



**East Contra Costa County Fire Protection District  
Board Strategic Planning GOALS Retreat  
Held July 27, 2018**

**August 2018**

**Management  
Partners**





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## Retreat Report

The first strategic planning retreat for the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District Board was held on Friday, July 27, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Brentwood's City Hall. The retreat provided an opportunity for the Board to achieve consensus on the vision, mission, values, and potential goals that are essential elements of the strategic plan.

The full Board participated in the entire retreat, along with Chief Helmick, staff representatives, and community representatives from the cities of Brentwood and Oakley. Greg Larson, Partner, and Mark Bisbee, Special Advisor, both with Management Partners, facilitated the retreat, and were assisted by Management Analyst Kristin Youngmeyer.

A comprehensive PowerPoint presentation developed by Management Partners was used to guide and inform the Board's agenda and discussion. That presentation is provided as Attachment A.

## Retreat Overview

### Objectives

This was the first of two Board retreats to establish the essential framework of the proposed strategic plan. The objectives were to:

1. Provide an overview of the strategic planning process
2. Learn about the environmental scan
3. Clarify the mission and vision
4. Reach consensus on the organization's values
5. Identify the most important goals and some strategies
6. Discuss and agree on next steps

### Agenda

At the start of the retreat, the agenda was graphically presented as follows:



For each agenda item, the facilitators first presented summary information from the extensive research phase which occurred from May through early August, including:

- Individual or small group interviews with 40 people,
- Community survey with 643 respondents,
- Employee survey with 28 respondents,
- Survey of other firefighter residents with 38 respondents, and
- Community workshop with approximately 50 participants.

The summary information was intended to inform and guide the Board's deliberations and direction.

A variety of small group tools and techniques were used to encourage full and efficient participation, including small group work, "cheap" consensus thumbs voting (up, down, sideways), and dotting exercises.

## ***Strategic Planning Overview***

Management Partners presented a summary of the strategic planning framework as proposed and being used throughout this process. Additional information, including the graphic below, was distributed to the Board prior to the retreat.



Each component of the strategic plan listed above was described at the community workshop, the Board retreat, and in materials previously distributed to the Board and the public.

This Board retreat focused on the first four items:

- \* Mission
- \* Vision
- \* Values
- \* Goals

## **Environmental Scan**

Given resource and staffing constraints within the District, the environmental scan for this strategic planning process was prepared by Contra Costa County staff at the request of Supervisor Diane Burgis.

Management Partners presented the primary results from the environmental scan as summarized below.

- **The District is rapidly growing in population**
  - But workday population drops 31% due to commuters leaving the area
  - The growing tax base is susceptible to economic fluctuations
  
- **Individual communities within the District vary tremendously**
  - Demographically (e.g., size, age, diversity, employment)
  - Economically/fiscally (e.g., tax base, Prop 13 impacts)
  
- **Significant organizational improvements underway**
  - New chief focusing on outreach and performance metrics
  - The District is financially stable, albeit at reduced service levels
  - Board transitioning to publicly elected body

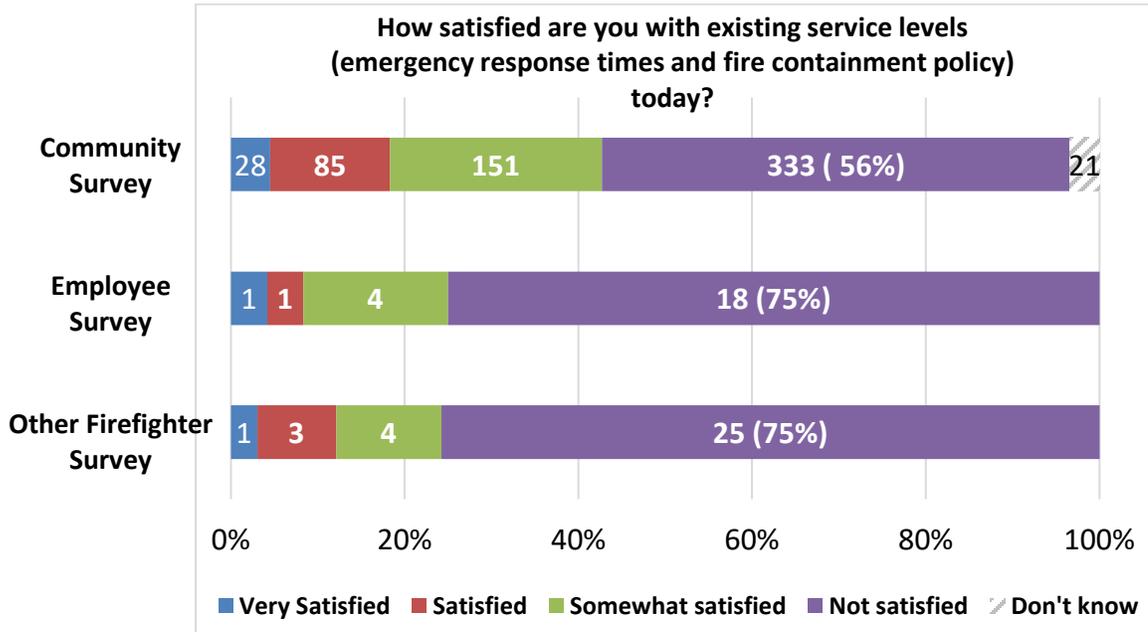
The Board received a summary of comments made about the environmental scan at the community workshop. The comments validated the factors identified above and added recognition of the exceptional performance of the frontline workforce within the District.

Management Partners also presented District and survey data, which shows extreme dissatisfaction with current District service levels.

Current District service levels are summarized in the table below.

	<b>Recommended Response Times</b>	<b>Actual Response Times (meets 90% of the time)</b>
<b>Urban Areas</b> (Brentwood and Oakley)	7:30	<b>10:00</b>
<b>Suburban Areas</b> (Discovery Bay)	11:30	<b>13:28</b>
<b>Rural Areas</b> (Unincorporated areas)	15:30	<b>16:02</b>

Finally, Management Partners presented the results of three survey responses regarding satisfaction with the current level of services. As shown below, over 55% of the responding residents and 75% of District staff and other firefighters living in the District rated they are “not satisfied” with current service levels; the lowest rating possible.



## Mission

The current mission statement for the District is:

*To preserve and protect life, the environment and property with service above all else.*

The Board reviewed the existing mission statement and reviewed information from the surveys, interviews and community workshop. All demonstrated high degrees of satisfaction with the mission statement as currently written.

Board members discussed the relative importance and ordering of “property” and “environment” within the mission statement and reached consensus on the following modest revision to it:

*To preserve and protect life, property, and environment with service above all else.*

## **Vision**

The District's current vision statement is:

*Our vision is to be recognized as:*

- *A district that is a model of excellence in fire protection and life safety programs.*
- *Responsive to the needs of the customers and communities we serve.*
- *Committed to continuous development in all areas.*
- *Committed to an environment of trust, involvement, innovation, creativity and accountability.*

As with the prior mission statement discussion, Board members reviewed the current vision statement and reviewed community and employee information demonstrating high degrees of satisfaction with the vision statement as currently written.

The Board reached consensus on maintaining the current vision with only a few minor modifications, as follows:

*Our vision is to be recognized as:*

- *A district that is a model of excellence in both fire protection and life safety programs.*
- *Responsive to the needs of the communities we serve.*
- *Committed to continuous development in all areas.*
- *Committed to an environment of trust, involvement, innovation, creativity and accountability.*

## **Values**

Management Partners presented survey data on possible District values from residents and employees, including a separate survey of firefighters from other agencies that live in the District, and comments from the community workshop. Note that the 15 possible values statements were assembled from the District's current list as well as a review of values statements used by other fire departments and districts in their strategic plans.

The survey and workshop results demonstrated a high degree of support for four values statements, mixed support for four others, and little support for the remaining seven.

The Board was then divided into small groups of three to address two questions each based on the research to date:

1. Are you comfortable with the first four preferred values statements?
  - *Be fiscally responsible, while maintaining a commitment to excellence.*
  - *Safeguard the lives of our team and the public.*
  - *Offer reliable and professional service.*
  - *Integrity, courage and personal accountability will direct our actions.*
2. Which of the next four statements, if any, do you want to add?
  - *Communicate openly and share knowledge.*
  - *Treat others as we want to be treated.*
  - *Measure our success by the satisfaction of our customers.*
  - *Work as a team to innovate.*

Each of the small groups then reported out the results of their discussion, with the consensus direction on values as follows:

- *Be fiscally responsible, while maintaining a commitment to excellence.*
- *Safeguard the lives of our team and the public.*
- *Offer reliable, compassionate and professional community services.*
- *Communicate openly and share knowledge.*
- *Integrity, courage and personal accountability will be in our actions.*

In addition, the Board requested that:

1. The Chief review the revised mission, vision and values statements with the organization to obtain concurrence.
2. The values statements not included above be considered as appropriate for the upcoming strategies discussion.
3. Consideration be given to splitting fiscal responsibility as a stand-alone value and/or creating separate lists of internal and external values.

## **Goals**

Management Partners presented 14 possible goal statements assembled from interviews and a review of other fire department and district strategic plans, as well as preferences for those statements based on the surveys of District residents, employees, and other firefighters who reside in the District.

Eight of 14 possible goal statements were rated highest by all three groups of survey respondents, although there was considerable variability of ranking within the top eight. The 14 goals were then presented on flip charts with ranking indicators from all three surveys.

While breaking for lunch, each Board member was given five dots to place on the goals they believed would be most important to include in the

strategic plan. Management Partners then reviewed and summarized the results during the lunch break.

Two goal statements were identified as most important with 12 dots each:

- *Reduce response times for emergency services throughout the District.*
- *Ensure financial stability and sustainability.*

These two goals were accepted by consensus, with the only discussion being that other goals could subsequently be presented as strategies under these two, such as “*add fire stations and appropriate staffing.*”

Three additional goals were identified for discussion.

First, the Board consensus was to include a goal statement regarding organizational development and performance, possibly by blending these two goal statements which received five and two dots, respectively:

- *Foster a culture of excellence and leadership within all stations.*
- *Build a high-performing workforce focused on continuous improvement.*

The Chief was asked by the Board to engage the workforce in reviewing and recommending a possible blended goal statement. Management Partners has provided the following draft to facilitate that process.

- *Maintain a high-performing workforce through a culture of excellence, leadership and continuous improvement throughout the organization.*

Second, the Board discussed the appropriate placement of this goal statement which received the third highest number of dots (seven):

- *Modernize stations, apparatus, and equipment.*

Consensus was to include this goal as either another goal or as a strategy, recognizing it would be essential for achieving the goals already identified.

Last, the Chief and Management Partners identified one additional goal statement (which did not receive any dots) which might need to be included due to external factors. Specifically, Contra Costa County Fire has recently notified the District that the District will soon have to assume responsibility for fire prevention development review and inspections. This is such a significant organizational and workload shift that it warrants consideration as a separate goal:

- *Transfer fire prevention services and inspections from the County.*

### **Summary of Goals**

Below is a summary of the Board's consensus direction on goals, which will serve as the basis for further discussion and development of strategies to achieve these goals:

- *Reduce response times for emergency services throughout the District.*
- *Ensure financial stability and sustainability.*
- *Maintain a high-performing workforce through a culture of excellence, leadership and continuous improvement throughout the organization.*
- *Modernize stations, apparatus, and equipment.*
- *Transfer fire prevention services and inspections from the County.*

### **Next Steps**

Management Partners summarized the progress made during this retreat and briefly presented additional survey data regarding preferred funding options, which will be one of the issues focused on at the next retreat. (The next retreat will include identification, development and selection of possible strategies to achieve each of the goals selected by the Board.)

The retreat concluded with an appreciative statement by the Chief for the Board's focused attention to development of the strategic plan.

Management Partners distributed a retreat evaluation form. The results are summarized on the next page.

## **Board Retreat Evaluation**

Nine evaluation forms were received, one from each member of the Board. On a five-point scale with one being low and five high, the retreat's usefulness was rated 4.7 and the quality was rated 4.9.

The best aspects of the workshop were reported as follows:

- *Kept the board positive, working together and on track.*
- *Everyone participated, and no one dominated.*
- *Good conversation dynamics.*
- *The facilitation was great.*
- *Environment was welcoming to foster participation.*
- *The workshop goals were clear.*
- *The board was able to finally get together and talk.*
- *This is the first time we were able to get together as a retreat.*
- *Quick pace, the retreat did not drag.*
- *Great content and input from all parties.*
- *I felt comfortable with making any and all comments in conversations.*
- *Interchange among current board members on a variety of topics.*
- *The overall engagement.*
- *Working through board consensus prior to decision day.*
- *Everyone had a chance to share.*

Some aspects which could have been better were reported as follows:

- *All good.*
- *Printout of slides handed out at beginning.*
- *I would like to see a full report on final percentages of all the survey questions, including the anonymous ones.*

Other comments provided were:

- *Good job by the facilitators.*
- *Thank you.*
- *This was fabulous and very productive.*

Management Partners greatly appreciates the full engagement of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District Board of Directors and staff in working together to make this a productive retreat.

## Attachment A – July 27 PowerPoint Presentation

# East Contra Costa Fire Protection District Strategic Planning

## Board Workshop

July 27, 2018





### Environmental Scan

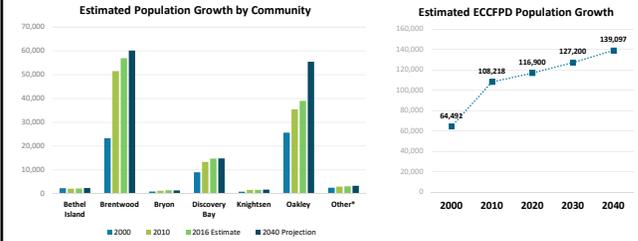
- Understand key internal and external factors that will affect the Fire District in the future
- Use the factors as important considerations in developing the strategic plan



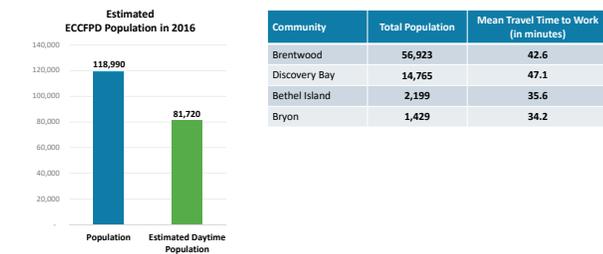

## Environmental Scan Results

- **Rapidly growing**
  - With large commuter population
  - Tax base growing but highly susceptible to economic fluctuations
- **Individual communities vary tremendously**
  - Demographically
  - Economically/Financially
- **Significant organizational improvements underway**

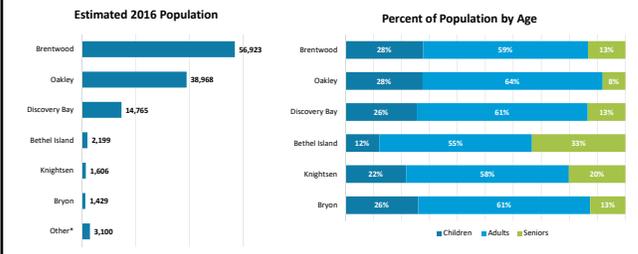
## Significant Population Growth (primarily in urban areas)



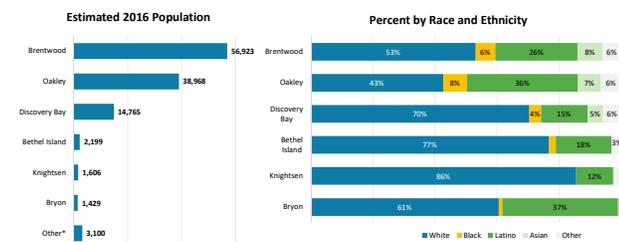
## Daytime Population Drops 31% Due to Commuters



## ECCFPD Serves Different Communities – By Age



## ECCFPD Serves Different Communities – By Race



## Internal Operations

- **Financially stable at current service levels**
- **New Fire Chief**
  - Increased community outreach and engagement
  - Increased planning and performance management
- **Moving to a directly-elected Board of Directors**

## Strengths and Challenges

### 1. What are the District's strengths?

- New management (7)
- Its employees (7)
- Openness to new ideas (3)

### 2. What are the District's biggest challenges?

- Lack of funds and staffing levels (8)
- Geographic size and limited station coverage (5)
- Response times (3)
- Equity of funding (3)

*Most Popular Responses from Community Meeting*

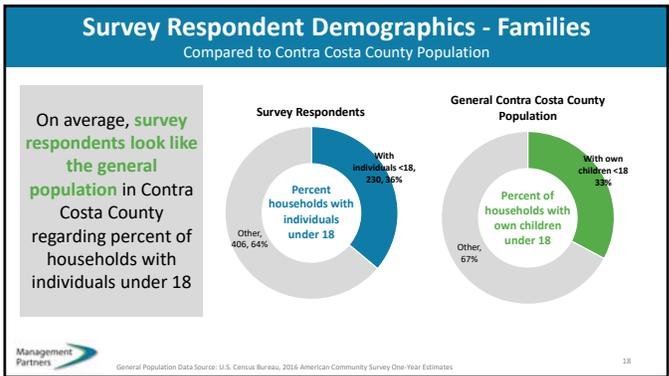
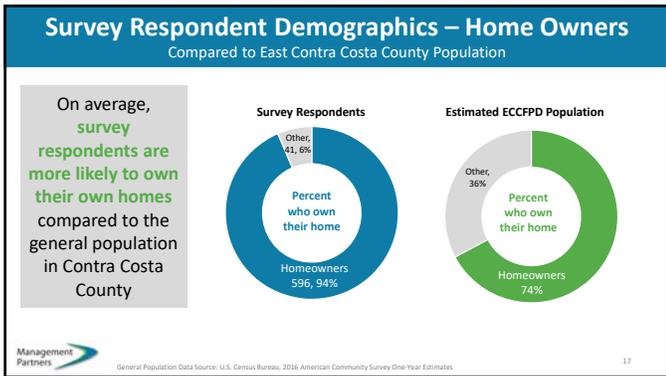
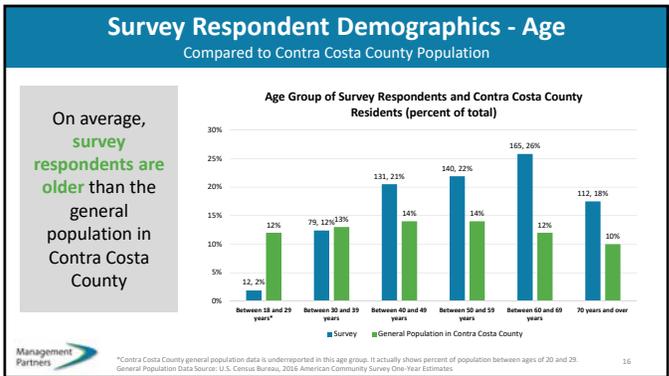
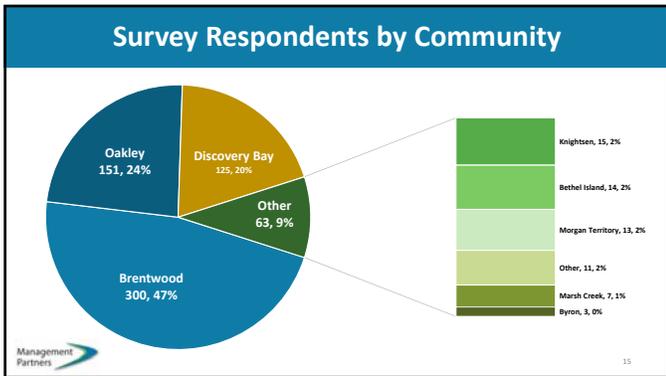
## Community Outreach Overview

# 643

 Responses to Community survey

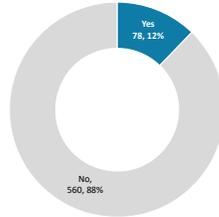
# ~45

 Participants at Community meeting



## 12% Have Received Emergency Response

Has anyone in your family or household received emergency services, including medical and fire response, from the District in the last 12 months?



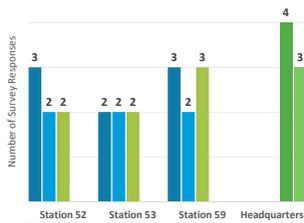
## Employee and Firefighter Surveys

28 ECCFPD Employee responses  
38 Non-ECCFPD Firefighters



## ECCFPD Survey Respondents

### Station Assignments



67% have worked more than 10 years at ECCFPD

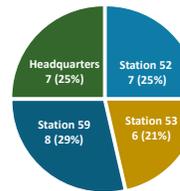
Over 1 in 4 (28%) have worked less than five years at ECCFPD

57% live in the East Contra Costa Protection District

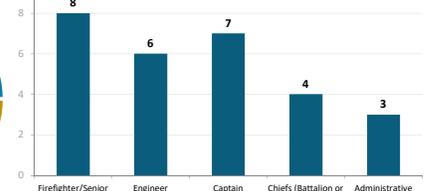
- Firefighter/Senior Firefighter
- Engineer
- Captain
- Chiefs (Battalion or Fire)
- Administrative (non-sworn)

## Survey Respondents by Station and Role

### ECCFPD Employees

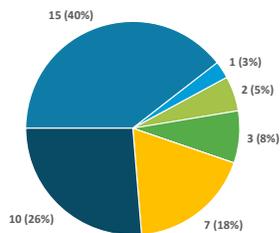


### What is your role in the District?

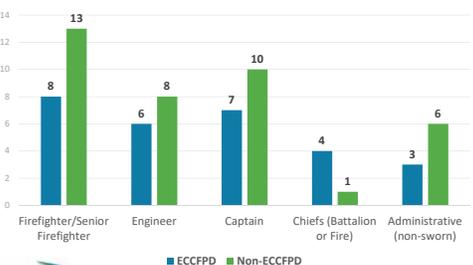


## Non-ECCFPD Survey Respondents

- Contra Costa County Fire Protection District
- Kensington Fire Protection District
- Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District
- Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District
- City Alameda Fire Department
- Other



## Survey Respondents Role



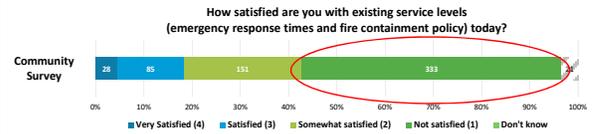
Other than chiefs, non-ECCFPD survey respondents roles are reflective of ECCFPD respondents

## It's All About Service Levels!!!

	Recommended Response Times	Actual District Response Times (meets 90% of the time)
<b>Urban Areas</b> (Brentwood and Oakley)	7:30	<b>10:00</b>
<b>Suburban Areas</b> (Discovery Bay)	11:30	<b>13:28</b>
<b>Rural Areas</b> (Other County unincorporated areas)	15:30	<b>16:02</b>



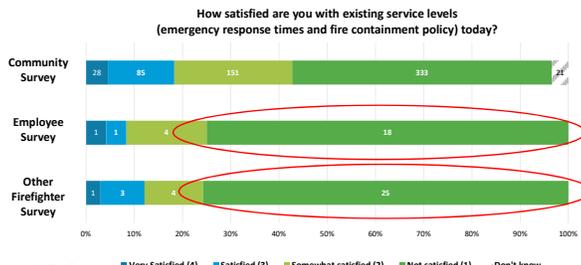
## Only 18% of Respondents are Satisfied with Existing Service Levels



### % of respondents who are satisfied or very satisfied with existing services levels (by community)

- Oakley (28%)
- Brentwood (17%)
- Other (16%)
- Discovery Bay (11%)

## Firefighter respondents are even less satisfied



## Mission and Vision



## Strategic Plan Framework

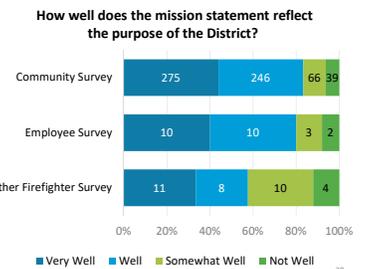


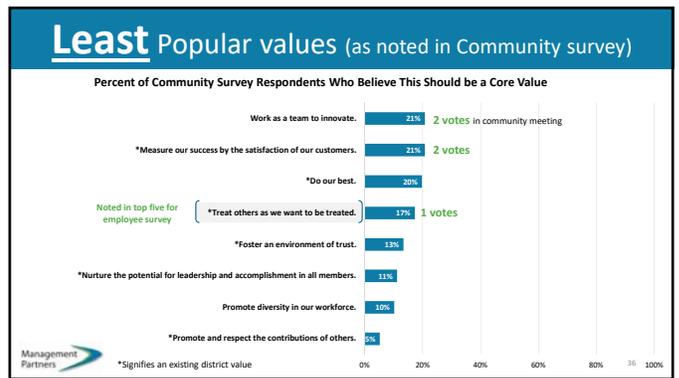
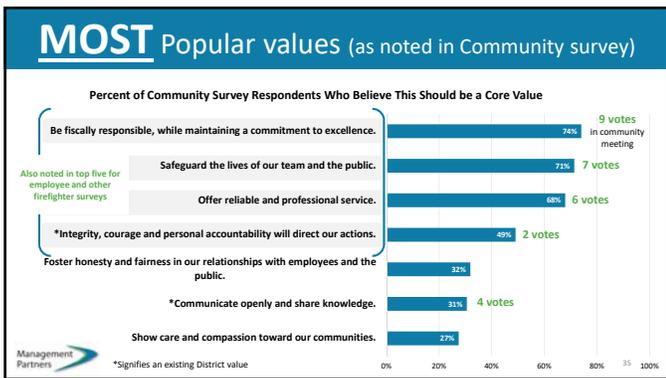
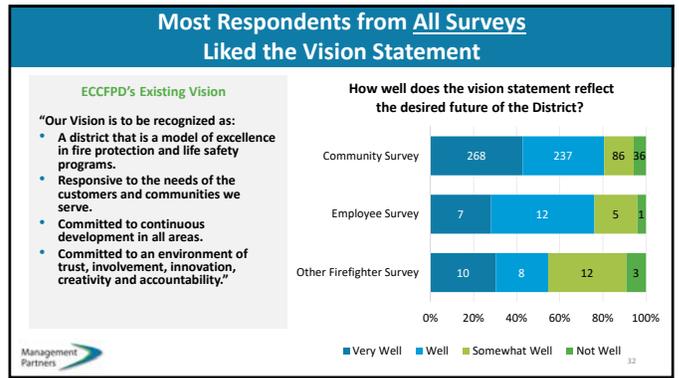
A **mission** is a statement of the purpose of the organization.

It fundamentally defines what the organization stands for and what it will do.

## Most Respondents from All Surveys Liked the Mission Statement

ECCFPD's Existing Mission  
**"To Preserve and Protect Life, Environment, and Property with Service above all else."**





## Choosing Our Values – Your Turn

- Are you comfortable with the first four?
  - Be fiscally responsible, while maintaining a commitment to excellence.
  - Safeguard the lives of our team and the public.
  - Offer reliable and professional service.
  - Integrity, courage and personal accountability will direct our actions.\*
- Which of these four, if any, do you want added?
  - Communicate openly and share knowledge.\*
  - Treat others as we want to be treated.\*
  - Measure our success by the satisfaction of our customers.\*
  - Work as a team to innovate.

## Goals



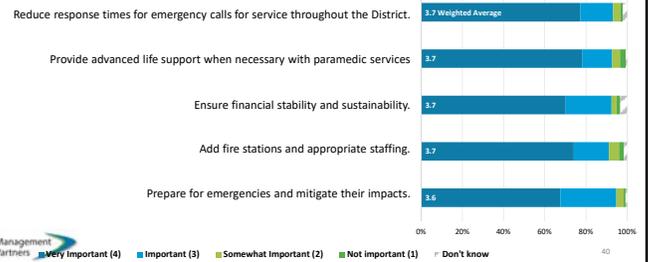
## Strategic Plan Framework



**Goals** are broad statements of desired outcomes and are achieved over a period of years.

## MOST Important Goals - Community

Please rate the importance of the following opportunities for the future of ECCFPD.



## MOST Important Goals – District Employees

1. Add fire stations and appropriate staffing. (78%)
2. Ensure financial stability and sustainability. (78%)
3. Prepare for emergencies and mitigate their impacts. (56%)
4. Modernize stations, apparatus, and equipment. (52%)
5. Foster a culture of excellence and leadership within all stations (44%)
6. Build a high-performing workforce focused on continuous improvement (41%)
7. Reduce response times for emergency calls for service throughout the District (33%)
8. Provide advanced life support when necessary with paramedic services. (30%)

## MOST Important Goals – Other Firefighters

1. Add fire stations and appropriate staffing. (97%)
2. Reduce response times for emergency calls for service through the district. (78%)
3. Ensure financial stability and sustainability. (69%)
4. Provide advanced life support when necessary with paramedic services. (67%)
5. Build a high-performing workforce focused on continuous improvement (42%)
6. Modernize stations, apparatus, and equipment. (33%)
7. Prepare for emergencies and mitigate their impacts. (31%)
8. Foster a culture of excellence and leadership within all stations (17%)

## Discussion Questions

### 5. What do you see as the most important goals for the District's future?



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1. Reduce response times for emergency services throughout the District.
2. Provide advanced life support when necessary with paramedic services.
3. Ensure financial stability and sustainability.
4. Add fire stations and appropriate staffing.
5. Prepare for emergencies and mitigate their impacts.
6. Build a high-performing workforce focused on continuous improvement.
7. Foster a culture of excellence and leadership within all stations.
8. Strengthen cooperative efforts with neighboring agencies.
9. Modernize stations, apparatus, and equipment.
10. Communicate the District's value to the public.
11. Invest in community partnerships.
12. Provide water and marine safety.
13. Transfer fire prevention services and inspections from the County.
14. Prepare for emergency response to planned high-rise structures.



## Strategic Plan Framework



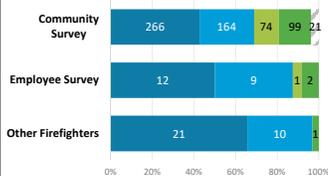
**Strategies** are the means to achieve the goals.

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## Funding Strategies - 1

A voter-approved tax increase to support three additional stations (for a total of six stations) to largely meet response time standards for our current population?



A voter-approved tax increase to support six additional stations (for a total of nine stations) to fully meet response time standards now and in the future?

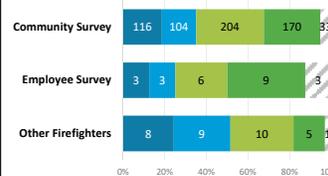


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## Funding Strategies - 2

A reallocation of property taxes that takes funding away from schools and education?

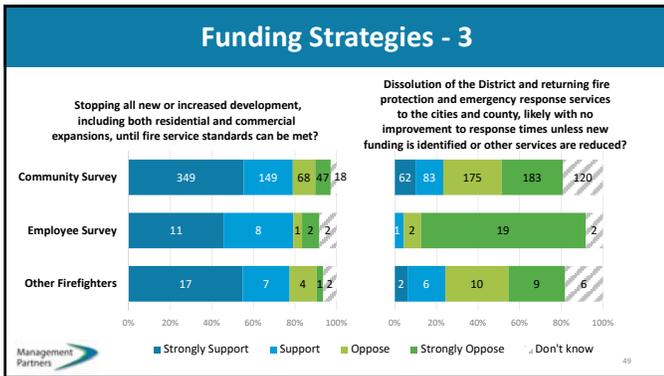


A reallocation of property taxes that takes funding away from law enforcement, streets, parks and other local services?



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- ### Other Opportunities for Improvement (as noted in the Community survey)
- Slow the growth of new development in the District
  - Discontinue practice of sending engine companies out on EMS calls
  - Explore cost efficiencies to deliver more within existing resources
  - Explore alternative revenue sources (development impact fees, donations, changes to tax allocation, etc.)
  - Address costs associated with the District's pension liability
  - Explore alternative staffing models (volunteers, part-time, EMS)
  - Provide more community education to prevent fires

- ### Focus areas for the strategic plan
- Ideas, strategies and best practices to work toward focus areas
- Add fire stations and appropriate staffing. (78%)**
- Work with cities and the county
  - Put funding mechanisms in place
  - Partner with community leaders in government
  - Review staffing model at stations

- ### Focus areas for the strategic plan
- Ideas, strategies and best practices to work toward focus areas
- Ensure financial stability and sustainability. (78%)**
- Continue with current plan
  - 10 year forecast model
  - Good fiscal management
  - Improve public perception – ECCFPD can be trusted to spend tax money for the public's best interest
  - Personnel
    - Commensurate rate to keep quality employees
    - Only hire on guaranteed permanent funding

- ### Focus areas for the strategic plan
- Ideas, strategies and best practices to work toward focus areas
- Prepare for emergencies and mitigate their impacts.**
- Revamp District Training
    - Increase opportunities
    - Provide better facilities
    - Provide modern equipment
    - Establish better communication solutions

- ### Focus areas for the strategic plan
- Ideas, strategies and best practices to work toward focus areas
- Modernize stations, apparatus, and equipment. (52%)**
- Seek grant opportunities
  - Create station and equipment budgets
  - Build in maintenance schedule to prevent breakdown and anticipate replacement of equipment
  - Encourage attendance of FDIC and other trade shows to stay up on the latest technology

## Focus areas for the strategic plan

Ideas, strategies and best practices to work toward focus areas

**Foster a culture** of excellence and leadership within all stations (44%)

- Improve communication
  - from Chief to the front line
  - focus on coping with conflict
- Encourage personal development
- Provide opportunities to expand roles
- Improve accountability
- Provide training opportunities and tools for employees

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## Concluding Thoughts and Next Steps

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## Strategic Plan Framework

An **action plan** is the vehicle for implementing the results of strategic planning.

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## Thank You!