

VI. POLICY DIRECTION & RECOMMENDATIONS



Policy Direction

Trends and Patterns

Trends and patterns in all areas of fire district governmental services are subject to wide changes in direction. For example, economic factors can cause funding of services to become very difficult. A breakthrough in technology can cause significant changes in work practices. New tools and techniques can change efficiency and effectiveness of both individuals and groups. Therefore, making predictions from trends is at best, inaccurate over time. The "further out" a projection, the lower its accuracy. Nonetheless, the best way to ensure a future outcome is to plan for its eventual implementation. This requires establishing some form of vision of the future; therefore, this Comprehensive Plan has a 10-year time frame. Moreover, the speed of technological change is creating some difficulty in the decision-making processes of an organization. In a recent newspaper article it was pointed out that with growth comes consequences. While the economic recession has significantly slowed growth in most areas, Colorado's ten largest municipal areas are still struggling with how to maintain the level of service provided five years ago.



Fire protection is also a quality of life issue. Communities with high fire loss and extremely high response needs are often the ones that have not invested in a total systems approach to fire protection. They may have lacked mitigation through prevention, staffing to control incipient fire, or training for both the fire force and the community. It is also appropriate to note that fire protection is in competition with other infrastructure issues in the community. Schools, highways, water systems, garbage disposal and law enforcement are generally in a similar mode of competition of fewer tax revenues. Balancing out risk with resources requires constant assessment of the policy direction of the fire department. Trends and patterns can be used to define a direction and to some degree, a sense of incremental change that can be projected short-term.

In the context of this document, the trends and patterns have also been evaluated against the performance and professional standards used currently by the Fire Department. Section IV and Section V provide detailed information relating to these activities. The information in these chapters present basic findings used to form the foundation of recommendations in this section.

General Issues

After a review of the District, Department operations, current programs, and contemporary standards that guide the delivery of fire protection services, the Planning

Team has identified six main issues to be addressed by this organization over the next 5 to 10 years. They are:

- Emergency Medical Service
- Fire Station Distribution and Concentration
- Staffing
- Level of Service & Response Times
- Management Information Systems
- Periodic Assessment of Performance

As noted in Section IV, the current level of effort for providing fire protection is about \$115 per person. As was the case in 2005, if this funding level continues at the current rate, implementation of many of these new recommendations will be based upon available funds and it could take at least 15 years to see only partial implementation. Any incremental improvement will be based on the Board of Directors' ability to make specific planning decisions in a timely manner and to determine what the necessary funding should be to meet the needs of the District.

The Louisville Fire Department - Ten Years From Now

If a person drove down the streets of Louisville in 1980 and had a perfect memory of what they saw and then came back in the year 2010, they would have one impression. This is no longer a small rural town, it has grown into a diverse community with significant infrastructure and support service needs. If one projected those same phenomena from the current year 2010 to the year 2020, a person would probably have a similar experience. The similarities are important, but not nearly as important as the differences. From a fire protection planning perspective, the fire problem in a community is a fairly slow changing phenomenon. The general plan will determine a great deal with respect to what is allowed to be built within the District; and, the aging population will bring with it increased service demands on the Fire Department. These were projected in Section IV. The most important thing to consider in this planning process is not that things may change, but rather that they will change one day at a time. Often problems are created before anyone recognizes them as problems. Based upon some of the existing changes going on in the community, we can anticipate that there will be a continuation of



increased traffic on streets and the construction of a wide range of buildings for a wide variety of occupancies.

There will be an anticipated change in type and distribution of housing stock, with some considerations given to increasing both the purchase ability and the availability for local workforces. There is likely going to be a change in the makeup of the age distribution in the community. It is unlikely that there will be major shifts in the types and sizes of



business and industry currently in the District (with the exception of the ConocoPhillips campus). New processes will be created and new products stored in old occupancies. It is likely that the number of occupancies that will require fire inspections and pre-fire planning will increase. New neighborhoods will become older neighborhoods. All of these things may happen, but when they do, they will not happen at the same time. The Fire Department must monitor and respond to these changes in the community or there will be service level deficiencies.

The fire service of the future is not easy to predict. If one looks at the fire service of 1980 and compares it to the fire service of 2010, he or she would find that the fire profession has changed very little. There are still traditional fire stations and the basic firefighting and staffing configurations. Slight improvements would include the means of fire extinguishment from automatic fire sprinklers and the number and type of built-in fire protection devices. What has changed the most is that fire departments have become “*all-risk*” agencies – given more and more multi-tasked assignments.

This has been basically for emergency medical services and to a certain extent hazardous materials. Also, the majority of the fire service has a strong disaster management focus. Another change has been an increasing demand upon firefighters to meet training and education standards since there has been more regulation of the types of training and education required and a general increase in accountability and productivity of fire agencies. Therefore, if these trends continue, the public will have a much higher level of expectation of the Louisville Fire Department. With the increased emphasis upon emergency medical services, hazardous materials, and even environmental issues, the fire service of the future may have need to re-evaluate hiring practices to emphasize different skills and abilities. Fire agencies will also likely be impacted by legislative and regulatory changes in the field of health care. Moreover, fire equipment may evolve into different configurations to take into consideration both higher road activity and the need to meet a different mission assignment.

Specific Policy Considerations

Background and support documentation for these considerations are contained in the previous three sections. This section identifies specific needs in these major areas that need to be considered in determining ultimate outcomes. These issues are not listed in order of priority in this chapter. Priorities have to be developed into formal action plans as the implementation of specific items reach maturation. Funding, time frames, strategies and decisions will vary according to facts that come into existence over the time frame of the Plan. In the Executive Summary, these recommendations are listed in a framework that identifies who is responsible, and approximately when they should become a priority. The Fire Chief and appropriate District officials should consider and adopt actions to deal with the following decisions.

Deployment Plan Findings and Recommendations

Finding #1 - Fire Station Distribution and Concentration

As in the 2005 assessment, this planning document has identified that current station coverage has deficiencies and projected growth will intensify the problem. This will be further compounded when the ConocoPhillips campus is built in South Louisville. Scenarios indicate that to achieve the response time goal of reaching 90% of the calls for service within 8 minutes, an additional fire station will be required in the near term. Additionally, based on the analysis outlined in this document, the District should take a graded approach to building a training facility.

The District should be commended for being proactive and seeking alternative methods, including a joint station concept with North Metro Fire. However, based on two years of ongoing discussions, it is unlikely that this proposal will go beyond the discussion phase. That said, the District should move forward to construct a station independently. Past fire boards have identified the need for Station #3 for over 20 years and it should be considered one of the highest District capital project priorities.

Supporting Information

The current station analysis seems to verify the recommendations and assumptions made in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The need for a total of three fire stations within 7 to 10 years is valid, which means the station should be operational within 1 to 4 years. This does take into consideration using automatic aid companies to help cover the existing area, to the extent possible. (*Currently, North Metro Fire Rescue has determined that it is not in their best interest to formalize an auto-aid agreement to support response deficiencies in South Louisville.*)

With regard to specific apparatus and staffing, the Department may evolve into a different mix of types and sizes of apparatus than it has presently. Flexibility will be required in making those operational decisions, as the delivery of services becomes more diverse.

The process used in this report to evaluate future fire station locations was primarily based on response time standards and risk assessments. Based upon a review of the background principles, proposed land use, existing distribution, and concentration of occupancies, it was determined that the two existing fire stations will not serve the needs of this community, based upon the growth assumptions, hazards, and projections in Section IV of this report.

The decision to build fire stations should ultimately be based upon criteria of response time thresholds, service gaps, or increased demand. In order for a policymaking body to make a valid decision regarding such a major capital outlay project, each fire station location or relocation should be accompanied by a specific analysis of its contribution to the district's overall fire defenses. The goal of this evaluation is to provide for construction and deployment of stations to minimize areas with minimum service. Several alternatives are provided in Section V for consideration in responding to future fire station needs.

The current construction costs for a new fire station vary from \$2 million - \$2.2 million dollars, excluding apparatus and equipment. Most importantly, the District Board of Directors has determined that the 3-station model is preferred to meet the intent of NFPA 1710.

Recommendation #1 - Fire Station in South Louisville

The current fire stations are somewhat distributed equitably for initial attack purposes and the major population concentrations of the District. Unfortunately, high-risk areas and growth in South Louisville highlight the need for an additional station in the So. 88th St./Dillon Rd. area. The Planning Team recommends the District take the necessary steps to build this new facility in the near term. That said, based on the comprehensive planning analysis and the current volunteer staffing profile, it might be realistic to fund this project providing current revenues remain stable.

The District should be commended for aggressively seeking alternatives to offset the cost of building a new station. Unfortunately, requests for support from major developers, inclusion in any City of Louisville impact fee assessments, a joint fire station venture with North Metro Fire, and federal grants have all failed to materialize. It is clear that the District will have the sole burden of funding a fire station in South Louisville.

Recommendation #2 - Consider Using Reserve Funds

The District is in a unique position whereby it is not currently overly burdened by high employee costs and most of its capital projects are paid for. Based on current reserves and an aggressive savings plan, the District should earmark funds every year to build Station #3.

OR

Recommendation #3 - Consider Alternative Funding

Consideration should be given annually to the feasibility of a general obligation bond or mill levy increase to meet the District's longer-term capital asset and operational needs.

Finding #2 – Staffing and Deployment

The current staffing level has transitioned from a completely volunteer program to a combination staffing model supplemented a minimum of 2 firefighter/paramedics. The skills mix and staffing levels remain somewhat unpredictable and there are limits to the availability of volunteers, particular during the daytime shifts. Staffing patterns are unpredictable and the system is dependent on the goodwill of the volunteer staff. While there has been a significant improvement in the overall hours covered, the initial attack force should be expected to handle at least a single room and contents fire as a minimum baseline capability. There are four primary corrective actions to support these recommendations:

- The District should continue with the combination type staffing model, however, 3 additional personnel should be hired to staff the second ambulance and help ensure there are 4 personnel responding to a simple room & contents fire (assuming a paramedic unit is not on a transport).
- Modify the existing staffing model to help reduce the amount of time when no stations are staffed. The Management Team should also consider using an e-scheduling system to better predict and manage its resources.
- Modify command staff hours (career and volunteer) to help ensure there is officer coverage on weekends.
- The District should start planning to staff a career engine company within the next 2 - 3 years if the current staffing model cannot meet 24/7 operational needs.

Supporting Information

The issue of staffing levels is among the most controversial factors within Louisville Fire Department. The “Critical Task Analysis,” (see Appendix D) indicates that the following staffing level be considered when developing its one-year staffing plans.

Currently, the existing SOGs outline the necessary resources and apparatus required to manage most of the fire and EMS events in the District. With few exceptions, the volunteer program has very successfully met the community’s needs when it comes to delivery of services. However, with the advent of performance standards, the expectation level of the community has changed. It is no longer acceptable for a department to assume that just because it is predominantly volunteer, an excessively long response time or no response is acceptable.

While even the most sophisticated and well-funded fire departments are challenged to meet the NFPA 1720/1710 standards, it is nevertheless a new fire service standard that departments must work to. Again, the District has done a good job of improving its capabilities over the past 6 years; however, significant gaps in service remain. For example, the last ISO evaluation showed a reduction in fire suppression capabilities and readiness. Any further degradation will most likely result in a reduction in its current insurance classification.

The Department continues to be challenged by significant turnover. This problem is not unique to Louisville, however it is nevertheless impacted by lack of experience and significant recurring training costs to train new firefighters. Currently the make-up of Louisville firefighters is consistent with the demographics of the community.

Louisville is considered a “white collar” community, with a predominantly professional workforce. As with the workforce, the volunteer force is impacted by transfers and changes in work assignments. Also, as outlined in Section IV, personnel demands on volunteer members sometimes conflict with the need for staffing coverage, as well as training and continuing education. That said, keeping a trained, competent volunteer force is a significant challenge.

Strengthening of a Combination Staffing Model

In today’s suburban fire service, the use of a combination staffing concept is becoming more desirable to ensure adequate staffing for initial fire attack and to provide EMS. As outlined in sections IV and V, mounting a successful initial attack largely depends on quick response times and applying water before the fire reaches flashover.

Having a minimum number of trained firefighters on duty at all times improves the Department’s ability to minimize damage to the involved structure, and most importantly, improves firefighter safety. Currently, if there is no volunteer staffing during the daytime, it has a direct effect on the Department’s ability to maintain the OSHA and

NFPA, two-in/two-out rule. Essentially, the first-in crew is limited to an entry of only two (if EMS is available), or is confined to defensive operations until an engine arrives. (This is considered a significant liability for the District.)

By having one additional career staff to assist in the fire suppression component, entry crews will have a better chance of performing interior operations with the initial complement of personnel. It will also help to ensure that an engine can respond with two personnel when there is no volunteer staffing. It should also be noted that the initial gpm delivery should be expected to increase as well. While the combination concept improves the Department service levels, it's not a solution for every conceivable emergency.

One critical operational limitation is that the career responders may transport a patient at the same time a structure fire is received. Albeit a lower probability event, it must be clear to the public and the Board of Directors that having four career personnel on duty is not a solution to every initial response requirement. However, it does provide the most significant improvement to service delivery at a reduced cost. The District should also formalize automatic aid agreements with surrounding area departments to help ensure initial resource requirements are available for major target occupancies in the service area.

District Challenges and Issues

There continues to be several management issues that must be explored in addition to complementing the volunteer program with career personnel. Obviously, the Department must continue to minimize potential conflicts between the career and volunteer staff. Many members of combination departments that started as volunteer may feel threatened by the prospect of additional career firefighters taking over their responsibilities.

The Assessment and Management Team still believes that it's beneficial that the career firefighters only augment the volunteer firefighting staff. The District must, however, not lose sight of its first obligation to protect the citizens it serves. The Board of Directors must always ensure, through the Fire Chief, that the community is provided a consistent and predictable response level.

For the most part, the District has enjoyed a cooperative, productive relationship with its volunteers. For this to continue, the combination staffing model should include a management commitment to minimize the threat to the volunteer firefighters. Another potential conflict is the chain of command. Career and volunteer firefighters could develop different knowledge and experience levels between various ranks.

Conflict can also occur when a member on one group has to take orders from someone he or she believes has less training or experience. This conflict is especially prevalent in departments with different minimum training standards for career and volunteer

personnel. To avoid this potential conflict, the District has done a good job of defining roles & responsibilities and communicating with both volunteer and career personnel. Minimum training levels for volunteer personnel continue to be equivalent to the basic training levels for career firefighters.

Inadequate or misguided department policies can also increase conflict. Sometimes when volunteers are relegated to only support functions with limited possibility for upward mobility, they become frustrated by the perception of having an inferior status. Again, the District has done a good job of integrating the team by ensuring both career and volunteer firefighters continue to have a vital part of the fireground operation and the direction of the Department.

To the extent possible, the Planning Team recommends that management develop its organizational structure and response policies so that they are equitable. Most importantly, the Management Team must communicate that fair treatment is not always equal treatment when dealing with different work groups. Expectations, performance and deliverables can be different depending on the rank, employment status, and time availability. In any case, high standards for both career and volunteer members are necessary, and the standard.

Other Compounding Factors

Based on the policy direction of the LFPD Board of Directors and the Planning Team's analysis, it is recommended that the Department's future staffing profile include a baseline capability for fire suppression. Again, this recommendation was based on the fact that there continues to be significant staffing shortages that have resulted in over 200 calls in 2010 where there was no engine company response.

While a post incident analysis was conducted on the necessity of engine company response, it doesn't dismiss the fact that there continues to be significant vulnerabilities in the level of service and overall capabilities of the District. The command staff, Operations Focus Group, and member staff should be commended for filling some of these gaps and changing the staffing schedule to cover more shifts. Moreover, the Department has increased the size of its volunteer membership in an attempt to ensure 24/7 coverage, however, the current staffing rational is not consistent with the Department SOGs. In spite of a 100% increase in personnel from 2005, gaps in staffing still remain.

Recommendation #4 - Fully Implement In-House Paramedic Transport Program Staffing Plan

The Planning Team recommends the District hire 3 personnel to complete the current paramedic force. They should be cross-trained to provide and support the Department core services including, but not limited to: ALS transports, firefighting, facilities and apparatus maintenance, fire prevention, and public education. We believe that fully

staffing both ambulances has several advantages. At a minimum, it provides an additional resource to support initial fire suppression during low staffing periods and will provide the necessary minimum personnel to staff the District #1 ambulance. The current staffing model has served the District well, however it is both impractical and ineffective with two operational stations.

Recommendation #5 - Re-engineer Existing Staffing Schedule

The existing staff schedule should be modified to help ensure adequate minimum staffing and enhance the Department's 24/7 baseline capability goals. While the LFD team has done a remarkable job of improving its staffing levels, there continue to be some shortfalls. As outlined in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, the District can always hire additional personnel to ensure that an engine company is on duty 24/7; but the Planning Team believes future changes to the existing system could minimize the need to implement that option for the short term.

The LFD should consider changing its fire suppression staffing schedule to ensure 24/7 coverage. For example, increase the daytime shift, require weekend shifts, and minimize overlaps on like qualifications. If the current staffing is unwilling or unable to meet these minimum District needs, the District should consider other options to the extent financially feasible, including a general operating mill levy override initiative.

Recommendation #5a - Other Staffing Options; Consider Supplementing Career Staff

As a contingency, the District should consider using a strategy of staff augmentation when necessary. The utilization of part-time employees or subcontracted labor has proven to be a cost-effective alternative before hiring full-time employees. While these options must be balance against other District needs, it is a viable option during staffing shortages. The Board of Directors should annually review its ability to meet the minimum staffing requirements to adequately protect the District and its residents.

Recommendation #5b - Consider Additional Volunteer Staffing

The Department has done a great job of increasing its staff in an attempt to ensure that at least one engine is available. The current staff is at 75, however staffing gaps are still negatively impacting the District's baseline capability goals. Should the re-engineering efforts meet the stated objectives, the Planning Team would recommend that an additional 20 volunteers be authorized.

Recommendation #5c - Evaluate Consolidation Options

While not considered a preferred option or priority, the District can and should consider alternatives to its current service plan. Consolidation of smaller departments into larger well-established career departments is not new. The reasons for choosing to go this

way are many - lack of funding to sustain a viable response force, lack of available volunteers, and cost-effectiveness, to name a few.

Louisville is somewhat unique as it does have adequate community support for funding, it can recruit reserves, and it's very cost-effective compared to all surrounding area departments. In a recent survey, District residents were asked if it was important to maintain a Louisville specific fire department. The results showed an overwhelming preference (79% strongly agree) for keeping local control and maintaining the Louisville Fire Department. The most practical option before any consolidation efforts should be auto-aid or simply requesting more funding to support its mission requirements (see Recommendation #12) and maintain its strong commitment to cost-containment through volunteerism.

Recommendation #6 - Improve Skills Mix and Consider Career Command Staff Positions

Unfortunately, as outlined in the previous sections, the Department does have times when a station is staffed with "duty crews" and the skills mix does not meet a desirable configuration. In an effort to minimize those impacts, it would be prudent to implement the following operational concepts and plans:

- The District should also train additional driver/operators to help reduce the occurrence of delayed or no response. At a minimum, there should be 28 certified D/Os on the roster.
- Restructure the current staffing procedure to spread out available D/O resources over more shifts.
- Stagger the career Chief Officers' and the career Training Officer's work schedules to support weekends or implement a 24/7 Battalion Chief concept.

Either one of these options should have an immediate and positive impact on the current staffing shortages, particularly on weekends. Most importantly, the BC concept will allow for a 24/7 command presence. The Planning Team believes that having a 24/7 commander will eliminate the impacts caused by having new or untrained firefighters performing critical command functions. Most importantly, firefighters will be allowed time to improve their overall firefighting skills before being expected to make fireground decisions. Any of these options could be realized at either no cost or reasonable additional costs.

Recommendation #7 - Establish a Baseline Staffing and Capabilities Standard

As outlined in Appendix D (NFPA 1710), the fire service has established the minimum staffing requirements to effectively and safely manage a 1,700 sq. ft. residential fire. In

short, it recommends 14 firefighters and officers to perform all the necessary critical tasks. These 10 critical tasks are effectively the baseline capabilities for a given fire. In order for any department to meet these standards, it must also design a minimum baseline capability or performance policy.

Currently, the LFD has a minimum staff of 3 career firefighter/medics along with an average of 4.66 volunteer firefighters and chief officers per call (2010 Data). Assuming the average staffing or availability per call is 7.66, the question then becomes, what should be the baseline capability?

Based on the current staffing performance, trends, call load, NFPA response standards and the District's risk & hazard assessment, it is easy to justify that a minimum daily staffing of 10 responders is required to manage the District's emergency services needs. This is a net increase of 3 firefighters per day, assuming the average turnout for structure fires will continue to be 17 personnel. The Planning Team and FD management understand these recommendations will require a graded financial approach; however, the District Management Team should start the planning process with both short-term and long-term targets.

Finding #3 - Volunteer Staffing Programs and Patterns

The LFD has made some significant improvements in its volunteer staffing program that have had an overall positive impact on delivery of its emergency service program. The "duty crew" staffing concept for response to all initial fire emergencies, including EMS incidents, has proven to be beneficial. The findings in this section highlight the need to continue seeking new innovations to improve its operations and to the extent possible, improve its pager call-out program. Complete implementation of interim corrective actions including, but not limited to, staggered start times and extending weekend duty crews. (See Finding #2 for supporting data.)

Supporting Information

The most important considerations for future staffing enhancements are the cost and benefit of each improvement. The Fire Department should, if fiscally capable, maintain and staff fire stations that are located to comply with the adopted standards of response coverage. While the Fire Department should, if fiscally capable, maintain adequate staff personnel to assure quality control over program activity and workload management.

That said, maintaining the volunteer program is not only essential to the overall Department staffing plan, it is the most financially feasible. As defined throughout this document, turnout and arrival time are critical to the overall service delivery goals. We know that the "pager call-out" program has served the community well over the years; however, it still has limited value for staffing initial routine alarms. It does work well for specific calls that are reported as "structure fires". Unfortunately, it has not worked well over the past 6 years to manage the majority of incidents the LFD responds to.

This is not unique to the LFD, nearly all of the remaining predominantly volunteer fire departments along the Colorado Front Range rely on the duty crew concept. It has proven to have a positive impact on the survivability of patients in cardiac arrest or fire prone to flashover. Therefore, it is critical to have the support systems to better facilitate the duty crew program. While it is critically important to maintain the pager call-out program for greater alarms and support, duty crews remain the preferred volunteer staffing model for the delivery of initial services.

Recommendation #8 - Modify Duty Crew Program and Vol. Support Systems

Revise the duty crew program as necessary to meet the minimum staffing requirements. For example:

- Change length of duty crew shift period;
- Add a requirement for all members to shift on the weekends;
- Stagger start times, with some incentives to cover hard to fill times periods;
- Implement an e-scheduling system so volunteers can access the shift calendar and officers can see the staffing strength;
- Implement a phone paging system for notification of calls. Currently, members do not like or don't want the provided voice pagers.

Finding #4 - Emergency Medical Service/Operations Officer

As recommended in the 2005 findings, the District Leadership Team should be recognized for accomplishing nearly all of the EMS recommendations. Within a two-year time span, the District initiated a campaign to increase its general property mill levy, obtain state licensing to operate an ALS service, purchased all of the state-mandated EMS supplies & equipment, hired nine fire medics, initiated an EMS cost recovery program, obtained a physician advisor, and implemented some basic components of a QA program. As a result of these proactive measures, District residents and visitors are no longer at risk of losing quality emergency medical services. Most importantly, the District has reduced its ALS response time by nearly 5 minutes, which has directly improved the quality of life and survivability of its customers.

The current level of service provided by the Fire Department is Advanced Life Support with enhanced EMT skills. Its service levels meet national standards or expectations of a modern suburban community. Formal agreements with surrounding area agencies ensure backup ambulances are always available to respond during high call volume or equipment breakdowns.

That said, the Department's EMS program does lack the maturity of many well-established fire-based EMS programs. While understandable, due to being a new system, the District should work to develop the necessary infrastructure, support, oversight, and supervision to ensure service quality and performance.

Supporting Information

After conducting an in-depth review of the LFPD's EMS system, it is evident that a basic improvement plan in its operating philosophy must be strongly considered. The 2005 LFPD Comprehensive Plan recommended the Department establish emergency medical service goals and objectives. (This document will serve as that vehicle.) The Team also believes that implementing a process for measuring system outcomes and system performance measures will greatly improve the emergency medical system in Louisville. This is typically done by statistical and trend evaluations, and a well-documented quality assurance program with strong supervision and oversight.

The Department has made some attempts to implement each of these programs, however, the current staff tries to perform these functions as a collateral function in addition to their regular duties. For example, the Fire Chief assigned the Training Chief to assume some of the daily supervision and implement the QA provisions outlined in their SOGs. As a result of these actions, there has been some marginal improvement in these program areas, however, the Training Division has suffered by not having a full-time resource dedicated to this activity.

Moreover, supervision of the EMS program requires a consistent and predictable level of field observations and real-time feedback and supervision. Currently, career chief officers provide this function and are effective to the extent possible. They are typically available during the normal 40-hour work week, which means field supervision is only available less than 25% of the time. If we exclude time needed to run other Department functions and responsibilities, chief officer supervision is less than 5% of any work day. The Planning Team would recommend that a full-time dedicated Operations/EMS Chief be hired to manage the Department's daily EMS needs, provide a consistent QA program and to the extent financially capable, work to AAA accreditation; or seek some type of staffing plan to have direct supervision of the EMS programs. The Planning Team also believes the Department should seek AAA accreditation. It will ensure that all of the necessary EMS program elements are implemented and verified through a third party evaluation.

Emergency medical calls account for approximately 64% (2000-2010 averages) of the call load for the LFD. In addition, the District Overview demonstrates that the population/demographic changes are most likely going to increase the need for EMS in the 5 to 10 year time frame, so the need to ensure a quick response time to all areas of the District remains a high priority.

Numerous studies, starting with the Seattle CPR study in the 1980's, have indicated that survivability of cardiac arrest patients can be affected by the speed in which ALS personnel arrive on the scene. It is a generally accepted standard for performance that an ALS unit should be on scene within 8 minutes and BLS (First Responder with AED) within 4 minutes (See NFPA 1710). With this understanding, the placement of fire stations plays a critical role in the Department's ability to provide medical intervention and have a realistic chance of saving lives. To that end, as highlighted in Finding #1, a fire station located in South Louisville should be a District priority.

While the response times, treatment and procedures of ALS companies are vital, another vital link is the intervention by witnesses to cardiac arrests. The speed in which First Aid, CPR, and other actions are taken is a determining factor of overall outcomes. As the Department expands its role, it should develop a more visible, proactive outreach program geared towards educating the public about emergency medical services (particularly defibrillation). The use of AEDs at public venues and athletic events has proven to be a significant and somewhat cost-effective way to provide quick CPR support. Fire stations can never be close enough, or responders fast enough, to administer defibrillation. To the extent possible, the District should seek grants or other funding options to support an AED community-wide program.

The District should also, at least annually, review its operating cost against the approved cost recovery fee structure. It a well know fact that fees will not cover the cost of operating a transport EMS program. Transport fees should at least cover 50% of the ongoing operating costs. When and if operating costs exceed 50% of its cost recovery revenues, the District should request either an increase in fees or a general mill levy increase. The District can obviously choose any options at its disposal, however, there should a funding delta (or action trigger) established to ensure a sustainable EMS program.

Documentation of training and performance is also very important in the EMS field. The Department needs a performance tracking system for enhanced and EMT-B/IV level skills. The development of competency-based curriculum testing for all EMS personnel, on an annual basis, should be a Fire Department standard. This should be in place as quickly as possible. It will require an additional Operations/EMS resource.

Another factor to be considered is a requirement for in-service training with all ALS personnel. In addition to the monthly continuing education requirements, paramedics should have regular feedback sessions with the physician advisor and skills training at Avista Hospital or another agency. This will help ensure their skill levels are maintained and evaluated by a third party. The goal statement for this program is to provide a level of service consistent with similar communities of this size. The Department must continue its development of plans to maintain the Louisville Fire Department's role in the county-wide Emergency Medical Services Plan.

Finally, as outlined in the staffing section and the EMS analysis, slower ALS response times in South Louisville negatively impact the Louisville EMS system. Again, it's pretty easy to understand why the service level and response times would be consistent with regional and national standards. The LFD is relatively new to ALS and it will take time and money to close the gaps.

Nevertheless, the District should take a graded approach to solving these challenges. From the Team's perspective, the first step in this process is to build Station #3 with the understanding that it will take some time to staff it. Once the capital assets are in place it makes it much earlier in the future to resolve the response time challenges in South Louisville. The Team would also recommend the District maintain a strong working relationship with surrounding EMS agencies through the IGA/MOU formalized process.

Recommendation #9 - Daily Supervision

The District should have, as a minimum, a supervisor on each shift and preferable in each station. Personnel need to have the necessary supervisory support, to ensure safety, productivity and accountability. The team lead concept has outlived its useful life and it doesn't fulfill the supervisory function.

Recommendation #10 - EMS Quality Assurance & Physician Advisor

This is a follow-on from the 2005 assessment findings; however, there have been some improvements in the QA program. The current system utilizes a third party evaluation of significant or challenging patients. The EMS Chief also reviews each PRC and provides some feedback. The QA program should include all of the elements outlined in the CAAS accreditation including a strong documentation program. As a second component of this recommendation, the program should also include at least semiannually, a skills evaluation and feedback program. The Department should be affiliated with an active pre-hospital EMS system that can provide the necessary guidance and oversight. While the Department has done a good job of implementing all of the traditional program requirements and it has formalized SOGs and protocols, it should enhance the Physician Advisor Program.

Recommendation #11 - Defibrillation and Public Education Program

While not a high priority, the EMS program could benefit from an expanded public access "defibrillation program". The District continues to have a good community CPR program as well as a dedicated ALS ambulance. The District should consider placing defibrillators at all public venues. Along with a strong community CPR program, it could have a meaningful impact on patient survivability.

Recommendation #12 - Dedicated EMS Chief/Battalion Chiefs

The LFD has done a great job of implementing an ALS program, however it does lack the necessary oversight, supervision and daily management. These duties are currently a collateral responsibility under training. It is recommended that an Operations Chief/EMS Officer be hired (or a similar position) to manage these diverse programs.

Finding #5 - Fire Training Facilities / Training Officer

This finding is essentially a carryover from a 2005 finding in that the District has no dedicated training facility. While the county training system was to provide three strategically located regional centers, their final locations have had no real practical use for the Louisville Fire Department. Most, if not all, firefighting skills training is relegated to simulation, using existing buildings within the District and the occasional acquired structure.

The Training Division must use the county training buildings for all “burn” training; however it significantly impacts in District staffing and, more importantly, negatively impacts overall protection of the District. To the extent possible, the District did make improvements to their existing learning resource center at Station #1 and included a couple of training props in the remodel project. From the Planning Team’s perspective, it must have a dedicated facility to accommodate their volunteer programs and to minimize the vulnerabilities caused when training out of district.

From a training perspective, the Planning Team continues to recommend all required certifications be transitioned to IFSAC. While all new driver/operators (D/Os) are trained and certified under the State of Colorado, the Department has been slow to fully implement this program. Finally, the District has had an expanded role in county-wide wildland deployments, so it has necessitated a new baseline training level for all responding employees and members. The Planning Team recommends competency levels should meet S-130/190 to the extent possible.

Supporting Information

As recommended in 2005, this observation proposes the development of plans and specifications for a local fire training facility scaled to the district’s needs. This might include, but is not limited to, a modular/metal type training building such as that used by North Washington, Ft. Lupton or Sterling fire departments.

A training facility would aid in the development and maintenance of firefighting, rescue and other skills over the time frame of the Comprehensive Plan. Moreover, the Planning Team recommends that it may be wise to research a teaming initiative with other departments to the extent possible. Due to District-wide vulnerabilities when equipment,

apparatus and personnel are out of district, it is considered a high priority. The Planning Team understands and appreciates the significant cost associated with such a project, however it has been in the discussion phase for several years. If nothing else, it should be moved to the planning phase.

The Department currently uses IFSAC certifications for Firefighter, Officer and Haz-Mat and has made some progress in transitioning new engineers to the state-approved certification. As outlined in the last assessment, the Planning Team still recommends the District require third party certifications. This is the standard of care for most departments in the Front Range and the old LFD training program cannot be validated. Transitioning to the state program ensures that all driver/operators have met the generally accepted industry standards and the training is accredited by a third party.

For many years, the LFD has not considered wildland fire to be a significant threat; however, that has changed over the past several years. The Planning Team recommends that at the very least, a “wildland team” be implemented and trained to the S130/190 training requirements. The Planning Team believes that the Department must be equipped and trained to meet every fire threat the District might have.

Recommendations: #13 - Training Center

The Department has more than doubled its career and volunteer staff over the past six years, which has resulted in more training hours, wear & tear of District buildings, wear of surface streets, and more time out of service due to travel to a county training building. This recommendation is no longer considered a luxury, but a necessity to maintain a trained force.

Recommendation #14 - Training & Certifications

The Training Division and FD personnel have made some significant improvements in its training programs. From all indications, it is compliant with all state and federal mandates. That said, we continue to recommend a transition to certifications that are accredited (specifically Driver/Operator). The Department should also initiate a wildland team and train its responders to the basic S190/130 certification.

Recommendation #15 – Multi-Company Drills

In addition to the current training program, the Training Division should include drills and simulation in its program. While the JPR and continuing education programs are solid, it should be integrated with drills.

Finding #6 - Fire Code Enforcement and Prevention Programs

The fire prevention and life safety activities of this Department are comprehensive and effective in obtaining code compliance. The Department has done a commendable job of implementing nearly all of the 2005 recommendations, so most of the 2011 recommendations are considered fine-tuning. The workload of this division is primarily impacted by maintenance efforts after occupancy is granted. The Department is now utilizing new technology for records management and manually enters code violations in the field. The Prevention Division has a well-documented program plan that defines or describes the program elements.

Supporting Information

One of the most effective means of controlling the growth of the community fire problem is the Life Safety & Fire Prevention Division (LSFPD). The Planning Team believes that the current staff are exceptional inspectors and have managed the community's fire defense programs well. Many commercial and industrial structures are sprinklered and inspected on an annual basis. That said, the Team would recommend several areas of improvement from a business management perspective. Perhaps most importantly, the District's community fire defense programs would benefit greatly from an analysis of emerging trends or recurring hazards in the District. Currently, there is no real effort dedicated to this function. Systems are available and widely used throughout the Denver metro area. They have proven to help identify and target problematic areas throughout the District. This information also allows the Fire Marshal to concentrate on prevention efforts in those areas.

The Department's preplanning efforts have been a bright spot in the inspection and mitigation programs. Career line personnel along with the Fire Prevention Division support field activities and develop the entire preplan. In an effort to accelerate the field walkdown activity, the District developed a new computer program to manage the information and it is utilized by Fire Prevention personnel to help obtain field facility information.

The LSFPD has a Fire Prevention Program plan that documents and describes the program elements and a means to implement them. The Department has also developed a "Contractors' Checklist" to ensure that developers and contractors have a guide on what is expected in the LFPD. This has proven to be a very successful tool in ensuring contractors are given standardized instructions of basic code expectations.

Finally, the Planning Team recommends that all Fire Prevention personnel be active in the local chapters of Fire Marshal Associations or the Society of Fire Protection Engineers. It is critical for all personnel to be current with new technologies, code development and emerging trends.

Public Education

The Fire Department has a relatively effective Public Education Program considering there is no one person dedicated to manage the program. It is mostly volunteer-based and entirely dependent on their goodwill for implementation.

Supporting Information

The Department's Public Education Program is virtually unchanged from the 2005 assessment. Most of the routine requests for public education classes are being met and the Department works hard to contact every 2nd and 3rd grade class in the District.

One notable item since the last evaluation is the development of a "Kids' Academy". The program is designed to reach 7 to 12 year olds with an overriding goal of teaching all-risk safety. It is basically comprised of 4 half days of interactive lessons and games to enforce positive safety behaviors. The program has been a remarkable success for everyone involved.

When we look at the role of public education in the fire service, it is changing from a "fire only" basis to more "all-risk" as departments and communities change. With the Department integrating emergency medical information into its publications and audio-visual presentations, its public education program can contribute greatly to the survivability of potential users of the EMS program. The public education program can be used more effectively if it focuses upon targeted audiences. The Department should also conduct a baseline community awareness survey once every five years to determine the depth of public awareness on pertinent issues in order to target activities and programs more accurately.

That said, the Planning Team recommends the Department work towards enhancing its programs to the extent possible with existing staff. The Department should also include an annual "senior safety" component to its education programs. The LFPD has one of the oldest populations in Boulder County so it stands to reason that programs focusing on seniors will be beneficial.

Recommendation #15 - Strengthen Public Education Programs

The Department and community could benefit from an improved public education program. To the extent financially practical, the program could benefit if it included a senior component with some additional corporate elements.

Recommendation #16 - Implement the Residential Sprinkler Component of the 2009 ICC Code

The Department has done a remarkable job of enhancing the 2009 ICC Code, however it should push to implement the residential code. This is not within the LFPD span of

authority, however, it should do what it can to educate and lobby the City for final implementation.

Finding #7 – Program/Performance Measure Reviews

The Louisville Fire Department has the desire to set goals and evaluate their completion. The Chief, command staff and District Board clearly understand the importance of producing goals and objectives that can be evaluated. The Comprehensive Plan will be the primary vehicle for evaluating programs and internal operational objectives will be measured through best management practices programs including self-assessments.

Supporting Information

Accountability and responsibility are increasingly part of the assessment of services in government. This recommendation is to raise the visibility of the process by recommending a review of all programs, and specific goals & objectives for each program element as it relates to the elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Also, internal self-assessments are an important part of the Department 360-degree functional review. These assessments and SWOT analyses are great tools to ensure internal feedback against the comprehensive planning process.

To the extent necessary, the Fire Department should consider a retreat with the staff and officers to facilitate the exchange of information between programs. This should include a review of the District's baseline and benchmark performance measures for fire protection services. The goal of this recommendation is to make an assessment of the changes the Department experiences over time.

Recommendation #17 - Assessment of Performance and Accountability to Taxpayers

The LFPD is a very transparent organization and provides the necessary access to all District business. The LFPD should, however, review its overall performance and expectations for service by the taxpayer. The LFPD District Board should also review the Department's performance against its approved "Service Plan" and "Comprehensive Plan" and ensure that the Department is performing as expected.

Finding #8 - ISO Grading

The Fire Department underwent a re-evaluation by the Insurance Service Office (ISO) in 2009. As in past evaluations, the District was able to maintain its Class 4 rating by a very narrow margin. While many in the fire service believe that this

rating system is archaic and not relevant today, it does still impact insurance rates for residential and commercial properties.

If for no other reason than keeping a low insurance rate, the District should seek to improve its rating or, at the very least, maintain its current rating. This objective is no small undertaking. It's reasonable to assume that the District will need to take a graded approach and evaluate other options, including a more aggressive auto-aid policy. That said, implementing the recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan will go far to ensuring compliance to the ISO fire suppression section. Again, the Planning Team understands that this will be a significant undertaking that may take a number of years to implement. Moreover, it will take a significant increase in funding to meet these objectives. (Reference Section IV).

On a more positive note, the District has done a great job meeting all of the 2005 apparatus and GPM recommendation. Adding an additional Type 1 engine has improved the likelihood that the District will always have the required fire flows when apparatus is undergoing maintenance or repairs.

Supporting Information

The ISO only grades cities in this population range about every 10 years. The next grading may be the only time in the 10-year cycle of this Plan that there is a chance to impact the "class" of the District. The Department should institute an internal team to prepare for the next ISO visit to ensure it gets maximum benefit from its policies, practices and resources used for fire protection. This will help the Department obtain the maximum benefit from actions its taken since the last grading. As outlined in the ISO rating of the Louisville Fire Protection District, Fire Department Operations received a slight improvement. However most importantly, over the last two evaluations, the FD Operations score has decreased. This was primarily due to a transition in how volunteers volunteer their time.

Staffing strategies have been redesigned to better accommodate volunteer schedules, because over the past decade volunteers are no longer available to respond from home. This is also compounded by the lack of affordable housing available in the LFPD. The District's overall ISO performance and capabilities have eroded over time and it is not likely that it will significantly change without a change its staffing strategies.

It should be noted that 2 of the 3 rating areas are not entirely within the control of fire department management or the District. Improvements or failures in the ISO water supply and communications sections are primarily influenced by the city's water supply and maintenance program and Boulder County Communications Center performance and records. At the end of the day, it will ultimately be up to the District Board of Directors and Management Team to determine the priority of the ISO recommendations.

Recommendation #18 - Review ISO

The LFPD should take the necessary internal actions to evaluate its compliance to ISO and determine the benefits of Center for Public Safety Excellence Accreditation. The District Board and Management Team shall also determine what funding will be required to meet the minimum requirements to maintain a Class 4. If the District moves forward with accreditation, the funding requirements shall also be estimated to achieve compliance.

Finding # 9 – Essential Assets (Apparatus Replacement Schedule)

Again, the District has done a great job of implementing the apparatus assets recommendations outlined in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The Department has added an additional engine, a Type 6 brush truck and purchased two ambulances to support the community based ALS/EMS program. These actions have had a direct effect on maintaining the Department minimum fire flow demands and ensuring that the District's fire suppression capability is not compromised when an apparatus is out of service. As successful as the District has been, it must not become complacent with its apparatus replacement plan or considering specialized pieces of equipment to better serve and protect the District.

Supporting Information

While the vast majority of each year's budget goes to personnel and operational program costs, the purchase price of a fire vehicle often creates "sticker shock" to the agency making the acquisition. As the District continues to implement its replacement cycle of fire apparatus, it has become more of a planning issue to balance apparatus against other future capital needs.

The District has done a good job of minimizing the risk of impacting its current ISO gpm requirements with the addition of a new engine. The District can now sustain a fire flow of 4000 gpm. That said, the Planning Team strongly recommends the District not only evaluate its apparatus and equipment needs based on gpm, but also the needs of the District.

For example, the city of Louisville has one of the largest open space areas of any city of its size, and the Department has limited access to much of those areas. Most, if not all, of the existing bridges in the open space cannot support the weight of even the smallest brush truck. The topography of much of those areas is so steep that conventional brush trucks are not accessible or would not be safe to operate in.

Most importantly, the City no longer supports mowing fire breaks between residential areas and vegetation in many areas is overgrown and the fuel load is not managed. Managing this new threat requires the District to add at least one 6x6 ATV concept

vehicles to its fleet. The addition of this apparatus will allow firefighters to access areas not currently accessible, mitigate fires in their incipient phase, improve firefighter safety, and better protect residences that back to open space.

The LFPD has also been proactive by adding a donated Zodiac inflatable boat to its inventory. The boat is currently at Station #2 and is deflated for storage purposes. Unfortunately, it's not easily accessible for emergency deployments. The Planning Team recommends that it have a dedicated towing trailer with a small gas motor.

It should be noted that the FD Management Team now considers wildland fires to be a significant threat to the community; therefore, the Planning Team recommends that a select number of 20 firefighters be trained to this capability. The Team believes that the Department must be equipped and trained to meet every fire threat the District might have and it should have some more specialized firefighters to meet this unique need.

Table 12 - Fleet Replacement Schedule

Station #1			
<i>Apparatus</i>	<i>Year Purchased</i>	<i>Year to be Placed in Reserve</i>	<i>Year to be Replaced</i>
Engine 2701	2008	2021	2021
Ladder 2716	1993/2010	2020	2020
Medic 2721	2007	2012	2012
Brush 2731	1991	2011	2023

Station #2			
<i>Apparatus</i>	<i>Year Purchased</i>	<i>Year to be Placed in Reserve</i>	<i>Year to be Replaced</i>
Engine 2702	1999/2009	2017	2017
Engine 2703	1995	--	2012
Ladder 2717	2001	--	2018
Medic 2722	2007	2012	2013
Brush 2732	2006	2014	2016

Table 12 - Fleet Replacement Schedule (Continued)

<i>Support Services</i>			
<i>Apparatus</i>	<i>Year Purchased</i>	<i>Year to be Placed in Reserve</i>	<i>Year to be Replaced</i>
Chief 2751	2004	2012	2012
D-Chief 2752	2006	2014	2014
B-Chief	TBD	TBD	TBD
Training	TBD	TBD	TBD
Bureau 2753	2005	--	2013
Bureau 2754	2005	--	2013
Utility 2755	1999	--	2012

Finding #10 – Essential Resources (Apparatus Maintenance Programs)

The Planning Team’s review of the current apparatus maintenance and replacement schedule indicates a well-managed and documented system. Also, all repairs are documented in the Department-approved database.

Supporting Information

As the fleet has increased over the years, the Department has made a big commitment by having its own fleet management tech on staff. The District has also invested in a “repair order” system that is designed to capture needed repairs, track repair progress, and document how the repairs were fixed and closed out.

The Department also has a PMO and PMI system that is designed to prevent or minimize apparatus and equipment downtime and to help ensure operability. For a department of this size, it is unusual to have systems and procedures that are compliant to the NFPA 1500 recommendations for maintenance.

That said, they are in their infancy and require some oversight and management to ensure they are done to procedure. Current staff has been slow to institutionalize these industry practices. It has also become evident that the District is need of its own fleet services building. There is no shortage of operational and safety concerns that have arisen because there is not dedicated space.

For example, responders have to routinely work around maintenance parts and equipment, exposed fuels & liquids, and unsecured tools. Moreover, both stations have been damaged due to maintenance on cabs or ladders, not to mention the damage of trucks from single person backing. These are all precursors to injury or continued damage. While some may see it as a minor inconvenience or the price of doing business, the Planning Team believes that it is a significant safety concern that should be a District priority.

The District should also make a conscious effort to review the apparatus replacement schedule every budget cycle. The condition of apparatus does change from year-to-year and it's necessary to have some flexibility in the replacement cycle.

Recommendation #18 - Fleet Services Facility

Performing truck maintenance in a fire station is considered a safety issue. The fleet mechanic should have a dedicated area to perform maintenance. Most importantly, firefighters should have an area that is free of tripping hazards, exposure to chemicals, and chronic industrial noise caused by vehicle maintenance. It should not be considered a luxury, but a necessity for firefighter safety and protection of District facilities.

Finding #11 - Information & Technology

The Department's current information management systems have been improved as recommended in the 2005 Comp Plan recommendations, including implementation of a NIFRS compliant reporting system. Most importantly, these improvements have had a direct effect on personnel productivity and standardization of FD Operations. The Fire Department does not, however, have a comprehensive management information system that can be utilized to perform HR functions.

Supporting Information

The Department is no longer a small department and it requires that the Administrative Division have a system to help manage its personnel needs. This is to ensure accuracy in management information and to maintain compliance with the applicable state and federal employment laws. This includes, but is not limited to: call timecards, payroll, inventories, training and personnel tracking, etc.

The Department is also lacking voice and telecommunications in both stations. The current system reduces the effectiveness of career and volunteer staff because there is no communications link between stations. Each work station should have direct video conferencing to support the multiple shift turnovers. The Team strongly recommends that this technology be funded to improve productivity of all staff and improve customer communications.

Consideration should also be given to integrating the AVL system in the primary responding units. The Boulder County Communications Center will soon be installing a new CAD system with AVL capabilities. If the District chooses to move forward with this recommendation, it could ensure that the closest unit is always dispatched and the current LFD mapping system is integrated into the county system. This will also allow BCC and commanders to see the location of responding units.

Lastly, the Department is lacking a technology replacement plan that is typical of most governmental and corporate entities. The Department currently runs most systems to failure, which has caused some loss of productivity. It is vitally important for the District to maintain a 24/7 operational capability, thus, the recommendation to develop a technology replacement plan and integrate it into the budget plan.

Recommendation #19 - Technology Upgrades

The LFPD should continue to upgrade its operational and support systems to include, but is not limited to: HR management software, automatic vehicle locations (AVL), voice communications between stations, and implementing a “technology refresh” program every 3 to 4 years.

Finding #12 – External Relationships (Auto-Aid or Box Alarm Assignment)

The Department has implemented all of the recommendations for establishing formal mutual aid agreements with surrounding area departments. However, there are areas in the District that could benefit from auto-aid or box alarm assignments.

Supporting Information

The Department currently enjoys good working relationships with the surrounding area departments and they routinely call on each other for support when needed. However, the Department should also consider utilizing automatic aid or box alarm assignments for target hazards including, but not limited to: “big box” stores, hospitals and the tech center. The Planning Team is also sensitive to the concerns of surrounding agencies when auto-aid is abused. There have been many cases where auto-aid has been used to cover routine alarms for agencies that are unwilling or unable to cover them themselves.

In some of the latest auto-aid discussions, one agency has refused to help cover new developed areas in South Louisville. This agency refused to sign a formal agreement because they don’t believe their taxpayers should be responsible for protecting new development in an adjoining district. Their position is that it is up to the LFPD and the

City of Louisville to protect their new development and it should have been considered when approving the new projects. The LFPD Management Team and Board of Directors certainly understand these concerns and are currently evaluating tangible options (contained within this Comprehensive Plan). To the extent possible, the Planning Team recommends that the District make modifications to these past proposals to help minimize the impact on surrounding agencies.

For example, the LFPD can implement a limited auto-aid agreement whereby they only request a box alarm for specific targeted addresses. By prioritizing protection in the South District, it will minimize the need for auto aid; however, there is no single department that can handle every conceivable emergency. The question the District will need to answer in the near future is whether to build and staff a station in South Louisville to address these higher risk areas and accommodate the demands of existing and new development.

Recommendation #20 - Evaluate Auto-Aid Policy

The District should reevaluate the need for auto-aid in South Louisville and specific target hazards. Until the District can meet its response time and staffing goals, it should consider an auto-aid option, to the extent that their neighbors are available.

Finding #13 – Financial Resources

The Louisville Fire Department Management Team, with the support of the Board of Directors, implemented a strategy in 2006 to increasing the current funding level by increasing the fire protection mill levy. This allowed the District to implement an ALS transport program, remodel Station #1 and replace some older equipment.

Like most departments in Colorado, the current funding will not support the longer term needs of the District. The Management Team believes that present funding will sustain the organizational and community protection needs for another 3 to 5 years. This is assuming there is no improvement in service levels in South Louisville or support & training structures constructed. This also assumes that the current staffing profile won't change.

The question of funding capital projects and improving the community's fire defense programs is always a tough decision for any elected official. At the end of the day, funding must be balanced against the needs of the department and the support of the taxpayers.

Supporting Information

As outlined in Chapter VIII (Summary and Cost Estimates) it is evident to the Planning Team that the existing authorized funding levels will not meet the Department's future service level requirements. While it is nothing short of amazing that the Board of Directors and the FD Management Team has been able to provide a quality service with only one tax increase in 35 years, it is not realistic to believe that the current funding level can sustain the needs of the community for more that 3 to 5 years.

With the addition of 40 new volunteer positions, increases in EMS staffing and an ops chief, much of the current funding will be committed to maintain these important operational needs. The Planning Team understands that it may not be practical or financially feasible to implement all of the comprehensive planning recommendations at one time, therefore a graded approach is reasonable.

Simply said, the District will have to prioritize its program needs and evaluate when and if these recommendations will require an additional funding increase. It should be noted that the District needs to be progressive today to protect tomorrow. The District can no longer wait until operational funding is depleted, exhaust its reserves, or defer capital projects and expect to adequately protect its customers.

Expectations from District customers are much different than they were 30 years ago as highlighted in the 2009 Community Survey. This survey showed that customers expect a service level that is consistent with national response standards and the District should be responsive to their needs. It is not inheritably negative or signify a system failure if the District asks the taxpayers for a funding increase to achieve these stated performance goals. It is the opinion of the Planning Team that many of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan recommendations directly impact the customers' quality of life.

Recommendation #21 - Funding Determinations

It is recommended that the LFPD Board of Directors determine the phasing of its capital and operational improvements. While currently not practical to fund all of its capital construction needs, to the extent financially practical, the District should prioritize "mission critical" programs and capital projects. That said, the District should consider requesting a general mill levy increase no later than 2016 to maintain its operational capabilities and consideration should be given annually to a bond initiative to support all of it capital needs.

Finding #14 - Preplanning

The Fire Department has done a remarkable job of developing a comprehensive pre-fire planning program. It shows a commitment to both firefighter safety and community life safety. All target hazards have a higher priority for completion and

are reviewed on regular basis.

Most notably, the Department has automated the preplan system and its now available on every apparatus computer. Moreover, preplans are updated on every computer within 24 hours of an update. As far as the District has come in its preplan development, the Strategy and Tactics sections are only in the beginning stage with few exceptions. The Management Team estimates that at the current rate of completion, it would take 2 to 3 years to complete the inventory.

That said, the District should consider contracting completion of some plans to the extent that funding is available. This will allow completion within two years. Again, this was an enormous amount of effort that required a team effort to complete within three years.

Recommendation #22 - Strategies and Tactics

The LFD should complete the Strategies and Tactics section of its preplans.

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