



Ann Arbor Fire Department Strategic Plan

DRAFT

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Introduction

The Fire Department of the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan (the Department) engaged The Azimuth Group, Inc. (AGI) to support the Fire Chief and his command team in the development of a Fire Department Strategic Plan. The strategic planning initiative was one of the Chief's first priorities, in connection with the goal of achieving national accreditation, upon his assumption of office. The planning effort was designed to support the City of Ann Arbor's organizational strategic planning program and resulted in the development of a broad consensus around several key strategic priorities to guide the efforts of both Fire leaders and line personnel over the next several years. These elements included:

- Development of a working draft of a Fire Department specific mission statement consistent with the overall mission of the City of Ann Arbor.
- Scan of the operating environment to achieve a common understanding of the context within which the Fire Department must deliver vital service and achieve results.
- Completion of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.
- Identification and prioritization of eight strategic priorities for the Department, around which future operating initiatives and performance measures can be developed.
- Completion of the planning process in an inclusive manner, involving not only Fire Department leadership but also broad representation of the Department's rank-and-file employees and representatives of the Ann Arbor community at large.

Throughout the strategic planning process, senior and mid-level Fire leaders openly discussed the strategic challenges facing the Ann Arbor community and its Fire Department while concentrating on the need to make the Department's strategic plan simple, understandable and meaningful to members of the Department's staff at all levels, City of Ann Arbor administrators and policy makers and to the general public.

The various planning workshops and focus groups, therefore, helped to produce a unifying frame of reference to guide daily policy and operating decisions of the Ann Arbor Fire Department (AAFD) going forward. This report further explains and documents the results of the strategic planning program.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Prior to the appointment of the current Fire Chief, the AAFD had been organized as a component part of a larger Public Safety Department, commanded by the Chief of Police. In 2015, this organizational structure was changed to a more traditional separation of Police and Fire Departments and a new Fire Chief was selected following a national competitive search. After an initial assessment of the Fire Department, the new Chief recognized an opportunity to pursue national accreditation for the Department through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) and its Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI).

As described on the CPSE website, Fire Department accreditation is based on a rigorous self-assessment process that requires the agency seeking it to "examine past, current, and future service levels and internal performance and compare them to industry best practices." The process is designed to improve public safety service delivery by:



- Determining community risk and safety needs and developing community-specific service standards
- Evaluation of the performance of the department against those standards.
- Establishment of a continuous organizational improvement focus.
- Instituting professionalism and data driven decision-making.
- Correction of small issues to make a big difference

The CFAI accreditation process provides a well-defined, internationally-recognized benchmark system to measure the quality of fire and emergency services.

One of the many important accreditation standards includes the development of a strategic plan for the Fire Department. This Fire Department Strategic Plan serves as an important enabling document, establishing a strategic foundation for improvement, clearly articulating a progressive future direction and driving the achievement of desired community outcomes.

Strategic planning is a product of strategic thinking, which should occur not only in periodic planning programs such as this one, but on a continuous basis. Strategic thinking and planning should occur at the highest levels of the organization, but should not stop there. It must cascade to lower levels of the organization and should directly drive decision making. Strategic planning involves the gathering, sorting and prioritizing of the best thinking of the Department's leadership, focused on the core purposes of the organization and the most important attributes of success.

The Ann Arbor Fire Department's strategic planning process focused primarily on **What** the Department needs to achieve in order to accomplish its overall mission rather than the day to day **Hows** of AAFD operations. Good strategic planning addresses the issues and opportunities that the organization faces today and, more importantly, those that may challenge it tomorrow. As such, the strategic planning process was designed as an exercise in collective foresight, as the participants worked together to clarify what success looks like for the Department in light of expected future conditions and the direction the leadership wants to take the organization moving forward.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

A structured process was designed and applied to the development of the Ann Arbor Fire Department Strategic Plan. That process included:

- Initial planning interviews with the Fire Chief and Assistant Chief to confirm the planning objectives, process and expected results.
- Initial interviews with members of the senior Fire Department management and leadership staff to identify strategic challenges and opportunities.
- A group meeting with representatives of the Firefighters union to seek their perspective on the current state and desired future direction of the Department.
- Completion of an Environmental Scan / Context Mapping exercise and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis with a representative cross-section of the Fire Department staff.
- Support of the Fire Chief's facilitation of focus groups with invited representatives of the Ann Arbor community.



- Facilitation of a full-day strategic planning workshop with the Department’s leadership team, including the development and prioritization of a set of strategic priorities and objectives for the Department’s future.
- Presentation of the results of the strategic planning workshop to representative members of the Department staff and to the participants in the community focus groups, including separate priority ranking activities with each.
- Development of the draft Ann Arbor Fire Department Strategic Plan for further refinement and development by the Department’s leadership and staff.

The key aspects of this planning process are described in more detail in the following sections of the report. The Azimuth Group appreciates the active participation of all of the participants in the various interviews, focus groups and workshops and thanks them for their candid and sometimes pointed contribution to the overall effort.

INITIAL COMMAND STAFF INPUT

The project consultant initiated the planning process with interviews with the Fire Chief, two Assistant Chiefs, a group interview with Battalion Chiefs and additional interviews with the Fire Marshall, Master Mechanic and Training Officer.

With respect to the strategic challenges currently facing the Fire Department, these senior leaders report that among the most significant issues include

- Need to stabilize staffing levels in fire operations.
- Need for an additional company assigned to Station 1.
- Reconsideration of the “two tiered” model of compensation is now in place. Newer hires have a different benefit structure than more tenured members of the department.
- The department is not hiring at a fast enough rate to keep up with current and expected turnover.
- Lingering uncertainty – will City Administration and City Council follow the new Chief’s direction? Who will run the department – the Fire Chief or the City Administrator?
- Need for true succession planning and effective recruitment.
- Need to move from seniority-based advancement to merit-based advancement.
- Need a serious employee evaluation system.
- Much improved labor / management relations than a year ago.
- The AAFD has high quality personnel.
- The Department is the best single family structure fire response department because of good, aggressive fire attack companies.
- Critical needs of the Department include:
 - A strong, multi-year strategic plan for the Fire Department.
 - More discipline within the Department.



- Reduction in the conflict and chaos.
- Need to straighten out many of the “small things” that are chronic irritants to people.
- Mend the relationship between Fire Department leadership / administration and the line operations personnel.
- Development and implementation of a robust, structured mentoring program.
- Improved incident management system.
- Modernized, improved, updated information technology, including a full-time IT resource dedicated to the Fire Department.
- Need a risk assessment on all fire stations.
- Clarity of administrative / command team roles and responsibilities.
- Aging apparatus: there are five active engines and 1 spare, 1 active tower and one spare. Need another spare engine.
- Upgrade / improve station condition.
- Fire Prevention should be co-located with the rest of the Department.

INITIAL UNION LEADERSHIP INPUT

The strategic planning consultant also held an introductory and initial data gathering meeting with available members of the Firefighters union leadership. The results of that initial meeting are summarized as follows:

- There are a number of “small problems” that need to be addressed:
 - Telestaff scheduling and time keeping system has a number of functionality issues:
 - Not performing to specifications.
 - Business rules are not accurate.
 - Manual payroll entry.
 - The disciplinary system was, historically, unevenly applied (people still don’t trust it)
 - Based on who you know.
 - Uneven, unfair discipline.
 - Favoritism.
 - Chain of command concerns:
 - More emphasis required on respecting the chain of command – don’t allow the chain of command to be ignored or circumvented.
 - New chief is working on building the department’s leadership skills.
 - Communication within the department needs improvement.
- People are the Department’s greatest assets.
- Prior reductions to Firefighter headcounts need to be reversed.
- Additional apparatus needs to be added (Station 1).
- The current fire dispatch system needs improvement:



- Years ago there was dedicated Ann Arbor Fire Department Dispatch. Now the service is contracted to Huron Valley Ambulance.
- Important call information is sometimes lost between the various call transfers within the dispatch process.
- Advanced Life Support engines should be considered.
- Fire apparatus is old and equipment reserves are inadequate.
- City Administration is “trying hard” to work with the union.

It is important to note that the above listing of issues and concerns expressed by both management personnel and union leaders were expressions of opinion only, based on the individual perceptions, perspectives and opinions of the individual participants. However, taken together, the diverse and varied input received was helpful to the planning consultant in design of the workshop and to define its desired outcomes.



THE PLANNING CONTEXT

Effective strategic planning cannot occur in a vacuum. Rather, it must be based on a clear understanding of both the internal and external environments within which it will be carried out.

CONTEXT MAP/ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Multiple small group workshops were conducted with members of the Fire Department at all levels and across all shifts. Participants worked together to complete a collaborative environmental scan in order to complete a graphical “context map” illustrating important trends and factors that should inform the Departmental leadership’s long range thinking about the needs of the Fire Service generally and the Ann Arbor Fire Department specifically.

The listing below is a synthesis of the common themes identified across multiple groups:

- Societal Trends
 - Growing civil unrest
 - Rising terrorism threat
 - Movement towards “right to work” (in the public sector)
 - Changing retirement / pension plan models
 - Two-tiered pay structure (for AAFD)
 - Declining trust in government
 - Increasing political polarization
 - Increasing social diversity
 - Rising drug abuse
 - Privatization of public services
- Community Trends
 - Density of development, high-rise buildings creating “vertical sprawl”
 - Traffic congestion
 - Hostile media
 - University of Michigan growth: students, facilities, land
 - Lack of public understanding and support (of the Fire Department)
 - Growing transient, homeless population
 - Employment growth
 - Shrinking Fire Department
 - Declining sense of personal responsibility
 - Uncertain city budget priorities



- Shrinking representation of females and minorities.
- Political Factors
 - Emphasis on smaller government, doing more with less
 - City Council is more focused on costs than service levels
 - Council service priorities are unclear
 - Clout of Huron Valley Ambulance (makes changes to the dispatch model difficult)
 - Rapid local election cycle leads to potential political instability.
- Economic Climate
 - Strong, growing, diverse local economy
 - Economic division / disparity between the rich and poor
 - University is growing and absorbing taxable property
 - City finances are strong but not shared with the AAFD
 - Unwise / frivolous municipal spending is undercutting core services.
- Citizen Needs
 - Faster response times
 - Quality / competent fire personnel
 - Good equipment
 - “Nothing until they really need us”
 - Public resentment of pay and benefits
 - Fire service is not a priority in Ann Arbor
 - Need for public education / outreach
 - Need for a more diverse workforce in the Fire Department
- Technology Factors
 - No technology growth for the Ann Arbor Fire Department
 - Poor technology support
 - Paper-based record keeping
 - Poor, “useless” telephone system
 - Increasing technical complexity of apparatus
 - Outdated dispatch and radio systems
 - Unreliable onboard technology
- Uncertainties
 - Safety of firefighters due to lack of adequate staffing

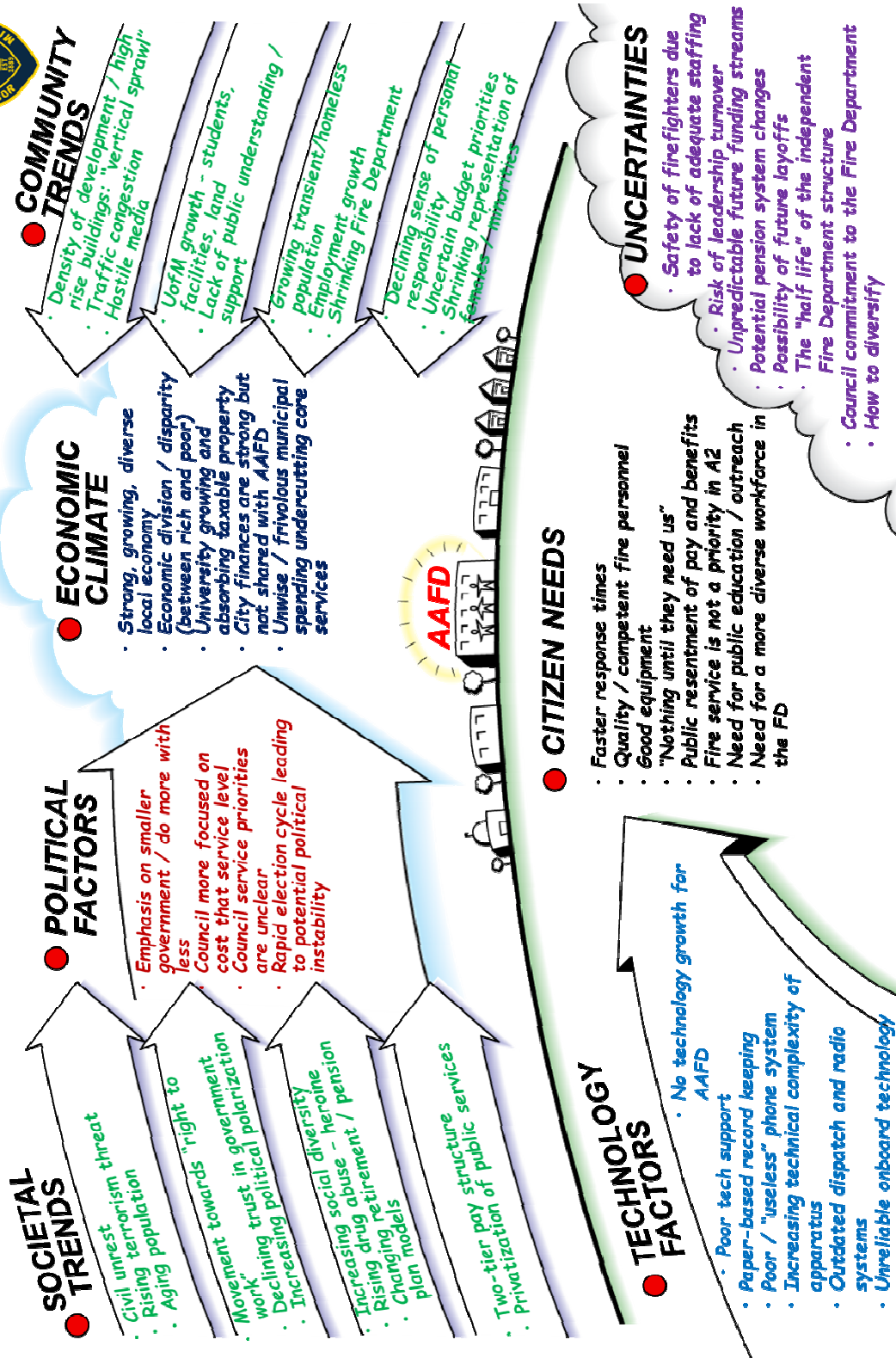


- Risk of leadership turnover (at both the city and department levels)
- Unpredictable funding streams
- Potential pension system changes
- Possibility of future layoffs
- The “half-life” of the independent Fire Department structure
- Council commitment to the Fire Department
- How to diversify.

The graphical Context Map on the following page illustrates these trends and factors. These conditions can have important implications for the future of the fire service in general and the Ann Arbor Fire Department in particular.



SUMMARY CONTEXT MAP





STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS (SWOT)

Following completion of the environmental scan and the development of the Context Map presented in the prior section, planning process participants next worked together to identify the most important and current internal strengths and weaknesses of the Department and potential external threats to the Department's future success and results. They then addressed the key opportunities available to the Department that might be gained by leveraging strengths, overcoming weaknesses and mitigating threats.

Whereas the environmental scan was primarily focused on external conditions, for the SWOT analysis, workshop participants were asked to critically and constructively consider attributes of the Ann Arbor Fire Department itself.

- **Strengths** are those assets and capabilities currently available within the Fire Department and that can be leveraged to achieve desired results.
- **Weaknesses** are those problem areas or aspects of the Department that are currently standing in the way of strategic success and that must be overcome to achieve optimal results.
- **Threats** are current or potential future internal or external events that, if unmitigated, have the potential to seriously impair the Department's ability to realize strategic success. These may be political, economic, societal, natural or man-made in nature.
- **Opportunities** are future-focused and are conditions that can, if properly understood, be captured to obtain strategic advantage through capitalizing on strengths, overcoming weaknesses and mitigating threats.

The following lists the consensus results of the SWOT assessment completed by the members of the Ann Arbor Fire Department:

- **Strengths**
 - Experienced, skilled, knowledgeable and motivated personnel
 - Personal protective equipment
 - Pay and benefits
 - Ann Arbor itself – growing city of estimated 250,000 daytime population
 - Current departmental leadership
 - Tactically aggressive and proficient department
 - Diversity of work opportunities
 - Multi-agency specialty teams
 - Independence from the Police Department
- **Weaknesses**
 - Staffing levels
 - Apparatus – age, number, reserves
 - Aging workforce
 - Fire station age and condition
 - Pending retirements



- Fire Chief turnover
- Growing student population
- Lack of departmental diversity
- Generational differences in the workforce
- Fire dispatch model
- Lack of technology
- Continuity of EMS care
- University of Michigan impacts
- Departmental morale
- Lack of Council / community support
- Lack of effective community engagement

- **Threats**

- Leadership turnover at the Fire Chief and City Administrator levels
- HVA dispatch model
- Loss of experience through retirements
- Economic downturn
- Terrorism / mass casualty incident
- Political instability / unrest
- Inadequate budget funding
- Negative public perception of the Fire Department

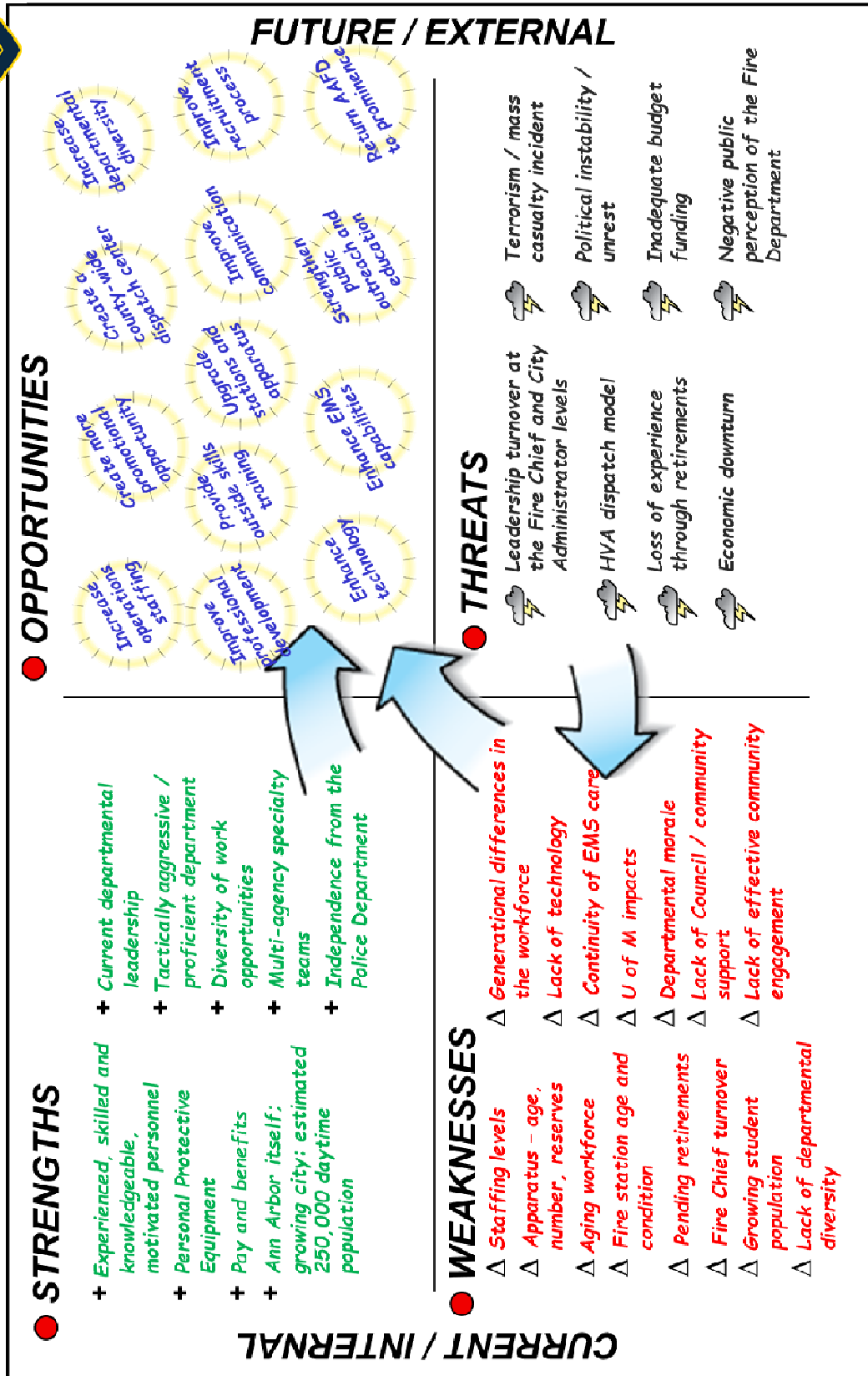
- **Opportunities**

- Return the AAFD to prominence
- Create more promotional opportunity
- Create a county-wide dispatch center
- Increase departmental diversity
- Improve professional development
- Provide outside skills training
- Upgrade stations and apparatus
- Improve internal communication
- Improve the recruitment process
- Enhance technology
- Enhance EMS capabilities
- Strengthen public outreach and education

The results of the SWOT analysis activity are illustrated in the graphical matrix on the following page.



SUMMARY SWOT MATRIX





CITIZEN FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The Fire Chief and the Assistant Fire Chief hosted and facilitated four focus groups for invited members of the Ann Arbor community. After a presentation by the Chief on certain basic aspects of Fire Department operations, industry best practices and standards, participants were afforded an opportunity to anonymously vote on their priorities for the Department. These results are summarized below. Note that result totals may vary from item to item based on the number of actual responses received as not every participant voted on every item.

Q1. Thinking about your own needs and priorities for the future of the Ann Arbor Fire Department: How important is it that AAFD *develop a fire station replacement and relocation master plan* for implementation over the next 5-8 years, given the current locations and condition of existing fire stations?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	61.11%	11
Important	27.78%	5
Somewhat Important	5.56%	1
Somewhat Unimportant	5.56%	1
Unimportant	0%	0
Not at all important	0%	0
Totals	100%	18

Q2. Thinking about your own needs and priorities for the future of the Ann Arbor Fire Department: How important is it to improve the department's operations through *increases in available modern fire apparatus*?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	61.11%	11
Important	33.33%	6
Somewhat Important	5.56%	1
Somewhat Unimportant	0%	0
Unimportant	0%	0
Not at all important	0%	0
Totals	100%	18

Q3. Thinking about your own needs and priorities for the future of the Ann Arbor Fire Department: How important is it that AAFD *seek regional partners for or return to providing its own fire/EMS dispatch services*?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	72.22%	13
Important	16.67%	3
Somewhat Important	11.11%	2
Somewhat Unimportant	0%	0
Unimportant	0%	0
Not at all important	0%	0
Totals	100%	18



Q4. Thinking about your own needs and priorities for the future of the Ann Arbor Fire Department: How important is it to improve the department’s operations through *increases in staffing*?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	50%	5
Important	30%	3
Somewhat Important	20%	2
Somewhat Unimportant	0%	0
Unimportant	0%	0
Not at all important	0%	0
Totals	100%	10

Q5. Thinking about your own needs and priorities for the future of the Ann Arbor Fire Department: How important is it that AAFD *meet National Response time standards for fire emergencies*?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	46.15%	6
Important	38.46%	5
Somewhat Important	15.38%	2
Somewhat Unimportant	0%	0
Unimportant	0%	0
Not at all important	0%	0
Totals	100%	13

Q6. Thinking about your own needs and priorities for the future of the Ann Arbor Fire Department: How important is it that AAFD *meet National Response time standards for EMS emergencies*?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	58.82%	10
Important	35.29%	6
Somewhat Important	5.88%	1
Somewhat Unimportant	0%	0
Unimportant	0%	0
Not at all important	0%	0
Totals	100%	17



Q7. Thinking about your own needs and priorities for the future of the Ann Arbor Fire Department: How important is it that AAFD *expand its EMS capability to include ALS paramedic first responder level services on key fire apparatus within the city?*

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	88.89%	16
Important	5.56%	1
Somewhat Important	5.56%	1
Somewhat Unimportant	0%	0
Unimportant	0%	0
Not at all important	0%	0
Totals	100%	18

Q8. Thinking about your own needs and priorities for the future of the Ann Arbor Fire Department: How important is it that AAFD develop and *implement a formalized fire prevention education/community outreach program?*

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	66.67%	12
Important	33.33%	6
Somewhat Important	0%	0
Somewhat Unimportant	0%	0
Unimportant	0%	0
Not at all important	0%	0
Totals	100%	18

Q9. Thinking about your own needs and priorities for the future of the Ann Arbor Fire Department: How important is it that AAFD *expand and improve its current fire prevention and inspection program to include technology and recognized best practices* within its current methodologies?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Very Important	46.15%	6
Important	53.85%	7
Somewhat Important	0%	0
Somewhat Unimportant	0%	0
Unimportant	0%	0
Not at all important	0%	0
Totals	100%	13



STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Having developed a broad understanding of the environmental context within which the Fire Department must operate and produce results, the next step in the planning process was the development of the core elements of the Department's new strategy itself. Those elements include:

- A statement of vision.
- A focused mission.
- Shared values.
- Strategic priorities / goals.
- Preliminary strategic objectives.

Each of these are presented and described in this section.

ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT VISION

An organization's vision is aspirational in nature. It defines what the organization wants to be or to achieve. It is an idealized description of the desired future state of the community. For the Ann Arbor Fire Department, the City's overall vision statement was assumed to be valid for the purpose of the planning workshop and there was no effort expended to examine or replace that vision statement. The existing vision for the City of Ann Arbor is shown immediately below:

VISION
*A unified team, creating and
sustaining excellence.*

A WORKING FIRE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement describes the organization's purpose. It defines the "business" of the organization and its relationship to its customers. In the recent past, the Fire Department has not had a unique mission statement, relying instead on the City of Ann Arbor's mission statement to define its main purpose. As a part of the development of the new strategy for the Department, the strategy workshop participants explored the possibility of adopting a statement of mission that is more directly applicable to the work performed by the officers and staff of the Fire Department.

The workshop facilitator presented the group with a set of 10 Fire Department mission statements from across the United States. After reviewing each, and through a structured process of elimination, four of the sample mission statements emerged as the most similar to the kind of mission statement the leadership team would prefer for the AAFD. The common attributes of the selected sample mission statements included an emphasis on exceptional service to the entire community, professionalism, compassion and diversity

As a working draft of a straightforward mission, the statement at the top of the following page was accepted for the purpose of the planning process and may be refined during the completion and implementation of the final strategic plan.



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT MISSION

“The Ann Arbor Fire Department delivers exceptional life and property protection services to the entire community. We serve with compassion and professionalism, within an atmosphere of innovation, professional growth, and diversity.”

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

At a high-level, how will things be different within the Ann Arbor Fire Department if the strategic plan is successful? How should senior Departmental and city management evaluate whether or not the Department is making progress towards its vision and succeeding in its mission?

The strategic planning process participants developed a set of summary performance indicators that, if realized, would provide evidence of strategic progress as shown below.

- Life and property losses will decline
- Complaints from the public should decrease
- Departmental diversity should improve
- Department morale should improve
- Service delivery expectations are met
 - Response time
 - Public education
 - Station condition
 - Age of apparatus
- Regional engagement is seamless

SHARED VALUES

Values are the fundamental principles that guide how members of an organization conduct themselves in pursuit of their vision and mission. Together, the values provide a framework for decision making and action.

Currently, the following value concepts are those directly included in the City of Ann Arbor Organizational Strategic Plan:

- **Teamwork** - Each person or group collaboratively contributes their skills and perspectives to work as part of a unified organization to achieve our common goals.
- **Commitment to Excellence** - Our work is performed in a professional manner and is characterized by its extraordinary quality, innovation and continuous improvement.



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC GOALS

- Champion a regional public safety dispatch service.
- Achieve and maintain national accreditation.
- Invest in public engagement.
- Develop and diversity the workforce.
- Elevate regional partnerships.
- Enhance first responder service capabilities.

- **Accountability** - Taking personal responsibility for our actions, performance, work products and behaviors that impact the organization and community.
- **Stewardship** - The careful and responsible management of resources entrusted to our care.
- **Integrity** - Do the right thing with the highest of ethics and honesty at all times.

In addition to the above-defined five City of Ann Arbor Values, the strategic planning workshop participants further value:

- Professionalism
- Compassion
- Quality

STRATEGIC DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

After confirming the Fire Department’s overall vision, mission and values, systematically scanning the external environment, evaluating the strengths and weakness of the organization, identifying opportunities and threats and considering the input of community representatives, the planning workshop participants next turned their attention to the specific actions and results they believe to be likely to have the greatest positive impact on the long-term success of the Fire Department and the safety of the Ann Arbor community.

To develop and identify these strategic departmental goals, the workshop facilitator applied a technique known as “future pull.” Participants were encouraged to go forward in time to imagine great success for the Department in terms of the pursuit of its vision, the fulfillment of its mission and the accomplishment of measurable success in accordance with its values. Then they were asked:

“Looking back from a position of great success, what, specifically, did the department do to achieve that success?”

Each participant listed the specific action steps that, if taken today, would lead the Department to that future position. They thought about how to leverage the identified strengths to overcome problems and how to mitigate threats to create opportunities. Many individual ideas were generated. Then, working together with the participants, the workshop facilitator grouped the ideas together on a graphical chart to reveal common strategic themes. From this exercise, a total of eight strategic departmental goals emerged as the most important for the AAFD’s future, as follows:



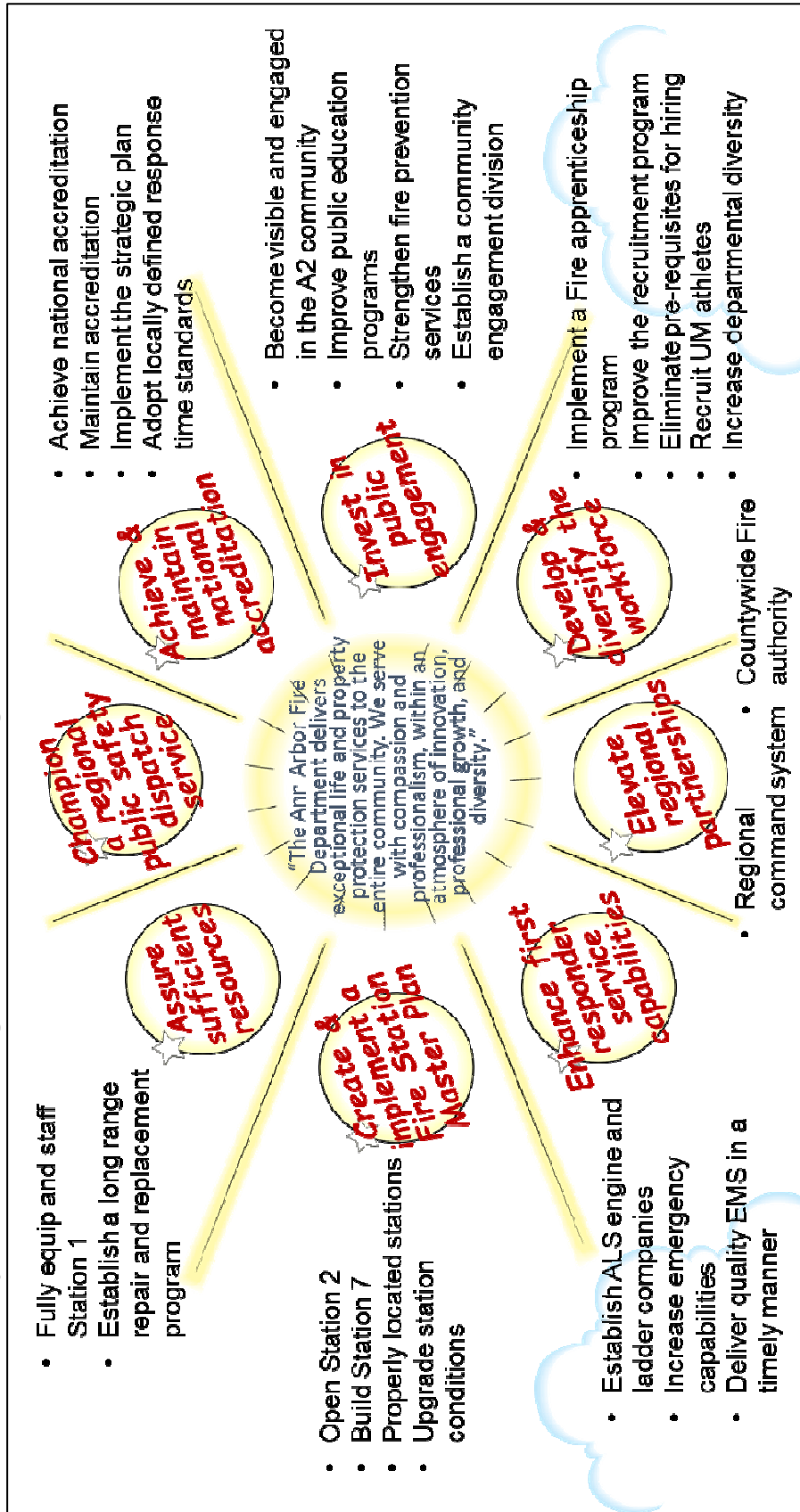
ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC GOALS

- Champion a regional public safety dispatch service.
- Achieve and maintain national accreditation.
- Invest in public engagement.
- Develop and diversify the workforce.
- Elevate regional partnerships.
- Enhance first responder service capabilities.

The graphical chart on the following page illustrates the results of this strategy goal identification effort. The detailed entries listed on the chart represent the results of the group's free-form brainstorming and the sharing of ideas among the participants through dialog and discussion and not necessarily concrete initiatives or short-term projects. They do represent the building blocks for the identification of the larger strategic goals for the department. These goals are reflected in the red text within the yellow highlighted circles.



Ann Arbor Fire Department – Strategic Goals Brainstorming





Within each of the focus areas, an initial set of **strategic objectives** were also identified, as shown in the sub-bullet points under each strategic departmental goal. These objectives will be further refined and developed as the accreditation process moves forward. They are also directly linked to and supportive of the overall Organizational Strategic Plan (OSP) of the City of Ann Arbor as indicated below:

- **Champion a regional public safety dispatch service** (OSP Goal: *Deliver Exceptional Service*)
 - Examine regional dispatch options to ensure best possible service and maximum operational effectiveness and efficiency from selected option
 - Seek-out potential partnerships with other regional emergency response agencies and providers
- **Achieve and maintain national accreditation** (OSP Goal: *Deliver Exceptional Service*)
 - Secure approval for and Implement the Fire Department Strategic Plan
 - Establish standards of coverage for the entire city
 - Adopt locally-defined and acceptable response time standards
 - Achieve and maintain national fire service accreditation
- **Invest in public engagement** (OSP Goal: *Integrate External Engagement*)
 - Fire personnel and crews to become more visible and engaged in the Ann Arbor community
 - Improve formal public fire education programs
 - Strengthen Fire Prevention programs
 - Establish a formal Community Engagement program/policy for the department
- **Develop and diversify the workforce** (OSP Goal: *Strengthen Human Capital*)
 - Increase departmental diversity
 - Improve recruitment programs; employ strategic-targeted recruitment methods
 - Eliminate prior state firefighter certification as a pre-requisite for testing and hiring firefighters
 - Target-recruit U of M, Michigan State; Eastern, Central, and Western Michigan Universities, etc., and local high school athletes, and military veterans, etc., for AAFD firefighter jobs
 - Implement a Fire Department apprenticeship program
- **Elevate regional partnerships** (OSP Goal: *Enable Economic Development*)
 - Establish regional command protocols to facilitate greater regional cooperation
 - Work towards the creation of a countywide regional Joint Powers Fire Services cooperative to enable consistent joint fire/EMS responses, resource sharing, training, grant administration, purchasing, etc., similar to the manner in which the regional Haz/Mat and



Technical Rescue teams function, to maximize available resources among area departments and for the benefit of area residents

- **Enhance first responder service capabilities** (OSP Goal: Deliver Exceptional Service)
 - Increase EMS emergency 1st response capabilities
 - Implement an ALS paramedic 1st responder program using AAFD fire apparatus where appropriate and beneficial
 - Deliver quality emergency medical services in a timely manner
- **Create and implement a Fire Station Master Plan** (OSP Goal: Ensure Financial Health)
 - Examine current fire station locations for suitability and maximum efficiency
 - Ensure sufficient fire stations are properly located to maximize response time coverage; implement a fire station location study
 - Upgrade and maintain as necessary, current station living conditions
 - Devise and adopt a multi-year master plan for replacing/relocating fire stations according to location study recommendations
- **Assure sufficient, Sustainable resources** (OSP Goal: Deliver Exceptional Service)
 - Examine daily staffing needs across the city
 - Reduce operational inefficiencies to maximize available daily resources
 - Equip and staff stations based on the needs analysis,
 - Establish a long range apparatus, tools and equipment repair and replacement program/master plan

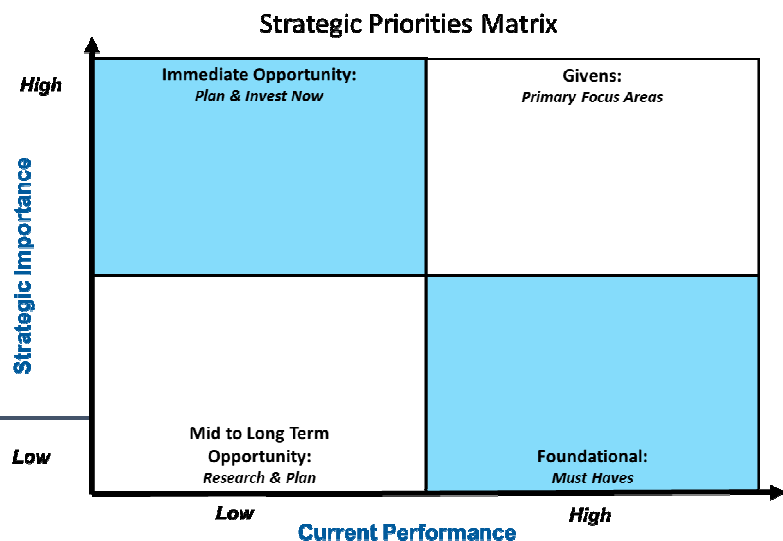
GOAL PRIORITIZATION

After identifying and agreeing on the eight strategic focus areas / goals, the participants engaged in a process of ranking and evaluating them using anonymous voting technology. Each of the focus areas was evaluated on two separate dimensions: **Strategic Importance** and **Current Performance**.

The first evaluation, **Strategic Importance**, used a paired comparison / forced choice ranking method to establish a hierarchy of strategic priorities. Recognizing that the Department needs to accomplish all eight of its strategic goals, over the long term, to achieve the desired future state, this process helped to determine the relative importance of each.

The **Performance** dimension allowed the participants to score how well they feel the Department is currently performing or succeeding on each of the strategic goals on a 1 to 9 scale, with 9 being “practically perfect” and 1 being “not at all.”

Having evaluated each of strategic focus areas on both Importance and

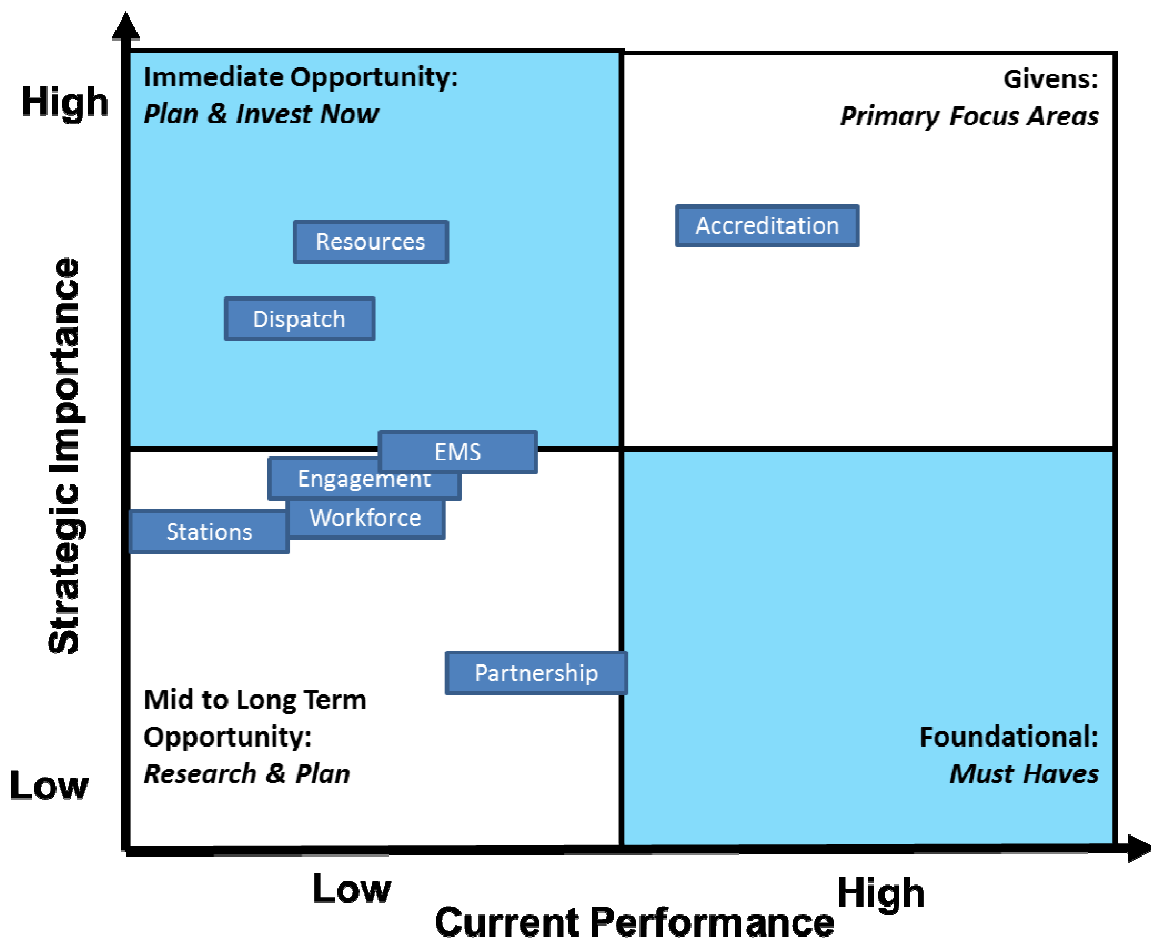




Performance, it was then possible to plot a profile of the results on a 2x2 matrix, as shown at right.

Definitions of the four quadrants of the strategy profile are as follows:

- **"Givens"** are high value/high performance items. They constitute the Department's primary strategic priorities.
- **"Foundational Strategies"** are vital support functions. They are necessary to the system and should be performed at least an acceptable level.
- **"Immediate Opportunities"** indicate key areas for *innovation or improvement* that can have major and early impact on long term strategic success. They show where not only "doing things differently" but *doing different things* are imperative.



- **"Mid to Long-term Opportunities"** represent key success factors that would likely be brought on line following execution of the Immediate Opportunities. These *innovations* are usually several years or more out.

Based on the strategy profile developed by the Department's senior leadership, as illustrated in the graphic above, the following priority assignments of each of the eight strategic departmental goals can be made:



- ***Givens – Primary Goals***
 - Achieve and maintain national accreditation
- ***Foundational – Must Haves***
 - None identified at this time
- ***Immediate Opportunity – Plan and Invest Now***
 - Assure sufficient resources
 - Champion a regional public safety dispatch service
- ***Mid to Long Term Opportunity – Research and Plan***
 - Enhance EMS service capabilities
 - Develop and diversify the workforce
 - Create and implement a Fire Station Master Plan
 - Elevate regional partnerships.

COMPARATIVE PRIORITY RANKINGS

To further assess the overall strategic importance and performance of the eight focus areas, representative members of the rank-and-file staff and representatives of the community at large were asked to complete a ranking activity identical to that completed by the Department’s leadership team.

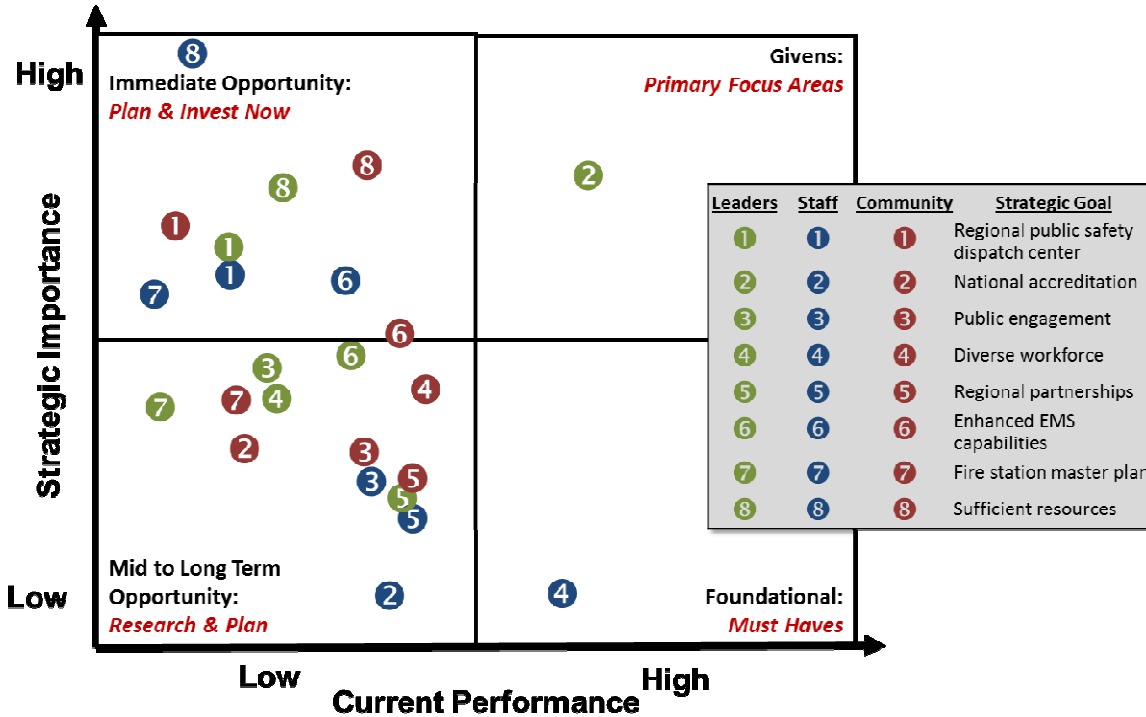
As illustrated in the consolidated prioritization profile on the following page, three separate prioritization votes were captured in this process: 1) the participating members of the Department’s leadership (“Leaders”), 2) members of the Department’s line staff (“Staff”) and 3) representatives of the Ann Arbor community at large (“Community”). Overall, the prioritization voting suggests that there is considerable congruence between the leadership team’s prioritization and that of the line staff and the community representatives.

All three groups identified “Sufficient Resources” and “Regional Public Safety Dispatch” as Immediate Opportunities. Similarly, all three voting groups agree that “Public Engagement” and “Regional Partnerships” represent mid to long term opportunities.

The most notable differences are noted in the relative value of “National Accreditation,” with the Fire Department leadership ranking this goal as its most important, while the rank and file see it as the least important of the eight. The rank and file also see less importance (but higher current performance) on the “Develop and Diversify” goal than do either the department’s leadership or the community participants.



Combined Strategy Priority Voting Results



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Based on the extensive input from members of the Ann Arbor Fire Department command team, the leadership of the fire union, the direct participation of rank-and-file members of the department and the outreach to representatives of the community as a whole, this Fire Department Strategic Plan represents an important first step forward towards what some in the Department have referred to as its “return to prominence.” By completing this planning effort and by working to assure its compatibility with the overall strategic plan of the City of Ann Arbor, the Fire Department has established a platform for improvement through the completion of the accreditation process and the operationalization of the long term departmental goals and objectives.