



2020-2025

STRATEGIC PLAN



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FOREWORD FROM

THE FIRE CHIEF

Since the inception of our department's first-ever long-range strategic plan in 2012, we have encountered numerous unplanned obstacles. We have experienced an economic recession, changes in high-level stakeholders such as elected officials, and even a pandemic. Through these times we have continued steadfastly in our vision for the department while being adaptive to unforeseen challenges along the way.

I have been amazed at the internal growth of our department and the growth of our community. Our workforce has nearly doubled and the caliber of personnel is truly second to none. They are highly motivated, well trained, and have a clear understanding of the department's need for continual process improvement.



To the firefighters - The command staff and I will continue to work daily to provide a safe, efficient, and positive work environment. Our daily focus will continue to be on your well-being. We do this in the hopes you provide the same caliber of caring to the citizens you respond to every day.

To the elected officials - The Garner Fire-Rescue will continue to be transparent and fiscally responsible while maintaining a positive partnership with the Town of Garner and Wake County. We will continue to evaluate the needs of our community and reflect them as we provide essential daily services. We are grateful for your on-going support and trust.

To the citizens - Our number one goal is to serve you. We are honored to provide emergency services to you, your families, and your neighbors. GFR promises you the highest quality attainable in all we do. We not only want to serve our community, but we strive to be an integral part of it. We are well trained and professional and are ready to protect and serve you when you need us.

Sincerely,

MATTHEW R. POOLE



DEPARTMENT

HISTORY TIMELINE

1952 - The Garner Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. was organized and formed April 14, 1952 when Garner was a small community south of Raleigh. It operated mainly on contributions and service contracts with the Town of Garner. Before moving into the first Garner fire station on Pearl St, the first Garner fire truck was parked at the local beauty parlor. If someone needed to report a fire, they would call the beauty parlor and the beauty parlor would then ring a bell to alert the volunteer firefighters.

1970 - A new fire station was constructed just a few blocks down from the first fire station. This station was built to house more fire apparatus and provide the department with offices, meeting space, and a volunteer roster of 50 firefighters. This one fire station served a large fire district which encompassed the Town of Garner and the surrounding Wake County unincorporated areas for a total of 90-plus square miles. One of the most populated unincorporated areas served by the Garner Volunteer Fire Department is the Panther Branch area, south of the Town of Garner.

1976 - The second fire station was constructed in the Panther Branch Community at 9115 Sauls Road. This station started with 20 members from that area, which grew to 30 members by 1986. The roster for the Garner Volunteer Fire Department was capped at 80 volunteer members in 1986 with 50 at Station one, and 30 at Station two. These volunteers gave thousands of hours to their community, not only fighting fires but also training and providing fire prevention services.

1988 - The department began accepting Wake County tax money from the fire insurance district created. This income combined with the annual Town of Garner contract to make funding the organization more sustainable than the days of fundraisers and going door-to-door asking for money. This steady source of income came with the hiring of the first employee, a fire chief.





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1989 - The fire chief soon hired a bookkeeper/administrative assistant and then four more employees by January. This brought the full-time staff to six personnel with a fire chief, captain, engineer, two firefighters, and a bookkeeper/administrative assistant. They worked the day shift to supplement the 80 volunteer members. As the community grew so did the need for additional services and staff to provide fire and emergency services.

1995 - In the mid 90s additional personnel were hired to allow two full-time day crews at Station one and one full-time day crew at Station two for a total of 14 full-time employees. Also in that period, the fire department began serving as medical first responders in the unincorporated areas of the fire district, the Garner police department handled this service in the Town of Garner, which shifted to the fire department in 1999. It was during this time Garner had extraordinary growth and demands for fire protection and medical service. Volunteers worked hard to remain the strong force of the department, but that started to decline as the call volume rose and the requirements increased.

1998 – This year served as a huge shift in Garner Fire Department's history as it started the 24-hour shift work era and this was when the third fire station went under construction, which was the second station inside the city limits of Garner. Shift work started with one person per shift to supervise and drive if needed. This lasted a short time until all suppression staff went to a 24-hour shift schedule.

1999 – The third station, Station three, opened and was the only station constructed with the shift work firefighter in mind, having bedrooms, locker rooms, showers, and other living spaces. All shift staff worked out of Station three while the volunteers responded from the other two stations during the next year.

2000 - Additional personnel were hired and the creation of a new 24-hour chief officer referred to as the district chief started. Station 1 was then staffed with 24-hour personnel, making two stations with around-the-clock coverage inside the Town of Garner.

2001 - Garner's first ladder truck, a 2001 - 100' Pierce Dash Platform aerial was purchased and placed in service, at Station one.





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2005 - Twenty-four hour personnel was added to Station two. With the addition of these personnel, all Garner Fire Department stations were staffed 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It was also during this time that the agency became a rescue provider and joined the North Carolina Association of Rescue and EMS. This came with an official corporate name change to Garner Volunteer Fire-Rescue, Inc.

2010 – Construction of Garner’s fourth fire station got underway and opened in the fall of 2010 at 125 Spaceway Court with 24-hour coverage. The opening of this station created the largest hiring opportunity for the Garner Volunteer Fire-Rescue, Inc., including 17 personnel hired to include a deputy chief position. The addition of these personnel brought the full-time staff total to 51 employees. Garner EMS and Rescue, a separate organization merged with Wake County EMS and only maintained an ambulance service leaving the agency to acquire all rescue services inside the town limits and the unincorporated areas within the fire district.

2013 – Three additional personnel were hired, bringing the full-time staff total to 54 employees. This additional staff was part of the creation of the first dual company house at Station one, which staffed the ladder/rescue company. This crew was called the Special Operations Crew (SOC) and was responsible for any response involving the ladder truck, rescue truck, brush truck, boat, and Utility Terrain Vehicle. The three 24 four hour district chief’s titles changed to battalion chief.

2016 - The department decided to pursue international accreditation through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). This endeavor created the need for more administrative help and office space. An additional administrative chief officer was created at the rank of an assistant chief to help manage logistics and training. This was the same time that the administration of the Garner Volunteer Fire-Rescue, Inc. moved out of Station one and into a separate office space at 120 East Main Street.





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2017 – In January, nine additional firefighters were hired bringing the full-time staffing level to 64 employees. These nine additional firefighters allowed the agency to have four firefighters for each of the four engine companies in service.

2018 - The administration was provided office space on the Town of Garner's town hall campus at 914 7th Avenue. This location offered more office, meeting, training, and storage space for the growing department. Inside the lobby of the administration building, a small history museum was added showcasing photographs and artifacts over the last 60 years of the department's history.

2019 – Garner's second ladder truck, a 2019 – 107' Pierce Ascendant aerial was purchased and placed in service at Station three.

2020 – In January 2020, a new assistant chief was added to the administrative team of Garner Fire-Rescue and was charged with leading the organization's continuous improvement efforts bringing extensive knowledge in accreditation, data analysis, records management systems, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and ISO compliance.

2021 - In January, the agency hired three new firefighter positions, increasing the ladder company's staffing levels to four employees per 24-hour shift. In January, GFR successfully completed the accreditation process through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) and received internationally accredited agency status for a five-year cycle from 2021-2026.





MISSION

STATEMENT

The concept defining the who, the what, and the how of an organization are crafted through a mission statement. The formal adoption of this statement essentially helps to answer who we are, why we exist, what we do, why we do it, and who we do it for. This comes with the subsequent creation of a vision, values, goals/objectives. The rich and vibrant history of Garner Fire-Rescue was inherently important as stakeholders met to establish a future direction. This statement defines our purpose and reason for existence.

“Garner Fire-Rescue is dedicated to protecting the life and property of our community by building our future on the foundation of our past.”



VISION

STATEMENT

The creation of a vision statement helps to articulate a mental image of what the agency wishes to achieve. Vision statements provide a view into the future defining what the agency intends to accomplish to show everyone what we are working towards. By nature, the vision is intended to be aspirational by painting a picture of a future worth working towards collectively. This statement supplements the agency's mission and helps to further describe our purpose. Further defined through goals and objectives is how the agency intends to accomplish the vision.

"To become the best possible fire service organization through well-trained and developed personnel, modern resources and equipment, and continue to be an integral part of our community."



VALUES

DEFINED

The instillment of values is reflective of the difference the agency intends to create in the lives of our stakeholders and the larger world beyond geographical boundaries. The values serve as the moral compass for the agency and further represent what the employees believe their purpose is. Furthermore, the formal establishment of these serve as guiding principles for behavior ensuring employees hold themselves accountable to the standards they set.

“Garner fireFIGHTers possess the courage needed to save lives and make our community safe. We will be models of honesty, possess giving hearts, and be grateful for our heritage.”

Fortitude Integrity Generosity Honor Tradition

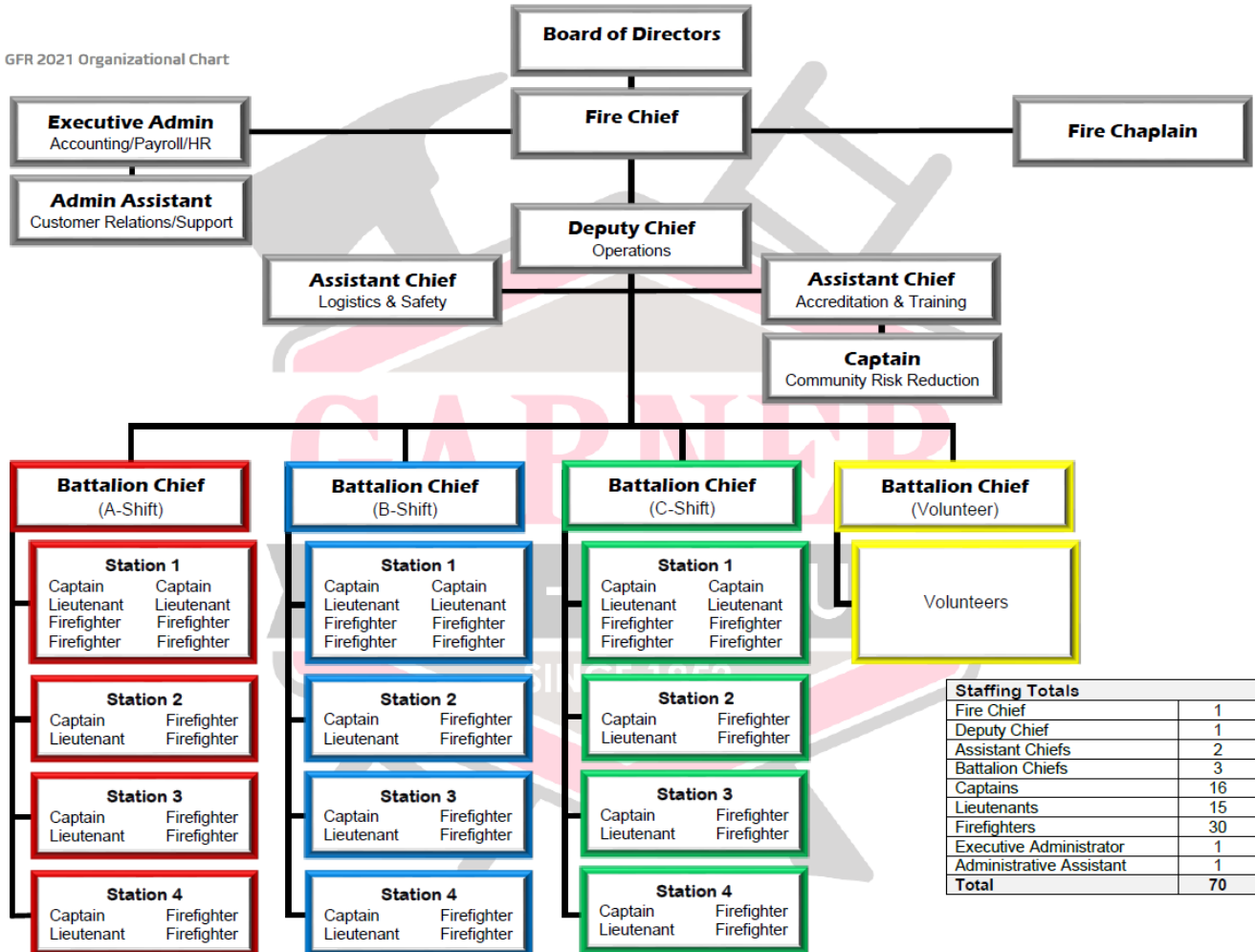


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ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Garner Fire-Rescue proudly serves over 64,000 citizens encompassing a service area of approximately 75 square miles. The organization consists of 63 operational personnel with 7 administrative support positions organized as shown below.



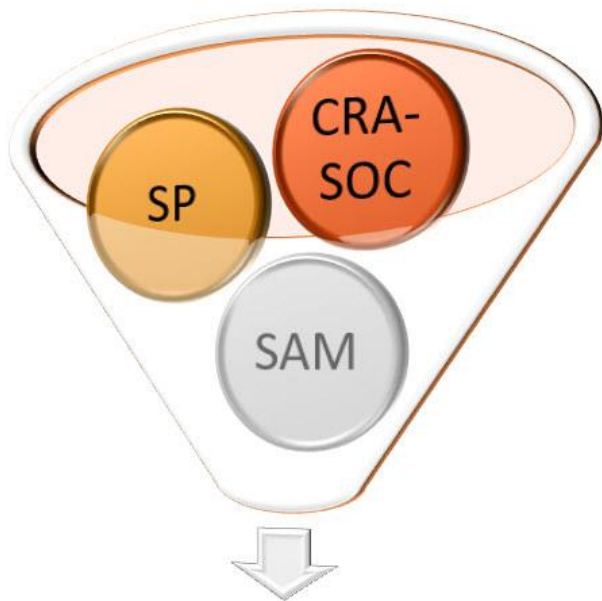
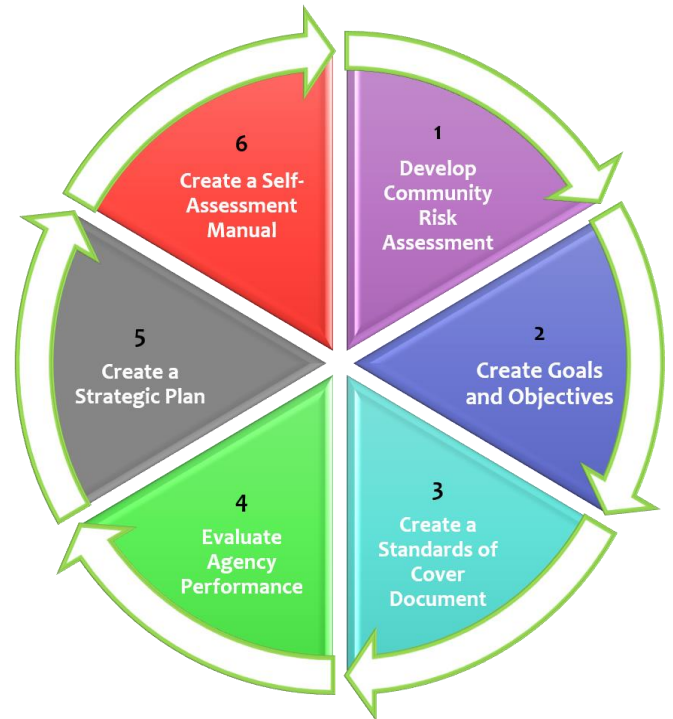


COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

STRATEGIC PLANNING

For any organization to excel, it is vital to understand the history, culture, mission, vision, and values of the agency and what the community expectations are. The strategic plan is one of three (3) core documents developed in accordance with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). The plan is a living active management tool that provides the following:

- Provides short-term direction
- Sets goals and objectives
- Optimizes the use of resources, and
- Builds a shared vision



Accreditation Model

The strategic planning process is critical to organizational success. This process helps an organization determine where it wants to go in order to achieve the greatest success.

Garner Fire-Rescue's strategic planning process involves brainstorming with staff, local governance, and citizens to determine short and long-term direction.



PARTICIPATION AND

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Garner Fire-Rescue proudly acknowledges and thanks all the external and internal stakeholders for their participation and input during the community-driven strategic planning process. The development of this strategic plan (2020-2025) started in early 2020 and was the second official strategic plan published by the agency.

Garner Fire-Rescue External Stakeholder Input Sessions

Town of Garner Elected Officials	Garner Lions Club
Town of Garner Management Team	Rotary Club of Garner
Wake County Elected Officials	Garner Mid-Day Rotary Club
Wake County Fire Services	Garner Civitan Club
Garner Chamber of Commerce	Lorraine's Coffee House (Pop-Up Town Hall)

Garner Fire-Rescue Internal Stakeholders

Garner Fire-Rescue Board of Directors	Garner Fire-Rescue Command Staff
Garner Fire-Rescue Strategic Planning Committee	Garner Fire-Rescue Members



EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER

OVERVIEW

Understanding the expectations of the community served is vital to any strategic plan. In order to prioritize organizational goals and objectives, the input of community leaders and residents is a critical step. The feedback from external stakeholders was gathered from in-person and virtual discussions as well as the dissemination of multiple surveys specific to focus groups. The three surveys used are listed below:



This information helped the agency to understand the community expectations and provided metrics to assist in gauging customer satisfaction. The agency also used the survey to compile response time expectations regarding call processing, turnout, travel time, and total response time.

The importance of community input can never be understated as an agency strives to achieve the community’s vision and aspirations for the future. The true power of including external stakeholders is the integration of community engagement. Enlisting the participation of all stakeholder groups ensures the plan reflects the values, beliefs, and expectations of the community it serves. As a result, the strategic planning process is more successful because it reflects the ideas of the agency and the community service level expectations.

The agency’s Strategic Plan coincides with the Town of Garner’s Strategic Plan building upon a shared vision organized around four-goal statements, which make up its mission.

Efficient and Timely Service Delivery (SD)
Provide efficient and effective services that match community needs and expectations

- **Objective 1:** Build and maintain strong relationships with regional and community partners.
- **Objective 2:** Provide quality services at a reasonable cost to residents and businesses.
- **Objective 3:** Foster attractive workplace culture to recruit and retain outstanding personnel.
- **Objective 4:** Nurture a culture of excellent customer service.



EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Garner Fire-Rescue offers many services to the community and the prioritization of service delivery components is invaluable to the organization in the creation of the strategic plan. Understanding what is most important to the local governance, elected officials and the citizens helps to align and correlate agency goals and objectives with community expectations.

Governmental Partners Summary

The governmental partners were asked to prioritize the programs and services offered by the agency. The results are shown below:

Question 1 – Please rate the priority of the services and programs provided.

Services & Programs Provided	Score	Ranking
Fire Suppression	7.6	1
Emergency Medical Services (EMS)	6.8	2
Fire Prevention	5.2	3
Hazardous Materials (HazMat)	4.2	4
Technical Rescue	3.8	5
Fire Inspections	3.5	6
Public Education	3.2	7
Citizens Fire Academy	1.7	8

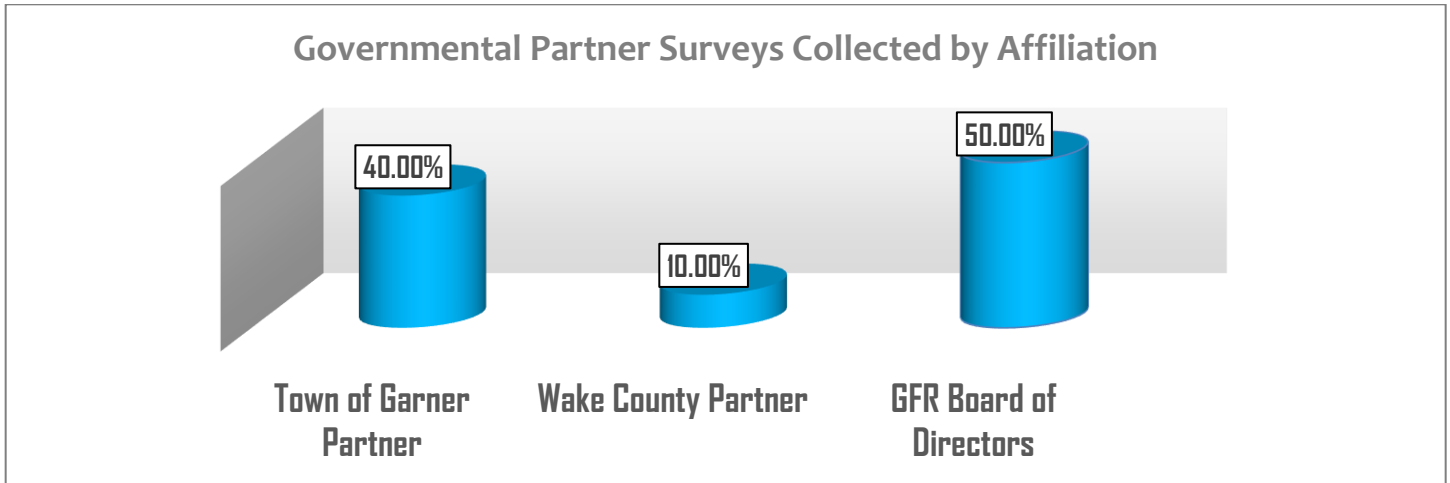




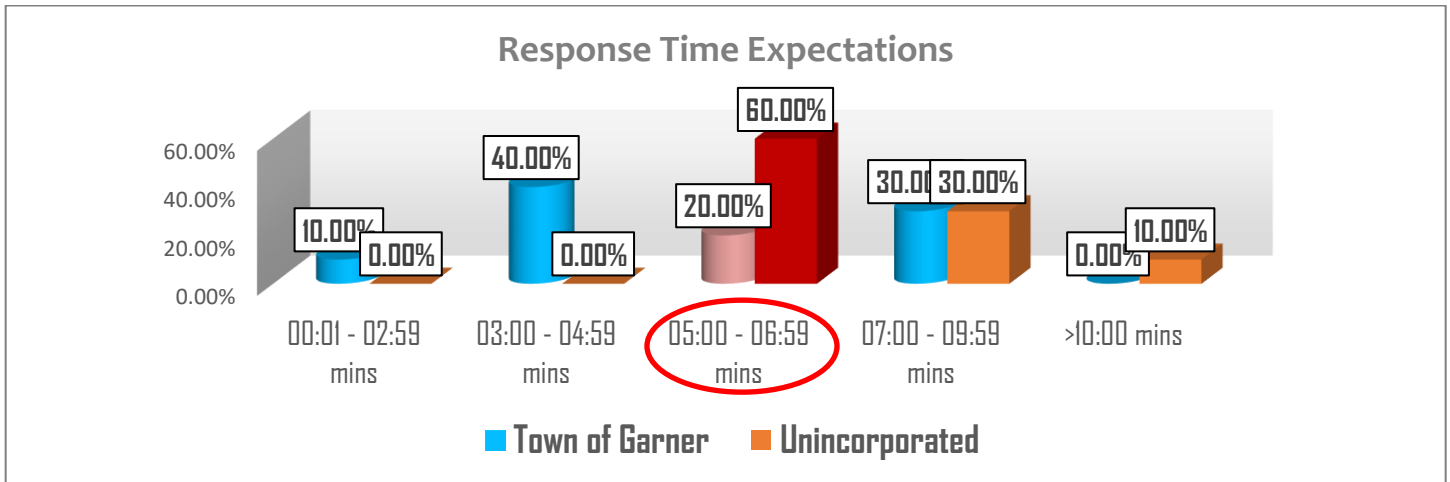
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Question 2 - What is your affiliation with Garner Fire-Rescue?



Question 3 – What do you expect/feel is the appropriate amount of time it takes for a fire truck to respond to an emergency scene (911 Call-Arrival)?

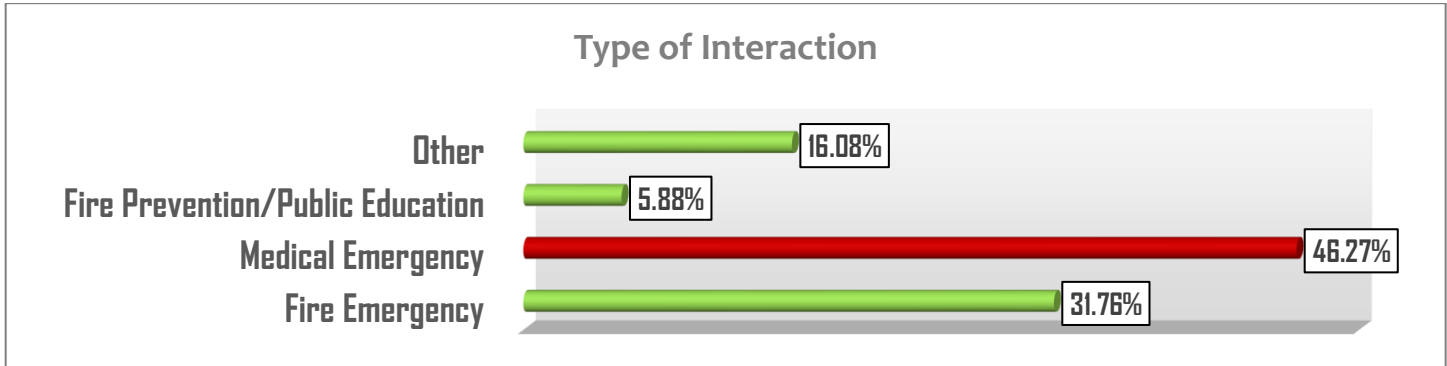




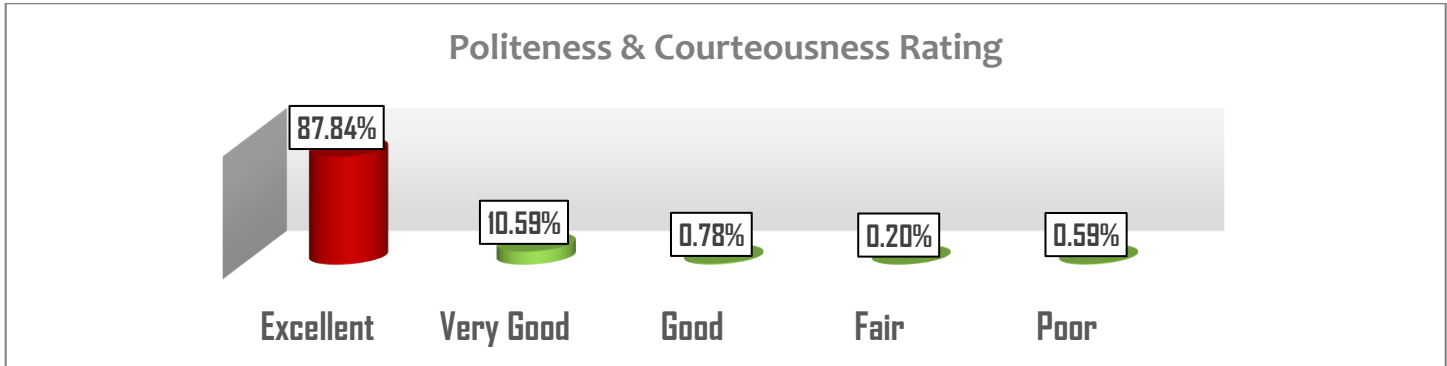
Customer Service Call Summary

The citizens we provide services to are randomly selected throughout the year to solicit feedback on the agency's customer interaction and engagement. The results as of October 2020 are shown below:

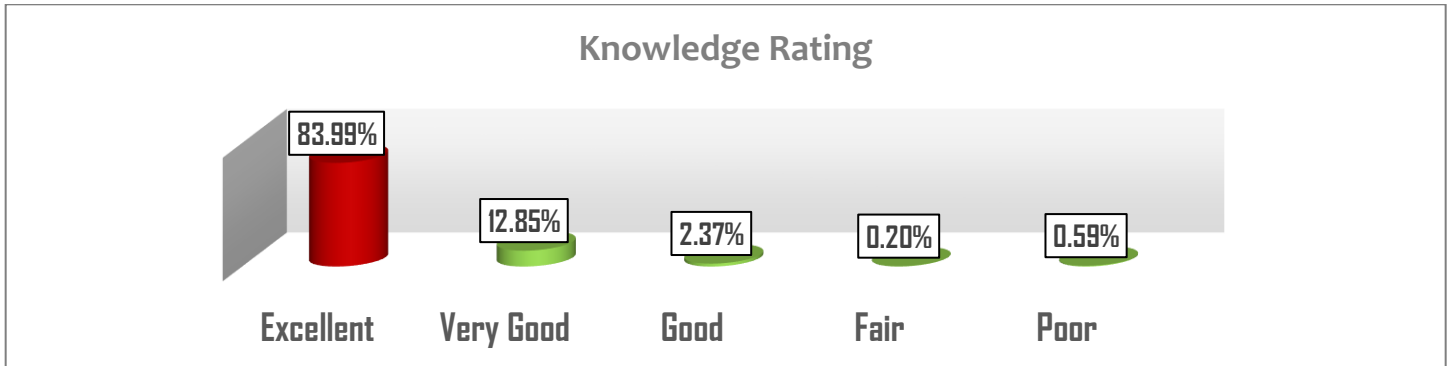
Question 1 – Please select the type of customer interaction by the agency.



Question 2 – How would you rate the politeness and courteousness of staff?



Question 3 – How would you rate the knowledge of staff?

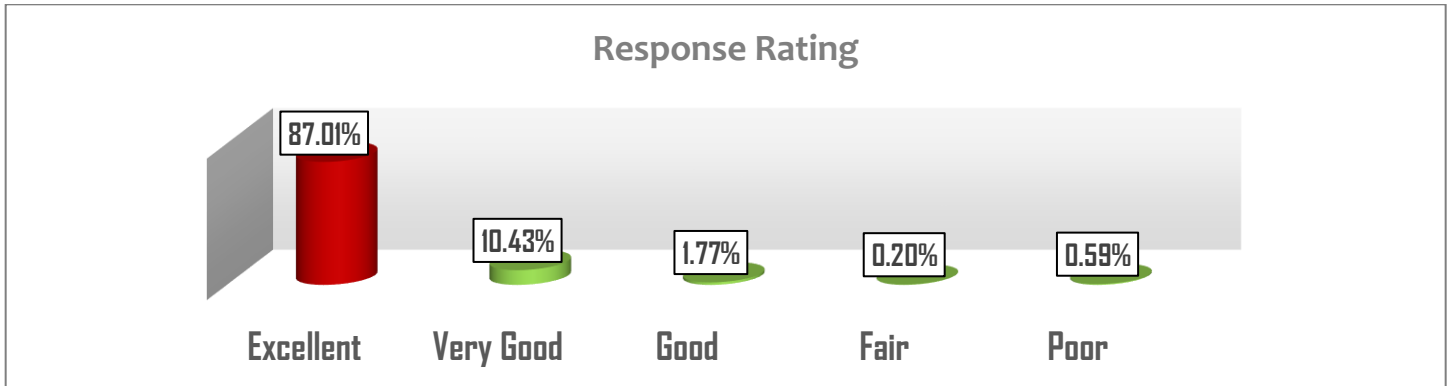




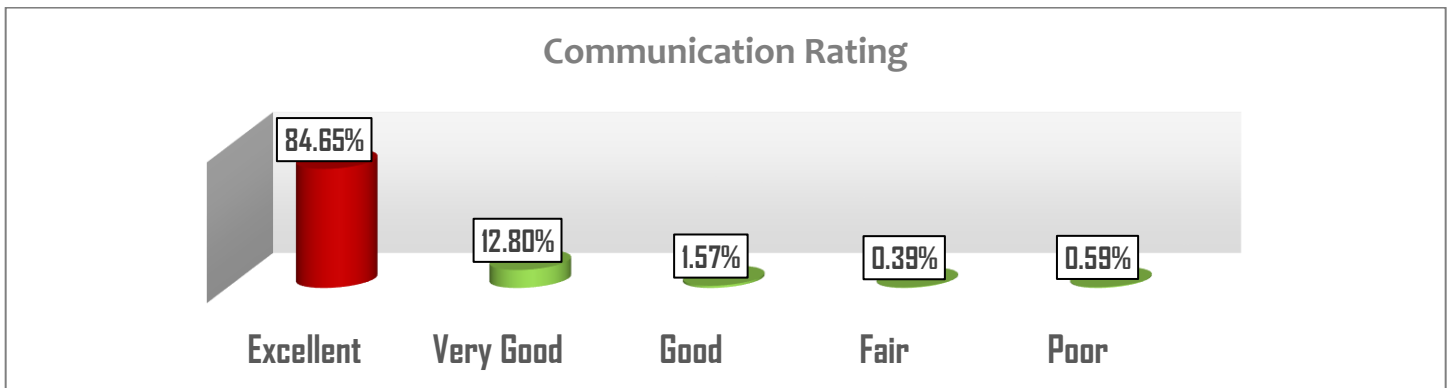
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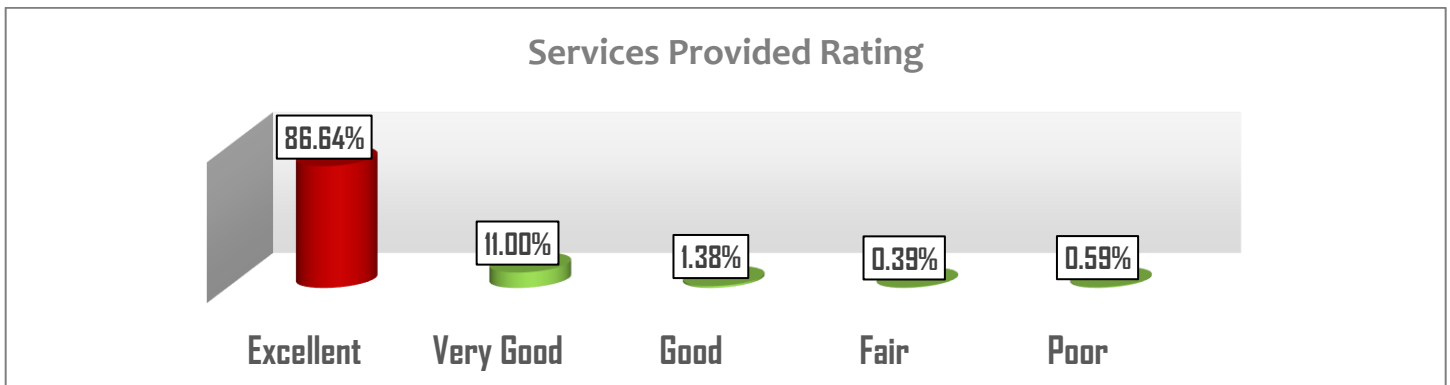
Question 4 – How would you rate the response of staff?



Question 5 – How would you rate the communication from staff on the procedures and actions including answers to questions?



Question 6 – How would you rate the services provided based on your needs/expectations?

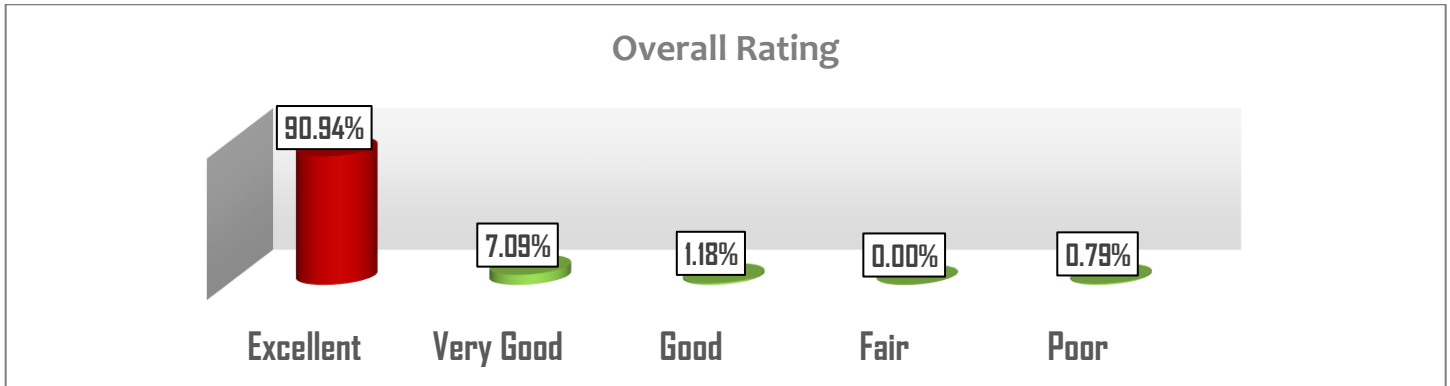




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Question 7 – Overall, how would you rate Garner Fire-Rescue?



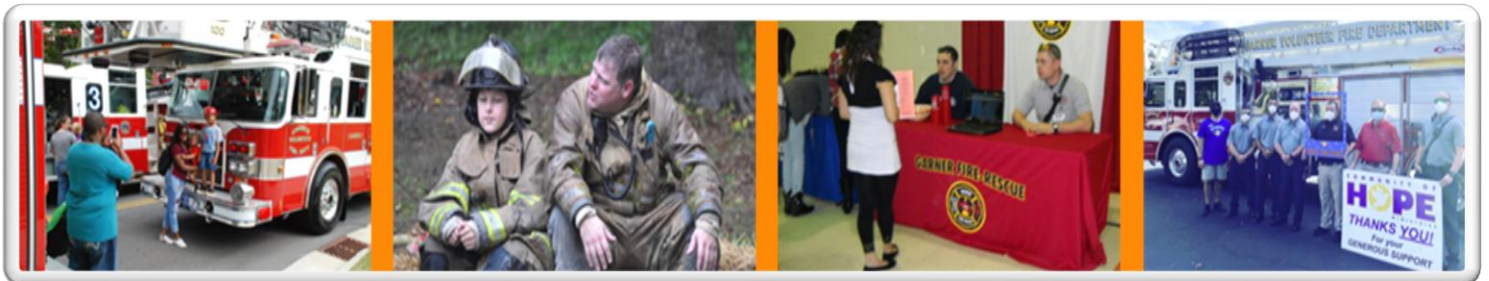


Community Expectations Summary

The input from we community we serve is extremely important as a course is chartered for future direction. Understanding what is most important to the community served has helped to align and correlate agency goals and objectives with customer expectations. The results are shown below:

Question 1 – Please rate the priority of the services and programs provided.

Services & Programs Provided	Score	Ranking
Fire Suppression	7.2	1
Emergency Medical Services (EMS)	7.0	2
Fire Prevention	4.6	3
Hazardous Materials (HazMat)	4.2	4
Technical Rescue	4.0	5
Fire Inspections	3.9	6
Public Education	3.1	7
Citizens Fire Academy	2.0	8

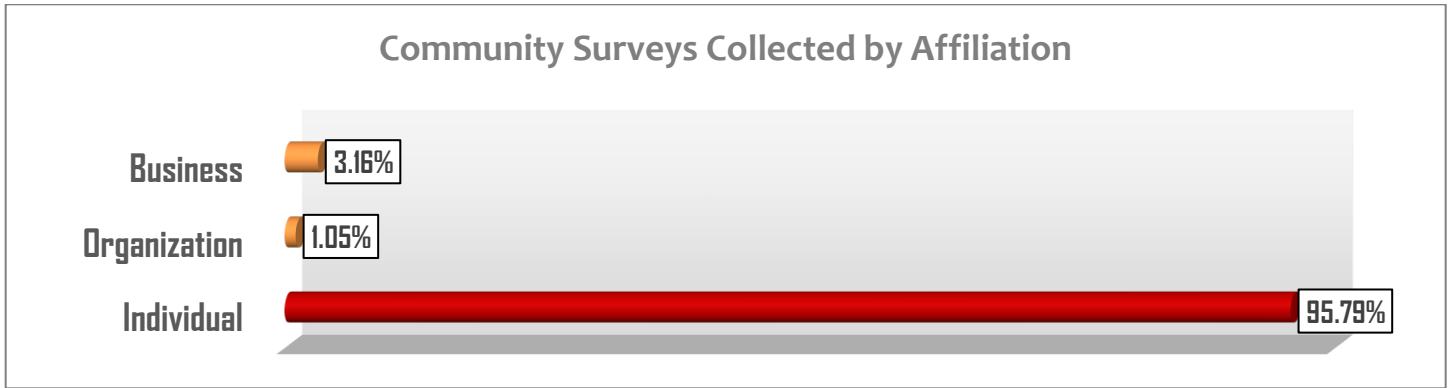




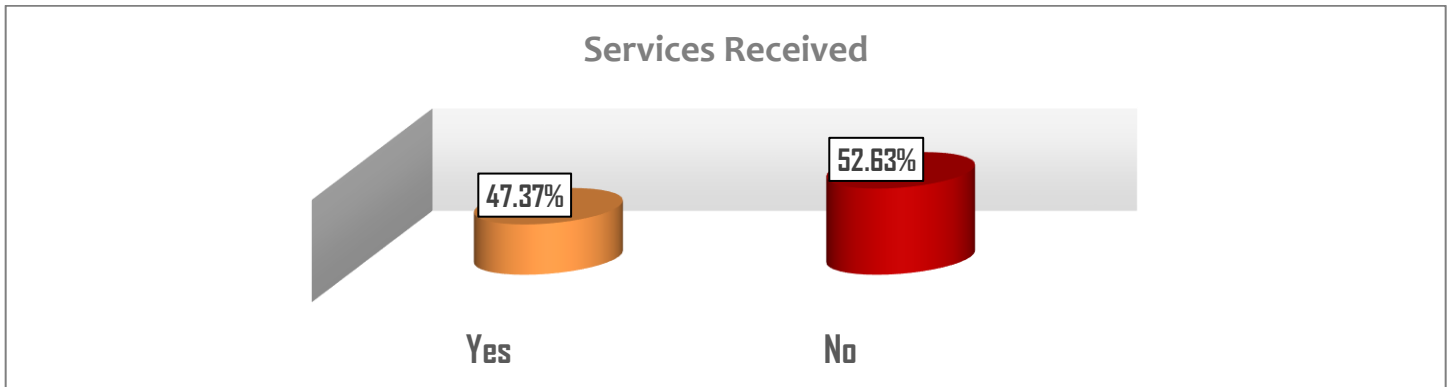
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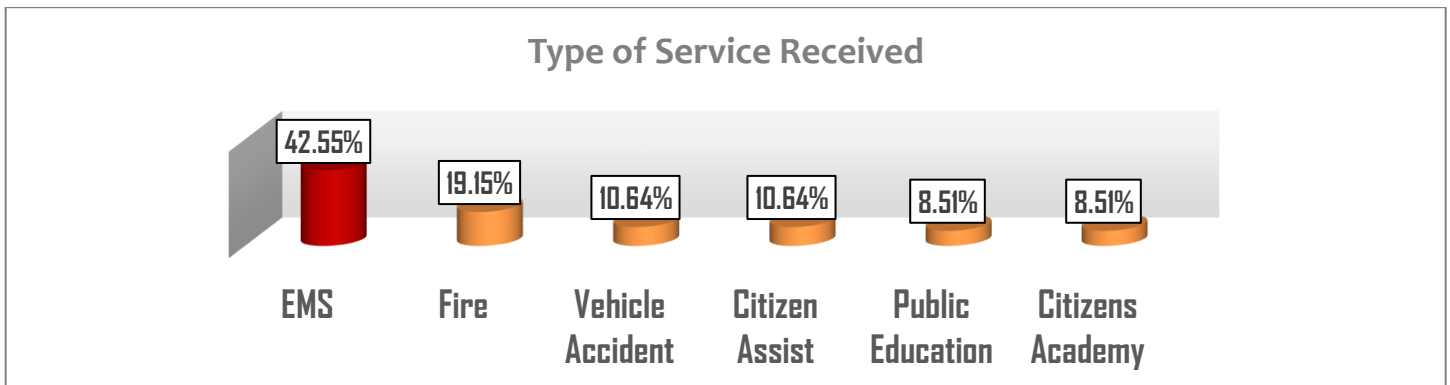
Question 2 – Are you submitting this survey as an:



Question 3 – Have you ever received our services?



Question 4 – If you have received our services, what type of service was provided?

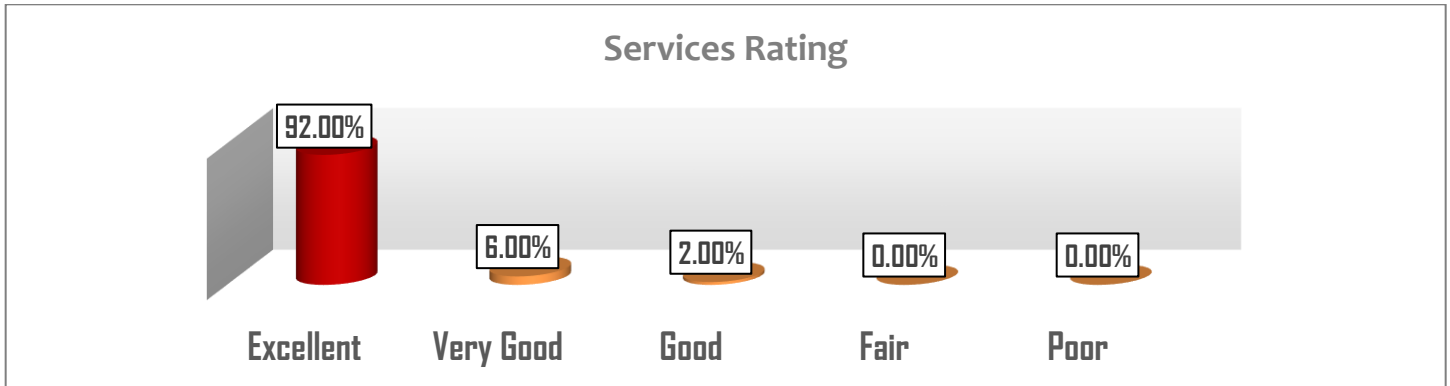




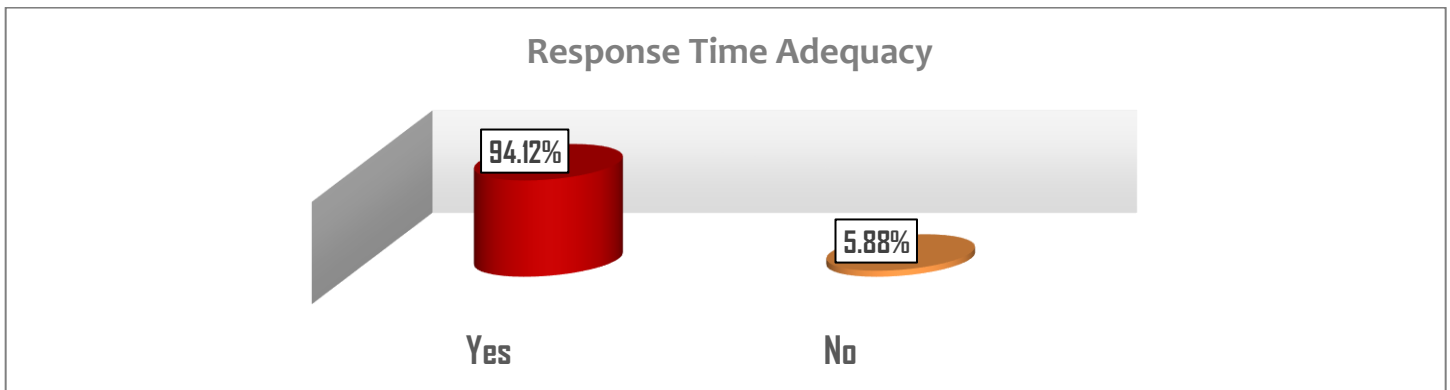
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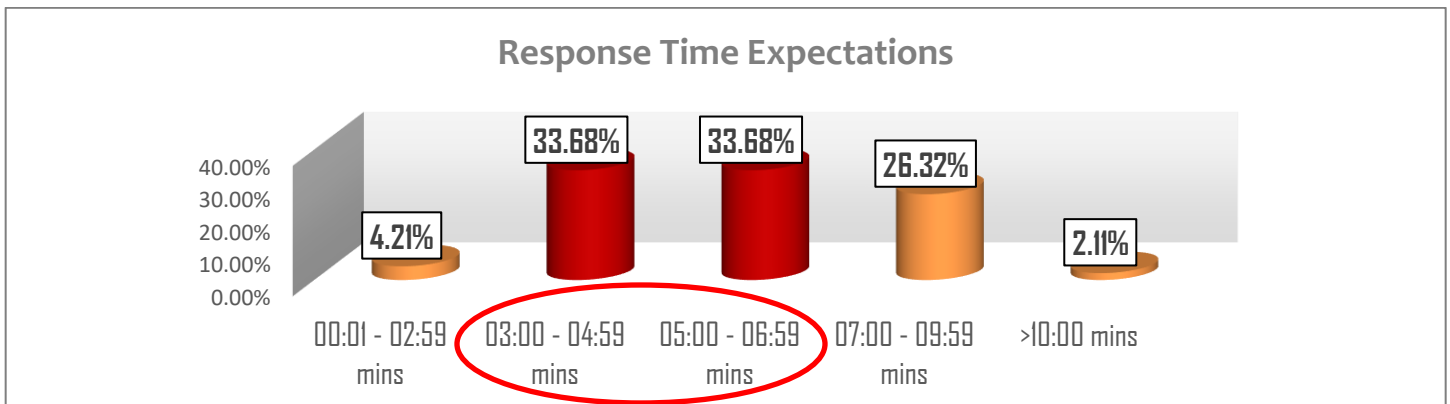
Question 5 – If you received services, how would you rate the services provided?



Question 6 – If you received services, do you feel like Garner Fire-Rescue responded in a timely manner?



Question 7 – What do you expect/feel is the appropriate amount of time it takes for a fire truck to respond to an emergency scene (911 Call-Arrival)?





INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER

OVERVIEW

Equally important in the development of a strategic plan is understanding the expectations of employees. The agency values the input of employees and engaged in several focus groups encompassing all ranks represented by the agency and solicited input utilizing an internal stakeholder survey. Multiple work sessions occurred with different tasks assigned to each working group such as:

- Revisiting the Mission Statement
- Creating New Values
- Creating a New Vision
- Updating Departmental History
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges (SWOC) Analysis
- Define Service Levels, Capacities, & Skills
- Harrisburg Benchmarking Study Review & Comparison
- Executive Summary



When we inform employees by clearly communicating the destination, they develop a sense of direction and focus.

When we inspire employees by explaining why the destination is important, they develop the motivation and determination to see the race through.

When we engage employees in reaching that destination, they become more willing to make decisions, take appropriate risks, and act in the best interests of the organization.



INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER

FEEDBACK

Garner Fire-Rescue offers many services to the community and the prioritization of service delivery components is invaluable to the organization in the creation of the strategic plan. Understanding what is most important to staff has helped to align and correlate agency goals and objectives with employee expectations.

Internal Stakeholders Summary

The employees were asked to prioritize the programs and serviced offered by the agency and to indicate response time expectations. The results are shown below:

Question 1 – Please rate the priority of the services and programs provided.

Services & Programs Provided	Score	Ranking
Fire Suppression	7.7	1
Emergency Medical Services (EMS)	6.8	2
Technical Rescue	4.9	3
Hazardous Materials (HazMat)	4.5	4
Fire Prevention	4.1	5
Public Education	4.0	6
Fire Inspections	2.3	7
Citizens Fire Academy	1.7	8

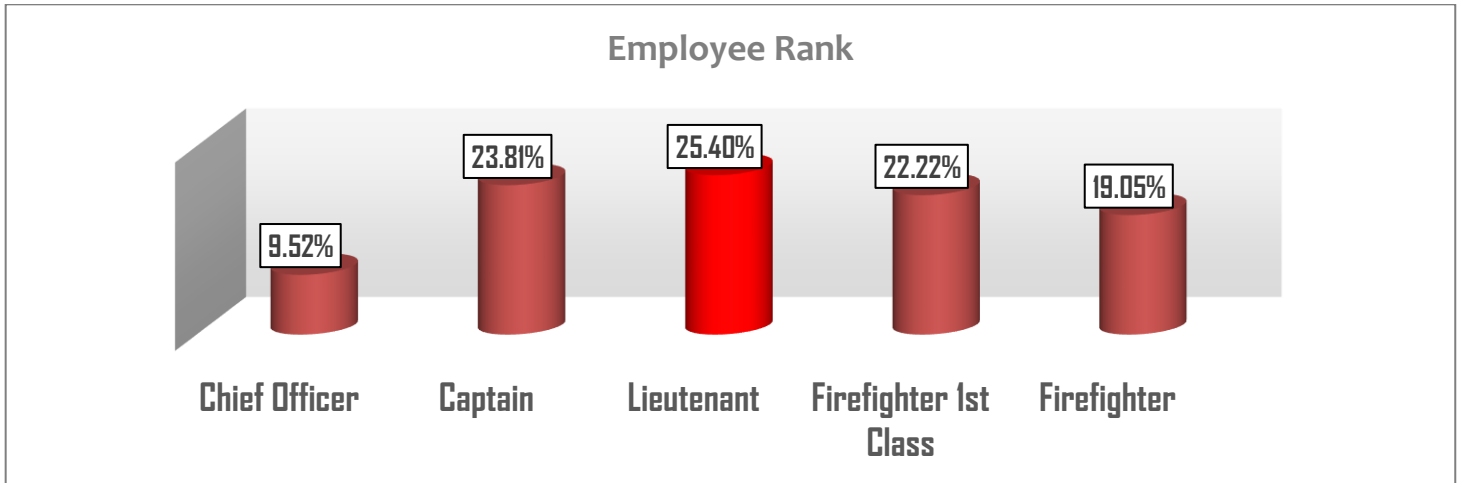




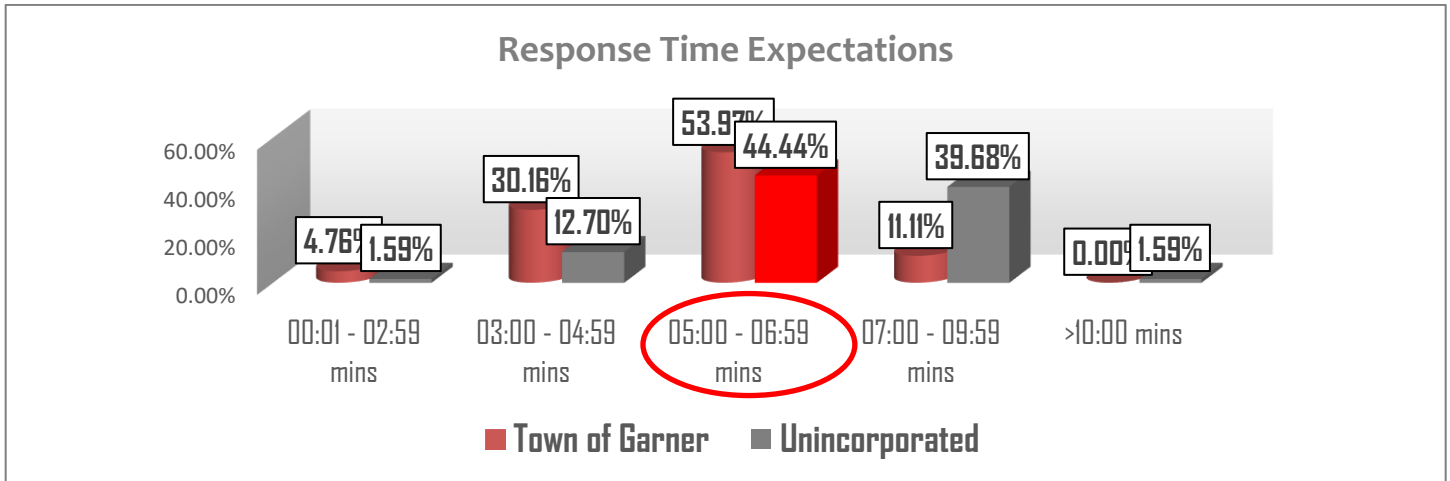
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Question 2 – Please indicate your rank.



Question 3 – What do you expect/feel is the appropriate amount of time it takes for a fire truck to respond to an emergency scene (911 Call-Arrival)?

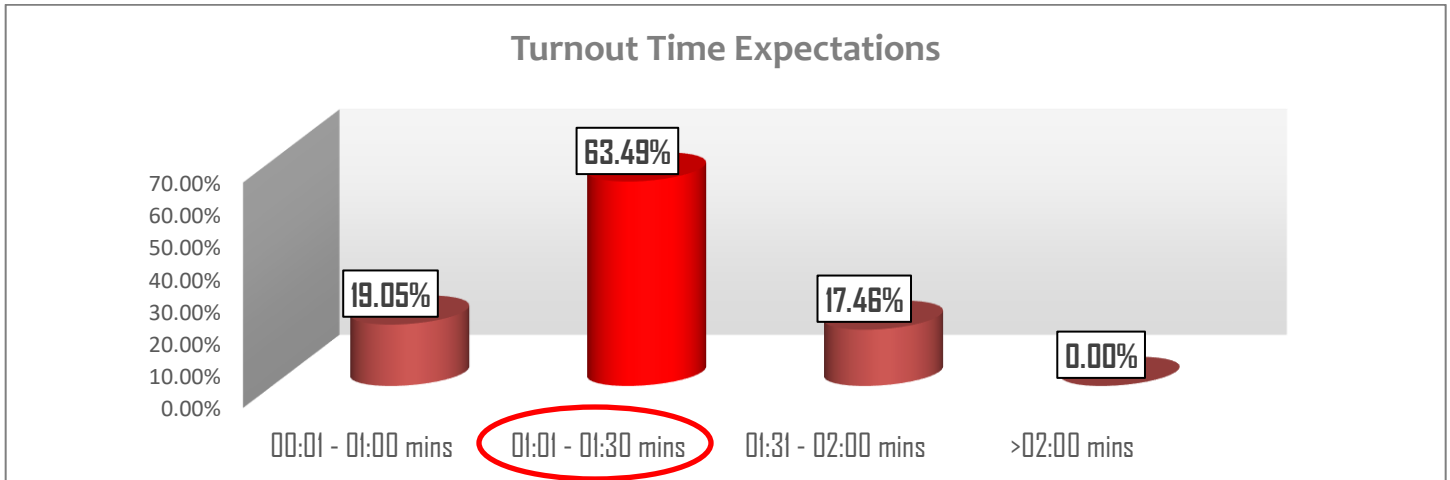




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Question 4 – As identified above, there are multiple elements to response time, but one in particular is controllable by our actions; turnout time. As the ones in control of turnout time, what do you feel is the appropriate amount of time from unit notification to enroute?





HARRISBURG BENCHMARKING

STUDY SUMMARY

A third-party analysis was conducted by North Carolina Fire Rescue Innovative Solutions, LLC to determine how Garner Fire-Rescue compared to similar communities in North Carolina. Below are a few highlights of the study as compared to Apex, Burlington, Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Clayton, Davidson, Gastonia, Harrisburg, Hendersonville, Hickory, Salisbury, Shelby, Statesville, and Mooresville.

Eight areas in which GFR ranked **HIGHEST** include:

1. Actual fires per 1,000 population
2. Percentage of Fire Department who are Firefighters or EMTs
3. Fire as a percentage of all responses
4. Actual fire responses per 1,000 population
5. Percent of full response travel within 8 minutes
6. Percent of full response within 10 minutes
7. Total fires per 1,000 population
8. Square miles of service area

Twelve areas in which GFR ranked **HIGHER THAN MOST** include:

1. Personnel costs as percent of total budget
2. Wages/salaries per FTE
3. Square miles per community fire station
4. Population per community fire station
5. Good intent calls as a percentage of all responses
6. Hazardous conditions as a percent of all responses
7. Mutual or automatic aid received as percent of all incidents
8. Mutual aid given or received as a percent of all incidents
9. Average number of incidents per fire station
10. Percent of turn outs within one minute for first arriving unit
11. Estimated service population
12. Percentage of population age 0-17



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Two areas in which GFR ranked **LOWEST** include:

1. Reserve pumpers, quints and aerials per 10,000 population
2. Structure fires as a percentage of total fires

Two areas in which GFR ranked **LOWER THAN MOST** include:

1. Fire services costs per capita
2. Fire services personnel per 10,000 population
3. Cost per fire department response
4. Operating costs as a percent of total budget
5. Firefighters per 10,000 population
6. Total fire department staff per 10,000 population
7. Administrative staff per 100 firefighters
8. Community fire stations per 10,000 population
9. Other calls not otherwise specified as a percentage of all
10. False alarm responses per 1,000 population
11. Average turnout time for first arriving unit
12. Percent of population aged 65+
13. Density

OVERALL SUMMARY

GFR leads all jurisdictions in fire workload, full complement response times, number of actual working fires and has the largest geographic service area to protect.

GFR protects more kids age 0-17. In addition, the department more heavily integrates automatic and mutual aid than most, has better turnout times than most and provides more good intent and hazardous condition responses than most.

GFR operates fewer reserve apparatus than any other jurisdiction and has the lowest number of structure fires as a percentage of total fires.

GFR costs to provide services are less than most, the total number of firefighters as well as administrative staff are less than most, they operate with fewer fire stations than most, there are fewer senior residents protected and the density is less than most comparable communities.



SERVICE DELIVERY & PROGRAM

PRIORITIES

PRIORITY #1

- **Fire Suppression** | External
- **Fire Suppression** | Internal

PRIORITY #2

- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)** | External
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)** | Internal

PRIORITY #3

- **Fire Prevention** | External
- **Technical Rescue** | Internal

PRIORITY #4

- **Hazardous Materials (HazMat)** | External
- **Hazardous Materials (HazMat)** | Internal

PRIORITY #5

- **Technical Rescue** | External
- **Fire Prevention** | Internal

PRIORITY #6

- **Fire Inspections** | External
- **Public Education** | Internal

PRIORITY #7

- **Public Education** | External
- **Fire Inspections** | Internal

PRIORITY #8

- **Citizens Fire Academy** | External
- **Citizens Fire Academy** | Internal

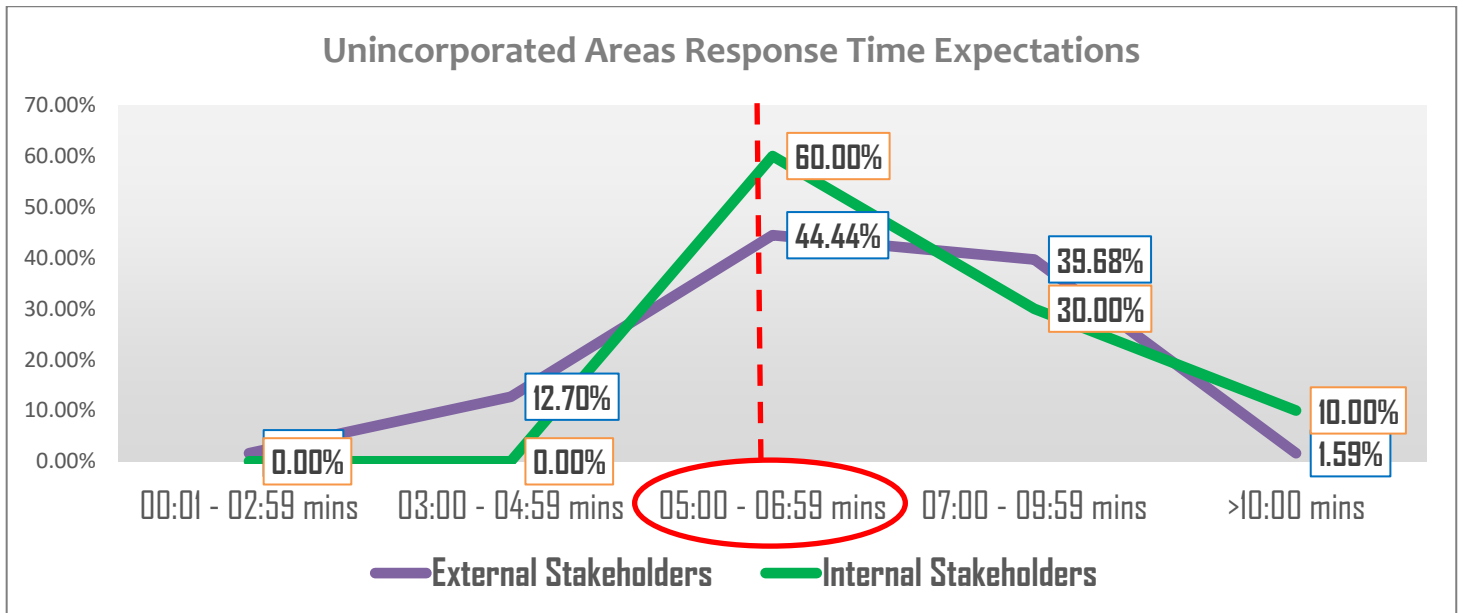
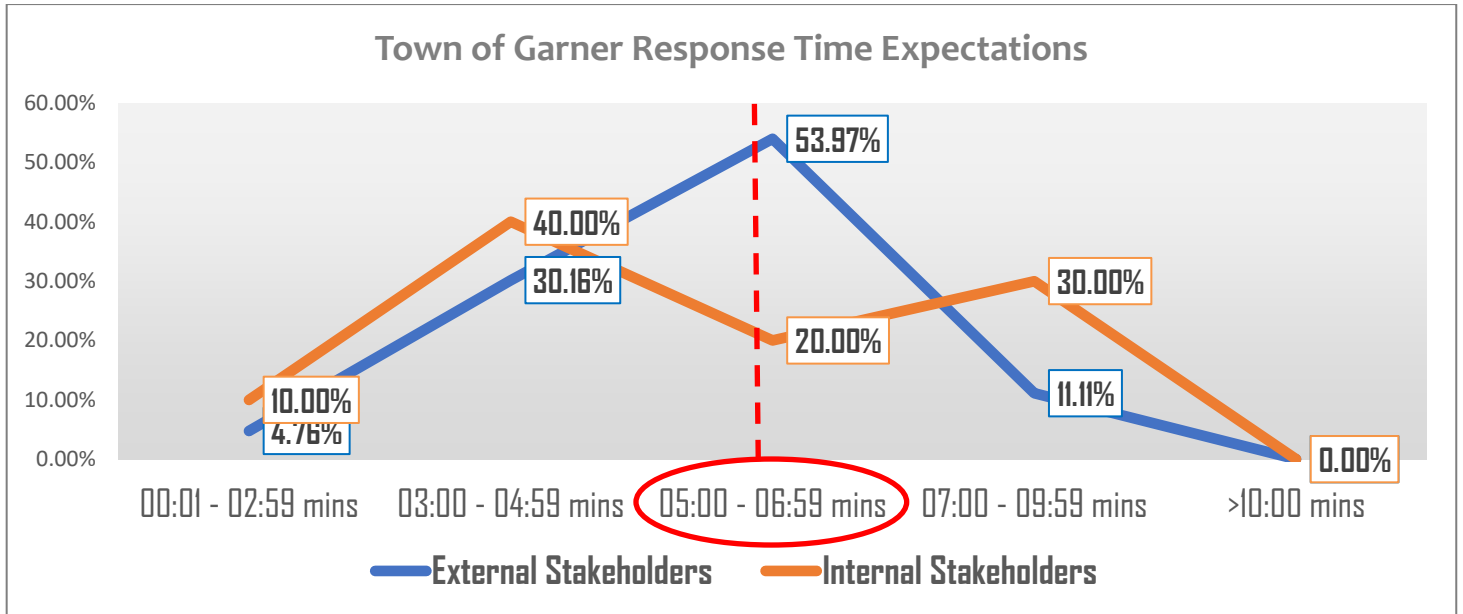


Garner Fire-Rescue

2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

RESPONSE TIME

EXPECTATIONS





LEVELS OF SERVICE

DEFINED

Garner Fire-Rescue firefighters are required to obtain and maintain several certifications prior to their employment and throughout their career in order to achieve higher rank. These certifications are issued through organizations such as North Carolina Department of Insurance, North Carolina Office of EMS, National Fire Academy, and the Department of Homeland Security. Garner firefighters maintain sharp skills through continuing education and training requirements that are among the toughest in the state. Below is a summary of the spectrum of services that Garner Fire-Rescue provides.

Incident Management

- After the attacks on 9/11 in New York, Homeland Security developed a series of incident management certifications that all members (paid and volunteer) obtain. These certifications allow Garner Fire-Rescue to work seamlessly with neighboring departments as well as other public safety agencies such as Police and EMS during small and large scale incidents.

Fire Protection

- Full-time staff members are certified as Firefighter Level 2. This certification consists of 22 different classes in disciplines needed on the fire ground. These include ventilation, fire control, ladders, and building construction.

Hazardous Materials

- Known to the fire service as HazMat, all Garner Fire Rescue members must be certified as Hazmat Operations Level 1. This allows members to handle incidents involving hazardous materials spills and leaks on a small scale such as natural gas leaks and fluid leaks during motor vehicle crashes.

Emergency Medical Services

- Garner Fire-Rescue full-time staff are all certified EMT Basic level providers within the Wake County EMS system. Garner Fire-Rescue responds to medical emergencies such as cardiac arrests, chest pains, diabetic problems, and respiratory distress among others. Firefighters are certified to administer several life-saving medications including Albuterol, Narcan, and Epinephrine.

Technical Rescue

- In 2012, Garner Fire-Rescue completed the process to become certified as a "Heavy Rescue" provider. Garner Fire-Rescue has the training and equipment to respond to a number of technical rescue incidents such as high angle rope rescue, surface water rescue, and vehicle and machinery rescue. Firefighters also participate in survival classes throughout the year to learn how to self-rescue as well as rescue other downed firefighters.

Apparatus Operations

- Once a staff member has gained some experience, they have the ability to promote internally. The next steps in the career ladder involve driving the apparatus. These members go through a driver operator certification series for engines and ladder trucks. These certifications consist of 10 classes that focus on the operation and anatomy of a fire pump, water supply systems, hydraulics, and truck maintenance.

Fire Officer

- The highest series of certifications involved the training of members to become officers within the fire department. Captains must obtain NC Fire Officer Level I while battalion chiefs must obtain Fire Officer Level II. The last two classes in the series focus on the role of a chief officer in an administrative role in the fire service.



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ANALYSIS

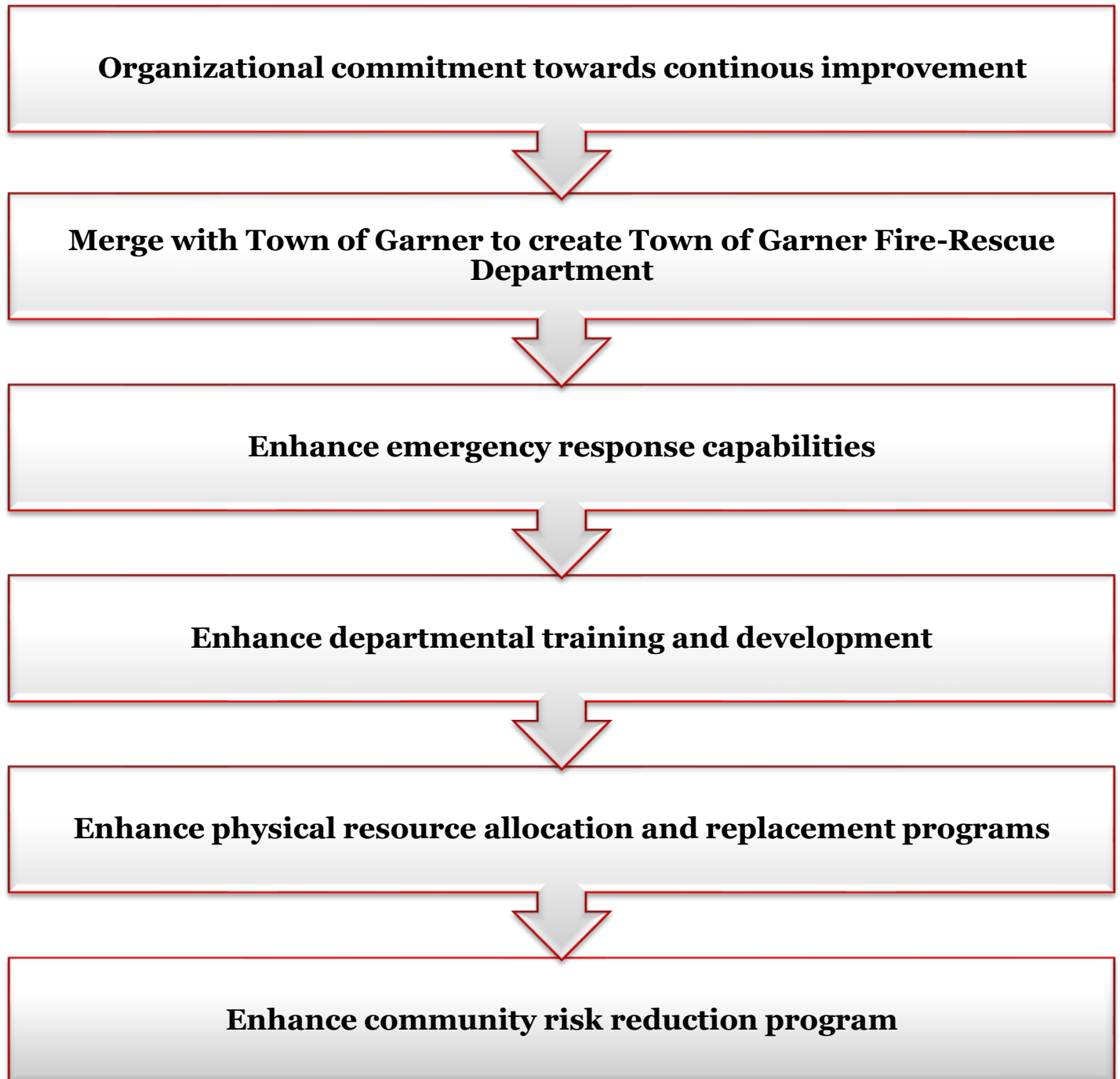
<p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">W</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">O</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHALLENGES</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Progressive in operations and administration -Talented, well trained, and highly qualified personnel -Wellness/Fitness -Value Diversity -Proactive cancer prevention policies -Forward-thinking planning and mitigation processes -Respect from community -Improvement of previous ISO ratings -Operationally efficient -Began path of Fire Service Accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Aging facilities -Over-commitment of non-emergency related activities based on available resources -Social media presence -Lack of continuity between financing entities -Limited fixed facility training options and inconsistent training schedule -Aging PPE inventory and lack of long-range replacement schedule -Inadequate fire prevention staff -Lack of promotional opportunities -Managing rapid community growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Improvement in external relationships -Ability to properly evaluate departmental data -Available talent at all levels of the organization -Obtain accredited status from CPSE -AVL closest unit response program -Employee’s willingness to seek external training opportunities -Staff’s participation in county level fire service committees -Highly motivated and intelligent firefighter rank -Availability of technological resources -Fire safety house to improve outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Development and community growth are out pacing FD growth -New manmade and natural disasters (active shooter & COVID19) -Overuse of electronic communications -Lack of daily staffing to handle day- to-day absences -Annual increase of emergency call volume -Increase of uncontrollable operating expenses -Salary compression among staff -Internal professional development -Continuity of operations between all shifts -Meeting certification, training, and business mandates



STRATEGIC

ACTION ITEMS

Review of the critical issues and service gaps facing the agency provided the foundation for the creation of six (6) strategic action items supported by goals and objectives.





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STRATEGIC

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To conclude a strategic planning process, realistic goals and objectives are identified and established. Through the implementation of goals and objectives, staff assignments and timelines are created with critical tasks for each goal. The goals are outcome statements that define what an organization is trying to accomplish. In contrast to goals, the objectives are very precise, time-based, measurable actions that support the completion of the goal. The step brings finality to the strategic planning process where everything is put into action.

Goal 1	Maintain organizational commitment towards continuous improvement.
Objective 1A	Achieve fire service accreditation through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE).
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure support from governing body to pursue fire service accreditation. Assign accreditation manager, seek needed training, build team. Develop Community Risk Assessment/Standards of Cover (CRA/SOC). Update Strategic Plan (SP). Complete the Self-Assessment Manual (SAM). Register to become a candidate agency once documents are finalized. Prepare for site visit and gain recommendation for accreditation.
Objective 1B	Conduct a formal and documented appraisal annually for all programs and services offered to determine impacts, outcomes, performance, and progress.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate Criterion 5A: Prevention Program Evaluate Criterion 5B: Prevention Program Evaluate Criterion 5C: Fire Investigation, Origin, and Cause Program Evaluate Criterion 5D: Domestic Preparedness Program Evaluate Criterion 5E: Fire Suppression Program Evaluate Criterion 5F: Emergency Medical Service Program Evaluate Criterion 5G: Technical Rescue Program Evaluate Criterion 5H: Hazardous Materials Program Evaluate Criterion 8B: Training and Education Program Evaluate Criterion 9B: Communication Systems Program Evaluate Criterion 11B: Wellness/Fitness Program Develop a standardized, consistent, and comprehensive annual appraisal template (PTR).
Objective 1C	Evaluate response capabilities of response times and performance objectives to all emergency incidents. Identify gaps/variations and how to address them.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor response times for each risk category and risk level per fire management zone to improve performance gaps based on benchmarks. Identify total response time components for delivery of services in each service program area.
Objective 1D	Maintain and evaluate all core accreditation documents.



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<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all components of documents are current. • Review all adopted methodologies. • Review all-hazard plan information and update as needed. • Utilize the strategic plan during each budget process to ensure alignment. • Make needed strategic plan updates and publish to governing body and staff. • Develop an interactive method for members to receive new and updated information explaining agency goals and objectives (PTR).
<p>Objective 1E</p>	<p>Improve communications and notifications systems for policies and procedures among internal and external stakeholders.</p>
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance current conflict of interest policy to include all staff members (PTR). • Review all current policies and procedures to ensure they are current with applicable federal OSHA regulations (PTR). • Create a process for receipt and acknowledgement of new and updated policies (PTR). • Work with other regional fire agencies and RWECC to set a jointly agreed upon standard for call processing and methods to evaluate and improve existing times (PTR). • Seek out external resources to assist in developing a new approach to agency recruitment efforts that result in a better reflection of the community served (PTR).
<p>Goal 2</p>	<p>Merge with the Town of Garner.</p>
<p>Objective 2A</p>	<p>Select the appropriate committee members and representatives.</p>
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a committee. • Create a timeline and agenda of meetings and topics. • Have fire chief work with town management on subtopics and details.
<p>Objective 2B</p>	<p>Acquire a consultant for a third-party analysis of the merger.</p>
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the scope of work. • Conduct cost analysis, focus group interviews with current staff, past and current trend with other mergers, additional fire department and town resources needed, and timeline of merger development. • Select the appropriate consulting firm. • Work with the firm to complete the listed tasks.
<p>Objective 2C</p>	<p>Complete the merger process.</p>
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin a timeline of the merger process. • Rebrand the fire department and educate the public. • Educate town staff on fire department requirements and internal policies. • Train employees on town policies and procedures. • Transfer resources to the town. • Reevaluate the merger process accordingly and make changes as needed.



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Goal 3	Enhance emergency response capabilities.
Objective 3A	Open additional fire station (#5) on the southwest side of the district.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure land for station. Finalize agreements with Wake County and Town of Garner. Design and construct station. Hire staff.
Objective 3B	Add a second battalion chief to each shift.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm funding in budget process. Conduct a promotional process.
Objective 3C	Develop a future fire station location study.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding for RFP. Develop the RFP for outside third-party vendor selection. Complete the final study and disseminate to internal and external stakeholders. Develop future staffing needs to support current and expected growth (PTR). Comprehensively develop the future probability and impacts of growth on existing service demands and performance (PTR).
Objective 3D	Add a second company to station 3.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide data specific to the need to determine the feasibility. Confirm funding in the budget process for personnel only, apparatus not required. Conduct promotions and hiring process.
Goal 4	Enhance departmental training and personnel development programs.
Objective 4A	Improve the existing training program and create a new monthly training process.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the existing training program by creating focus groups for each program area and provide more guidance for meeting needs and requirements department-wide. Create monthly training topics for all shifts with outlined requirements. Provide at least two facility-based training opportunities annually. Develop a more systematic personnel development program for all ranks. Hire additional FTE to support training needs. Work with partner agencies to develop an overall ICS/NIMS training program for large-scale incidents (PTR). Provide additional training to frontline supervisors to result in a more objective annual evaluation process for members (PTR). Complete applicable formal coursework for both the agency appointed health/safety officer and fire officers in health and safety program areas (PTR). Develop minimal technical rescue training tasks/standards across disciplines and ensure that quarterly and annual required skills for certification are met (PTR). Perform a review of the technical rescue program to determine if there is a need for a change in training requirements or station assignments based on growth (PTR).



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study the feasibility of creating a component to the command and staff development program that encourages the pursuit of professional credentialing (PTR).
Objective 4B	Evaluate operational performance through performance-based measurements.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate individual and crew performance. • Implement a quarterly multi-company drill schedule. • Participate in four quarterly automatic-aid drills annually.
Objective 4C	Evaluate current training resources and keep current.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on services and programs provided by the department, evaluate training materials to include books, props, and online resources at least annually to ensure all are updated as needed. • Create a student evaluation form for training, define its use and purpose, and implement to determine the reliability of training conducted (PTR).
Goal 5	Enhance physical resource allocation and replacement programs.
Objective 5A	Evaluate the current apparatus maintenance program and sustain the replacement schedule.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess all apparatus and provide a report on condition and needs annually. • Review apparatus replacement plan criteria and ensure it aligns with the department's needs. • Evaluate preventive and repair programs. • Replace Ladder 1 in FY21. • Replace Engine 9 in FY23. • Replace Engine 5 in FY23.
Objective 5B	Evaluate the small/loose equipment program and PPE maintenance program.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a small/loose equipment maintenance and replacement program with a tracking system including non-disposable items (PTR). • Assess all PPE and provide a report on condition and needs.
Objective 5C	Evaluate the facility capital improvement plan.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a capital improvement plan to address existing issues at all facilities. • Create a new facility needs assessment. • Replace station 2. • Develop a plan to add a fixed-facility training center. • Replace the SCBA compressor system. • Evaluate the need for a formalized replacement schedule for facility fixtures, furnishings, and mechanical systems (PTR). • Evaluate the ability to relocate workout equipment and turnout gear away from apparatus bays (PTR). • Evaluate the feasibility of installing fire suppression systems in existing facilities that do not have them (PTR).



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Goal 6	Improve community risk reduction (CRR) efforts within the community served.
Objective 6A	Promote a broader culture of involvement in the community.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to host Garner Citizens Fire Academy annually. • Continue to host the Firemen’s Day Festival on the first Saturday in October annually. • Strive to have a presence at all community wide events. • Engage stakeholders on social media outlets at least three times weekly (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter). • Engage interested and affected parties within the community in interest-based discussions to identify, prioritize, treat, and measure risks and outcomes of intervention strategies. • Identify and build upon local defined partnerships that align with the organizational mission, vision, and values. • Engage members of vulnerable populations in their homes to assess behaviors and conditions that could result in injury or death.
Objective 6B	Evaluate and improve the existing fire and life safety education programs.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a full-time fire and life safety educator position. • Evaluate the life safety educational resources (tangibles) needed to provide education within the community. • Evaluate and create needed educational programs to reduce fires and risk. • Improve existing fire safety house. • Evaluate hosting CPR and basic first aid courses in collaboration with EMS in fire stations on a quarterly basis. • Seek out any applicable grant funding sources for fire and life safety programs. • Focus community risk assessment efforts at the station level to stimulate involvement and action by operational personnel. • Seek additional opportunities to utilize the CRA/SOC to guide the community risk reduction program efforts (PTR).
Objective 6C	Evaluate and improve the existing fire and life safety education programs.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to have operational input during the plan review process (TRC). • Continue to share resources to include the fire department’s RMS system for inspections and pre-plans and NFPA code access.



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Goal 7	Improve information technology (IT) components such as policies, procedures, security, software, and hardware.
Objective 7A	Select and migrate to a new records management system to replace Firehouse.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Firehouse Software for end-of-life by cleaning up records. • Establish internal focus groups to evaluate vendors to determine replacement. • Gather initial and recurring cost information for the FY22 budget. • Establish a sandbox account for testing. • Establish an internal RMS team to review and provide feedback. • Establish end-user training schedule in person. • Create how-to videos for modules as a reference. • Establish an end-user testing period. • Migrate all necessary modules based on preferences. • Establish a go-live date.
Objective 7B	Evaluate current hardware within fixed facilities.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an inventory of assets within fire stations. • Create an IT repair form to assist with troubleshooting minor IT issues. • Create a comprehensive technology plan to update, evaluate, and procure hardware and software. • Ensure policy protects the integrity of infrastructure, including networks, programs, and devices, from unauthorized access that could disrupt essential services. • Budget for in station digital dashboard and messaging system for FY23. • Install in station digital dashboard and messaging system in FY23.
Objective 7C	Evaluate current software utilized across different platforms.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate migrating from Active911 to First Due (mobile applications). • Select and implement a new mobile application — First Due. • Evaluate software utilized within fixed facilities to ensure it meets agency needs.



THE SUCCESS OF

THE STRATEGIC PLAN

A strong strategic plan positions the agency for success and clearly defines to internal and external stakeholders what that looks like at every level along the way. The process of collecting and gathering feedback through community engagement is not a one-time task, but something that becomes an integral part of the short and long-term planning process. Communicating to employees, governance, and citizens is essential to fulfilling the agency's purpose in order to provide the best service delivery possible to the community served.

Components of the plan are dependent upon support received from the employees, residents, and elected officials. Understanding the vested interest that all parties have in the success of the plan is paramount as the agency positions itself into the future by way of continuous improvement.

“THANK YOU TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS PLAN”

If you don't measure the results of your plan, you can't tell success from failure.

If you can't see success, you can't reward it.

If you can't reward success, you're probably rewarding failure.

If you can't see success, you can't learn from it.

If you can't recognize failure, you can't correct it.

If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.

Reinventing Government
David Osborn and Ted Gaebler