

San Luis Obispo City Fire
Department 2024-2029

Strategic Plan



CITY OFFICIALS

Erica A. Stewart, Mayor

Jan Marx, Vice Mayor

Andy Pease, Council Member

Michelle Shoresman, Council Member

Emily Francis, Council Member

Whitney McDonald, City Manager

Greg Herman, Deputy City Manager

COMMAND STAFF

Todd Tuggle, Fire Chief

Sammy Fox, Deputy Fire Chief

Ray Hais, Battalion Chief

Shayne Skove, Battalion Chief

John MacDonald, Battalion Chief

PREPARED BY

Todd Tuggle, Fire Chief

Mika Timpano, Administrative Specialist

Nicole Vert, Business Analyst

James Blattler, Emergency Manager

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Chief.....	4
Jurisdiction and Organizational Background.....	5
Introduction.....	6
Strategic Planning Process.....	7
Summary of Findings from External Stakeholders.....	8
Summary of Findings from Internal Stakeholders.....	9
Mission, Vision, and Values.....	10
Fire Department Organizational Chart.....	11
Fire Department Statistics.....	12
Strategic Initiatives.....	13
Community Focused Service.....	13
Professional Development and Training.....	16
Health & Wellness.....	19
Emergency Preparedness.....	21
Community Risk Reduction.....	23
Technology & Data.....	25
Team Implementation.....	27
Success of the Strategic Plan.....	29

MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

San Luis Obispo City Fire is pleased to present the next iteration of the Fire Department Strategic Plan. The 2018-2023 plan yielded many improvements that have brought us to the 2024-2029 version.

The 2024-2029 Strategic Plan was developed with an engaged group of external and internal stakeholders who cast a vision of the future for our department. The SLO Fire Department Strategic Plan contains six initiatives focused on improving SLOFD's ability to reduce risk while delivering exceptional customer service. The stakeholders took a holistic view of the department and the community to come up with the key work efforts which will continue to refine our direction and efforts towards the specific needs of San Luis Obispo. Needs such as wildfire threat, mental health crises, homelessness and a growing population among other impacts drove the initiatives in this plan.

As we look forward to the next few years of growth and development in the Department, SLOFD remains committed to providing exceptional service amidst the continuously evolving nature of public safety. Thank you for your commitment to SLOFD and our work in this community.



Todd Tuggle, Fire Chief

Command staff from left to right:
Battalion Chief Skove, Battalion
Chief Hais, Deputy Chief Fox,
Battalion Chief MacDonald,
Fire Chief Tuggle



JURISDICTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

San Luis Obispo was founded by the Spanish in 1772, when Saint Junípero Serra established Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa. Located on the Central Coast of California, San Luis Obispo is the largest city and seat of San Luis Obispo County. The population is estimated 48,341 per the 2022 census. The city has a total area of 13.25 square and is home to California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. San Luis Obispo is a seismically active area; there are several nearby faults including the San Andreas Fault. The City of San Luis Obispo is surrounded by more than 4,000 acres of protected open space and is a popular tourist destination that attracts visitors from across the globe. The Nine Sisters are a string of hills that partially run through San Luis Obispo. They are geologically noteworthy for being volcanic plugs. Six of the nine peaks are open to the public for recreation.

San Luis Obispo is incorporated as a charter city. The city charter provides for a "Council-Mayor-City Manager" form of municipal government. The City Council has five members, a mayor who is elected to two-year terms, with each mayor limited to serving no more than four consecutive terms, and four city council members who are elected to four-year terms, with each council member limited to serving no more than two consecutive terms.

The Fire Department of San Luis Obispo was first organized in 1872 and has 49 full-time Firefighters operating out of four fire stations and 14 Fire Prevention and Support personnel. The Department provides "All-Risk" service to the community through five (5) Divisions: Administration, Emergency Management, Fire Prevention, Training and Suppression.

Fire Station #1 houses Administration, Fire Prevention, Emergency Management, Training, and vehicle maintenance and repair. Fire Station #1 operates a 4-person advanced life support (ALS) truck company, Battalion Chief, and 2-person Mobile Crisis Unit. Fire Station #2 operates a 3-person ALS Quint that cross staffs the Department's off-road UTV. Fire Station #3 operates a 3-person ALS engine company and houses the state-owned OES engine. Fire Station #4 operates a 3-person ALS engine company that cross staffs Type 3 4x4 wildland engine.

Each apparatus has at least one paramedic on duty each day and the Mobile Crisis Unit is staffed with two personnel, one of which is a mental health professional Monday-Friday. The department responds to over 7,000 calls each year, including Automatic and Mutual Aid assistance to adjacent agencies and statewide response. The San Luis Obispo City Fire Department also maintains a bike medic and UTV program which is used for open space rescues and downtown special events throughout the city.

The San Luis Obispo City Fire Department also participates in a variety of county teams and associations to better collaborate and improve service to the community. Nine members of the Department are part of the San Luis Obispo County Urban Search and Rescue Team, and six members of the Department are part of the San Luis Obispo Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team. The Department also participates as part of the San Luis Obispo Fire Investigation Strike Team (SLOFIST), a joint agency Fire Investigation team, the San Luis County Training Officers Association, and San Luis County Fire Prevention Association. Several members participate on the Type 3 SLO County XSL Incident Management Team,

which serves all county jurisdictions during major extended emergency operations such as fires, floods, earthquakes, pandemics, and civil unrest. The Department has automatic and mutual aid agreements with surrounding departments, the California Office of Emergency Services, and the Los Padres National Forest.

In addition to providing exceptional and compassionate emergency response, the Department embraces inclusive fire prevention and education strategies that include fire and life safety inspections, plan review services, fire/arson investigation, fire safety and public safety education, and disaster preparedness classes.



INTRODUCTION

Over the last 150 years, the San Luis Obispo Fire Department has grown and evolved to professionally achieve and meet the needs of the communities' unique challenges. The San Luis Obispo City Fire Department provides modern fire suppression, emergency medical services, fire prevention, technical rescue, hazardous materials mitigation, domestic preparedness planning and response, fire investigation and public fire safety education service to the community.

The San Luis Obispo Fire Department prides itself on being progressive in terms of providing state-of-the-art emergency services at an efficient cost. One of the Department objectives is to update and maintain an inclusive and thorough Strategic Plan for current work programs and long-term planning. This is the first update to the Department Strategic Plan which was originally initiated by Fire Chief Garret Olson in 2018.

The process includes review of the department mission, responsibilities, and stakeholder expectations including a comprehensive evaluation of set performance standards, best practices, and alignment with major city goals. This plan is intended to guide the organization towards improved performance and increased service delivery to the community of San Luis Obispo and its visitors. The Plan includes input from a representative group composed of members of the Department (internal stakeholders), other City Departments, elected officials, and the community at large (external stakeholders).

The San Luis Obispo City Fire Department's Strategic Plan sets forth a comprehensive vision and mission statement that provides the agency with a clear understanding of its purpose. Additionally, this strategic plan identifies the core values that allow the agency's members, individually and collectively, to carry out the day-to-day functions in support of the mission.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

What is a Strategic Plan? It is a living management tool that provides short-term direction, builds a shared vision, sets goals and objectives, and optimizes use of resources.

The evolution of this Strategic Plan has been thoughtful, deliberate, and measured. To ensure that the community's needs and priorities were considered, a community focused Strategic Planning Process was used to develop the SLOFD Strategic Plan. For many successful organizations, the voice of the community drives their operations and charts the course for their future. A community focused organization is defined as "one that maintains a focus on the needs and expectations, both spoken and unspoken, of customers, both present and future, in the creation and/or improvement of the product or service provided."

Strategic Planning is a continuous and systematic process where the guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future, develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is to be measured. Planning is a continuous process, one with no clear beginning and no clear end. While plans can be developed on a regular basis, it is the process of planning that is important, not the publication of the plan itself. Most importantly, strategic planning can be an opportunity to unify the city, leadership, members, and stakeholders through a common understanding of where the department is going, how everyone involved can work toward that common purpose, and how progress will measure success.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS OUTLINE

1. Define services provided to the community and establish the community's service priorities in alignment with Major City Goals.
2. Establish the community's expectations of the department, aspects that the community views positively, as well as any concerns they may have about the department.
3. Identify both external and internal environmental and operational challenges.
4. Align with the department's mission statement, values, and vision.
5. Identify areas of strengths, weaknesses, opportunity for and potential threats to the department.
6. Establish realistic goals and objectives, along with critical tasks for each objective.
7. Understand the obstacles of specific action steps to be effective in achieving completion.

The San Luis Obispo City Fire Department utilized a community focused strategic planning process to critically examine traditions, values, philosophies, beliefs, and desires. With a focus on service to the community and providing all personnel the opportunity to participate in the development of the organization's long-term goals and initiatives. The members of the

Department's external and internal stakeholder groups performed an outstanding job in committing to this important project and remain committed to the document's completion.

A strategic plan serves as a management tool that documents the shared mission and vision into a series of short-term and long-term strategic initiatives, goals, and objectives. The intent is to drive the organization toward a common vision while optimizing organizational resources. The San Luis Obispo City Fire Department recognizes that the future of the fire service will continue to change due to multiple influencing forces, the greatest of which will be citizen expectations. Although we fully expect to see influences from all facets of the world around us, it is service to our citizens that will drive most changes. In short, we don't want to waste time and energy on goals that lack a good cost/benefit ratio. The process of strategic planning is as important as the final plan itself. The inclusion of internal stakeholders from all ranks and a diverse cross section of external stakeholders provided feedback to ensure the plan had strategic initiatives that reflected the community but were balanced against various constraints.

Internal stakeholders included all suppression personnel, emergency management, fire prevention, vehicle technicians, chief officers, and administration. External stakeholders included all city department heads, deputies, city management and elected officials and the public at large. The community was encouraged to participate through Open City Hall website which resulted in 137 respondents. The feedback from our community helped inform the components of our plan and helped identify priorities and the method and means for accomplishing those priorities.

The process, internally, took department members through a wide variety of lectures and discussions on fire department organization, levels of service and meetings to discuss and review the department Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis). External stakeholder participants were provided a comprehensive series of questions related to their expectations as customers and service providers.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Overall, 80% of respondents were extremely satisfied with the service provided by the San Luis Obispo City Fire Department with top comments identifying quick response, professional service, and appreciation for the kind personnel. A significant amount of feedback recommended maintaining service levels as current performance provided is sufficient. Additional priorities include:

1. Maintain current core services and service levels (primarily response times) throughout the existing community. The Department is free to improve/enhance service levels, but the community does not want to pay for any enhancements.
2. Provide more community outreach and public education on fire prevention, home safety, disaster preparedness and mental health services.
3. Increase proactive wildfire preparedness through annual weed abatement inspection/enforcement, fuel management in the open space, creeks, and surrounding areas to protect infrastructure and open space.

4. Maintain quick response to emergencies while moving to reduce use of Truck 1.
5. New/future development growth should pay their own way and not adversely impact the current service levels in existing areas.
6. Expand the Mobile Crisis Unit outreach to address and reduce homelessness, addiction issues and illegal fires.
7. Continue to advance Disaster Preparedness throughout the City through employee training, community forums and social media.
8. Continue use of various social media outlets to provide up to date information including appearances on KVEC and online informational videos.
9. Increase positive firefighter visibility in the community at public events, supporting local businesses, and providing safety information.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

The Department sought input by all internal members through a series of self-assessment steps. The Deputy Chief, Fire Marshal, shift Battalion Chiefs, and company officers were provided pre-meeting information about the Department philosophy of the strategic plan development, organizational decision-making priorities, and guidance document review. The group reviewed the department mission statement, 2018-2023 strategic plan, City Council Major City Goals, current department budget, 2022 Community Development presentation on proposed development, current ISO rating information and a variety of National, State, and local standards.

The discussions at each level were transcribed into draft SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is a widely applied tool in strategic decision support which identifies an organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Identifying an organization's traits into categories allows opportunities for improvement. Strengths can be used to exploit opportunities and to help prevent threats. Overcoming weaknesses to exploit new opportunities is the challenge; however, performing a SWOT analysis enables agencies to self-evaluate and show improvement opportunities to become more safe, healthy, prepared, and resilient communities.

Teams were asked to be visionary while working within the constraints of what the department controls to develop actionable organizational priorities for the five-year strategic plan. Primary items identified include:

1. Continue to emphasize the San Luis Fire Department mission, core values and vision to meet community needs at all levels of the organization.
2. Maintain a high level of customer service to match community priorities within fiscal capacity.
3. Pursue third party assessment of department data, insurance service office rating, community service needs, and proposed community development to define and maintain effective response time and operational force.
4. Increase personnel training, education, competency, and mentorship at all levels of the organization in correspondence to the many new entry level and promotional employees.

5. Continue with high level of coordination between the City and Department Public Information Officer to provide continuous emergency and non-emergency information flow to the community.
6. Advance community preparedness in line with ready-set-go, 72 hour-kit, home fire safety and public safety academy.
7. Continue to build a safe, healthy, prepared, and more resilient firefighters through enhanced Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program.

DEPARTMENT MISSION, VALUES AND VISION

SAN LUIS OBISPO CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Competence - Courage - Compassion

MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance and protect the lives, environment, and property of our community and its visitors.

VALUES

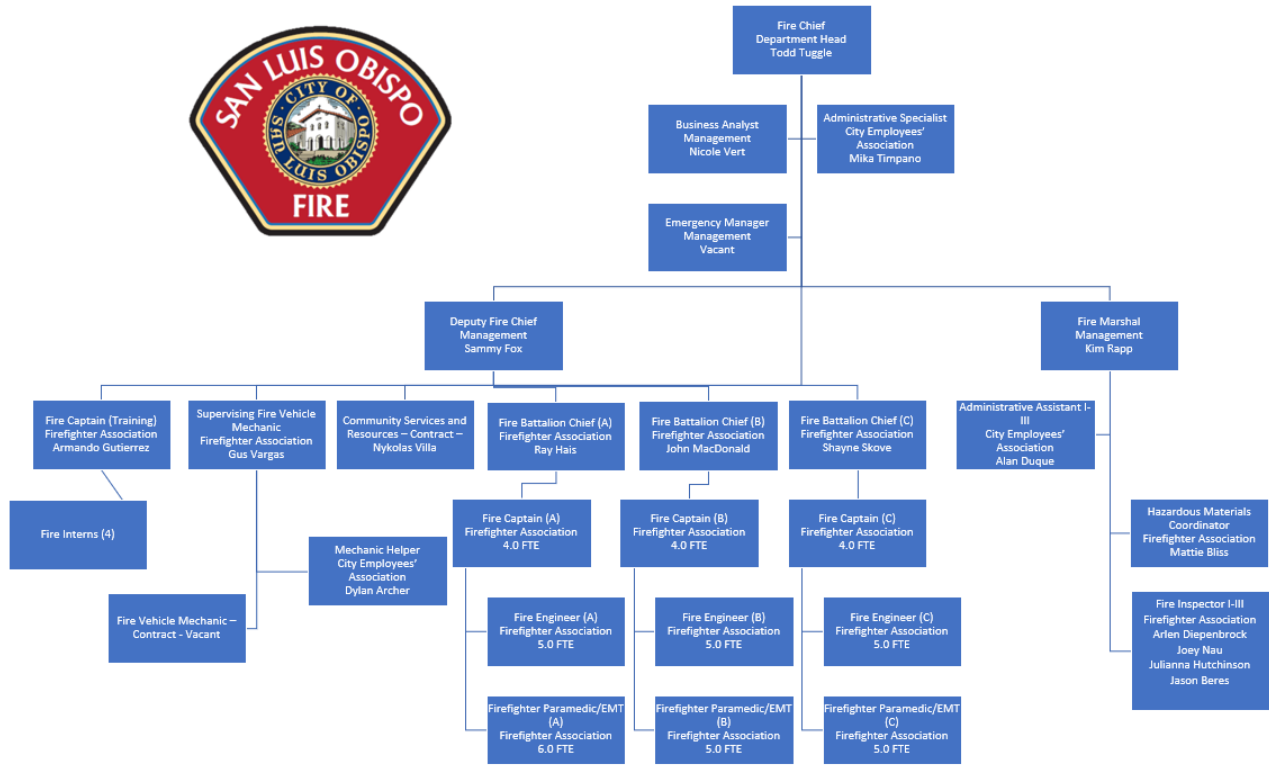
- S - Service
- L - Loyalty
- O - Ownership
- F - Family
- I - Integrity
- R - Respect
- E - Excellence

VISION

To be a progressive organization that leads the community in public safety and preparedness demonstrated through an unwavering commitment to the protection of lives, property and our environment. The service we provide will be of the highest quality recognized against local, state and federal standards.

FIRE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

SLO CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029



FIRE DEPARTMENT STATISTICS

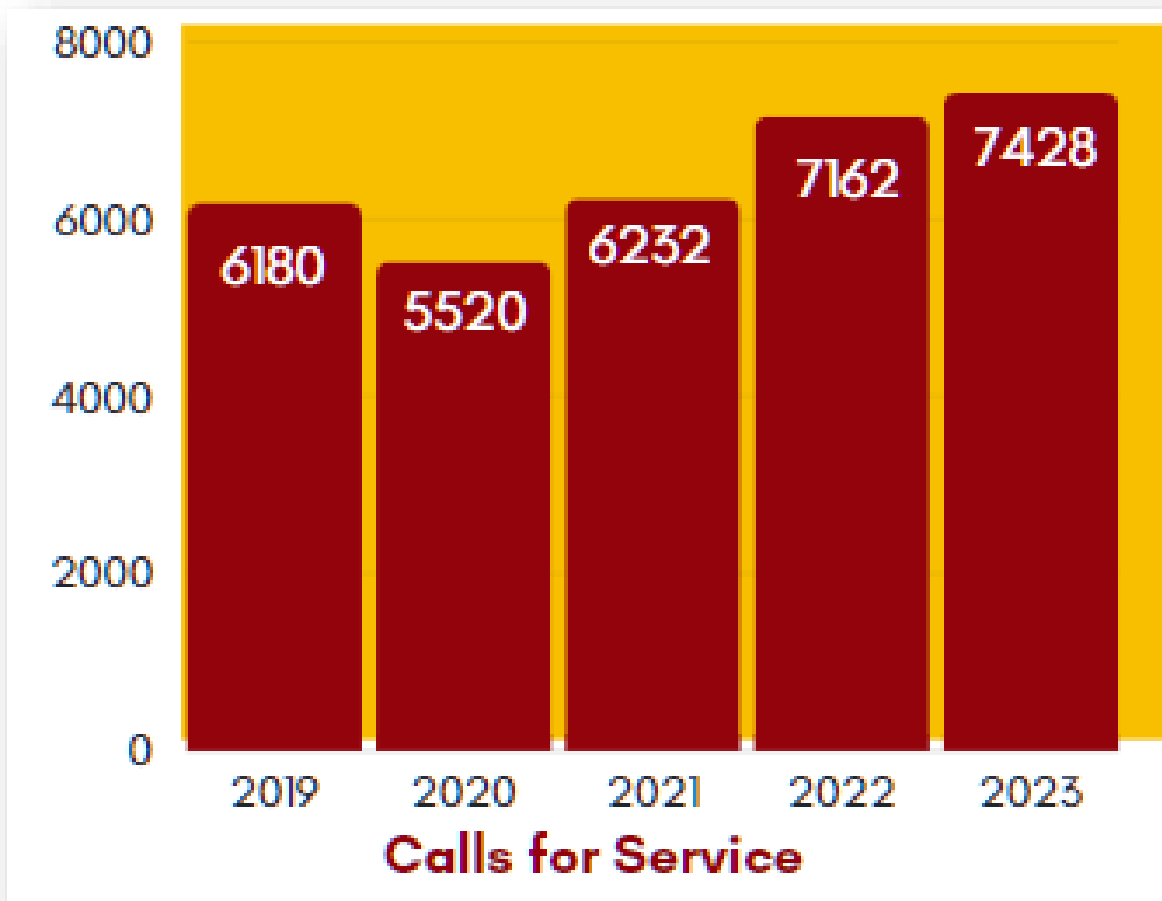
2023 Budget

Department Program	Staffing	Contract Services	Operating	Total
Fire Administration	\$929,298	\$6,600	\$245,552	\$ 1,181,449.55
Emergency Response	\$11,881,072	\$19,353	\$155,727	\$ 12,056,152.22
Hazard Prevention	\$968,897	19,500	\$58,893	\$ 1,047,289.25
Training Services	\$0	\$49,964	\$62,784	\$ 112,748.00
Fire Apparatus Services	\$270,203	\$29,235	\$191,162	\$ 490,600.80
Fire Station Facility Support	\$0	\$13,800	\$30,657	\$ 44,457.32
Emergency Management	\$180,724	\$4,133	\$21,030	\$ 205,887.28
Mobile Crisis Support	\$139,392	\$126,672	\$54,515	\$ 320,578.96
	\$14,369,586	\$269,257	\$820,320	\$ 15,459,163.39

Calls for Service

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The San Luis Obispo Fire Department 2024-2029 Strategic Plan bridges the gap between the organizational mission and the critical day-to-day tasks it takes to support an organized list of goals in the form of a strategic planning document. Which outlines organizational priorities for the next five years. Strategic initiatives are broad statements that set a direction for the organization. Many require support and/or cooperation from entities or departments outside of the Fire Department. Under each initiative, there may be included more specific goals and objectives that support the overarching initiative. Based upon all previously captured information and the determination of crucial issues and service gaps, the following strategic initiatives were identified as the foundation for the development of goals and objectives.



Community focused service, professional development and training, health and wellness, emergency preparedness, community risk reduction, and technology and data.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

To continuously accomplish the mission of the San Luis Obispo Fire Department, realistic goals and objectives with timeline for completion must be established. These will serve to enhance strengths, address identified weaknesses, provide a clear direction, and address the concerns of both internal and external stakeholders. These should become the focus of the department’s efforts, as they will direct the organization to its future while reducing the obstacles and distractions along the way. Established internal workgroups should meet and manage progress towards accomplishing these goals and objectives. These groups will continuously report back monthly with to department leadership updates to progress and adjustments needed based on the City and Community environment.



Maintain or improve exceptional community focused public service delivery. To meet the demands of the future, utilize response data to provide accurate, reliable forecasting and quality business analytics. Use of quality data to make decisions is a critical element moving the organization forward as we focus on improvement of the performance of our organization. It is essential that we establish methods to measure the performance of the services we provide.

Goal 1A	Improve effective deployment of resource response time performance
Objective	To provide the same level of emergency services throughout all areas within the City of San Luis Obispo and Cal Poly campus. Currently the Fire Department is experiencing longer than the adopted response time standards in several areas of throughout community.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilize Image Trend Continuum to evaluate performance indicators. ▪ Provide monthly Turnout Time data to Deputy Chief, Shift Battalion Chiefs and Fire Captains. ▪ Continue to utilize Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) to dispatch the closest available emergency resource. ▪ Work in conjunction with Business Analyst to review Total Response Time performance on quarterly basis. ▪ Assess need for updated Standards of Cover document to illustrate opportunities for improvement. ▪ Evaluate and determine tiered response dispatch system to reduce call processing and dispatch for critical incidents. ▪ Evaluate the utilization of Medic Rescue 1 on a wider scale to reduce Truck 1’s call volume. ▪ Improve staff notification process and recall procedures by updating internal notification and recall system. ▪ Utilize data and metrics to identify gaps in response strategies and explore response time improvements through movement of

SLO CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

	<p>resources, alternative deployment model and/or addition of resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform department, city administration and community of real-time unit response time data using public facing website. ▪ Work to maintain or improve the department’s Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating. ▪ Continue to forecast service impacts related to community growth, development, and annexations.
Assigned to	Department Administration Team
Timeframe	2024/2027

Goal 1B	Improve the delivery of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the City of San Luis Obispo
Objective	To work in conjunction with SLO County Emergency Medical System Authority (EMSA), Department Paramedic Coordinators, Paramedic Field Training Officers, the EMS Battalion Chief, the department’s Training Division, and our partners from allied agencies to look for ways to improve emergency patient care delivery throughout the community.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and improve Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement program through review of all ALS patient care reports. ▪ Evaluate and make improvements to Department EMS delivery and technology with a focus on quality patient care. ▪ Maintain and improve ongoing EMS training delivery to meet and/or exceed current best practices. ▪ Evaluate EMS Paramedic training opportunities for current members to maintain and increase number of Firefighter/Paramedics. ▪ Expand Department EMS response capabilities for special and planned events. ▪ Evaluate expanded Firefighter/Paramedic training to include Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). ▪ Research alternative models of pre-hospital care, delivery, and transport in collaboration with SLO County EMSA and SLO County Fire Chiefs Association. ▪ Collaborate with LEMSA for Triage to Alternate Destination capabilities and training. ▪ Evaluate high volume call locations for reduced impact to emergency resources.
Assigned to	Fire Chief, EMS BC, Paramedic Coordinator Team, and Training Officer
Timeframe	2024/2027

Goal 1C	Evaluate and improve Mobile Crisis Unit (MCU) deployment and Crisis Intervention Training for all members of the Department
Objective	To provide a first responder-based community response for those in mental health crisis to reduce hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and homelessness.

Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate effectiveness of current MCU deployment to provide crisis support to residents experiencing mental health problem against response data to improve individual and community needs. ▪ Update objectives of program to improve residents' ability to access needed social and behavioral health services through MCU coordination. ▪ Seek out funding options for Mobile Crisis and Outreach services through grant funding, reimbursement, billing and other revenue options. ▪ Work with SLOPD in prevention of opioid overdoses and direct residents to appropriate resources. ▪ Implement Crisis Intervention Training for ALL staff members.
Assigned to	Deputy Chief, EMS BC, Training Division, and Mobile Crisis Team
Timeframe	2024/2025

Goal 1D	Evaluate the capital improvement plan for Department infrastructure, apparatus, equipment, and appropriate funding for expected needs
Objective	To provide for an efficient and effective response force, the Department needs to be strategically located throughout the community and respond with the appropriate resources and equipment.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate and adjust the department sustainability financial plan as needed to maintain appropriate replacement schedules. ▪ Review and adjust the Department's 30-year Fleet Replacement Plan and monitor for proper funding. ▪ Review current City infrastructure replacement/upgrade plan with long-term sustainability focus for fire department facilities addition and replacement. ▪ Assess fleet and facility upgrades for conformance with climate action goals of Carbon Neutrality Plan.
Assigned to	Fire Chief and Deputy Chief
Timeframe	2025/2027



Enhance professional development, organization diversity and organization safety through training and education.

Goal 2A	Enhance the Department training, succession planning and professional development to provide and support highly qualified, well trained, safe, healthy, and fit employees
----------------	---

SLO CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

Objective	Over the past 5 years, the department has experienced immense turnover with nearly 30 new personnel, and it is projected that the Department will see additional retirements and needs to be prepared to promote individuals into higher positions throughout the organization by providing high quality and modern in-service training delivery.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate, expand, and update Recruit Firefighter academy training objectives. ▪ Investigate interest in developing standard county-wide multi-agency recruit academy. ▪ Evaluate, expand, and update the Fire Engineer pre-examination academy training objectives to include new apparatus and Tractor/Tiller training. ▪ Develop and implement Fire Captain pre-examination academy. ▪ Develop and implement Fire Battalion Chief pre-examination academy. ▪ Evaluate coordination and weighted assessment of Fire Engineer, Fire Captain, and Fire Battalion Chief academies as part of the promotional process with Human Resources. ▪ Develop training cadre of certified instructors to teach a variety of fire & rescue courses, including refresher training, in-house. ▪ Evaluate and develop Regional Truck Academy, through San Luis County Fire Training Officer Association. ▪ Provide training, career development and succession planning for Prevention staff. ▪ Develop clear career development pathways for multiple Prevention career paths. ▪ Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of conducting in-house State Fire Training courses to increase training opportunities for our staff while remaining within our current training budget.
Assigned to	Deputy Fire Chief, Community Risk Reduction Manager, Training Battalion Chief, Training Division.
Timeframe	2024/2027

Goal 2B	Create and implement a professional career development program for all positions within the organization to include State Fire Training, National Wildfire Coordinating Group, Hazardous Materials and Technical Rescue Training courses
Objective	Create professional foundation for Firefighter Interns, Firefighters, Fire Engineers, Fire Captains, Fire Battalion Chiefs, Fire Prevention staff, Fire Mechanics, and Mobile Crisis personnel to utilize in pursuing higher level of responsibility within the Department. This would include specialty teams and positions such as Urban Search and Rescue Team, Field Training Officer, Fire Investigator, Hazardous Materials Specialist Team, XSL Type 3 Incident Team member etc...
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and evaluate performance benchmarks for position/work assignments.

SLO CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design and implement a rank specific continuing education and career development guide grounded in current but forward-thinking industry trends. ▪ Maintain and improve position specific department task books to support the career development guide. ▪ Review and update department job descriptions to reflect modern fire service certifications. ▪ Support external training opportunities for State Fire and CICCIS Training Certifications. ▪ Build partnerships and seek opportunities to teach or host State Fire Training and CICCIS certifications courses in-house.
Assigned to	Training Battalion Chief, Training Officer, and Training Division.
Timeframe	2024/2026

Goal 2C	Supervisor leadership training and mentorship
Objective	To empower new and promoted personnel into their roles faster through a wide variety of training and mentorship opportunities to grow and develop.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop appropriate course recommendations for each position within the department. ▪ Encourage attendance of specialty training opportunities during annual appraisal recommendations. ▪ Partner with Human Resources to secure training positions in City sponsored courses through the Centre for Organizational Effectiveness (Foundation in Excellence, START, Supervisory Academy, Management Academy, Leadership Academy and Certified Public Manager). ▪ Encourage supervisors to participate in City Quarterly Manager Meetings. ▪ Develop and implement an Executive Mentoring program for Chief Officers and Division leads. ▪ Re-envision and implement line level agency job shadow program with allied agencies in the tri-counties.
Assigned to	Deputy Chief, Operations Battalion Chief and assigned team
Timeframe	2024/2026

Goal 2D	Recruit, develop, and retain a professional and diverse workforce
Objective	To make San Luis Obispo Fire Department a more welcoming and inclusive organization for all by developing programs and policies to support diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and advance the recommendations of the City DEI task force.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In coordination with Public Works continue to enhance improvements to fire station facilities. ▪ In coordination with Human Resources, continue to enhance improvements to firefighter recruitment and training.

SLO CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and improve the Fire Intern program to meet DEI initiatives. ▪ Expand intern opportunities to include multiple roles within the department, including suppression, emergency management, inspections, plan review, investigations, fuels management and Mobile Crisis Unit. ▪ Develop or partner with public safety agencies for Youth Summer Fire Camp to increase fire safety, prevention and introduce youths to the fire service. ▪ Continue to host and support the “Emergency Services Job Fair.” ▪ Consider local recruitment efforts through Cal Poly, local public safety academies and local school districts.
Assigned to	Fire Chief, Deputy Chief and assigned team
Timeframe	2024/2027

Goal 2E	To make improvements to the Fire training facility to develop fundamental training on a wider variety of hands-on emergency situations
Objective	To improve the current fire training facility to incorporate a wider range of emergency situations our firefighters may encounter.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate and develop plan for additional props and system addition to training facility. ▪ In coordination with Community Development and Public Works continue to enhance improvements to the fire training facility. ▪ Continue construction on the live-fire training facility to ensure live-fire trainings are both frequent and sustainable. ▪ Evaluate the need and opportunity for jointly owned mobile training props that may be shared amongst stations and other fire agencies in the County. ▪ Meet NFPA 1402 standards on facilities for fire training and associated props necessary to accomplish general fire fighter training effectively, efficiently, and safely. ▪ Incorporate Investigations training into live fire operational evolutions. ▪ Look for opportunities to partner with SLOPD in developing training facilities or props that could be used by both police and fire.
Assigned to	Deputy Chief, Training Battalion Chief, Training Officer, and Training Division.
Timeframe	2024/2025

Strategic Initiative
3

Health & Wellness

Enhance a healthy, safe, and productive work environment.

Goal 3A	Expand opportunities to improve overall health, wellness, and functional fitness of all team members to minimize workplace injuries
Objective	An effective fire department organization is reliant on the people who provide all-risk service to the community. Use relevant data and best practices to improve overall health and wellness of all personnel.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and evaluate the City Injury Reduction Program and CJPIA data, to research and implement best practices, procedures, and strategies to mitigate organizational risks. ▪ Assess need for external consultant to provide specialty programs such as nutrition, and flexibility assessments. ▪ Obtain quotes and determine provider to conduct in-depth NFPA 1582 compliant annual physical exams. Consider expanding annual physicals to include Fire Prevention/Community Risk Reduction staff. Develop and implement an expedited and thorough return to duty process when returning from long term leave, injury, or illness.
Assigned to	Deputy Fire Chief, Training Captain, Fitness Team/Shift Captains
Timeframe	2024/2027

Goal 3B	Firefighter Cancer Awareness and Reduction; cancer is a leading cause of death among firefighters, and research suggests firefighters are at higher risk of certain types of cancers when compared to the general population
Objective	Develop effective exposure training, and best practices to reduce carcinogen exposures and promote a culture of safety.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appoint shift safety officer to provide general safety messages and provide technical information related to risk management of cancer-causing items. ▪ Initiate training that increases cancer awareness and physical well-being to encourage firefighters to adopt work practices that lower their exposures to cancer-causing substances. ▪ Promote healthier lifestyles that may reduce cancer risk and increase the use of cancer screening tools. ▪ Continue to research, educate, and provide its members with the tools and PPE to increase safe work practices. ▪ Training should emphasize the proper use and care of PPE and turnout gear and the proper use of approved respiratory protection during all phases of firefighting. ▪ Review and update and enforce post fire decontamination process, procedures, and policies.

SLO CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to develop culture of safety related to carcinogenic exposure through the creation and implementation of a fire station hygiene program. ▪ Improve firefighter cancer screening as part of annual NFPA 1582 physicals. ▪ Complete install of PPE extractors in fire stations to maintain clean and uncontaminated personal protective equipment. ▪ Update all policies regarding PPE use, decontamination, and cleaning.
Assigned to	Operations BC, Training Officer, and Shift Captains
Timeframe	2024

Goal 3C	Maintain and enhance the mental health and wellness PEER support program
Objective	To provide the San Luis Obispo Fire Department personnel, both sworn and non-sworn, psychological, and emotional support through pre-incident training, family support, on-scene support, and post incident support as needed.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce the stigma and barriers to behavioral health help. ▪ Develop robust mental health support initiatives. ▪ Improve information and access of the City Employee Assistance Program (EAP). ▪ Partner with Human Resources, Police, and Rangers to secure licensed clinician contract. ▪ Increase funding for PEER team and contract support. ▪ Review and implement appropriate sections of NFPA 1500. ▪ Conduct ongoing training department wide and PEER team training. ▪ Implement traumatic incident process: at scene diffusing, debriefing, PEER coordination and professional behavioral health treatment. ▪ Provide feedback to Human Resources regarding The Counseling Team International (TCTI). ▪ Expand PEER support team to include additional members, including representation from FP/CRR staff.
Assigned to	Deputy Fire Chief, BC MacDonald, Engineer Gatton, and PEER Team Members
Timeframe	2024/2027

Strategic Initiative
4

Emergency Preparedness

Maintain and improve Emergency Management and Preparedness for all person made and natural large-scale disasters to meet current and future needs.

Goal 4A	Maintain and improve all Disaster Preparedness Program plans.
Objective	Maintain the comprehensive, risk-based, and all-hazard emergency plans, which describe who will do what, as well as when, with what resources, and by what authority before, during, and immediately after an emergency.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and update the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). ▪ Review and update the EOP supporting annexes. ▪ Review and update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. ▪ Review and update the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). ▪ Develop and implement the emergency management improvement plans created post disaster and trainings.
Assigned to	Emergency Manager
Timeframe	2024/2027

Goal 4B	Provide initial and ongoing employee training and enhancement of skills and abilities
Objective	Ensures that City personnel can provide appropriate emergency management services following a major disaster such as earthquake, flood, nuclear power accident, hazardous material spill, wildland fire, utility outage and pandemic.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and update post-hire/promotion NIMS position training for all employees. ▪ Provide annual City-wide email explain the Disaster Service Worker background and responsibility. ▪ Establish annual City Staff EOC/DSW Training Plan / Calendar ▪ Ensure City department-specific emergency planning needs are met. ▪ Ensure appropriate SEMS compliant After-Action Reviews following all major incidents.
Assigned to	Emergency Manager
Timeframe	2024/2027

Goal 4C	Provide whole Community Disaster Preparedness Training
Objective	To provides information and education on disaster preparedness, and evacuation procedures to city residents.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish ongoing Community Readiness event calendar. ▪ Provide topic specific disaster preparedness forums. ▪ Maintain and update PrepareSLO website. ▪ Provide monthly awareness information on social media sites.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the completion and implementation of evacuation program in collaboration with SLO County OES and resident training on “know your zone.” Engage City Volunteer Coordinator to empower neighborhood groups in risk reduction activities.
Assigned to	Emergency Manager
Timeframe	2024/2027

Goal 4D	Support the development of a dedicated City EOC at the new Public Safety Center and complete comprehensive functional upgrades to the existing EOC which will become the alternate site location.
Objective	Assist with the design of the new Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the Public Safety Center.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain high level of engagement as part of the EOC development team at the new Public Safety Center. Ensure the new Emergency Operations Center is designed for survivability, redundancy, communications, flexibility, open architecture, and security. Complete necessary upgrades to the current EOC located at Fire Station #1. Develop a Continuity of Operations Plan for offsite/back-up EOC to include mobile option. Development of a robust needs assessment for emergency management grant opportunities. Identify and implement new EOC software program to improve the communication, tracking and recovery during a disaster incident.
Assigned to	Emergency Manager
Timeframe	2024/2027



Maintain or improve Fire Prevention Division Risk Reduction in San Luis Obispo

Goal 5A	Increase target outreach to high-risk populations through Community Risk Reduction based programs
Objective	Provide a thorough Community Risk Reduction (CRR) program intentionally focused on knowledge and activities to lower the all-hazards risks within the City of San Luis Obispo.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and develop a strategic and integrated program focused on reducing the occurrence and impact of risks associated within the City of San Luis Obispo. Develop community training calendar for both in-person and virtual events.

SLO CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop list of annual social media information posts to share out as appropriate. ▪ Identify target hazard focus groups that may benefit from in-person presentations, discussion, volunteer inspections and department prevention resources. ▪ Partner with American Red Cross “Sound the Alarm” campaign. ▪ Provide public education in schools and public for disaster preparedness and fire safety.
Assigned to	Fire Marshal, Emergency Manager and Fire Chief
Timeframe	2024/2027

Goal 5B	Target Hazard Pre-Plans
Objective	Develop detailed pre-plan program to improve incident command and responding firefighters understanding of a property experiencing a fire incident, including the location of hazardous materials, entrances, exits, fire suppression systems and priority salvage and overhaul areas.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate pre-plan software program to best fit department needs and IT support. ▪ Develop procedures and policy for completing assigned pre-plans. ▪ Establish list of priority properties to be entered into the system based on hazard, risk to population and Haz-Mat. ▪ Partner with business licensing to flag priority properties that open new business and meet the requirement for a pre-plan. ▪ Work with partners in PD and Rangers to coordinate preplanning efforts in Wildland Urban Interfaces that are impacted by homeless encampment activities.
Assigned to	Operations Battalion Chief, Fire Marshal, and Suppression Captains
Timeframe	2024/2025

Goal 5C	Maintain and update the Department Fuel Reduction & Defensible Space Program
Objective	To execute a proactive and effective fuel reduction program to lessen wildfire hazards and threat to human safety and damage to property.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate a comprehensive update to the City’s Vegetation Management plan in partnership with the City Natural Resource Officer. ▪ Identify City-wide priority projects for vegetation (fuel) removal to create defensible space commensurate to property and human risk. ▪ Increase wildfire preparedness through annual Ready-Set-Go presentations both in-person and virtual. ▪ Partner with SLO County Fire Safe Council to secure grant funding for unfunded priority projects. ▪ Increase public notice through advertisements, social media, and City websites to encourage residents to conduct fuels reduction treatment of their properties.

SLO CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Codify Citywide Vegetation Management Committee. Institute proactive annual weed abatement enforcement with half-time inspector.
Assigned to	Fire Marshal, Emergency Manager and Fire Chief
Timeframe	2024/2027

Goal 5D	Reduce illegal homeless fires
Objective	Develop homeless encampment program to address High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and other areas of the city.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify priority project areas (homeless encampments, creeks, surrounding areas) to reduce fuels increasing defensible space and improving wildfire mitigation efforts. Discuss and determine to implement joint citation procedures for illegal fires through Fire Department, Park Rangers, Mobile Crisis, and Police Department. Increase outreach to homeless community living within high-risk vegetation areas.
Assigned to	Deputy Chief, Fire Chief
Timeframe	2024/2025

Goal 5E	Address property insurance issues for residents within the CAL FIRE Very High and High Severity map areas.
Objective	Provide resident information regarding homeowners insurance and proactive actions that may be taken.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create informative pamphlet on what actions local homeowners can do to reduce the risk of wildfire through mitigation efforts and increase opportunity to maintain homeowners' insurance. Partner with SLO County Fire Prevention Association to develop uniform "Frequently Asked Question" document to be displayed on agency websites related to Fire Insurance. Partner with SLO County Fire Prevention Association to develop uniform letter to property owner related to Fire Insurance cancellations and recommended actions. Review and comment on CAL FIRE 2022 Risk Mapping related to the ground truth of hazard and risk within the city.
Assigned to	Fire Marshal and Fire Chief
Timeframe	2024/2025

Strategic Initiative
6

Technology & Data

Maintain and improve Fire Department Technology and Information System that meet the current and future needs of the department.

Goal 6A	Identify and evaluate current technology resources used by the department to inform decisions on future improvements and needs
Objective	To research, analyze, and recommend relevant state of the art hardware, software, and technologies.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perform a strategic needs assessment relative to new and emerging technologies. ▪ Assess the current software programs to determine long-term feasibility and alternative solutions. ▪ Revisit Tablet Command and make recommendations. ▪ Evaluate and recommend implementation of a drone program for open space and major incident intelligence. ▪ Evaluate and recommend purchase of hybrid fire apparatus. ▪ Implement City of SLO Carbon Neutral fleet requirements for relevant light and heavy fleet equipment. ▪ Evaluate and implement asset management software systems to track equipment, resources, and supplies.
Assigned to	Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Emergency Manager, Battalion Chiefs and assigned team
Timeframe	2024/2026

TEAM IMPLEMENTATION

Prioritization: Prioritizing strategic goals and objectives is essential for making progress and ultimately reaching the vision. This process can be translated easily from the fireground, where we are challenged to pick the most impactful issues to get after first. There are several ways to prioritize goals. It's important to remember that when it comes to prioritization, there can only be a single number one priority. If everything is a priority, then nothing is a priority. Additionally, it's important to avoid categorizing priorities too broadly as it can lead to poor communication of which components of each priority should come first. That said, if tasks are divided up to be worked by different teams, they should each have their own priorities informed by the master priority list. That means each team can be working their own tasks simultaneously unless they would be pulling resources from one another where the master priority list would then help to deconflict. It's essential that each team understands which of their tasks are of the highest importance and should be tackled first.

Responsibility: Determining who will take responsibility for each specific strategic priority is perhaps the single biggest factor to success. It's no different than on an emergency scene: if the incident commander gives unclear instructions or assignments, it could lead to confusion or even disaster. If it is unclear who is ultimately responsible for a given topic, it is easy to have a breakdown in communication that leads to either conflict over many people believing they are the decision maker, or, more commonly, neglect, with people believing that someone else will handle it. Assigning a single individual as the champion and principal coordinator for each individual item will ensure that there is the right amount of buy-in, leadership, and oversight over the department's strategic efforts.

Action: Setting priorities and assigning responsibility are essential, but they are not enough on their own. To achieve strategic goals and objectives, it is necessary to have a well-defined plan of action. Just as a fireground leader might rally the team, listen to status reports, and then talk through a tactical approach to the next objective, strategic plan leaders must prepare their key players with a coordinated plan of attack to get after their assigned tasks. This is where it's vital to have a good "coach" overseeing the strategic efforts, deconflicting projects that may compete for resources or attention, and continually motivating and providing feedback to those doing the work. As a paramilitary organization, we can borrow a lot of wisdom from the military. One popular saying in military circles is: "No plan survives first contact with the enemy." As your team gets started chipping away at tasks, they will inevitably run into roadblocks and unexpected challenges. One way to get ahead of this will be to deliberately encourage flexibility, create space for failure, and empower the team to seek alternative solutions.

Collaboration: Staff likely understand the value of working in teams more than most. Much of what we do day-in and day-out is done either as a small team (like a single company) or a larger team (like one or more stations). That said, we are not immune to creating silos, building walled-kingdoms, or failing to consider other perspectives, especially the further we get from the fireground. As we drive our strategy from vision to plan to action, we must make a conscious effort to share the intent for early and continuous collaboration across teams. This collaboration is not just within the subgroups working on individual efforts but should be encouraged at all levels. Sharing strengths, resources, and perspectives across teams will

add value and reduce friction as they approach each task. Just like on the fireground, more eyes and more hands at a tough job will usually decrease risk and lighten the load.

Communication: Hand in hand with collaboration is effective communication. It's not enough to just ask for help when you need it. Just like a C.A.N. report, giving regular updates to your team and department leaders is a great way to communicate needs, stay on track, and receive the feedback needed to remain agile in the journey towards completion of your assigned tasks. This battle rhythm will vary for different teams and in different seasons. Earlier in a project, the team may need significantly more feedback than towards the end. Likewise, teams that are working on projects they are specialized in could require less regular communication than a team tasked with something more outside their usual scope or specialty. One leadership-driven opportunity related to communications is to encourage transparency and truthfulness, even in failure. Consider ways you can champion transparency, create space for setbacks and failures, and encourage richer collaboration.

The fireground is a unique ecosystem of communication, teamwork, adaptability, ingenuity, prioritized task execution, and selfless service. Fire service leaders in the conference room would do well to adopt these traits when approaching issues like a department's strategic planning cycle. Things don't always go as planned, and the team will inevitably run into roadblocks along the way. By creating an environment with a clear vision, clear expectations, continuous feedback, and multiple perspectives, you may see the strategic goals and objectives of the department come to life both better and faster than you could have ever imagined. Finally, just like the ice cream with dinner after a shift well-done, don't forget to celebrate the team's successes as they make progress on the planning and execution efforts. There will always be more to be done, and it's your job to make sure your team is recognized, rested, and ready for the next challenge to come.

THE SUCCESS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The San Luis Obispo Fire Department has approached its desire to develop and implement a Strategic Plan by asking for and receiving input from the Community and members of the Department during the development stage of the planning process. The Department utilized professional standards and the Community Focused Strategic Planning Process to compile this document.

The success of the San Luis Obispo Fire Department's Strategic Plan will not only depend upon implementation of the strategic initiatives and their related goals, but also from the support received from the City of San Luis Obispo, members of the Department, and the Community-At-Large.

The final step in the Community Focused Strategic Planning Process is to develop organizational and community commitment to the plan. Everyone who has a stake in the present and the future of the San Luis Obispo Fire Department also has a role and responsibility in this Strategic Plan.

Provided that the Community Focused Strategic Planning process is kept dynamic and supported by effective leadership and active participation, it will be a considerable opportunity to unify internal and external stakeholders through a jointly developed understanding of organizational direction; how all vested parties will work to achieve the mission, goals, and vision; and how the organization will measure and be accountable for its progress and successes.

