station Replacement (split funding source)	DIF	\$518,500	1.46%
Sun City Fire Station Replacement	DIF	\$3,400,000	9.55%
Riverside County Fire Dept. Strategic Plan	CIP	\$208,700	0.59%
TOTAL		\$35,608,700	100.00%

The funding sources for these projects are shown below in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5: FUNDING SOURCES FOR FY09/10 RCFD CAPITAL PROJECTS



As the figure shows, the County relies on Redevelopment Agency (RDA) and Development Impact Fees (DIF) to fund capital projects, with the County General Fund (CIP) comprising just 1% of funding. All three funding sources are highly variable. Over time, virtually all ongoing tax revenues have been directed to operations, leaving little or no property tax funds to build new facilities.

Given the priority for ensuring direct service delivery and the lack of funds from existing tax sources (especially in light of the poor economy) this is not likely to change. The RCFD will need a long-term source of capital funding that is not strictly related to new development or the RDA.

As the County becomes built out, and as development slows, DIF funding will diminish as a revenue source. In addition, DIF funds are highly volatile and subject to market conditions. Housing development in the County plummeted from 34,373 units in 2005 with a value of \$6.37 billion to 5,763 units in 2008 with a value of \$1.44 billion. Based on the first four

months of this year (admittedly a conservative approach), we estimate that in 2009, the total units will be 4,115, which will be worth approximately \$1.03 billion. While in the past, the County no doubt collected more than could be spent in the boom years it would be prudent to count on only about \$10 million per year. (Using current fee levels the County could collect an approximate \$20 million annually in a year like 2005, but only about \$2 to 3 million per year in the current economic environment.)

In contrast, RCFD identified roughly \$48 million in capital needs through 2010 and most of these needs have not yet been funded. Net County costs of the \$48 million in improvements are approximately \$42 million, a significant amount. It would be valuable to review the number of calls for service (CFS) in cities and unincorporated areas and compare this to the manner in which capital costs are being allocated. Our hypothesis is that the County may have programmed projects to benefit incorporated cities in the boom years of the recent past and, hence, the high County cost.

The combination of the drop in DIF revenues and the large capital project list means that the County will need to revise the CIP based on lower annual DIF revenues than was the case during the period between 2003 and 2006. (The last DIF update was done in November 2006.) Additionally, to the extent that new funding sources can be identified (e.g., new federal stimulus funds) the department should pursue them.

STRATEGIC PLAN

In December 2008, Management Partners was hired to assist in preparing a Strategic Plan for the Riverside County Fire Department. This plan is intended to define current and future needs and recommend goals and objectives that, when implemented, will enable the department to meet those needs during the next 20 years.

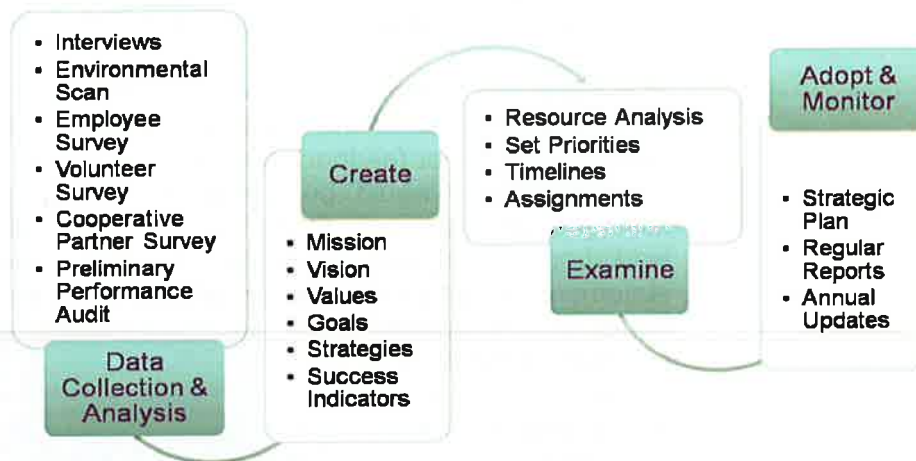
A systematic strategic planning process was used to evaluate the organization's strengths and weaknesses, identify external influences and opportunities, and establish priorities that will help foster a productive future. Using an environmental scan and considering data likely to affect the department in the future, the list of priorities were developed which were used to formulate the goals and strategies for the future.

In developing the Strategic Plan, the department considered a broad range of concerns that could potentially impact the operation of the organization, including:

- Problems or issues that arise on a daily basis that need long-range attention
- Budget objectives and limitations
- Data and trends
- Fire service best practices
- Regional issues

Figure 6 illustrates the elements and steps involved in developing the strategic plan for the department.

FIGURE 6: STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT



The strategic planning process for RCFD consisted of two phases, as described below.

Phase 1: Set the groundwork for the Strategic Plan

- Conduct interviews and opinion surveys
- Review current conditions and conduct a performance audit
- Prepare an environmental scan of factors impacting the department
- Engage department members and the Strategic Planning Committee in a day-long workshop to create a mission, vision, set of values, identify short and long range needs for inclusion in the strategic plan
- Prepare draft goals and strategies
- Prepare for implementation planning

Phase 2: Prepare Strategic Plan

- Engage department members and the Strategic Planning Committee in a second workshop to refine the goals and strategies, and identify key elements of the implementation action plan
- Prepare implementation action plan
- Prepare final Strategic Plan document

The strategic planning process was collaborative throughout, with direction being provided by the Department's Strategic Planning Committee. Management Partners conducted a performance audit of the Department and also prepared an environmental scan. This included an analysis of trends in the fire service, fiscal information pertaining to the department, stakeholder input and a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis. Several means were used to obtain stakeholder input, including:

- Individual interviews
- Online employee and volunteer stakeholder opinion surveys
- Phone interviews with key stakeholders

Management Partners presented the performance audit and environmental scan to the Strategic Plan Committee in April 2009. This session allowed for feedback from the committee and identified additional information that would be useful in moving forward. In May 2009, Management Partners facilitated the first workshop during which workshop participants developed a draft mission statement, vision statement and articulated the department's values. In addition, workshop participants developed a list of priorities which were used to develop the draft goals and strategies for the second workshop. Following the first workshop, Management Partners and the Strategic Planning Committee worked together to create a set of goals and strategies, which were then reviewed and refined in the second workshop, held in July 2009.



During the second workshop, participants also identified key elements for the implementation action plan to achieve their goals and strategies. The action plan was then refined by Management Partners and the Strategic Planning Committee.

Department Mission

A mission statement describes the purpose for the organization's existence. It defines the principles and objectives of the organization and is used to prioritize the services provided. It states what the organization stands for and the reason for its existence. The RCFD mission statement, developed during the strategic planning workshops, is as follows:

The Riverside County Fire Department is a public safety agency dedicated to protecting life, property and the environment through professionalism, integrity and efficiency.

Vision for the Future

A vision statement articulates where the organization hopes to be in the future. A vision statement provides targets of excellence that the organization will strive towards and provides a basis for its goals and objectives. It does not predict the future, but provides an image of success. The words should conjure up a similar picture for each person so that the desired destination is clear. During the strategic planning workshops the RCFD developed the following vision statement.

The Riverside County Fire Department is committed to exemplary customer service and will be a leader in fire protection and emergency services through continuous improvement, innovation and the most efficient and responsible use of resources.

Values Guiding Department Personnel

The values of an organization are the underlying set of core beliefs the department deems to be important. Core values help to define the organization, guide behavior, are the foundation of operational activities, and set the standard by which all members will be measured.

As part of the strategic planning process, the RCFD staff identified the following five core values.

- Integrity
- Customer Services
- Safety
- Leadership
- Competence



To clearly articulate its expectations for all department members, behaviors that positively demonstrate or detract from each value were also identified during the first workshop. Through these examples, all members will understand how they can work in a manner consistent with the core values. The values and the example behaviors are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5: DEPARTMENT VALUES AND EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIORS OF EACH VALUE

Value	A behavior that demonstrates the value	A behavior that detracts from the value
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honest in words, deeds and actions • Proper use of revenues and funding • Make the extra effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lying or being dishonest • Irresponsible use of revenues and funding • Lack of values • Unethical and immoral actions
Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well trained, skilled personnel who are capable of performing emergency and support functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not knowing what to do and not being familiar with department operating procedures • Lack of training and a workforce that is not able to meet the demands of the calls • Poor leadership, practices and performance • Failure to perform job responsibilities
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership by example – practice what you preach! • The ability to guide, direct, or influence people and organizations in a positive manner • Team builder • Motivator • Decisive • Communicator • Confidence • Positive attitude • Competent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do as I say, not as I do • Dishonesty or incompetency • Expecting subordinates to do things that you won't do • Indecisive • Poor listener • No follow through • Poor communicator • Autocratic
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance • Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indifference • Complacent • Not following standard operating guidelines
Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being courteous to everyone • Empathy • Responsiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indifference • Condescending • Rudeness • Intolerance

Goals and Strategies for the Future

For this Strategic Plan, the terms “goals” and “strategies” are used. Both terms are described below.

Goals are multi-year in nature and set the framework for policies and decisions. Six goals, which state the desired future, have been identified by the department.

1. Fiscal sustainability
2. Staffing, training and development
3. Operational effectiveness
4. Relationship with cooperative partners
5. Support services
6. Facilities, equipment and technology

Strategies are the means to achieve the goals. They are the projects and plans to achieve the goals. Strategies are measurable and are the specific projects for which the organization is accountable. Strategies provide a way for progress to be tracked. A set of strategies has been created for each of the six goals.

Each of the goals for this Strategic Plan is provided below with a summary statement of need and a set of strategies to achieve the goal.

Goal 1: Fiscal Sustainability

Statement of Need: Maintaining fiscal sustainability and sufficient fiscal capacity is critical to the Department’s ability to deliver uninterrupted services to the public. RCFD expenditures increased by 14% between FY 2006/07 and the FY 2009/10 recommended budget, which is an average increase of 4.7% per year. Conversely, revenues increased by 13.5% during the same time period, an average of 4.5% per year. While this shows only a slight variance between revenues and expenditures, there was an increase in County general fund support of approximately 17% during this period.

County revenues are decreasing due to effects of the economic downturn in California and nationally. The County of Riverside’s proposed FY 2009/10 budget includes a \$20 million structural deficit because of decreased revenues. Furthermore, the proposed budget includes a 10% reduction in the General Fund.

Additionally, the cooperative partners are similarly experiencing significant revenue challenges, requiring them to examine all of their expenditures. The RCFD can expect their partners to seek ways to lower their fire contract costs as well. This condition is expected to exist for several years, requiring careful attention to cost containment and revenue generation. It is critical that the department seek new revenue opportunities while also ensuring that the expenditures reflect the department’s priorities. The department needs to implement regular

financial forecasting to be able to anticipate and prepare for fiscal changes.

Goal 1: *The RCFD seeks fiscal sustainability to ensure uninterrupted services.*

Strategies

1. Update and maintain the fee schedule for all fees charged by the department to ensure that they capture the full cost of the services provided, to the extent that County policy permits full cost recovery.
2. Develop and implement annual revenue and expenditure projections for the next five years to forecast future budgets so necessary corrective actions can be taken as early as possible.
3. Establish a process to examine costs and the causes of cost increases in all areas of the department to identify new ways to contain costs and increase cost efficiency.
4. Establish a program where purchases, facilities maintenance and communication programs can be managed internally.
5. Develop and implement a method of recovering costs for EMS service delivery and supplies to reduce costs to the County.

Goal 2: Staffing, Training and Development

Statement of Need: Having appropriate staffing with individuals who are well trained and are accountable for their performance is fundamental to a service-driven agency such as the RCFD. A number of needs have been identified in this area.

The roles and responsibilities of employees and volunteers vary by division, battalions and other work units. While firefighting and emergency medical response protocols are clearly established and consistent, policies and practices regarding personnel management, budget, and support services are not. This creates a problem with clarity of communications and authority, as well as amplifies a problem with span of control and unity of command. Additionally, the reduction in staff in the last several years in the emergency medical services (EMS) program has resulted in a lack of proper oversight in this critical operational area, resulting in insufficient drug inventory controls, lack of consistent quality assurance (QA) and improvement programs (QI), and adherence to training standards.

The department does not provide training and professional development on a regular and consistent basis, nor does it track the training that is provided to department members. In an emergency services operation with significant risk management issues, it is important that appropriate (including mandated) training be provided on an ongoing basis, both to paid and volunteer members of the department. It is also important that it

be appropriately documented and recorded. Required certifications are not current for paramedics or in the technical operations areas of confined space and hazmat which raises concerns about expertise, capability and risk management. Chief Officer training and development is a critical component to successful management of daily and emergency operations. It is also important to succession planning, and appears to be lacking.

Goal 2: RCFD seeks to have well-trained and certified individuals to enable the department to carry out its mission and responsibilities.

Strategies

1. Develop a standard of cover analysis and report to establish the proper staffing levels required to meet current and projected operational needs.
2. Develop and implement a training and certification program for new sworn hires and existing personnel, including volunteer firefighters to ensure that all required certifications are completed on a timely basis; personnel have the expertise expected to do their jobs and personal safety and risk management issues related to carrying out duties are fully communicated to employees.
3. Implement and maintain a training tracking system to ensure that all training provided to department members is consistently recorded and required training certificates remain current (e.g., confined space, hazmat, driver-operator, EMT, paramedic, and other certification mandates).
4. Develop and implement a mentoring, career development and succession plan that ensures the department has individuals who are motivated and eligible for higher level positions, with particular focus on executive and senior manager ranks.
5. Establish an on-going supervisory training program which includes training in policy implementation and departmental business practices; operational supervision; methods of identifying and managing risks and strategies and tactics for fire combat.
6. Create an effective means of recruiting and retaining personnel for functions experiencing high turnover and difficulty in recruitment (e.g., dispatch, fleet maintenance).
7. Establish policies and business practices for hiring, training, supervising and utilizing volunteer firefighters to ensure they are providing services consistent with expectations and needs, and to ensure risks are managed related to their role in operations.
8. Establish fire prevention training classes for fire suppression personnel.

Goal 3: Operational Effectiveness

Statement of Need: The core purpose of the department is to deliver efficient and effective operational services to the public. Since conditions and needs change over time, a practice of operational reviews and continuous improvement should be imbedded in the department's responsibilities.

The department's policies and procedures for the EMS program are not current. Given the critical nature of that service and the associated risk management issues, it is important that this need be addressed. Specifically, the tracking, inventory control, reporting and auditing systems for drug purchases and supplies are outdated and practices are not consistent between battalions. There is also inconsistency and lack of clarity about responsibilities of each division and each battalion chief.

Given the geographic distribution of fire companies and the expectation that in a decentralized operation clear and consistent practices will be followed, there is a real need for establishing written expectations for all battalion chiefs to follow. Special assignments are a common practice in the fire service for suppression personnel. Captains and battalion chiefs can be given special assignments but should be provided with specific instructions regarding expected goals, desired results, and due dates. In addition, such assignments should be coordinated with the appropriate senior staff officers and periodically audited and/or reviewed for compliance and completion.

The role and expectations of RCFD volunteer firefighters has been unclear for a number of years, resulting in conflicts between volunteers and career members. Since volunteer firefighters are expected to continue as RCFD members in some manner, their role needs to be clear, along with expectations for cooperation and collaboration between volunteers and career members for operational unity.

The Volunteer Fire Company Operating Manual is outdated. Updating this important document will serve to better manage personnel risk, improve accountability, and improve performance in many measurable categories.

Another area that requires attention is disaster planning and emergency response during a disaster. The basic plan has been completed for the County. However, most of the fire stations are located on one side of the earthquake fault and the current plan does not specify how services will be provided if there is an earthquake along that fault line.

Goal 3: *The RCFD seeks efficient and effective performance in its operations, measures its performance, and continuously improves its work methods.*

Strategies

1. Create and implement a consistent procedure for investigating and reporting customer service complaints and ensuring appropriate follow up to improve quality, protocols, and minimize risks associated with the services.
2. Evaluate the emergency medical services dispatch protocol, with a supporting cost/benefit analysis, that measures current performance with the anticipated benefit and compliance with state requirements.
3. Update all of the administrative policies and procedures throughout the department and provide training to all department staff about the updated policies.
4. Update and maintain disaster plans.
5. Establish and implement a set of Department-wide expectations and responsibilities for all battalion chiefs to ensure that services are delivered and business policies are followed on a consistent basis.
6. Rewrite the Volunteer Fire Company Operating Manual to ensure it contains appropriate hiring practices, operational policies, and expectations for volunteers so that they are operating within department expectations.

Goal 4: Relationship with Cooperative Partners

Statement of Need: Maintaining and strengthening the RCFD's relationship with its cooperative partners is a core business need. Revenue from the cooperative partner agencies represents 36% of the total revenue for the department, making it the largest single source of department revenue. Almost half (48%) of the fire stations are located in cooperative partner agencies. In addition, 41% of all department employees are assigned to serve cooperative partner agencies.

Overall, the cooperative partners are satisfied with the operational services provided by the department. However, there are concerns regarding several non-operational issues such as contracts that are confusing and out of date; lack of transparency about costs and cost containment measures taken by the department; inconsistent types and levels of support from assigned chief officers and inconsistent communications between the Department and the cooperative partners.

Goal 4: *The RCFD is committed to maintaining a strong relationship with its cooperative partners and providing cost-effective services while maintaining the highest level of customer service.*

Strategies

1. Engage the cooperative partners in modifying the basic contract to clarify all provisions, make costs transparent and provide implementation updates on a regular schedule.
2. Engage the cooperative partners in creating a mechanism for determining the type and level of division chief and the duties of the division chief and other support services to be provided as part of the contract.
3. Establish methods to obtain feedback from cooperative partners about services, costs, contracts and other issues of concern to resolve issues on a timely basis.

Goal 5: Support Services

Statement of Need: Fire and emergency medical operations can only be effective with sound support services. Achieving the primary mission of the department requires business practices pertaining to budget, human resources, risk management, purchasing, accounts payable, fleet maintenance, Service Center, and other support operations. An examination of the Department's policies and procedures revealed that in some cases they are not current, and where there are current policies, they are not consistently applied.

Budgeting, monitoring and tracking expenditures will also benefit from changes. Managers who are responsible for adhering to a budget while delivering services are not involved in meaningful ways nor is budget information effectively shared with managers in any transparent manner.

The Service Center operations demonstrate a lack of inventory control and accountability, inaccuracy and lack of timeliness of requests, inconsistency in applying procedures for obtaining materials and supplies. There is also a lack of regular auditing to identify losses and changes needed to minimize loss and improve efficiency. Additionally, the department does not collect, track or analyze risk management data, which makes it difficult to observe trends and make adjustments in operational or business practices to minimize loss. Retirement and turnover data are available but are not analyzed for the purpose of projecting future staffing needs. Background checks are required for new County employees but not for State of California employees, which increases risks to the Department.

Policies and procedures are not consistently applied throughout the department. Grant funding is increasing at the federal level at the same time that positions are vacant for grant writer positions in the Office of Emergency Services. Staffing for support services has not kept pace with increases in operational staffing. Information technology staffing is 1% of

the total department staff while government agency standards show that information technology staffing is typically between 3% and 5% of the total department staff. All of these issues should be addressed to improve efficiency and effectiveness of support services, which will increase efficiency and effectiveness of line operations.

Goal 5: *The RCFD seeks to ensure that effective and efficient support services are in place to support the mission of the department.*

Strategies

1. Conduct an assessment of the Department's staffing (including number and the mix of sworn/non-sworn employees) and organizational structure of administrative functions to identify improvements that will ensure efficient and proper administration of departmental business responsibilities.
2. Establish new policies and procedures for purchasing and dispensing materials and supplies at the Service Center, provide training to department staff; enforce the new policies and procedures and conduct regular audits to control costs and minimize risk of loss.
3. Implement consistent hiring practices between state and county employees throughout the department in order to ensure that all employees have the same requirements including consistent background checks.
4. Implement cost-effective means of seeking out and applying for grants in order to increase funding for the Department.
5. Establish streamlined procedures for efficiently tracking vendors, contracts and paying bills on a timely basis.
6. Create a mechanism for engaging division managers in developing the annual budget and then providing approved budgets to division managers within a month after budget adoption.
7. Create and implement a new tracking, inventory control, reporting and auditing system to ensure that all drug purchases and supplies are disbursed appropriately, accounted for, and that risks of loss are minimized.

Goal 6: Facilities, Equipment and Technology

Statement of Need: Having appropriate facilities, equipment and technology are critical to effective operations of a fire agency. A number of needs have been identified in this category.

The department does not have a master facility plan that includes objective criteria for deciding the location of fire stations. Additionally, fire agencies are required to keep vehicle inspection data as required by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) but the department's CHP records are not current. The RCFD does not have a program in place to track equipment maintenance and costs per vehicle to determine replacement needs.

The Department's backup dispatch system is outdated and may not function properly in the event of an emergency. Although technology needs have been identified, there is no overall technology master plan to guide decisions.

Goal 6: *The RCFD seeks to have well maintained facilities, equipment, technology and apparatus that enable personnel to perform their jobs safely and efficiently.*

Strategies

1. Create a fire station location methodology and plan that guides the location of fire stations based on objective criteria.
2. Create and assess a ten-year plan for facilities other than fire stations (including emergency operations center, training facilities and administration) to meet the needs of the department.
3. Create and implement a ten-year equipment and apparatus replacement schedule that considers all relevant factors (e.g. maintenance costs, replacement costs, reliability and funding sources).
4. Create and implement an electronic system to accurately track repairs, preventative maintenance, and condition of apparatus and equipment in order to comply with state requirements, improve cost effectiveness of the fleet, and serve as the basis for determining the cost effective ways of maintaining the fleet.
5. Assess current and future technology and data center needs of the department for the next five years and create a plan to meet those needs (including prioritizing needs and funding sources).
6. Obtain a new backup system for dispatch to ensure continuity of service in the event of power disruption.
7. Evaluate and obtain an electronic tracking system (that is implemented system wide) for the receipt, tracking, storage, and approvals of fire prevention plan checks, inspections and hazardous occupancy inspections to increase the service level provided to the customer and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of fire protection planning.

8. Review the location, space and technical equipment and operational protocols in the Emergency Operations Center to ensure services can be delivered in the event of an emergency.

Implementation Action Plan

An implementation action plan identifies, for each strategy in the plan, the following items:

- Key implementation tasks
- Other agencies or departments that will be involved
- Resources available or needed for implementation
- Timeline
- Success indicators

The implementation action plan for this strategic plan is provided as Attachment A. While the major actions needed to fulfill each strategy are provided, additional internal staff work will be needed to identify more specific steps, assignments and timetables for accomplishment. The action plan will serve as a mechanism to monitor progress and identify challenges or necessary changes to the strategic plan.

Successful implementation also requires that each person in RCFD understands his or her role in carrying out the goals and strategies. All other internal work planning processes at a division or other level and the department's budgeting process should align with and support the department's overall goals and mission.

Communicating and Updating the Strategic Plan

An annual review of progress in accomplishing the strategies will be an important way for the RCFD to keep its Strategic Plan current. The goals should serve the department well but during the annual review, there may be a need to revise them. The strategies should be updated annually on the basis of what has been accomplished. New strategies should be created as necessary to continue making progress toward the goals.

Additionally, communicating the Strategic Plan and its progress to stakeholders will enable the Department to ensure the goals and strategies are meeting the needs of the people it serves. Staff within the department should be engaged in regular discussions about the Strategic Plan and how they are helping to achieve its goals and strategies. Additionally, discussions with stakeholders will ensure relevancy of the plan as well as timeliness of implementation.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

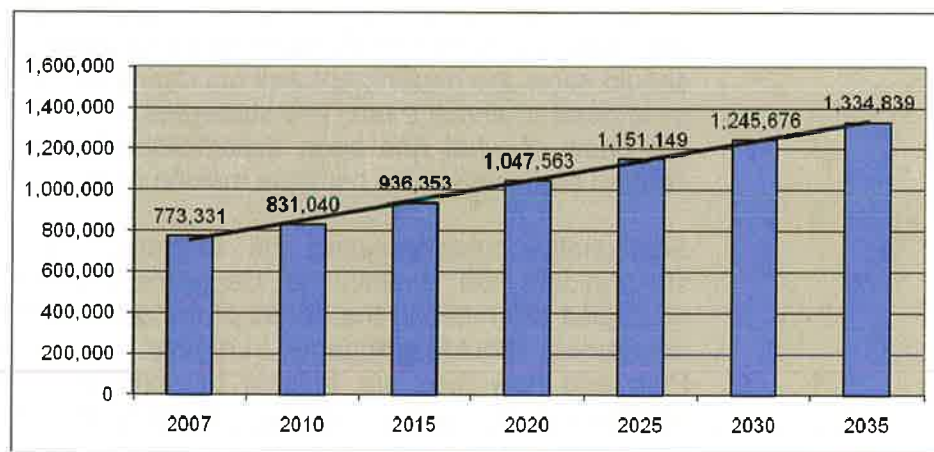
In preparing this Strategic Plan, an environmental scan was conducted to provide a framework for understanding some of the issues the department has faced and would be likely to face. A variety of sources were used including interviews with management staff, an online employee survey, online volunteer survey, document reviews and workshops with department staff.

This section contains a summary of important information, including housing and employee turnover trends, employee, volunteer, and cooperative partner survey results, and workload analysis.

Housing Trends

Riverside County, like most of California, experienced a development boom in the early 2000s, due in part to affordable housing in the region and access to major transportation routes. While the boom has slowed considerably in recent years, total projected housing units are estimated to increase by an average of 2.6% per year through 2035, for a total 73% increase in housing from 2007 to 2035 as depicted in Figure 7.

FIGURE 7: RIVERSIDE COUNTY HOUSING PROJECTIONS, 2007-2035



Source: Riverside County Center for Demographic Research

Employee Survey Results

As part of the environmental scan, Management Partners prepared and implemented a confidential online survey for RCFD employees to elicit their opinions on the following topic areas:

- Staffing levels
- Employee safety
- Employee skills and training
- Technology, facilities and equipment
- Organization, support services and technical response
- Customer service and community involvement

A total of 304 of 1,252 employees responded to the survey (a 24% response rate). Of the respondents, 62% were line staff, 26% mid-management, 4% management, and 8% office staff. Highlights of the survey responses are detailed here and complete survey results are shown in Attachment C.

Highlights of Employee Survey Responses

Respondents were asked to provide their own assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that affect the RCFD.

More than 45% of respondents identified the following items (a partial list) as department strengths.

- Level of EMS staffing
- Safety procedures and practices
- Certification of EMS employees
- Size/complexity of the organization
- Complaints from the public about EMS services
- Response time
- Response planning
- Fire prevention
- Overall customer service

In assessing weaknesses, more than 45% of respondents agreed that the following areas need attention.

- Sufficient screening for paramedics
- Recruitment of full-time firefighters
- Level of employee recognition
- Level of employee moral
- Management of employee performance
- Frequency of supervisory training
- Supervisory skills training
- Condition of stations
- Timely provision of supplies to stations

Survey Results from Volunteer Members

A confidential online survey was also administered to volunteer firefighters. A total of 92 of 738 volunteers responded to the survey (a 12% response rate). Of the respondents, 28% have more than 10 years of experience with the department. Highlights of the survey responses are detailed here and complete survey results are shown in Attachment D.

Highlights of Survey Responses

Respondents were asked to provide their own assessment of the RCFD's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

More than 45% of respondents identified the following items as strengths of the department.

- Level of EMS Staffing
- Sufficient screening for paramedics
- Volunteer performance
- Certification of EMS employees
- Technical expertise of supervisors and managers
- Frequency of firefighter training
- Frequency of supervisory training
- Firefighter training
- Condition of stations
- Department-wide communications
- Communication between fire stations and contract cities
- Overall customer service
- Volunteer firefighter program

The following are the items that the respondents identified as weaknesses of the department through the open ended questions.

- Hostile environment between CAL FIRE union staff and volunteers
- New gear not available to volunteers at Service Center
- Some field battalion chiefs not open to suggestions
- Better mission statement needed for volunteers
- Improve equipment needs in remote/mountain areas
- Improve safety equipment
- Volunteers underutilized
- Improve and increase volunteer training

Observations

In reviewing results from both surveys, we can learn about areas of agreement and those areas in which the two groups differ in their impressions of the department

Areas of agreement between the two groups include:

- Morale issue among employees
- Conflicts between employees and volunteers
- Level of EMS staffing
- Communication between fire stations and contract cities
- Response time and response planning
- Fire prevention
- Overall customer service

Areas in which the two groups disagree include:

- Screening for paramedics (employees see this as a weakness; volunteer respondents see it as a strength)
- Frequency of supervisory training (employees see this as a weakness; volunteer respondents see it as a strength)
- Condition of stations (employees see this as a weakness; volunteer respondents see it as a strength)

Survey Results from Cooperative Partners

As part of the strategic planning process, Management Partners also surveyed the 19 cooperative partner agencies to gain their input and perspectives on RCFD operations. A total of 13 agencies (68%) responded through either a written or telephone survey.

The cooperative partners expressed satisfaction with fire protection operations. Areas of dissatisfaction were largely related to non-operational issues such as:

- Contracts that are confusing and out of date
- Lack of transparency about costs and cost containment measures taken by the Fire Department
- Lack of involvement in the community
- Career firefighters at times being hostile to volunteer firefighters
- Communications with and customer service from Fire Department
- Dependence on the particular chief assigned to the agency
- Need for a standard set of expectations for all assigned chiefs, so customer service and communications are consistent, regardless of which chief is assigned
- Improved process to establish or renew contracts
- Need for a complete and consistent list of contracts
- Costs are difficult to track in the current contracts

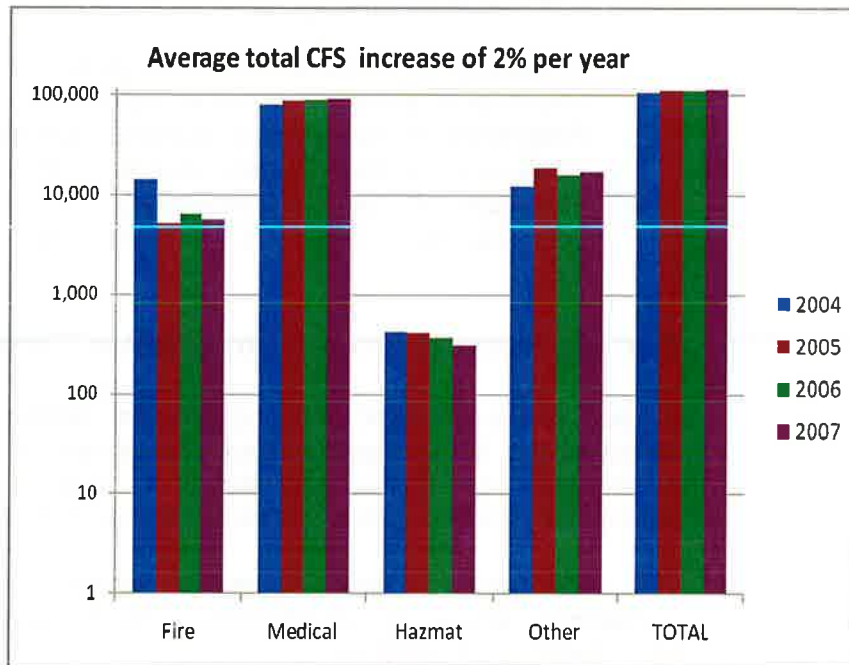
Calls for Service

The RCFD provides service to both rural and urban areas. The department responded to over 114,000 calls for service in 2007. Trends regarding calls for service (CFS) are shown in Figure 8 between 2004 and 2007.



On average, total CFS increased by 2% per year during this period, as shown in Figure 8.

FIGURE 8: CALLS FOR SERVICE FROM 2004 TO 2007



As Figure 8 shows, medical emergencies were the most frequent, followed by fire, other, and hazmat. The percent change for each call type between 2004 and 2007 is shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6: PERCENT CHANGE IN CALLS FOR SERVICE FROM 2004 TO 2007

Type of Call	Percent Change
Fire	-60.1%
Medical	+15.98%
Hazmat	-27.49%
Other	+36.89%

General Trends Affecting the Fire Service

Significant changes have occurred over the past 25 years that impact the fire service. The Riverside County Fire Department has identified the following factors as they pertain to service delivery.

- **Improvements to Building Codes.** Significant improvements have been made to building codes in the State of California and in specific municipalities that include enhanced fire protection requirements. This has resulted in a decrease in structure fire responses effectively reducing property damage.
- **Increased Medical Emergencies.** Medical emergencies have increased over the years and will continue to do so in the future because of two important factors:
 - **Aging Population.** As the baby boomer generation ages, their need for emergency medical care and medical services increases, which increases EMS calls in communities.
 - **Increased Cost of Medical Insurance.** As the cost of medical insurance continues to rise and fewer preventative services are offered, individuals do not have access to or cannot afford many preventative medical treatments. Thus, individuals wait longer to seek treatment, resulting in the need for emergency medical services, which increases the EMS calls in communities.
- **Legislative and Regulatory Changes.** Increased training requirements have impacted the fire service and will continue to do so. New mandates to enhance training programs to meet the needs of the population as well as increased training requirements will add to the fiscal challenge of funding these programs.
- **Technology.** Technological innovations have resulted in enhanced equipment and service delivery in the fire service over the years. As technology continues to advance, there will be a desire to continue to purchase the latest innovation to improve service. However, this will have to be balanced with the fiscal constraints and the enhanced service that the particular innovation will provide.

- **Economy.** The economy across the nation has been in a decline for the last several years. Increases in fuel prices, a high unemployment rate, and the fallout from the subprime home mortgages have all contributed to the poor economy in the United States. All of these factors have a direct impact on local government revenues. Traditionally, the largest sources of revenue for local governments have been property taxes and sales taxes. In economically challenging times, those are the revenues that have dramatic decreases, which results in fewer General Fund resources to provide services to the community.
- **Climate.** California has experienced an increase in wildfires during the last several years. These fires burned thousands of acres across the state and destroyed numerous structures as well. The increase in wildfires is a result of warmer temperatures coupled with dry fuel and a drought. It is likely that these factors could be in place for the next several years, which will undoubtedly put a burden on fire protection services. This is especially true when multiple wildfires take place at the same time, draining the available resources.
- **Water Supply.** Droughts not only dry out the vegetation, they also impact the water supply needed to put out the fires. The severe drought conditions make fires more dangerous and more difficult for fire agencies to protect life and property.

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

As part of the strategic planning process, Management Partners conducted a high-level organization review and performance review of specific areas within the RCFD. The purpose of the performance audit was to identify areas for consideration as the goals and strategies were created. This review was not intended to be an in-depth assessment of each of the areas reviewed.

The performance audit covered the following areas:

- Fire station location methodology
- Standards of cover preparation
- Mutual aid and automatic aid agreements
- Business practices within the department

Each of these four areas is summarized below.

Fire Station Location Methodology

The Riverside County Fire Department developed a methodology to determine the location of future fire stations. The Fire Department prepared a facility planning/response study (Attachment F) and asked Management Partners to review and either validate or provide recommendations for change. The following summarizes the results of our review.

Purpose of Establishing Fire Station Location Methodology The purpose of a having an objective fire station location methodology is to ensure that service is delivered efficiently and effectively to all areas for the protection of life and property.

Principles that Guide Fire Station Location Methodology

Guiding principles for locating fire stations are found in the *NFPA Fire Protection Handbook, Volume II, 20th edition*, and include:

- Consideration of criteria established by the Insurance Services Offices, Inc. (ISO) regarding the distribution of fire companies within the community;
- Consideration of NFPA Standard 1710 as a guideline, which calls for an engine company within 4 minutes, zero seconds of travel time to fire incidents and EMS calls, and a full first-alarm group

- within 8 minutes, zero seconds—all for a minimum of 90% of annual incidents;
- Consideration of the proximity of travel time to other station protection zones for timely inclusion in the full first-alarm response group;
- Consideration of rapid and safe access to multi-directional major response routes;
- Consideration of appropriate locations given the land use issues in the surrounding environment;
- Consideration of utility availability, plot size, and surrounding traffic control issues; and
- Consideration of historical and projected call volume (response workload) in the area of concern using risk versus cost analysis.

Results of Review

The facility planning/response study described in Attachment F provides a sound methodology and reflects best practices for locating fire stations. In order to assist the County in establishing a process that can be used to guide decisions to place new fire stations, Management Partners simplified the Riverside County Fire Department's process into the six steps listed below.

1. Identify the geographic area of concern on a regional map.
2. Use computer response mapping software to locate a hypothetical station at or near the center of the geographic area or near a major response route.
3. Use a realistic safe response speed or appropriately varied response speeds to plot color-coded timed distances on all streets and roads emanating from the hypothetical station extending out to the response area boundary.
4. Determine the number of responders and types of apparatus that would respond from that station for various types of calls and compare with department standards of cover for that type of area and its hazards.
5. Evaluate the response time and resources that would be dispatched to fire and EMS calls from other stations to make-up the first alarm assignment "standards of cover" set by policy for that area.
6. Adjust the hypothetical station location, if necessary, while maintaining the station location as close to the center of that geographical area as possible to maintain equity of response time.

Standards of Cover Process and Report Elements

The Riverside County Fire Department will be creating a Standards of Cover (SOC) document in the future and asked as part of the strategic planning process, an outline of the SOC be prepared by Management Partners. The purpose of an SOC report is to specify the minimum criteria that will be used for addressing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Fire Department's fire suppression operations, emergency medical services, and special operations delivery in protecting the community. Specifically, an SOC determines the right number of personnel, the best combination of equipment, and the maximum response times, for initial arrival and full assignment arrival to adequately protect a particular fire service jurisdictional area.

Management Partners has outlined the key steps in the data assessment process that should be taken to create an SOC document and the components that should be included in the document. Both are shown below.

Data Assessment

Preparing an SOC requires data collection and analysis, a review of existing policies and procedures, establishing standards and matching those standards to capability. An effective SOC creates expectations for performance that can reasonably be achieved by the agency with available or planned resources and meets either industry best practice standards or local standards developed by the authority having jurisdiction.

The process of developing an SOC should involve discussion of the data, criteria and standards with the decision makers including CalFire, the County of Riverside and the cooperative partner agencies. Because the final standards of cover will set the expectations for staffing, equipment and other resources, engaging decision makers in the process of development of the SOC is critical.

Ten key steps are involved in preparing an SOC document as listed below.

1. Review the existing deployment plan for the emergency response zone/area being considered.
2. Plot and list existing deployment of response resources expected to arrive at the scene first and those expected to arrive second as calculated by standards and best practices.
3. Identify deficiencies based on observations and response data.
4. Verify observations of deficiencies with dispatch data.
5. Identify and categorize RCFD's target hazards and risks in that area.
6. Examine existing alarm/dispatch protocols SOP/SOG and evaluate against target hazards.

7. Analyze fire reports for historical performance and reliability of weight of response in target areas.
8. Modify existing policies and dispatch protocols that fall short of providing desired response weight and time for fire zone requirements.
9. Determine any additional stations and response units needed to fulfill service level requirements and desired standard of cover.
10. Evaluate performance and reliability on a continuous basis and modify resources as necessary to achieve the standards.

Report Elements

The standards of response coverage should contain the components listed below. Each of the components should have supporting statistical information as well as a narrative explaining the statistics. In each case, the significance of the item should be clearly described so it can be used for creating policies and practices.

1. Existing Deployment Plan

This section should describe RCFD's existing services, staffing and deployment. In addition, it should include total calls for service for the last five years, current population, and service area square miles plus any unusual features and barriers to response.

2. Risk Identification

After the existing deployment plan is articulated, the RCFD needs to identify the risks to the service area. The risk identification section should include the fire risk factors as identified by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and RCFD to determine risks to life and property, building type-construction-clustering (exposures), and community profile. Examples of risk factors include:

Fire Risks

Fire risk is identified as the characteristics of the community that could create a hazard to the community. Criteria could include, but is not limited to:

- *Geography*
- *Topography*
- *Critical Infrastructure (e.g., structural, water supply for fire suppression, fixed alarm and extinguishing system placement, emergency apparatus response routes and target hazard accessibility, and wildland fuel management practices.)*

EMS Risks

EMS risk is defined as the correlation between the frequency of medical conditions and community characteristics to determine the need for shorter times to receive treatment. Criteria could include, but is not limited to:

- *Population*
- *Age of the population*
- *Frequency and types of EMS calls*

- *Presence of health care or assisted living facilities*

Non-Fire Risks

Non-fire risks are defined as structural and geographical characteristics of the community that over time generate risks to life safety and/or the environment. Criteria could include, but is not limited to:

- *Population*
- *Number of non-fire incidents*
- *Geography*
- *Wildland/urban interface*
- *Types and concentration of industry*
- *Hazardous materials*

3. Risk Expectations

The next step is to determine the expectations for each risk factor by identifying the combinations of high and low risk incident probability and high and low consequence for each type of risk factor. This creates four possible risk expectations between structures or conditions and the distribution and concentration of resources.

- Low probability, low consequences
- Low probability, high consequences
- High probability, low consequences
- High probability, high consequences

Thus, where there is an increased risk area identified, the area needs an increased concentration of resources. In order to determine where the resources need to be distributed, the RCFD needs to take each risk factor and determine the incident probability and consequence for each service area.

4. Service Level Objectives

After understanding the current community risk and the expectations for dealing with it, the RCFD needs to develop specific performance objectives for each risk type. For example, a performance objective for EMS could be, *“to have EMS response at the ALS level within eight minutes of receipt of a 911 call in 90% of calls to all areas served.”*

5. Distribution

Determining the distribution means establishing the locations of the first engine or ladder company and initial attack resources that will meet the service level objectives. In this step, RCFD should take the current station locations and with call data for one year determine the number of times the service level objectives are met for each service area.

6. Concentration

Next, the RCFD needs to determine concentration of resources. This means the spacing of multiple resources that are arranged close enough so that the initial response can be assembled on scene with enough time to most likely stop the escalation of the emergency for a given risk type.

7. Performance Reliability

This section of the SOC looks at the multiple call frequencies which could impact resource availability. This occurs when more than one emergency call occurs in the same time period for the same fire company. Since it is not possible to have a system that reaches the desired performance standard 100% of the time, the NFPA allows the performance reliability to be 90%.

8. Historical Response Effectiveness

The department needs to evaluate the percentage of time that the response to the calls meets the established service objectives.

9. Overall Evaluation

After steps one through eight are complete, the department needs to analyze the report as a whole and determine if any changes need to be made to achieve the desired SOC outcome.

10. Implementation Plan

If it is determined that changes to the SOC are necessary, the RCFD should develop and implement a plan to detail the process in which the changes will be made and in what timeframe.

Mutual/Automatic Aid

Fire protection mutual aid is defined as an agreement between two fire agencies in which they commit to respond to calls for services in the other agency's jurisdiction when they are called, at no cost to the requesting agency. Automatic aid is not only predetermined, but one or more additional departments are automatically dispatched to certain locations or types of alarms at the same time as the home department. Typically, both mutual and automatic aid agreements are written between the agencies.

The Riverside County Fire Department has four mutual aid and seven automatic aid agreements with other agencies. The specific agencies with which the County has current contracts for these services are listed below in Table 7.

TABLE 7: CURRENT RCFD MUTUAL/AUTOMATIC AID AGREEMENTS

Mutual Aid Agreements	Automatic Aid Agreements
City of Corona (Haz Mat)	City of Palm Springs
Chuckawalla Valley State Prison Fire Department	Idyllwild Fire Protection District
March Air Force Base	City of Hemet
Niland Fire District	Morongo Band of Mission Indians
	City of Murrieta
	Orange County Fire Authority
	Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians

Based upon Management Partners' review of the mutual aid and automatic aid agreements in Riverside County Fire Department, the agreements are virtually identical. However, the agreements do not include provisions for annual reviews by either party. Data regarding these agreements should be tracked in terms of how many responses to calls were provided under each agreement during the year. Several of the agreements are over nine years old (e.g., Orange County Fire Authority agreement dated 1999 and Idyllwild Fire Protection District agreement 2000).

Business Practices

The following sections of the department were reviewed at a high level:

1. Emergency Medical Services
2. Dispatch
3. Fleet
4. Training
5. Fire Prevention
6. Office of Emergency Services
7. Communications/Technology
8. Human Resources
9. Risk Management
10. Purchasing
11. Budgeting and Accounts Payable
12. Volunteer Firefighter Program
13. Performance Measurement
14. Battalion Chief Incident Command Guidelines

Observations about each of the fourteen areas are provided below. These observations were provided prior to the department identifying its goals and strategies in order to assist the department in determining its priorities for attention over the next several years.

1. Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The Riverside County Fire Department began delivery of advanced life support services (ALS) in the 1980s in communities that could afford to implement the programs. These programs provide a higher level of EMS care, but at a substantially greater cost than a basic life support (BLS) program. Riverside County Fire Department delivers ALS services through firefighters who are cross-trained in ALS level emergency medical training. Now almost every first response engine company provides the ALS level of service.

A battalion chief oversees the EMS operations. This battalion chief reports directly to the Deputy Chief of Special Operations. In addition, this division has a medical director who is a physician who oversees and monitors the EMS program. In addition to overseeing the entire emergency medical services program, EMS operations is primarily responsible for ensuring that emergency medical services personnel have the proper training and certifications. Mandatory training includes annual and biannual training for paramedics to maintain state certifications of paramedics. If there are other EMS immediate training needs identified, this EMS Bureau provides the in-service training to meet the State mandated training standards.

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- The significant reduction in staff during the last several years has resulted in the lack of program oversight and proper training for personnel. This has left the department extremely vulnerable to liability exposure. For example, this program does not have a medical professional (nurse educator) to monitor the training program and provide training.
- This division does not have policies and procedures in place regarding routine narcotic inventory control. This exposes the department to significant liability issues.
- The division does not have a system to track certifications, training requirements and state-required continuing education hours. The lack of a proper tracking system also leaves the department vulnerable and open to liability exposure.
- The EMS Bureau does not have records regarding training, complaints and actions taken by the department to resolve EMS issues. A review of one narcotics audit showed that records are routinely missing and accounting for drugs is poorly done.

2. Dispatch

Dispatch Operations are located at the headquarters in Perris. The dispatchers are County of Riverside employees and are supervised by CAL FIRE personnel, captains and battalion chiefs. Dispatch Operations are under the Emergency Command and Control Operations which is under the command of a division chief. This division chief reports to the Deputy Chief of Operations.

Riverside County Fire Department contracts with the following agencies to provide dispatching services:

- Chuckawalla Department of Corrections
- Idyllwild Fire Protection District
- Morongo Indian Reservation
- Pechanga Indian Reservation
- Riverside County Environmental Health

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- The existing dispatch facilities are outdated and need to be replaced. In addition, the microwave system is fragile and there is no secondary dispatch system if the microwave system malfunctions. Having a secondary dispatch system is critical for uninterrupted service delivery.

- The current software system is an Altaris System that was purchased in 2005. The current contract with the vendor provides two software upgrades per year to keep the system current. The department is current on the software upgrades of this system. However, there needs to be a backup system in place in the event that a software failure occurs.

- Currently, there are approximately 15 vacancies for dispatchers in RCFD. Department staff reports that filling these positions has become increasingly difficult during the last several years. This is a high number of vacancies for this critical area of the department. The recruitment process, compensation and benefits for dispatchers should be reviewed as they relate to recruitment and retention.

3. Fleet

Fleet services are provided by two facilities. The West facility is located in Perris and the East facility is located in Indio. This division is responsible for maintaining approximately 362 pieces of equipment. Routine maintenance of the fleet is performed by the staff and the RCFD contracts for the major engine and equipment maintenance services.



Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- The West Facility Fleet Manager position is currently vacant, which has resulted in the East Facility manager being responsible for both facilities (which are approximately 96 miles apart). As a result, he has a total of 16 direct reports.
- The California Highway Patrol (CHP) requires that fleet and maintenance facilities keep detailed maintenance records for items such as brake inspections. The CHP record keeping system is not current at the West facility.
- The West facility appears to be outdated and does not accommodate current technology or RCFD fleet vehicles beyond a certain size.
- Staff reports that the Fleet Division has a high rate of turnover, which means that constantly having to train new staff members costs the department money. An analysis of the underlying reasons for the turnover should be identified and rectified.
- The vehicle lift at the West facility has not been inspected for several years; This is a safety issue.

4. Training

The Training Bureau is located at the Ben Clark Public Safety Training Facility. The facility is shared with the Sheriff's Training Operations. CAL FIRE also operates the State Fire Academy from this facility. The facility is equipped with a training tower, classrooms, and grounds for practicing firefighting and rescue evolutions from basic training to advanced level training.

The Training Bureau is supervised by a battalion chief who reports to the Deputy Chief of Special Operations. The Training Bureau is responsible for keeping all suppression personnel current on mandatory training requirements such as confined space, first responder EMS certifications, fire officer skills training, and driver/operator training for Engineers, and more. This Bureau is also responsible for the recruit academies and basic firefighting training exercises.

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- Training records have been kept manually until recently when a software system was purchased to track training requirements and hours. This new system will assist the department in tracking training by individual to determine when training is needed and the length of time before certifications expire.
- An important issue for the department is the fact that some paramedics are operating without current certifications. In addition, some personnel do not have basic firefighter training certifications; training has lapsed for some staff in the areas of confined space, hazmat and driver-operator training; and, some firefighters are not trained as emergency medical technicians (EMT) Level 1 as desired by the department. Implementation of the new software system and proper oversight of the program will not only reduce the department's liability exposure, but it will save money in overtime from having to pull staff off their assignments and backfill their positions to complete this training. A well planned training program that complies with all of the state and federal requirements will reduce current costs to the department.
- The department does not have a defined professional development training program for staff, which is necessary to ensure that employees have the tools they need to move to the next level within the department.

5. Fire Prevention/Life Safety

The Fire Prevention/Life Safety Bureau is divided into three units: Fire Protection Planning Bureau, Investigation and Enforcement Bureau and the Strategic Planning Bureau. A battalion chief supervises the Investigation and Enforcement Bureau and is responsible for investigations and code enforcement tasks. Deputy fire marshal's and/or battalion chief's supervise the Fire Protection Planning Bureau. These bureau's report to the fire marshal, an assistant chief position which is currently vacant. A battalion chief supervises the Strategic Planning Bureau. This position reports directly to the Fire Chief.

Fire Protection Planning Bureau

The Fire Protection Planning Bureau is led by the Life Safety assistant chief position who reports to the fire chief. There are two deputy fire marshal positions under the assistant chief. A deputy fire marshal is each assigned to the Eastern and Western County areas. One fire protection engineer is assigned to assist both the Eastern and Western areas as needed. There are four assistant fire marshals. One is assigned to each of the two offices (Eastern or Western); one is assigned to the Life Safety Program; and one is assigned to training and special projects. There are additional positions of fire systems specialists for plan checking and fire system inspectors for new construction fire inspections and life safety inspections.

The Fire Protection Planning Bureau is further divided into three sub-units: Planning, Systems, and Fire and Life Safety Programs. Planning handles the entitlement processes, environmental impact reports, specific plans, plot plans, tract maps, parcel maps, single family residence construction, and commercial and industrial construction. The Systems section handles underground and overhead systems as well as fire alarms. Fire and Life Safety Programs (FLSI) oversees inspection of public schools, hospitals, jails, daycare facilities, skilled nursing and Title 19 inspections.

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- While some computer systems are used in this bureau, staff is primarily using a manual record keeping system. For example, project tracking is on paper rather than automated, therefore requiring significant staff time to maintain and search for information. Manual systems are subject to inaccuracy of files, records and accounting of fees and reimbursements. Some staff created their own automated spreadsheets for tracking information. The data those staff are keeping is not accessible by anyone else in the organization or the public/applicants.
- The fee schedule is not current, resulting in the loss of revenues and likely lack of cost recovery for the bureau's work.

Investigation and Enforcement Bureau

The Investigation and Enforcement Bureau provides fire investigation services throughout the County in the peace officer capacity and also provides enforcement services for the Hazard Abatement Unit. Hazard Abatement staff inspect unimproved property for flammable vegetation in the west end of the County where wild land interface issues create a hazard to populated areas. This bureau provides peace officer criminal investigation services to the County and the cooperative partners. These specific employees are given powers of arrest under the Penal Code and require a high level of specific education and training, beyond the specialty training required for the skills required for cause and origin investigation of fire.

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- Staff within the Investigation and Enforcement Bureau participates in training with outside law enforcement agencies. This enables them to stay current with Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) requirements as well as current law enforcement techniques and standards.
- Employees are assigned to this unit for only two years. This limits the ability of the employee to really contribute to the unit's performance, as it can take several years to develop the skills necessary to do the job.

- Depending upon the situation, there are times that two investigators should be assigned to an investigation; however, strong consideration should be given to having investigators conduct initial investigations without a partner so that resources can be better deployed and local law enforcement be tapped for those situations where a law enforcement presence will make the environment safer for the investigator.

Strategic Planning Bureau

The Strategic Planning Bureau (SPB) was created in 2007 to oversee long range planning, facility infrastructure and special projects, led by a battalion chief who reports directly to the Fire Chief. The staffing consists of a fire facilities planner, administrative services analyst and fire captains which are each assigned to Eastern and Western Operational Areas and Special Projects. The Maintenance and Construction personnel consist of a building maintenance supervisor, two lead maintenance carpenters, one maintenance carpenter and one maintenance mechanic.

Staff provides construction and maintenance services; fire facility planning and design; specific plan/area plan review; environmental impact report reviews; review of annexation and incorporation reports; strategic, master and operation plan development; master fire facility inventory; and, data analysis.

In addition, the Strategic Planning Bureau provides regional integrated fire protection services input, including response studies, response mapping, fire station and fire equipment placement analysis and Insurance Service Organization (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) reporting.

The SPB is responsible for all projects within the unincorporated areas of Riverside County and additionally is consulted on projects within the cooperative partner jurisdictions.

6. Office of Emergency Services

The Office of Emergency Services (OES) is supervised by the Deputy Director of Emergency Services, who reports to the Fire Chief. The office is divided into two sections: the Emergency Services Program and Administrative Services. OES was originally established as the Riverside County Office of Disaster Preparedness in 1971. This office was transferred to the Fire Department in 1984 as the Emergency Services Division, and was renamed as the County OES in 2002.

In the Emergency Services Program a supervisor oversees seven emergency services coordinators and one administrative analyst. Five coordinators manage OES functions for the County's cooperative partners and operational areas. Two are assigned to special projects.

In the Administrative Services Program a supervisor oversees six staff members including an administrative analyst, office assistant, administrative services officer and three grant analysts.

There are two Emergency Operations Centers (EOC's). The primary center is in downtown Riverside and another backup facility is in Indio. Riverside's EOC is slightly atypical by virtue of the fact that its operations must be adjusted to reflect the large geographic size of the county and the large population base and diversity with the cooperative partner cities. In Riverside, unlike in many counties, there are a large number of autonomous government units, each requiring varying levels of EOC support. Some cities in the county have their own emergency manager. In other cases, one of the County's emergency service coordinators may be responsible for serving as emergency manager for multiple cooperative partners.

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- The OES Section has completed the basic emergency plans for the County.
- Currently there are six vacant OES positions. Three of these vacancies are grant writers. The other vacant positions are an administrative officer, a community outreach position, and a training position. If any of the OES vacant positions could more than cover their costs through grants obtained it would be valuable to fill those positions, potentially on a temporary staffing basis or with a contractor.
- The current Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is inadequate in terms of location, space and technical equipment. For example, there are only 19 computers for 100 on-duty personnel when the EOC is at full alert.
- A major fault line extends through the mountain pass area of the County. Most stations are located on one side of the fault line. If a major earthquake occurred, the department would experience significant delays in reaching impacted areas on the other side of the fault line.

7. Communications/Technology

The communications manager oversees the department's Communications/Technology Bureau and reports to a battalion chief (vacant position) who oversees this bureau. The Communications/Technology Bureau is located at the headquarters facility in Perris and consists of 21 positions with three current vacancies (including the battalion chief). Some of the staff is located in field offices throughout the county. The bureau is also responsible for GIS and the department website.

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- Slightly more than 1% of the staff in RCFD is part of the Communications/Technology Bureau. This is low compared with other public agencies, which typically staff IT operations at between 3% and 5% of the total workforce. The small IT staff and distance between County facilities makes the ability to address all of the IT issues in the department a challenge and leaves little time for future planning.
- As many as 25 servers are used to provide information technology support to the department. This does not include the redundant servers offsite for critical functions. Staff is also planning on installing additional servers in the backup EOC and dispatch facilities. This is a large number of servers even for the size of the department.
- The department is using fire station staffing management software called OSS. This software does not support phone-in notifications and overtime shift management.
- The data center is cooled by an in-house HVAC with additional supplemental cooling that has been implemented over the years. The electrical system in the data center was recently upgraded. All of the equipment is mounted in an open communications rack with fire protection provided by a pressurized sprinkler system. The HVAC system provides air conditioning to the building, but it is not designed for computer system use. Overheating of this equipment is common. The department has experienced several incidents a year where the data center overheats due to failure of the current systems.
- The fire protection system in the data center is provided by a pressurized fire sprinkler system. A discharge of water in a data center can result in a loss of millions of dollars in equipment and a serious disruption in service.

8. Human Resources

The RCFD Human Resources function resides within two separate units within the department's Administrative Section. The State Employee Human Resources section is overseen by an administrative deputy chief. The County Administration unit is overseen by a deputy director and services the county employees and reports to the Administrative Deputy Chief.

As reported by the deputy director, the county unit works closely with the County's central Human Resources Department on recruitment and other personnel issues. Because of the functional divisions of responsibility described in the memorandum of understanding between the County and the State of California there is essentially no interaction between RCFD's two personnel units or between RCFD's Administration personnel unit and the County's central personnel function.

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- Currently, background checks are required for County positions but not for state positions. Not only is this inconsistent within the same department, it also creates liability issues.
- Turnover and retirement data are tracked for the County employees but not for the state employees. This inconsistency makes it difficult to analyze the department's efforts as a whole regarding recruitment, retention and succession planning.
- The department does not have a succession plan in place for "mission critical" classifications so the department can prepare and plan for future vacancies.

9. Risk Management

The risk management function reports to the Special Operations Deputy Chief and is overseen by a battalion chief, entitled Safety Officer. This bureau includes four staff, consisting of a battalion chief, two captains and an office technician who are responsible for the department's safety and accident prevention program. Incident data are not currently maintained, other than OSHA postings that are currently tracked by the Return to Work coordinator. County risk management has recently begun to involve fire safety staff in annual fire facility inspections.

The Riverside County fire service area is large. As a result, substantial time is required for the three risk management staff members to travel to a site for incident safety investigations or annual equipment or facility inspections. This leaves little time for procedure development and data collection analysis.

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- Risk management policies and procedures are not clearly defined and are not integrated into the department. The lack of risk management policies increases the department's liability.
- Risk management data collection, reporting and trend analysis is not being conducted consistently throughout the department.

10. Purchasing

The purchasing staff and the service center staff are part of the Administration Section of the Riverside County Fire Department. The staff members report to the Administration deputy director who reports to the Administrative Section deputy chief. RCFD purchasing staff is responsible for handling all of the purchases for the department working closely with the County's Central Purchasing staff. In addition, the RCFD purchasing staff is also responsible for the operations of the Service Center which provides the supplies and materials to the administration and fire stations for the department throughout the County.

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- There is insufficient accountability for property in the Service Center, as evidenced by the inventory that could not be accounted for in the last several years in the year end reconciliations. This has resulted in a financial loss for the department over the years and this could continue if the inventory is not carefully tracked and accounted for.
- The department has inventory software in the Service Center, but it is not being used to the fullest extent possible. All warehouse employees need to be trained on how to use this software.
- Service Center processes and procedures are being implemented inconsistently (or do not exist), which has resulted in stations receiving items that they did not request or not receiving requested items at all.
- Staff reported during our interviews that there are significant delays in obtaining items requested from the Service Center.
- Equipment is given to volunteers from the Service Center. However, when a volunteer leaves the organization the equipment is to be returned to the station where they were last assigned, rather than to the Service Center. As a result, the Service Center does not know where equipment is and ends up purchasing equipment that might otherwise not be needed. All of this is a product of inadequate inventory control practices.
- Purchases are not itemized for budgeting purposes in the department.

11. Budgeting and Accounts Payable

The budget and accounts payable functions for RCFD are the part of the Administration Section. The staff members responsible for these functions report to the Deputy Director of Administration who reports to the Deputy Chief of Administration.

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- Divisions within the department do not receive copies of the budget and are not provided quarterly budget reports. As a consequence, division managers do not know how much money they have spent during the year and what is remaining in each account.

- Revenue and expenditure trend analyses and projections are not being prepared on a regular basis. Such analyses and projections, including itemizing expenditures, should be done for planning and management decision making.
- Staff reported that they receive complaints from vendors regarding late payments. Late payments can sometimes result in late fees being paid by the department. The accounts payable process could be examined to determine efficiencies that could be achieved by streamlining.

12. Volunteer Fire Fighter Program

As noted above, Riverside County's volunteer fire service dates back over 130 years. Today, the Riverside County Fire Department has approximately 55 volunteer fire companies with approximately 700 volunteer firefighters who serve Riverside County, including numerous contract cities, and who work with career firefighters to protect the County. Volunteers are trained through the Riverside County Fire Academy which takes place at the RCFD training center. They are provided first responder training, auto extrication, wildland firefighting, and other skills training.

Highlights for Consideration during the Strategic Planning Process

- There is tension between the volunteer firefighters and career firefighters, which prevent the department from operating as a unified organization. The department desires to bring the volunteers into the command and control structure of the County Fire Department to achieve the goals of the department and optimize the effectiveness of having both paid employees and volunteers providing services.
- The volunteer operating policies are outdated. They should be updated to ensure that the volunteers are working with the same procedures and practices as career firefighters.

13. Performance Measurement

Performance measurement is the process of identifying indicators that demonstrate an organization's efficiency and effectiveness in delivering a program or service, systematically collecting data, and analyzing that data to assess program performance. It is a tool for identifying successes and needed improvements, and is a method to gauge customer satisfaction. In the context of customer service, performance measures must also address the interest of the community in providing effective services while protecting individual rights, liberties, and the need for respect.

The use of performance measurement is a key way of assessing progress towards meeting organizational priorities and strategic objectives. It's a way of asking, "Did our efforts and expenditures make a difference and have the desired and anticipated results?" Metrics can help answer the question, "How are we doing?" – not just, "What are we doing?"

Tracking key indicators and analyzing where performance is and is not meeting objectives forms the foundation of process improvement. The regular analysis of performance measurement information enables managers to make informed decisions about changes needed and progress in meeting objectives. Best management practices include the use of metrics in:

- Making resource allocation decisions
- Evaluating service effectiveness (quality and efficiency)
- Assessing and improving customer satisfaction
- Focusing and increasing accountability
- Identifying emerging issues and problems
- Tracking positive or negative trends
- Serving as the basis for policy and practice changes
- Comparing and benchmarking with other agencies
- Educating, informing and communicating improvements and successes

Understanding that budget allocations should be tied to policy goals and objectives is strategically critical for any governmental agency. This is especially true in the face of constrained revenues, which are not likely to change in the mid- or even long-term. Therefore, whether or not a formal performance budgeting system is instituted, performance measures provide department and management staff with critical operating information. Performance measures enable staff to develop solid budget justifications, either by demonstrating program effectiveness or demonstrating a gap between needs and service levels. This, in turn, ensures that short-term resource allocation decisions are consistent with long-term goals and objectives. Examples of sample performance measures for the RCFD are included in Attachment E.

14. Battalion Chief Incident Command Guidelines

In large departments, such as the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD), battalion chiefs typically have four primary work responsibilities.

- Administrative duties supervising station crews (typically five or six stations)
- Emergency response and incident command responsibilities for "working" alarms in their battalion area
- Backup response to an adjacent area to serve as sub-command or safety officer or other supporting position
- Department staff support, such as oversight of breathing apparatus maintenance, truck replacement planning, and emergency medical services quality assurance

The RCFD service area covers 7,057 square miles and is divided into 17 battalions. This means that each battalion is geographically very large, which makes it challenging for the assigned battalion chiefs to respond to calls and address their other duties.

Battalion chiefs work a 72 hour shift with 96 hours off and are often assigned to cover two battalions. They typically sleep at their home, which by department policy must be within a 30 minute drive of the outer boundary of their assigned area. In reality, it may take them as long as 45 minutes to respond to a call. When there are simultaneous alarms, which occur frequently, the battalion chiefs cannot arrive on scene until well after the first engine company arrives. According to industry best practices, a battalion chief should arrive on scene for a "working alarm" in his or her assigned area within 10 minutes of the arrival of the first engine company to be the incident commander. Because of the geography, covering more than one battalion at a time, multiple calls, and other duties, achieving this standard in RCFD is challenging.

One way to improve battalion chief incident response time, ensure manageable station and crew oversight, ensure sufficient coverage for shift days-off and multiple alarms is to redraw the boundary lines to reduce the size of the existing battalion areas. However, that would result in additional battalions and the need for additional staff. Given the difficult economy and the financial situation the state and all local governments are faced with, this solution is impractical.

In order to ensure that there is a trained incident commander at the scene within 10 minutes of the arrival of the first engine company to direct the operations, the RCFD should adopt a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which states that if the area Battalion Chief cannot be at the scene within approximately 10 minutes of the arrival of the first engine company, the company captain, who is the interim incident commander, must assume the full incident command function until relieved by a higher ranking officer. The department also needs to include incident command training as part of the training program for all department captains to ensure that staff is properly trained to carry out this function.

CONCLUSION

The Riverside County Fire Department has taken an important step in developing this Strategic Plan. The department has agreed upon a mission, vision and values through this process. In addition, priorities led to the creation of goals that will serve the department well into the future. Specific strategies, each of which is measurable, have been created to move the organization forward. Each goal and the strategies associated with each goal have been incorporated into an implementation action plan. The continued commitment from the department staff to implementing the goals and strategies is critical for successful implementation of the strategic plan.

The RCFD is fortunate to have a staff that is committed to providing effective and efficient services to the communities they serve. This strategic planning process is critical to establishing the goals and priorities to keep the department moving forward now and in the future.

