



# FARGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN



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The Center for Public Safety Excellence® (CPSE®) acknowledges and thanks the community and Fargo Fire Department (FFD) stakeholders for their participation and input into this community-driven strategic planning process. The CPSE also recognizes Fire Chief Steven Dirksen, CFO, and all who participated for their commitment to this process.

This community-driven strategic plan was developed in May 2023, beginning with a meeting facilitated by representatives from the CPSE for community members, as named below. The community stakeholders' feedback considered by agency stakeholders in developing this strategic plan can be found in [Appendix A](#).

### **Community Stakeholders**

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Desi Fleming	Troy Knutson	Michael Redlinger	Jeff Wallin
Kendel Frost	Denise Kolpack	Kristin Roers	Wade Webb
Clint Gilbertson	Andrew Lynch	Taylor Savageau	Mark Williams

The agency stakeholder work sessions, conducted over three days, involved a group representing a broad cross-section of the FFD, as named below.

### **Agency Stakeholders**

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# Message from the Fire Chief

I am honored to present the 2024 - 2029 Fargo Fire Department (FFD) Strategic Plan. The planning process featured an ambitious, inclusive strategy designed to tap into the broad experiences and insights from a diverse cadre of employees. It also engaged nearly 40 community members in driving the future of the FFD.

On May 9, 2023, a group representing the senior leadership team, representatives from all three shifts, the community risk reduction division, and the training division convened for the first of three strategic planning sessions. The group was ready to assess the plethora of issues facing the department and our community.

The following pages are a result of their challenging and collective work. The group was challenged to look into the future and work toward a plan to ensure the FFD delivers the best product possible to the citizens and visitors of Fargo. All involved understood the need for a plan to give direction as well as the need to be versatile with the ability to change focus when confronted with a changing environment.

The 2024 – 2029 FFD Strategic Plan clearly sets a community-driven roadmap built by internal and external stakeholders who have a desire for the FFD to address the increasing demands from our residents and visitors.

The plan includes five specific goals and 19 objectives to ensure the FFD meets or exceeds what is needed from us by our community over the next five years. The FFD is committed to being an agile organization that can respond effectively and efficiently when emergencies arise.

It will take considerable effort to make this plan a reality. As the fire chief, I cannot thank our community, the FFD command staff, the men and women in the stations, community risk reduction, and training divisions enough for their efforts in continuous quality improvement in developing this plan. Ultimately, the Fargo community supports this department, and it is for the community that we continue our efforts to constantly evolve and improve to better serve you.

Sincerely,

Steven J. Dirksen  
Fire Chief

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# Introduction

The community serviced by the Fargo Fire Department (FFD) receives high levels of professionalism and efficiency from the agency's proactive approach to risk reduction and emergency mitigation. As such, the FFD contracted with the CPSE to facilitate a community-driven strategic plan. The process utilized by the CPSE aligns with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International® (CFAI®) fire and emergency services accreditation model but also considers all parameters prescribed by the authority having jurisdiction.

The CPSE's approach to community-driven strategic planning gathers feedback and input from community and agency stakeholders while focusing on future change beyond the status quo. Beliefs, concepts, current processes, and values were among the many pieces considered and questioned to bring this planning document to reality. The FFD exhibited a commitment to the implementation and execution of this plan to become more efficient and effective in alignment with its community.

# Process

Understanding what the customer desires is vital to the success of any organization. In this case, the customer is the community that the Fargo Fire Department serves. This applies even if the service organization is a governmental entity. Community-driven strategic planning ensures the community remains a focus of the organization's direction and community feedback is at the heart of all deliberations and development of this strategic plan.

The process of community-driven strategic planning and the plan itself represents the embrace of transition away from how an organization has always done things, seeking to find efficacies and outcomes based on change. The community-driven strategic plan provides a management roadmap built on a shared vision and structured for measurable results. With the involvement of a diverse group of agency stakeholders, the Fargo Fire Department's community-driven strategic plan encompasses various experiences, perceptions, and perspectives that can also work to build more internal organizational symbiosis. For the desired, measurable results to be realized, the process and the strategic plan must focus on substance, not form. Only then can the FFD truly benefit from the process and realize its ultimate vision.

## Community Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Identify, from the community perspective, things the agency should and should not change.
- ✓ Identify the community's expectations for the agency, concerns about or for the agency, and aspects the community views as strengths or positives.
- ✓ Define the programs provided to the community.
- ✓ Establish the community's prioritized view of the programs and services provided by the agency.



## Agency Stakeholder Work

- ✓ Identify the agency's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results.
- ✓ Revisit the mission statement, giving careful attention to the services and programs currently provided and which logically can be provided in the future.
- ✓ Revisit the values of the agency's membership.
- ✓ Determine the agency's current vision considering the consensus built from the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and desired results.
- ✓ Identify the agency's challenges, service gaps, and causal effects through a thematic sifting process.
- ✓ Determine, by consensus, strategic initiatives for outcome-based organizational improvement.
- ✓ Develop strategic goals, SMART objectives with relative timelines, and comprehensive critical task concepts focusing on outcomes.

# Agency Background

The City of Fargo was founded in 1871, encompassing an area that was historically part of the Sioux territory and was an early stopping point for steamboats traversing the Red River



While the city was originally named Centralia, the name was changed to Fargo after William Fargo, the founder of Wells Fargo Express Company.

Throughout the city's history, Fargo has continued to grow and evolve, starting with the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad. By virtue of the railroad, Fargo became known as the "Gateway to the West."

Today, the City of Fargo is a thriving cultural, retail, healthcare, educational, and industrial center for southeastern North Dakota. With a population of over 127,000, Fargo is the home of North Dakota State University and several larger corporations. However, Fargo is also known for being a great place to have a smaller business or start a career.

The genesis of the Fargo Fire Department (FFD) dates back to 1875 in the form of two fire wardens who would patrol the city, watching for fires and protecting the population of 600 residents. The city and the department dealt with a number of conflagrations, the largest in 1893 when 31 blocks of downtown Fargo were destroyed by fire. However,

resiliency is indicative of the area. Within one year, 246 new brick buildings were built, along with new streets and a water system.

In 1903, the Fargo Fire Department transitioned from a volunteer department to a career organization. The FFD has also continued to grow and evolve along with the city as risks changed, partially due to the population and economic growth.

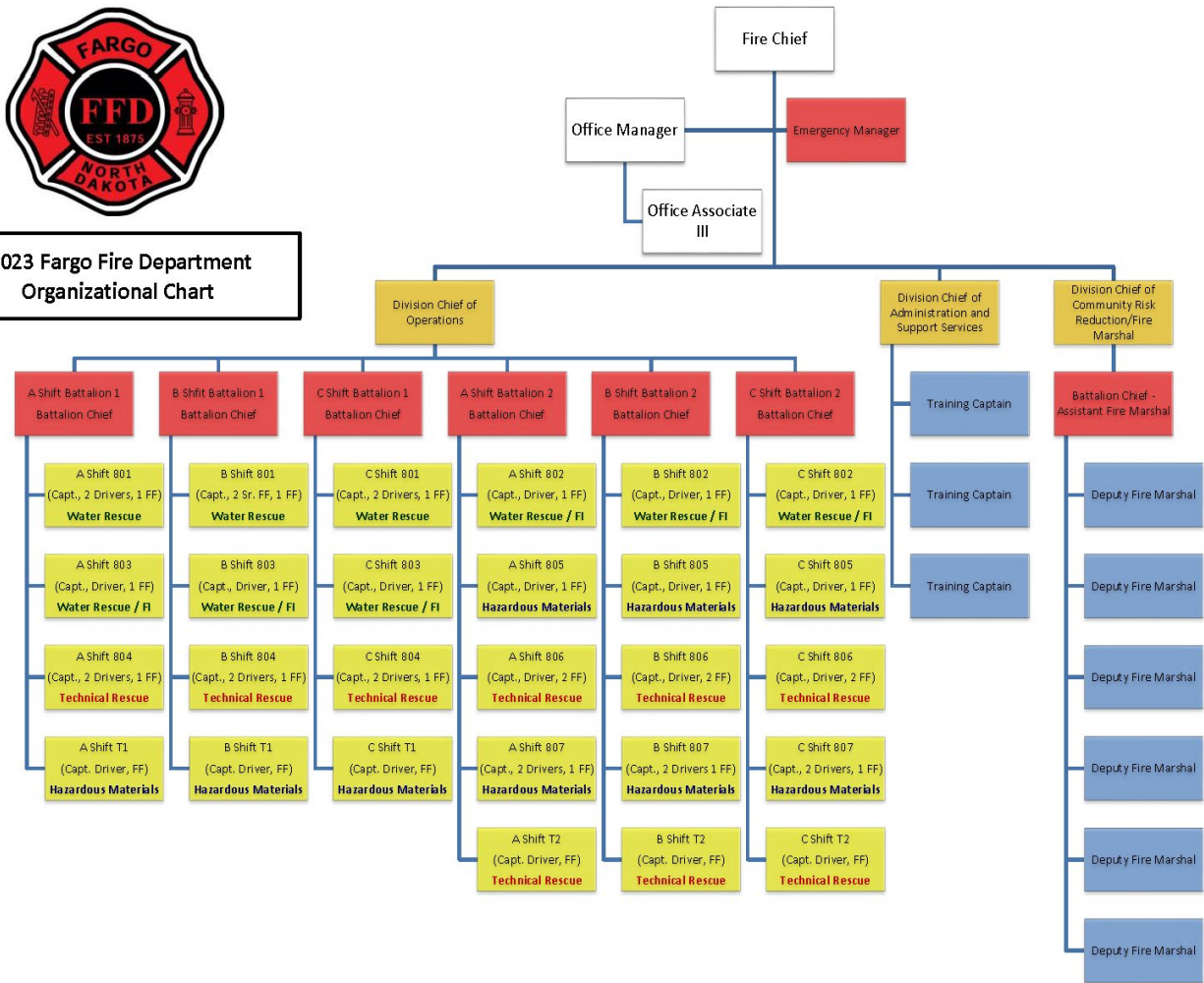
Today, the Fargo Fire Department protects the city's residents, businesses, and visitors from seven strategically deployed fire stations. In total, the FFD is comprised of 125 members who strive daily to fulfill their duties in a professional and courteous manner. Their commitment to their community through the provision of emergency and risk-reducing services is evident in all that they do. The FFD continues its endeavor to catch excellence for the good of all who live, work, and play in the City of Fargo.



# Organizational Chart



2023 Fargo Fire Department  
Organizational Chart



Agency Stakeholder Work Session Participants

# Mission

The mission provides an internal aspect of the existence of an organization and, to a degree, an empowering consideration for all FFD members. The purpose of the mission is to answer the questions:

- Who are we?
- Why do we exist?
- What do we do?
- Why do we do it?
- For whom?

A workgroup met to revisit their existing mission and after ensuring it answered the questions, the following existing mission statement was discussed and accepted by all:



**The Fargo Fire Department mission is to reduce the rate of emergencies through public education and code enforcement; protect lives and property from fire and other emergencies; and respond to emergencies in a professional and courteous manner.**

## Values

Values embraced by all members of an organization are extremely important, as they recognize the features that make up the personality and culture of the organization. A workgroup met to revisit the existing values agreed upon by the entire group.

The mission and values are the foundation of this agency. Thus, every effort will be made to keep these current and meaningful to guide the individuals who make up the Fargo Fire Department to accomplish their goals, objectives, and day-to-day tasks.

**The Fargo Fire Department  
values are  
Professionalism, Responsibility,  
Integrity, Dependability,  
and Empathy.**

**The vision of  
the Fargo Fire Department  
is utilizing a diverse workforce  
to be an industry leader in fire  
and life safety through  
collaboration and  
continuous improvement.**

## Vision

An organizational vision exists to keep all agency members focused on the successful future of the Fargo Fire Department and to guide quality change and improvement in alignment with the community. In support of the futurity created within the community-driven strategic planning process, the CPSE facilitated the development of the FFD's vision for the future. The agency will support the reality of this vision through successful plan implementation and goal achievement.

# Goals

Community feedback and the SOAR process led to the determination of strategic initiatives representing the high-level issues the agency stakeholders developed into goals. The FFD must now make these goals a focus of efforts that will direct the agency to its desired future. Goals with complete objectives, tasks, timelines, and assignments are included in a separate **Management and Implementation Guide**.



**Goal 1: Safeguard the community through proactive prevention, preparedness, and public education programs.**

Self Assessment  
Categories 2, 5,  
&10



**Goal 2: Ensure systems and processes are in place to minimize the impact on life and property from medicals, fires, disasters, and other emergencies.**

Self Assessment  
Categories 2, 3, 4,  
5, & 10



**Goal 3: Recruit, develop, and retain the highest quality team members and implement a comprehensive training program that provides for continuous education and career preparation opportunities to all personnel.**

Self Assessment  
Categories 2, 3, 7,  
8, & 11



**Goal 4: Maintain an organization that effectively administers, plans, and manages the physical resources of the department.**

Self Assessment  
Categories 2, 3, 6,  
& 10



**Goal 5: The fire department will work to be dynamic and continually adjust to meet the changing fire problems, new technologies, new laws and regulations, and changes occurring in the community.**

Self Assessment  
Categories 1, 2, 3,  
4, 5, 7, 8, 9, & 11

## Conclusion

Working with community and department members from all levels, this strategic plan was developed...but the work is truly just beginning. Agency stakeholders must now execute and institutionalize the plan to ensure the community's expectations and the Fargo Fire Department's vision remain congruent. The accompanying **Management and Implementation Guide** will assist the FFD in the mechanics of implementation. The guide is not intended to be all-inclusive; rather, it provides flexibility to ensure future success.

It must be remembered that during this journey of regeneration through change and improvement, recalculation may need to occur to find the success

"...we will chase perfection, and we will chase it relentlessly, knowing all the while we can never attain it. But along the way, we shall catch excellence."

Vince Lombardi

desired. This strategic plan is a roadmap to help the Fargo Fire Department navigate that change and the department's future. The ability to pivot to meet the current environment as institutionalization and implementation occur provides a greater likelihood that the desired outcomes and efficacies will be realized as envisioned.

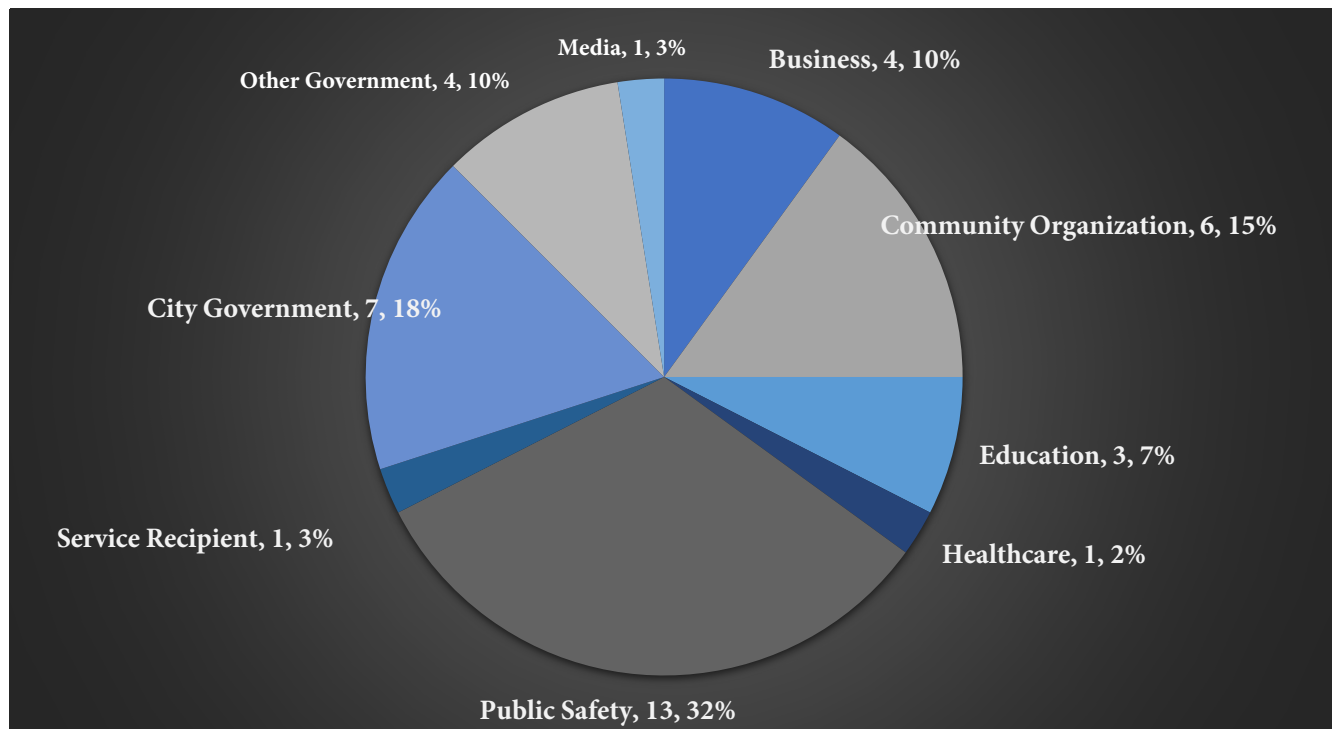


# Appendices

## A. Community Stakeholder Findings

The Fargo Fire Department demonstrates a commitment to its community via a focus on community input and satisfaction. A community stakeholder session was held to gather feedback from the respondents on the agency and its various services delivered. The information gathered from the community stakeholder feedback provided understanding to the agency stakeholders of any misalignment with its organizational foundation and performance or values-based expectations or concerns from which new improvement strategies and processes may be created.

**Community stakeholders** were identified by the agency to ensure broad representation. The breakdown of groups represented is presented here:



Respondents were asked to list, in priority order, up to three subjects relative to expectations, concerns, and strengths or positives for the FFD. Expectations and concerns were then analyzed for themes and weighted. The numbers in the parentheses are the cumulative weighted value that correlate with the themes identified. While the themes are listed in prioritized, weighted order, all responses were important in the planning process. Strengths or positives are listed verbatim and may be repeated based on different respondents. The specific data and findings from the community stakeholder respondents are provided to follow.

## Community Expectations of the Fargo Fire Department (in priority order)

1. Deliver a high level of public service. High level of service-what you do. Show up at the time of need-answer the call. That the department will show up when help is needed. Effective response. Quality delivery of services that are delivered consistently with a high level of standards. Effective response. Excellent response to calls for service. (63)
2. Timely response. Rapid response time. Quick fire response, fire suppression. To respond to all hazards in a timely and effective manner. Show up in an emergency within metric/time no matter where you are in Fargo. (59)
3. Maintain a high level of knowledge and training to serve the community. To be knowledgeable, professional, and well-trained using up-to-date technology. Well trained. Well-trained team. Safety training and equipment for firefighters. (41)
4. Maintain and represent the community professionally. Professionalism. Professional and respectful. Professional and empathetic with the public. (33)
5. Support education for fire safety. That the department will help us think through how to keep our people safe. Education efforts in schools, through media, social media. Public training opportunities in fire prevention, life safety, and first aid. Educate the public on fire safety, injury prevention, etc. Strong community education programs. CPR and first aid training. (22)
6. Effective communication and inspection between the FFD and our business. Fire prevention. Visibility in community fire prevention efforts. Prevent or reduce the impact of fires and medical situations. Code enforcement. Engage with the public with actions and programs that prevent fires. Available for questions and inspections. (22)
7. Fire suppression. Extinguish fires as quickly and effectively as possible. Fire suppression to lessen property loss. Minimize property damage with great fire responses. (18)
8. That the FFD would work to be collaborative with other departments, agencies, and citizens. Collaborate with community partners to address other quality-of-life issues. That the FFD and police/sheriff are always on the same team. Proactive relationship building to set clear expectations before a problem exists. Collaboration with community stakeholders (schools, businesses). (13)
9. That FFD would strive to be a reflection of our community, so can see themselves in the work and people of FFD. Hire diverse applicants, reflecting the community. Representative of our diverse community. (10)
10. Emergency medical services. Treat injuries and rescue living beings. Lifesaving services (EMS) that are timely and appropriate. (9)
11. Provide public outreach or community involvement to reduce hazards overall. Continue public relations-related activities. Strong visibility in community. (9)
12. Visioning for the future, trends, and change. Commitment to continuous improvement. Preparedness. (5)
13. They will charge me my fair share for the service for me and all our residents. Maintain resources (human and physical) to be able to respond to calls for service. Stewardship. (5)
14. Courtesy. Treat everyone with respect/compassion. Empathy. (5)
15. Capable, honest reports/testimony. Open clear communication (4)
16. When they arrive, they have the personnel, equipment, and water to put it out. Maintain adequate staffing levels as the city continues to experience rapid growth. (4)
17. To be prepared to respond quickly and effectively to active shooter or other terrorist events. Emergency management. (4)

18. Fire investigation. (3)
19. Continue to be topic leaders. Leaders in the community. (2)
20. Safety/risk mitigation. (1)
21. Hazardous materials response. (1)
22. Stations continue to have the best equipment/training. (1)

### **Areas of Community Concern about the Fargo Fire Department** (verbatim, in priority order)

1. Being able to maintain growth along with city growth. City growth - timely response/service. As Fargo continues to grow, ensuring keeping up with staffing in order to minimize burnout and ensure proper coverage. The department grows proportionally with our community. Growth that would lead to a lower level of service. Run times to calls with a growing city. Growth of the department to meet the growing needs of the city. Locations and number of fire stations for our expanding community. Service area growth. (56)
2. Being able to hire and maintain employees. Recruitment and retention of FFD staff. That is to continue to recruit and train qualified applicants. Being able to recruit enough firefighters to staff a growing community. Ability to recruit and retain a quality workforce. few applicants. Are we able to hire and retain skilled team members? What do we need to do to be more competitive? (44)
3. Being able to maintain a high level of response capabilities based on budget restrictions. Static delivery model - suppression. Best utilization of staff when in “on call” response mode. Locations of fire stations affecting response times. EMS response with an engine versus a squad or SUV. Response times. (29)
4. In a day when staff is such an issue, a concern I have is whether enough new people are joining the force. Staffing levels have been difficult to maintain in many industries. Does staffing allow timely response to emergencies? Staffing. (25)
5. Our ability to fulfill the long-term pension commitment to public servants based on current pension method (defined benefit versus defined contribution). Budget has become an issue of late due to the rising costs of wages, equipment, and supplies. Funding for training and facilities. Demonstrate fiscal responsibility through long-term planning. Ensure continued funding to operate at the highest level. Flexible budget to grow and strengthen the department. Funding. (22)
6. Lack of large-scale training facility for region/local fire academy. Being trained to work around electrical equipment including inside electrical substations. Knowledgeable/experienced. I would like to see more inter-department training with the police. Training with other agencies/departments. (21)
7. Health and safety of firefighters during emergencies as well as decontamination efforts to prevent problems later, also mental health of firefighters who have seen difficult times. Safety for all involved in response. Firefighter safety. Health (mental) of firefighters, need to keep them healthy for response. (16)
8. Future tasks-mission creep/expansion of non-traditional areas/service. Preparing for aging population/demographics. Economic planning for the future coverage needs of Fargo. Proactive vs. reactive. Explore new technologies for emergency response, i.e., different vehicles, etc. (15)
9. Lack of diversity. Few women firefighters. Diverse recruitment. (13)
10. Communication between our fire alarm system (Johnson Controls) and FFD. Engagement with our growing diverse populations with education initiatives and communicating in various languages and methods. (10)
11. Resourcing the emergency management service in the same way as the other nine services have been. Emergency management should not be under fire department or any other department - too self-serving. (10)

12. We have a lot of hazards in our business, i.e., electrical, combustibles, and housekeeping, that we could use training and inspection in an enforcement setting. Evolving emergency management for the betterment of the community. (7)
13. Structuring emergency management to directly connect, influence, and support city departments. Maintaining working relationships with local/regional partners. How the FFD works/interacts with the other Greater Metro FDs. Ability to mesh with mutual aid partners. (6)
14. Medical response coordination with ambulances. (3)
15. I am worried about if/when/who someone decides to pull the meter on a fire site or when we get contacted to do so. (3)
16. Volume of mental health-related issues in the community along with the rise of violent crime. (3)
17. Department communication. (3)
18. Members are kind/sensitive. (3)
19. That they expand their annual inspection program to include single-family rentals. (1)
20. Public policy and department needs not aligning. (1)
21. Members know that the community appreciates them. (1)

## **Positive Community Comments about the Fargo Fire Department** (verbatim, in no order)

- Great collaboration with other agencies.
- Always looking for ways to get better.
- Willing to help whenever and however they can.
- Workforce quality.
- Equipment and capital.
- Facility planning.
- Approachable – very willing to support/educate the community.
- We are inspected annually and have never once had an inspector be anything but helpful. We've certainly had to change some things, but even those instances have been done in an encouraging manner.
- They are a great partner in caring for our guests and staff in areas that don't have to do with fire safety.
- Inspections are good and thorough.
- Communications are good.
- The process of improvement and growth of the fire department has been impressive.
- The operation of the fire department can be used as a model of efficiency for other city department operations.
- Consistency.
- Multi-year engagement on strategic planning – I wish more of the city would engage in a process like this.
- Hail to the chief for leading a department that has delivered a positive rapport with the community.
- As a community member, I know of no negative comments regarding the fire department.
- Community outreach in our schools has always been welcome and needed. Who doesn't want to be a firefighter?
- Overall capabilities are impressive.
- Increased level of training with other agencies not of the fire discipline.
- Community engagement – social media, job fairs, fundraisers, school events, community picnics, golf tournaments.

- Communicating with media during emergencies and non-emergencies for education.
- Great people.
- In my experience, the response of our fire department has always been prompt, professional, and thorough.
- Our fire department does a great job keeping up with inspections and making sure businesses are safe.
- Friendly and empathic.
- Cooperative.
- Dedicated.
- High level of professionalism.
- Community trust.
- Focus on the future as well as the present.
- Community engagement.
- Great leadership.
- Very transparent.
- Easy to work with.
- Forward-looking – manage city growth.
- History of response and service.
- Community-driven, involved with events.
- Stable workforce.
- It is my understanding that the FFD is positioned geographically to provide faster response times than peer jurisdictions. Wonderful!
- Department is very visible in the community. Very engaged at community events.
- The overall consensus is the FFD has done a fabulous job at being and operating like a well-oiled machine. If it is broken, no one can tell from the outside.
- Visible within the community.
- Outreach to youth.
- Current leadership is strong.
- Community involvement and outside city stakeholder input.
- Expertise.
- Relationship-oriented.
- Easy to communicate with.
- Friendly.
- Approachable at all levels of the organization.
- Community-oriented.
- Responsive to the needs of local partners.
- Regional leaders.
- Level of service.
- Instilled high standards.
- Fargo Fire well-trained and professional.

# FARGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

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- I feel FFD is a high-caliber team striving for improvement to meet community needs.
- Strong leadership.
- Well-equipped.
- Easy to work with.
- A great mutual-aid partner/willing to work with others.
- Training of new firefighters and the program is very good.
- Continued passion of CPSE and to improve constantly.
- Leadership team.
- Community involvement.
- Commitment to the community of not just Fargo, but the region.
- Strong working relationships with other first responders – ambulance and police.
- Continued community outreach – schools and Night to Unite demonstrations.
- Occupancy inspections keep us safe!
- Quick response times.
- Positive attitudes.
- Ability to work well with others.
- Professionalism.
- Reliability.
- Community commitment/involvement.
- They have always been easy to work with and willing to help out.
- I've had no direct contact with FFD. Responding truck to medical emergencies has been good.
- ISO certification.
- Passion for Fargo and its citizens.
- Unity among teams/culture.
- Strong leadership.
- Community visibility.
- Team player.
- Well-equipped with the latest fire gear and equipment.
- Professional department and the value they put on it.
- Very high reputation in the state of being a great fire department.
- Professional staff.
- Timely response.
- Very well received at community events – positive public perception.

### Other Community Comments about the Fargo Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)

- A forward-thinking department with resources. What are the next challenges/trends for longer career departments to study? Plan for? What is on the horizon zone?
- Would love to see education grow on things you do outside fire prevention and firefighting – there is so much more! Examples – AED training, assist if fall and can't get up, etc.
- Training sessions put on by FFD and our employees, i.e., fire safety and waste disposal, would be beneficial.
- Although anonymous, this input sheet will be obvious as to its source.
- Public awareness – FFD is more than simply fire services.
- How might the public better understand and appreciate all that FFD does?
- I think the department has met and exceeded my expectations.
- The amount of wood-framed construction introduced into the downtown business district is a huge concern. Should have tried to keep all new construction downtown as non-combustible.
- Accreditation is an important process and only lends itself towards an agency's professionalism. Commendable!
- I think there are opportunities to showcase all the fire department does beyond fighting fires. I would like to see more collaboration with stories highlighting staff (heroes), what it takes to become a firefighter, safety for families (carbon monoxide, turkey fryers, etc.), behind the curtain of the department.
- A few years back, Fargo Emergency Management offered a CERT training program. Would love to see that revived.
- Community outreach and engagement can help the community and FFD manage expectations and craft service delivery, recruitment, and retention goals.
- FFD is in a great position of community and organizational trust; a standard that has been maintained and continues to thrive.
- Appreciate being a part of the process.
- FFD is like a brace of support for a bridge. Though it doesn't always get the attention it deserves, people notice it and couldn't imagine not having it.
- My understanding is that we have a solid relationship between our organizations. It has not always been this way. Great improvement over the past five years.
- It has been fun getting to know FFD personnel over the years.
- The Fargo Fire Department is an organization that is held in high regard. They have earned it through community involvement and the professional way they conduct themselves.
- Thanks for all that you do for our communities.
- Yesterday's fatal accident on 94 reminded me of the amount of secondary trauma that our first responders experience. I hope they all get the support they need and deserve.
- Firefighting is something I respect and never wanted to do. So, thank you for your good service.
- Fargo has one of the best fire departments in the country.

## Things the Community Feels the Fargo Fire Department Should Change

(verbatim, in priority order)

1. Increased diversity - racial, gender. Increase diversity in staffing. Increase diversity, including women. (3)
2. Possibly doing more training with other departments. Could do more community training and outreach. (2)
3. Look for expanded response opportunities. How to become a force multiplier for surrounding fire departments - Harwood, Horace. (2)
4. More communication on great work being done. Continue to educate the community about the vast number of things you do outside of fighting fires. (2)
5. Add a CRR-Health Alliance Program. (1)
6. Look for opportunities for flexibility. (1)
7. Larger role in fire investigation. (1)
8. Hiring strategies. (1)
9. Enforce city/state/federal codes to prevent responses. (1)
10. Improve ties to the community. (1)
11. More competitive pay. (1)
12. The name of the department. (1)
13. Emergency management. (1)
14. Is there a better medical response model? (1)

## Things the Community Feels the Fargo Fire Department Should NOT Change

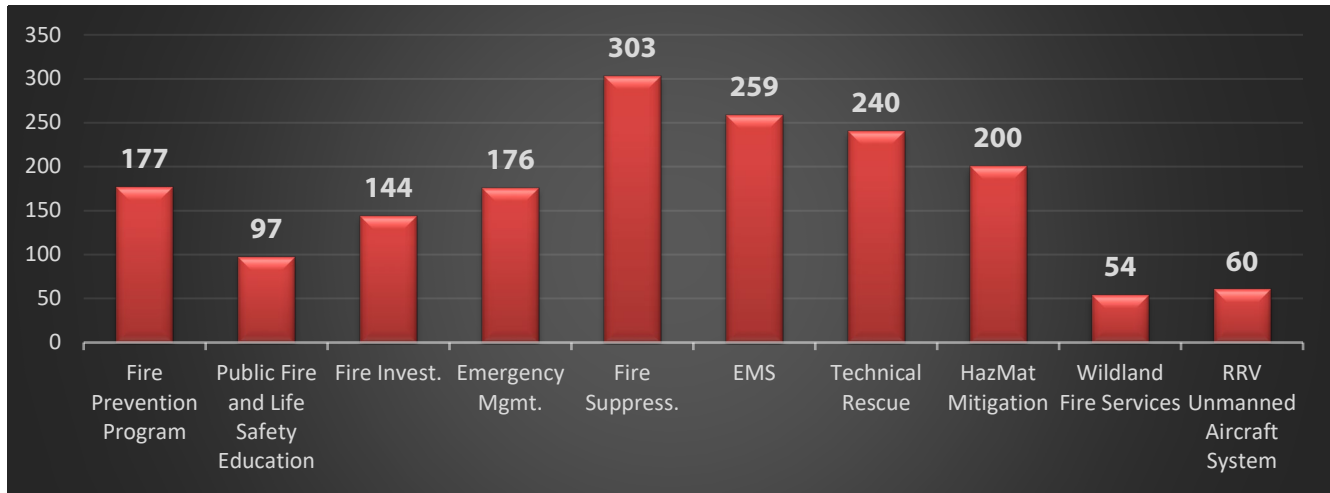
(verbatim, in priority order)

1. Quality of services provided. The excellent level of service. HazMat education for area emergency services. Focus on performance. Dedication to mission. Quality of response and service. Building on past high-quality service. (7)
2. Continue public relations and events. Community/non-profit engagement. Seeking outside opinions where relevant. Strong community engagement. Community engagement. Continued visibility in the community. Department collaboration. (7)
3. Emergency response in a timely manner. Achieving response time targets. Its rapid response when a request for help goes out. (3)
4. The commitment to accreditation. The process and approach for accreditation should not change. Commitment to the community and continuous improvement. (3)
5. Training - do not reduce. Professional standards. (2)
6. Collaboration with ambulance and police. (1)
7. Leadership team. (1)
8. Credentialing process (CPSE). (1)
9. Professionalism. (1)
10. Availability to the public. (1)
11. Outreach and visibility to youth in the community. (1)
12. Pride/culture. (1)
13. High standards. (1)

14. Dedication to protecting our community. (1)
15. Its consistency and positive community brand. (1)

### Community-Prioritized Programs

Understanding how the community prioritizes the agency's programs and services allows the Fargo Fire Department to ensure its focus on resource allocation aligns. With that, feedback was garnered with an instrument that compared the programs and services offered by the FFD to determine prioritization. The results were as follows:



## B. Agency Stakeholder Work

A group of agency stakeholders representing the various segments of the FFD attended a three-day work session to review the community feedback, develop or revise the agency's mission and values, and establish a quality focus on the way forward in developing this community-driven strategic plan. Additionally, the process included an environmental scan in the form of a strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results (SOAR) analysis to better understand the current situational aspects impacting the agency.

### SOAR

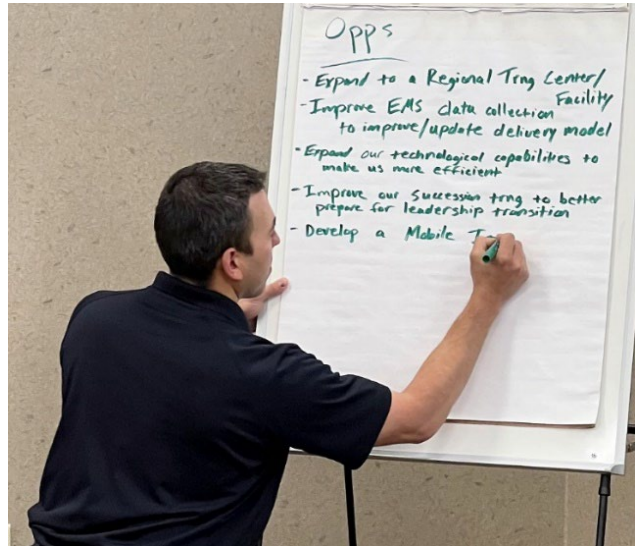
The agency's internal stakeholders utilized a strategic environmental analytic method known as SOAR: where members consider the organization's current strengths, opportunities, future aspirations, and strategic results to formulate a path for continuous improvement. The SOAR process was conducted for reflection, focus, and alignment with the organization's set of values, its vision, and its mission. This appreciative inquiry process provided environmental scanning for strategic direction, associated plans through the application of innovative ideas, and a positive strategic framework that brings clarity to the agency's vision for leadership in day-to-day functions.

### Strengths

Great culture allows open and honest feedback from top to bottom	Variety of KSAs and ability to draw on them department-wide
FFD values drive how we operate	Everyone shows a commitment to improve
Individual growth-minded environment for greater personal success	Commitment to employee health and wellness – mental/physical
We are not afraid of failures – we learn from our mistakes	Modern, up-to-date equipment through the organization
Our community image is highly regarded	High functioning – well trained
The ability to adapt to industry best practices through accreditation	Fire prevention and code enforcement programs are integrated top to bottom
We have data to back up the decisions	Leadership's willingness to work with the union
Identifying and addressing weaknesses	Personnel support our values
Community involvement on/off duty	Public spirit – citizens of Fargo value the community
Encouraged and given the tools to succeed in your position	Holding everyone to a high standard to keep us accountable
Age of department and call volume leads to high levels of experience and competency	Willingness to collaborate – regional teams, joint training with other agencies, work with other city departments

## Opportunities

Build a process that includes triggers for the department to mirror growth	
Improve the current two-system process that is used for calls with the ambulance company for dispatching	
Growth = reason to address needs	
Request for fully staffed/highly trained staff	
Improve response model	
Opportunity to address training facility needs	
Regionalization of fire department/collaboration with other services	
Data analysis to triage risk for the development of programs reducing risk in the community	
Expanded training facility	
Expand our focus on employee retention	Reducing cost of turnover/retain experience – investment
Establishment of a formal mentoring program to improve retention efforts	Provide quality essential services while reducing “mission drift” – busy work
Annual climate survey process – use the results	Develop a mobile integrated health program
Data-driven response model improvement through analytics	Improve our succession training to better prepare for leadership transition
Marketing the department to educate the public	Expand to a regional training center/facility
Improve EMS data collection to improve/update the delivery model	Expand our technological capabilities to make us more efficient
Collaborate with the communications team and DEI to improve recruitment efforts	Collaborate with NDSCS to provide a fire service degree – training academy



## Aspirations

Stronger image in the community of capabilities	Expand the reach of the regional-leading training
To be the fire department that people want to work for – leave other departments to come here	A recruitment program that sees an increased number of qualified applicants
Determine and integrate the FFD role in mobile-integrated health service delivery	Increase staffing to improve our ERF providing for safety and flexibility
The department that leads a consolidation effort for an emergency service department in the region	Fully staffed trucks all of the time, especially during planned classes and activities
To have a department with CRR programs centered around the installation of sprinkler systems to improve safety in vulnerable occupancies	Continue to improve our mental and physical programs to support the longevity of our workforce
All members of the community recognize we are there to serve them	Maintain a culture of inclusion that helps us all succeed
	To be a fire service leader by using analytics and current technologies
Have a workforce more representative of the community	Continue to be a beacon of involvement in our community

## Results

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AARs lead to improved responses via open/honest feedback</li> <li>- Accreditation renewal proves the department's commitment to ongoing improvement</li> <li>- Lack of complaints and an increase in complements indicates that members exemplify the department's values</li> <li>- Health and wellness programs exist</li> <li>- New employees are comfortable asking questions or providing feedback.</li> <li>- Improved relationships and better service to the regional community</li> <li>- We are one of the only departments to complete an annual review of all employees</li> <li>- Measure it with a completed survey. This will validate a healthy, happy, inclusive workplace</li> <li>- Producing a regional facility that meets the needs of the region – increase in KSAs and regional collaboration</li> <li>- Less turnover</li> <li>- Likes/shares/views/subscriptions</li> <li>- Using analytics to increase unit reliability/availability</li> <li>- Other departments look to us for advice/best practices</li> <li>- Measured by better retention</li> <li>- Measured the culture during a culture survey</li> <li>- An increase in involvement with external stakeholders – committees/meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase in staffing ratio</li> <li>- Regional training building built and staffed</li> <li>- Decrease in turnover</li> <li>- Decrease in unnecessary runs/increase in tasks on scene</li> <li>- Regional service department</li> <li>- Eliminate gaps in coverage, providing the reliability citizens expect from the department</li> <li>- Increase in NFPA 13D sprinkler systems</li> <li>- Decrease turnover and increase quality of applicants</li> <li>- Reduction in extended work absences by treating injuries earlier</li> <li>- Maintaining a positive image</li> <li>- Change in behavior and skills</li> <li>- Loss of well-trained employees to other departments</li> <li>- Reliable and trustworthy department as seen through the eyes of the community</li> <li>- Less fire loss and time on scene</li> <li>- More highly trained workforce through identifying weaknesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our ERF numbers closer to our benchmarks</li> <li>- A mobile integrated health program is established</li> <li>- Retention rates increase – non-retirement</li> <li>- Increased number of qualified applicants</li> <li>- Addition of a regional training center</li> <li>- Increased number of certified FFI and II in the region – including training hours</li> <li>- Equal participation in committees</li> <li>- Crease injuries and FMLA use for injuries</li> <li>- Higher level of understanding from the community during the next stakeholder meeting</li> <li>- Successfully passed credentials</li> <li>- Calls for service completed successfully without injury and with expected results</li> <li>- Getting budget approvals to match needs</li> <li>- COOP</li> <li>- Bottom-up policy development</li> <li>- Completion of annual inspections and plan reviews</li> <li>- An extensive training academy that we continually look to improve on</li> <li>- Automated reporting</li> <li>- Increase in the diversity of applicant pool</li> <li>- Increase in employees getting associate degrees after competing recruit class</li> <li>- Improved response times as a result of predictive analytics</li> <li>- Mobile integrated health</li> <li>- Decreased maintenance</li> <li>- Increase in emergency call volume</li> <li>- Increased reliability</li> <li>- More professionally driven media content</li> </ul>

## Programs and Services

It is imperative that agency stakeholders distinguish between the core deliverables (programs and services) provided by the Fargo Fire Department and those supporting services that help the agency provide the core programs and services. With this understanding, the agency stakeholders can further define where the issues and gaps exist within the organization and provide more basis for the environmental scan that is conducted. To bring this understanding to fruition, the CPSE provided guidance and gained consensus understanding with the entire group so that the difference between the deliverables and the supporting functions were understood.

## Challenges and Service Gaps

After sifting through data and feedback provided by the community stakeholders, and the internal environmental scan conducted, the agency stakeholders, by consensus and group effort, determined that the following challenges and service gaps exist within the Fargo Fire Department. Each challenge or gap listed is accompanied by the causal effects determined by the two groups. They are then linked to the strategic initiative identified by the agency stakeholders.

Group 1	Group 2	Initiative Link
<b>Facilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintenance</li> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Placement</li> <li>○ Training facility</li> <li>○ Public perception</li> <li>○ Ergonomics – station design/layout</li> </ul> <b>Equipment/Apparatus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Training</li> <li>○ Maintenance</li> <li>○ Research</li> <li>○ Technology</li> <li>○ Time to acquisition</li> <li>○ Reserve apparatus</li> <li>○ Vehicles</li> <li>○ Apparatus</li> <li>○ Ancillary equipment – boats, tool cat, trailers</li> <li>○ Supplies/logistics</li> </ul>	<b>Training Facilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Utilization</li> <li>○ Expanding mission services</li> <li>○ Location/space</li> <li>○ Staffing</li> </ul> <b>Stations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Geographical growth</li> <li>○ Cultural changes</li> <li>○ Station design for firefighter health</li> </ul>	<b>Physical Resources</b>

<p>Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Public expectations</li> <li>○ Mission creep</li> <li>○ Collaboration</li> <li>○ Regionalization</li> <li>○ Types offered</li> <li>○ Staffing</li> <li>○ Service model</li> <li>○ Cost/benefit</li> <li>○ Abuse</li> </ul> <p>Program Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Specialty teams</li> <li>○ Mission creep – do the programs follow our mission/values?</li> <li>○ Consolidated redundancies</li> </ul> <p>Call Volume</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staffing</li> <li>○ EMS calls</li> <li>○ Prevention</li> <li>○ Unit reliability</li> <li>○ Burnout</li> <li>○ Frequent fliers</li> <li>○ Triage structure/dispatching</li> <li>○ Other agencies</li> <li>○ Community risk reduction</li> <li>○ Mission creep</li> </ul>	<p>Expanding Demand for Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cultural changes</li> <li>○ Needs of the community</li> <li>○ Limited community services</li> <li>○ Data/analytics</li> <li>○ Funding</li> </ul> <p>Reliability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Non-emergent calls</li> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Staffing</li> <li>○ Not trained for expanding services</li> <li>○ Non-response-related activities/tasks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Expansion of Services</b></p>
<p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Money</li> <li>○ Growth</li> <li>○ Commission</li> <li>○ Workload</li> <li>○ Burnout</li> <li>○ Job roles/responsibilities</li> <li>○ Public education</li> </ul> <p>Program Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staffing to manage</li> <li>○ Over-extending staff</li> <li>○ How do we provide/staff for the current programs?</li> <li>○ Training</li> <li>○ Certification</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>	<p><b>Staffing</b></p>

<b>Staffing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recruitment/retention</li> </ul>	<b>Recruitment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Growth – geographic, population, call volume</li> <li>○ Turnover</li> <li>○ Resources</li> <li>○ Competition</li> <li>○ Expanding services</li> <li>○ Schedule flexibility</li> </ul> <b>Retention</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Health/wellness</li> <li>○ Call volume</li> <li>○ Pay and benefits</li> <li>○ Competition</li> <li>○ Expanding services</li> </ul>	<b><i>Recruitment and Retention</i></b>
<b>Technology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Staffing</li> <li>○ Research</li> <li>○ Training</li> <li>○ Implementation</li> <li>○ Data software</li> <li>○ Efficiencies</li> <li>○ Correct type</li> <li>○ Over-reliance</li> <li>○ Future</li> <li>○ AI</li> <li>○ Security</li> <li>○ Safety</li> <li>○ Redundancy</li> </ul>	N/A	<b><i>Technology</i></b>
<b>Communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Marketing ourselves – social media</li> <li>○ Separate communication person</li> <li>○ Type of messages</li> <li>○ Recruitment</li> </ul>	<b>Image/Branding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staffing</li> <li>○ Social media</li> <li>○ Cultural representation</li> <li>○ Expanding services</li> <li>○ Public education demands</li> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Lack of collaboration with the communications team</li> <li>○ Humility in the fire service</li> </ul>	<b><i>External Communications</i></b>

## Strategic Initiatives

Based on all previously captured information and determining critical issues and service gaps, the following strategic initiatives were identified as the foundation for developing goals and objectives.

**Physical Resources**

**Expansion of Services**

**Staffing**

**Recruitment and Retention**

**Technology**

**External Communications**



## **2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN**