

# WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025



*Proudly serving the communities of  
Lakewood, University Place and Steilacoom*

# STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Strategic Planning Committee was created by choosing a diverse representation of West Pierce Fire & Rescue as a whole. The members of this committee have an array of knowledge, experience and years of service. Having a cross section of the organization was important to ensure crucial components were assessed and addressed.

**Jeff Axtell**, Battalion Chief

**Christine Badger**, Emergency Management Coordinator

**Mike Boltz**, Deputy Chief

**Dan Bronoske**, Captain

**Herb Cabe**, Facilities Maintenance Technician

**Kim Cacciaguidi**, Administrative Manager

**John Clancy**, Commissioner

**Kyle Clark**, Captain

**Bryan Copeland**, Firefighter

**Michael Dobbs**, Battalion Chief

**Grant Erb**, Commissioner, retired

**Norm Fiacchi**, Assistant Chief

**Mark Giron**, Captain

**Amy Jay**, Finance Specialist

**Scott Kelly**, Battalion Chief

**Tammy Lamb**, Executive Assistant

**Bryson Lane**, Firefighter/Paramedic

**Rob Mayzak**, Firefighter/Paramedic

**Hallie McCurdy**, Deputy Chief

**Ryan McGrady**, Assistant Chief

**Andy Millard**, Firefighter/Engineer

**Chris Mitchell**, Mechanic

**Eric Norton**, Assistant Chief, retired

**Karl Roth**, Deputy Chief, retired

**Mitch Sagers**, Deputy Chief, retired

**Jim Sharp**, Fire Chief

**Jay Sumerlin**, Battalion Chief, retired

**Paul Tinsley**, Deputy Chief

**Matt Wagner**, Battalion Chief

**Jim Waldeck**, Information Technology Manager

**Koree Wick**, Director of Finance & Administrative Services

**Jenny Weekes**, Community & Media Relations Manager

**Jason Yantzer**, Captain

**Brandon Zecher**, Captain



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# MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

I am proud to present West Pierce Fire & Rescue's 2020-2025 strategic plan. This document is the result of a collaborative effort between all the members of the District, International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1488 and the Professional Fire Service Administration Guild. Without the involvement of this diverse group of employees, this strategic plan would fail. The dedicated members of this department are without equal in delivering excellent service to our community. Their support of this strategic plan will help to make West Pierce Fire & Rescue a stronger organization and an unmatched industry leader.

Since forming in 2011, our core mission has not changed. We are committed to providing the communities we serve with exceptional fire and emergency services. The implementation of the goals and strategies identified in this plan will help us fulfill this commitment to the community.

This plan represents the vision of the organization we seek to become and outlines how we foresee getting there. This strategic plan will serve as a road map and guide for identifying priorities so we can continue delivering excellent service and support to our community and every member of our organization.

To maintain a strong organization, we have identified several goals such as: promoting effective and open lines of communication, fostering a culture that embraces inclusion and diversity, promoting safety and wellness throughout the organization, maintaining quality infrastructure and responsible resource management practices, continuing to develop strong leadership at all levels of the organization, developing effective outreach strategies for our community and industry partners, and working to proactively improve the overall health and wellness of our community.

It is our goal to constantly seek input from both our external and internal partners to ensure a high level of effectiveness in the execution of our organizational goals. While this plan will be used to guide our organization for the next five years, we are committed to revisiting it at least annually to ensure the plan is accomplishing what we intended it to, and to make adjustments when needed. As the economy, industry standards and the community change, so will the methods by which we execute our mission. Our goal is to have a flexible organization that can anticipate and adapt to change.

In closing, I want to thank all of the employees who shared their thoughts, ideas and opinions. Your honest feedback has been invaluable in making this strategic plan a reality. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the communities we serve for their continued support in helping us provide the best service possible. This five-year strategic plan represents our commitment to good stewardship of the department resources funded by the residents of West Pierce Fire & Rescue.





# MISSION, VISION, VALUES & MOTTO

## MISSION STATEMENT

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is a community partner dedicated to saving lives, improving health and safety, and protecting property.

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## VISION STATEMENT

To be a progressive community and industry leader that readily adapts to the needs of current and future generations.

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## CORE VALUES

### **Balance**

Pursue happiness alongside work; enjoy laughter, fun and faith; love your family, friends and community.

### **Compassion**

Exercise patience, empathy and mindfulness when interacting with others; be considerate and kind to others in any situation.

### **Integrity**

Be courageous to do the right thing in the right way; be honest, trustworthy, and loyal to the community and the organization.

### **Respect**

Engage in thoughtful actions, inclusiveness, acceptance, and transparency; practice humility; honor everyone you encounter.

### **Community**

Be engaged, transparent, authentic, and committed to the community; appreciate the community and return its generosity; help the community build resilience.

### **Leadership at all levels**

Be self-confident, professional and fair; be a proactive and courageous leader who demonstrates vision, innovation and lifelong learning.

### **Equity**

Seek to understand the perspective of an individual with an open mind; make fair, ethical decisions by firmly avoiding prejudice; embrace inclusivity and diversity.

### **Service**

Remain mission-focused; be reliable by being prepared, adaptable, and efficient; engage in teamwork and be accountable while serving; take pride in your service.

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## MOTTO

Respond Efficiently • Execute Flawlessly • *BE NICE!*

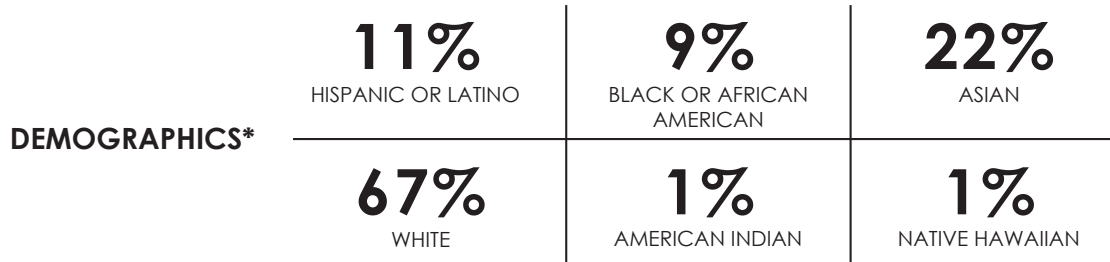
# ABOUT WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE

West Pierce Fire & Rescue (WPFR) provides service to the cities of Lakewood and University Place and contracted emergency services to the Town of Steilacoom. Also known as Pierce County Fire District No. 3 and established in 1941, the District now operates using the name West Pierce Fire & Rescue.

The District operates under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) title 52 and is a municipal corporation as defined by law in the State of Washington pursuant to RCW 41.24.010, operating as a junior taxing district. WPFR is governed by a Board of five elected officials, Fire Commissioners, who serve six-year terms. The Board appoints a Fire Chief to oversee day-to-day operations.

The history of West Pierce Fire & Rescue started with the merger of Lakewood Fire Department (PCFD #2) and the University Place Fire Department (PCFD #3). In late 2008, fire chiefs from each department brought the concept to their respective Board of Fire Commissioners. In January 2009, both boards agreed to form a committee to explore the possibility. On February 8, 2011, a measure was placed on the ballot to merge the two departments. With an 82 percent approval rate, WPFR was officially created on March 1, 2011.

WPFR provides numerous services to the community including fire response, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and transport, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, special operations, fire prevention, inspections & code enforcement, as well as fire and life safety education. There are currently six fire stations, which operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, located strategically throughout its borders that protect 31 square miles. In 2018, the District responded to 16,320 incidents and employs 186 personnel.



\*Source: US Census 2018 Estimates  
Some may identify as more than one race



# WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE'S SERVICE AREA

West Pierce Fire & Rescue (WPFR), located in Pierce County, Washington, serves the communities of Lakewood, University Place and the Town of Steilacoom, along with some small unincorporated areas. It is located approximately 40 miles south of Seattle and 25 miles north of the state capital, Olympia. The western border is the Puget Sound and Interstate 5 runs through the fire district.

According to the US Census 2018 Estimates the following populations were reported for each of the three municipalities served:

- Lakewood - 60,538
- University Place - 33,740
- Steilacoom - 6,373

The total population served is 100,651. Combined, these communities would be the equivalent of the seventh largest city in the state. The WPFR community has a wide range of occupancies, which include commercial, institutional, manufacturing, high rise (buildings over 75 feet above ground level), warehouse, as well as single and multifamily residential. In 2019, the assessed value of the fire district was approximately \$12.4 billion.

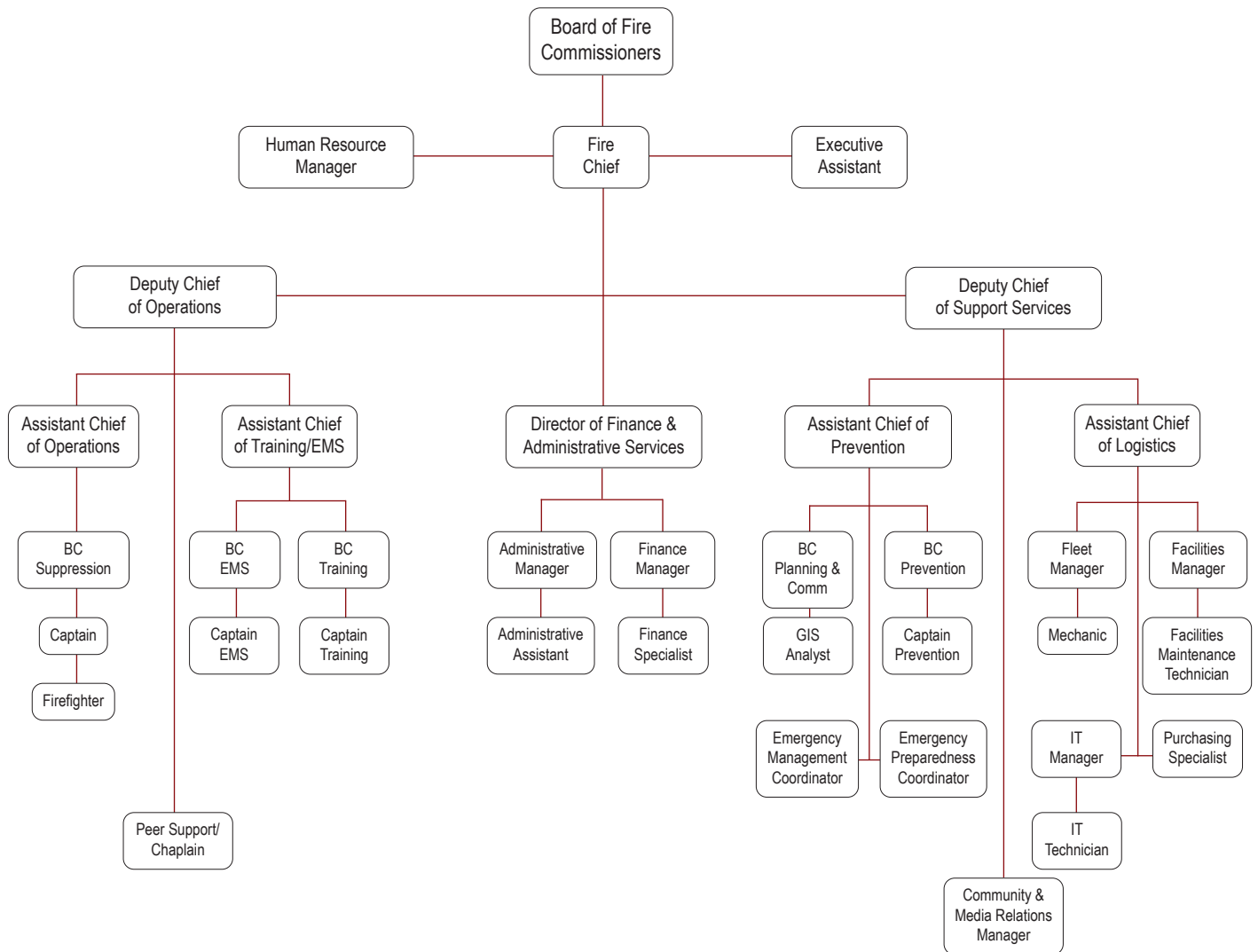
The City of Lakewood incorporated in 1996. Today the City of Lakewood is a vibrant community which was named one of the nation's "One Hundred Best Communities for Young People" six years in a row by America's Promise Alliance. It is home to 5,380 businesses, 34,096 jobs and 26,453 households.

The City of University Place incorporated in 1995. It is home of the world class Chambers Bay Golf Course that hosted the 2015 U.S. Open. Today it is a growing community which is home to 2,487 businesses and 13,558 households.

The Town of Steilacoom is the oldest incorporated city or town in Washington, established in 1854. The community contains a large historic district with homes dating back to the 1850s. Today Steilacoom is home to 447 businesses and 2,697 households.



# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## EMPLOYEE COUNTS

Executive Staff - 10  
 Peer Support Advocates / Chaplains - 3 (part-time)  
 Operations (first responders) - 138  
 Training/EMS - 5  
 Information Technology - 3  
 Emergency Management - 2

Prevention - 6  
 Facilities Maintenance - 4  
 Fleet Maintenance - 4  
 Administrative Services/Finance - 8  
 Communications & Planning - 2



# THE PLANNING PROCESS

The process of developing this plan was just as important as the outcome. It created an opportunity to engage all personnel along with our community partners to determine the path our organization will take in the future. The planning process followed the steps outlined in “Fire Department Strategic Planning, Creating Future Excellence,” by Mark Wallace and included the following components:

The first step in the planning process was to form a diverse committee made of personnel representing all divisions and ranks of the organization. The planning process began with a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) Analysis. The Committee provided guidance on the survey instruments that were used, both internal and external to the organization. They also reviewed all the draft documents and created the implementation steps needed to realize the identified goals.

There were several surveys sent to personnel during this process to gain more input from those who will be implementing the plan. There were then three additional surveys conducted to receive guidance from our external partners. One was sent to community partners to include other governmental agencies, neighboring fire departments, schools, etc. A second survey was sent to the general community, and the final survey was sent to the business community. The external surveys were conducted in September 2018, with a total of 454 responses. The surveys explored service priorities, levels of satisfaction with District services, community expectations and areas where improvements could be made.

The internal and external surveys along with the SWOC analysis will serve as a benchmarking tool for evaluating the District’s success in achieving the strategic goals set forth in the plan. Evaluating performance according to these benchmarks is one of the final stages of the strategic planning process. To determine if the desired results were achieved, WPFR will need to conduct periodic examination and performance measurement.

Strategic plans are typically thought of as living documents, subject to revisions as circumstances change and new challenges emerge. Review of the WPFR Strategic Plan will be ongoing and occur formally every year.

## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Through employee and community surveys and a SWOC analysis conducted by the committee, several strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges were identified. The strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organization and were determined utilizing two main tools, the first being the SWOC analysis conducted by the committee and the second being the employee survey. The three main strengths and weaknesses across the organization are addressed in this document. The external opportunities and challenges were determined by the committee SWOC analysis and the external surveys that were conducted. Acknowledging these and developing ways to manage and leverage them is one of the many benefits of going through a strategic planning process.

## INTERNAL STRENGTHS

### ***Family oriented culture***

The results of the employee survey almost universally addressed the family environment of WPFR. There were several items related to this family environment that were also identified in the survey including camaraderie, team approach and that employees take care of each other.

### ***Highly talented and dedicated workforce***

WPFR has an incredibly well trained, caring and approachable workforce with a commitment to excellence. When asked in the employee survey what they liked about being a member of WPFR, a large number of commented on the talent, dedication and excellence of our workforce. This is a strength that can be leveraged when implementing the Strategic Plan.

### ***Responsive to needs both internally and externally***

Employees at WPFR are very motivated to provide excellent customer service both internally and externally. During the SWOC analysis, the topics of responsiveness and customer service came up in every conversation across every division.

## **INTERNAL WEAKNESSES**

### ***Communication***

Maintaining effective communication can be a challenge in any organization, but it is even more challenging when employees are spread across six stations, working four different shifts. The employee survey and the SWOC analysis identified a lack of communication from management to the employees which has created an organizational disconnect.

### ***Workload***

The SWOC analysis identified workload as an issue across all divisions. Rising call volume creates additional work for everyone regardless of their position within the organization.

### ***Leadership development***

The SWOC analysis identified the need for a formal mentorship program. While there is a strong informal mentorship program, the committee determined there is a need for a more formal program.

## **EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

When the committee analyzed the external opportunities and challenges, they quickly realized that with every opportunity also comes an associated challenge. There were four main topics analyzed as part of the process: political, economic, social and technological.

### ***Political***

Relying on a community vote every four years is an incredible opportunity for the District to interact and engage with our residents to be sure we are providing the appropriate level of service to meet their needs and expectations. This would also be a challenge should the community change their level of support for WPFR. Another political challenge the District faces is managing the community's expectations of the services WPFR can and will provide.

### ***Economic***

A significant opportunity for the District are the many federal, state and local grants available. WPFR takes every opportunity to apply for external funding sources. The economic challenges include unfunded mandates, the risk of another recession and the changing healthcare environment.

### ***Social***

Community engagement and outreach through events, education programs, neighborhood associations and civic clubs is a major opportunity for WPFR. The social challenges identified by the committee include cultural differences and socio-economic barriers.

### ***Technological***

A major opportunity for WPFR is technology. As it continues to improve, our organization has been able to rely more on data and evidence during the decision-making process. Technological challenges identified by the committee included the high cost of programs, the planned obsolescence of platforms and the constant training required to maintain employee proficiency.



# GOALS, STRATEGIES & ACTION STEPS

West Pierce Fire & Rescue's Strategic Plan includes seven goal areas. Each goal is supported by and accomplished through a series of high level strategies and more specific action steps. In this strategic plan, goals are defined as overarching visionary statements that guide the future direction of the organization.

The strategies beneath each goal outline a plan of action for achieving the goal. Below each strategy is a set of action steps that are concrete, specific tasks designed to implement the strategy and ultimately reach the stated goal. The Strategic Planning Committee used the following parameters to develop the goals, strategies and action steps.

All goals must line up with and move the organization forward in fulfilling its mission, vision and values.

## ***Achievable***

Understanding the financial limitations of the District, the goals must be practical and focused so they can be accomplished within the limitations of the organizational budget.

## ***Built on consensus***

The goals must be agreed upon by the District's key stakeholders, to include employees, leadership, labor groups and the Board of Fire Commissioners.

## ***Measurable***

Each goal and the accompanying strategies and action steps must be measurable so it is possible to objectively determine whether the goal is being achieved.

The goals and strategies will likely be accomplished in phases over a period of time. This plan is intended to be reevaluated every five years as both the internal and external environment are subject to change. A status check will be conducted in the spring of each year to assess the strategic goals.



# STRATEGIC GOALS

## *Goals*

Overarching visionary statements that guide the future direction of the organization.

## *Strategies*

Outline a plan of action for achieving the goal.

## *Action Steps*

Concrete, specific tasks designed to implement the strategy and ultimately reach the stated goal.

The following goals, strategies and action steps are equally important and are not listed in any order of priority.

<b>COMMUNITY HEALTH</b> Improve community health and wellness by proactively adapting to the changing healthcare environment.
<b>INCLUSION &amp; DIVERSITY</b> Foster a culture that embraces inclusion and diversity, both internally and externally.
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT</b> Maintain quality infrastructure to support the mission of the District.
<b>INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b> Develop strategies that promote effective and open lines of communication throughout the organization.
<b>LEADERSHIP</b> Develop and support strong leadership at all levels within the organization.
<b>OUTREACH &amp; PARTNERSHIPS</b> Create sustainable partnerships and continued outreach to enhance service delivery.
<b>SAFETY &amp; WELLNESS</b> Promote safety and wellness throughout West Pierce Fire & Rescue.



# GOAL 1: COMMUNITY HEALTH

*Improve community health and wellness by proactively adapting to the changing healthcare environment.*

## STRATEGY 1: Provide access to community risk reduction programs

Action Step 1: Use data to develop and evaluate programs to best meet the community's needs.

Action Step 2: Identify at-risk and underrepresented communities and create outreach programs.

## STRATEGY 2: Improve access to appropriate community resources

Action Step 1: Incorporate internal training programs that address non-traditional patient care issues.

Action Step 2: Create community outreach programs that help to provide awareness of available resources.

Action Step 3: Collaborate with non-traditional partners to address community health.

## STRATEGY 3: Enhance West Pierce resource allocation to provide the best community care

Action Step 1: Acknowledge and accept we are often the first point of contact for community healthcare.

Action Step 2: Adopt resource allocation plans based on measurable data driven by community needs.

Action Step 3: Continue to reevaluate resource allocation plans and adapt to meet changing needs.

## GOAL 2: INCLUSION & DIVERSITY

*Foster a culture that embraces inclusion and diversity, both internally and externally.*

### STRATEGY 1: Promote cultural competency with the intent to support a diverse workforce and community

Action Step 1: Provide education regarding cultural competency.

Action Step 2: Seek to understand and value differences and commonalities.

Action Step 3: Evaluate barriers and obstacles in hiring practices and promotional processes.

Action Step 4: Foster an environment where people feel comfortable offering opinions and beliefs.

### STRATEGY 2: Enhance recruiting efforts in underrepresented communities

Action Step 1: Identify underrepresented communities for outreach.

Action Step 2: Collaborate with other fire service organizations that serve like communities.

Action Step 3: Conduct an external outreach program to increase the application pool.

# GOAL 3: INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

*Maintain quality infrastructure to support the mission of the District.*

## STRATEGY 1: Continue to develop sustainable practices that responsibly reduce environmental impacts

Action Step 1: Improve operational, energy and financial efficiencies and effectiveness through environmentally responsible practices.

Action Step 2: Educate personnel on environmentally sustainable practices.

Action Step 3: Encourage employees to prioritize reduction of their environmental impact on a daily basis.

## STRATEGY 2: Ensure a culture of financial stewardship

Action Step 1: Acknowledge that every employee is entrusted with the public's money.

Action Step 2: Ensure employees are trained on and follow financial policies and standard operating guidelines.

Action Step 3: Provide education on district budget and finance to all personnel.

Action Step 4: Ensure fiscally responsible business practices throughout the organization.

## STRATEGY 3: Assure effective department resources through responsible operational planning and budget management

Action Step 1: Ensure appropriate long range planning of all revenue streams.

Action Step 2: Create and maintain both short and long term operational plans.

Action Step 3: Create and maintain capital asset and infrastructure plans.

Action Step 4: Place technology at the forefront of our decision making.



# GOAL 4: INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

*Develop strategies that promote effective and open lines of communication throughout the organization.*

## STRATEGY 1: Ensure transparent, 360 degree communication

Action Step 1: Utilize and share information to explain the “why” behind decisions.

Action Step 2: Reinforce the “open door policy.”

Action Step 3: Ensure there are opportunities for communication across all levels of the organization.

## STRATEGY 2: Promote methods of internal communication to ensure messages are both heard and understood

Action Step 1: Reinforce the face to face communication strategy.

Action Step 2: Foster an environment that allows for a common understanding of issues and terminology.

Action Step 3: Use a variety of communication methods to reinforce the message.

## STRATEGY 3: Build respectful relationships with each other

Action Step 1: Empower personnel to seek clarification by asking questions at any level.

Action Step 2: Provide opportunities for employees to experience other parts of the organization.

# GOAL 5: LEADERSHIP

*Develop and support strong leadership at all levels within the organization.*

## STRATEGY 1: Incorporate leadership training throughout all levels of the organization

Action Step 1: Establish a comprehensive leadership training program throughout the organization.

Action Step 2: Create a succession development program to prepare personnel for professional growth.

## STRATEGY 2: Empower all employees to make educated, values based decisions

Action Step 1: Identify and clearly communicate the organizational values.

Action Step 2: Support actions and decisions that are consistent with organizational values.

Action Step 3: Consistently encourage personnel to lead at all levels.

## STRATEGY 3: Enhance our culture of mentorship at all levels of the organization

Action Step 1: Create the expectation that mentorship is everyone's responsibility.

Action Step 2: Establish a comprehensive mentorship program.

Action Step 3: Continue to utilize informal mentorship throughout the organization.

# GOAL 6: OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS

*Create sustainable partnerships and continued outreach to enhance service delivery.*

## STRATEGY 1: Engage in community outreach and solicit feedback

Action Step 1: Make community engagement a priority at all levels both on and off duty.

Action Step 2: Partner with labor groups to support community engagement.

Action Step 3: Encourage and support engagement in civic organizations and community service groups.

Action Step 4: Continually evaluate community input by providing platforms for community feedback.

## STRATEGY 2: Enhance relationships with industry partners

Action Step 1: Seek out opportunities to collaborate and build relationships with fire and non-fire based industry partners.

Action Step 2: Seek out opportunities for involvement in local, regional and national committees.





# GOAL 7: SAFETY & WELLNESS

*Promote safety and wellness throughout West Pierce Fire & Rescue.*

## STRATEGY 1: Enhance the health and fitness of all employees

Action Step 1: Facilitate and encourage participation in annual physicals.

Action Step 2: Make wellness time a priority.

Action Step 3: Provide health and wellness education for all employees.

## STRATEGY 2: Foster an environment where mental wellness is as important as physical health for employees and their families

Action Step 1: Eliminate the stigma associated with mental and behavioral health challenges.

Action Step 2: Proactively foster mental wellness and behavioral health programs and training.

Action Step 3: Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental and behavioral health challenges.

Action Step 4: Provide easy access to mental and behavioral health resources.

## STRATEGY 3: Enhance the culture of safety throughout the organization

Action Step 1: Continue to improve the physical environment by ensuring the workplace has effective safety features.

Action Step 2: Proactively educate and train to address the ever changing work environment.

Action Step 3: Encourage best safety practices and accountability at all levels.

# PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

To hold ourselves accountable to deliver on the Strategic Plan, the Fire Chief will appoint West Pierce Fire & Rescue executive staff members to oversee its implementation. Key performance measures and timeliness will be established to monitor whether strategies and action steps are being accomplished. Employees and other stakeholders will be kept updated on the progress of the plan which will be revisited once each year.

## NEXT STEPS

West Pierce Fire & Rescue will take the following actions to implement this plan:

1. The Fire Chief will assign an overall program manager who is responsible for monitoring the plan and its implementation.
2. The Fire Chief will assign each of the seven goal areas in the plan to a specific member of executive staff who will be responsible for creating a smaller employee-driven work group. Each work group will have at least one strategic planning committee member who will assist the assigned executive staff member to coordinate, monitor and move the goal area forward. Regular reports will be delivered to executive staff on each goal's progress.
3. Leadership at all levels within West Pierce Fire & Rescue will show clear commitment to the plan's implementation.
4. Employees will receive updates about the progress of the plan and how it relates to operational changes and decisions.
5. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet the first quarter of each year to assess the progress on the implementation phase of the plan.
6. The Strategic Plan will be utilized and considered during the annual budget process to ensure limited resources are allocated appropriately.
7. The plan will be reviewed annually and updated every five years with the next update being in 2025.

## GLOSSARY

The following terms and acronyms are essential to West Pierce Fire & Rescue's practices and procedures, and are found in this Strategic Plan.

<b>Advanced Life Support (ALS)</b>	Critical or life threatening emergency medical calls staffed by firefighters trained as paramedics. Skills include administering drugs, opening airways and performing more technically advanced medical care.
<b>Basic Life Support (BLS)</b>	Emergency medical calls staffed by firefighters trained as emergency medical technicians.
<b>Emergency Medical Services (EMS)</b>	Pre-hospital, urgent medical care.
<b>Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)</b>	Certified provider of emergency medical services.
<b>Healthcare</b>	The restoration and maintenance of physical, mental or emotional well-being.
<b>Strategic Plan</b>	The process of defining an organization's strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. It may also extend to control mechanisms for guiding the implementation of the strategy.
<b>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges Analysis (SWOC)</b>	A structured planning method that evaluates those four elements of a project or business venture.





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