STRATEGIC PLAN

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY

2024 - 2028

2024-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

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STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

GENERAL INFORMATION

Introduction

Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority (Puget Sound Fire) provides all hazard response services to the residents, businesses, and visitors of the cities of Covington, Kent, Maple Valley, SeaTac, Tukwila, and King County Fire Districts #37 and #43. Puget Sound Fire has been a Commission on Fire Accreditation (CFAI) accredited agency since 2004. Puget Sound Fire is always seeking to provide the highest level of service, identify innovative ways to serve the community's needs, and implement operational efficiencies.

Puget Sound Fire has patterned this plan according to the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) framework for a "Community-driven Strategic Plan." Input from external and internal stakeholders was solicited and synthesized to provide the foundational context to support this strategic plan. Puget Sound Fire's executives used this information and additional exercises to identify the organization's initiatives, goals, and objectives.

Organizational Background

Puget Sound Fire traces its roots to the City of Kent Fire Department. In 1927, Charles "Brick" Bridges was appointed Fire Chief of the Kent Fire Department. In 1948, King County Fire District #37 (KCFD#37) was formed, and Chief Bridges was named administrator of both agencies. This was the beginning of a relationship that has lasted to this day. In 1965, the Kent City Council hired its first paid staff. Chief Bridges retired and was replaced by Tom Foster. 1974 saw a contractual merger of KCFD#37 into the Kent FD.

In the mid-1980's a voter approved capital improvement bond request allowed the Kent Fire Department to replace two aging fire stations, Stations 73 and 76, remodel Station 71, and build Station 74 and the Police/Fire Training Center and a vehicle maintenance facility. The voters in KCFD#37 approved a levy lid-lift at the same time and Station 75 was built. This department grew from a five (5) station department to a seven (7) station department. The Kent Fire Department also purchased six (6) new fire engines to update our fleet. In 2003, King County Fire District replaced aging Station 77 by building a new station and in 2009, built Station 78. The Kent Fire Department then became an eight (8) station department.

On July 1, 2010, these two agencies became the founding members of the Kent Fire Department RFA. In 2016, Kent Fire Department RFA changed its name to Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority. Contracts for service with the City of SeaTac in 2015, KCFD #43 (which includes the City of Maple Valley) in 2018, and the annexation of the City of Tukwila on January 1, 2024, have seen Puget Sound Fire grow to a 17-station fire authority providing service to a population of approximately 265,000 people covering 118 square miles.

Today, Puget Sound Fire continues to be a regional innovator and leader. Puget Sound Fire is a founding member and provides all administrative support to the South King County Fire Training Consortium (SKCFTC). The SKCFTC provides training in industry best practices to support regional operational consistency. This training program drives effective and safe operations for 13 fire departments. Puget Sound Fire deployed the FD CARES program in 2015, introducing Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) to the region. Puget Sound Fire has three CARES teams, consisting of a registered nurse and a social worker, on duty each day responding to non-emergent calls for service and helping people navigate complex medical or mental health issues. Puget Sound Fire provided the leadership and support needed to deploy testing sites and mobile vaccination programs across South King County during the COVID 19 pandemic. Puget Sound Fire has gained strong support from the community because of our commitment to finding innovative ways to serve the needs of our changing community.

Message from the Fire Chief

BRIAN CARSON
FIRE CHIEF

Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority is proud to be a trusted partner in the communities we serve. Our vision is effective and sustainable fire and EMS services that maximize the resources entrusted to us. Being a large, $110 million business, with multiple internal business units, including FD CARES, Fire Prevention, the Training Consortium, and the Fire Garage and the annexation of the City of Tukwila into Puget Sound Fire has created many strategic opportunities over the past year.

Even though we approach the department structure in terms of a business model, we are first and foremost a fire department, and the foundation of Puget Sound Fire is Operations. The organizational structure is still largely based on a seven-station city fire department and that structure does not adequately serve the business units or Operations.

Strategic planning and goals will be a dedicated focus during the year as Puget Sound Fire works diligently to implement the Business Transformation Program recommended by SIA Partners. The goal is to create a new streamlined organizational structure that is expandable and retractable, as needed.

The Business Transformation Program includes:

- Complete a strategic reorganization.
- Create a new operating model for Finance.
- Create a new operating model for Data Management.
- Create a new operating model for the ERP.
- Create a standardized operating model for Project Management

Additionally, Puget Sound Fire grew in size when the citizens of the City of Tukwila voted to annex into the Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority. This increased the levels of service for the Tukwila community with the addition of community relations and public education programs, a larger Fire Marshal's office, and a community injury and illness prevention program. In addition, the Governance Board increased from six (6) voting members to nine (9) voting members.

While we adapt to these changes, we will be focusing on the following strategic initiatives:

- Investing in our people and our future.
- Enhancing operational capabilities.
- Strengthening our culture.
- Transforming our business practices.
- Investing in our infrastructure.
- Connecting with our communities.

Finally, I am truly thankful to the community partnerships and the trust you have placed in the Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority. We will always strive to earn and maintain your trust through dedication and selfless service. Our employees are truly exceptional people who exist to serve and care for people with compassion and professionalism.

Thank you for allowing us to serve.

Brian Carson, Fire Chief
Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority

DRAFT

Our Guiding Principles

Mapping our goals to our vision.

PURPOSE

Professionally and compassionately helping people.

VISION

To be a trusted resource for building safe and healthy communities.

MISSION

To provide effective and sustainable services that meet the needs of a changing community with the resources entrusted to us.

CORE VALUES

Integrity

We believe in holding ourselves accountable for our actions and living our shared values.

Innovation

We believe in continuous improvement through collaboration.

Inclusion

We believe in the strength diversity brings to our organization and communities.

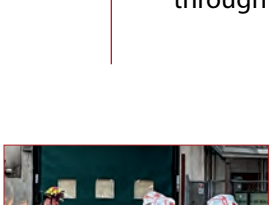
Service

We believe in exceeding the needs of our communities through exceptional customer service and leadership.

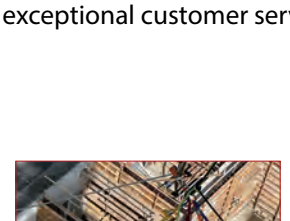
PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Fire Suppression/EMS

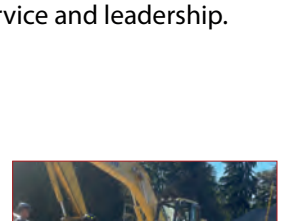
FD CARES (non-emergent response)



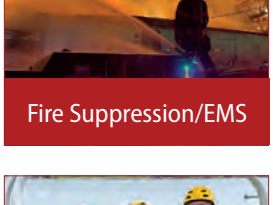
Hazardous Materials Response



High / Low-Angle Rescue



Trench Rescue



Swiftwater / Stillwater Rescue

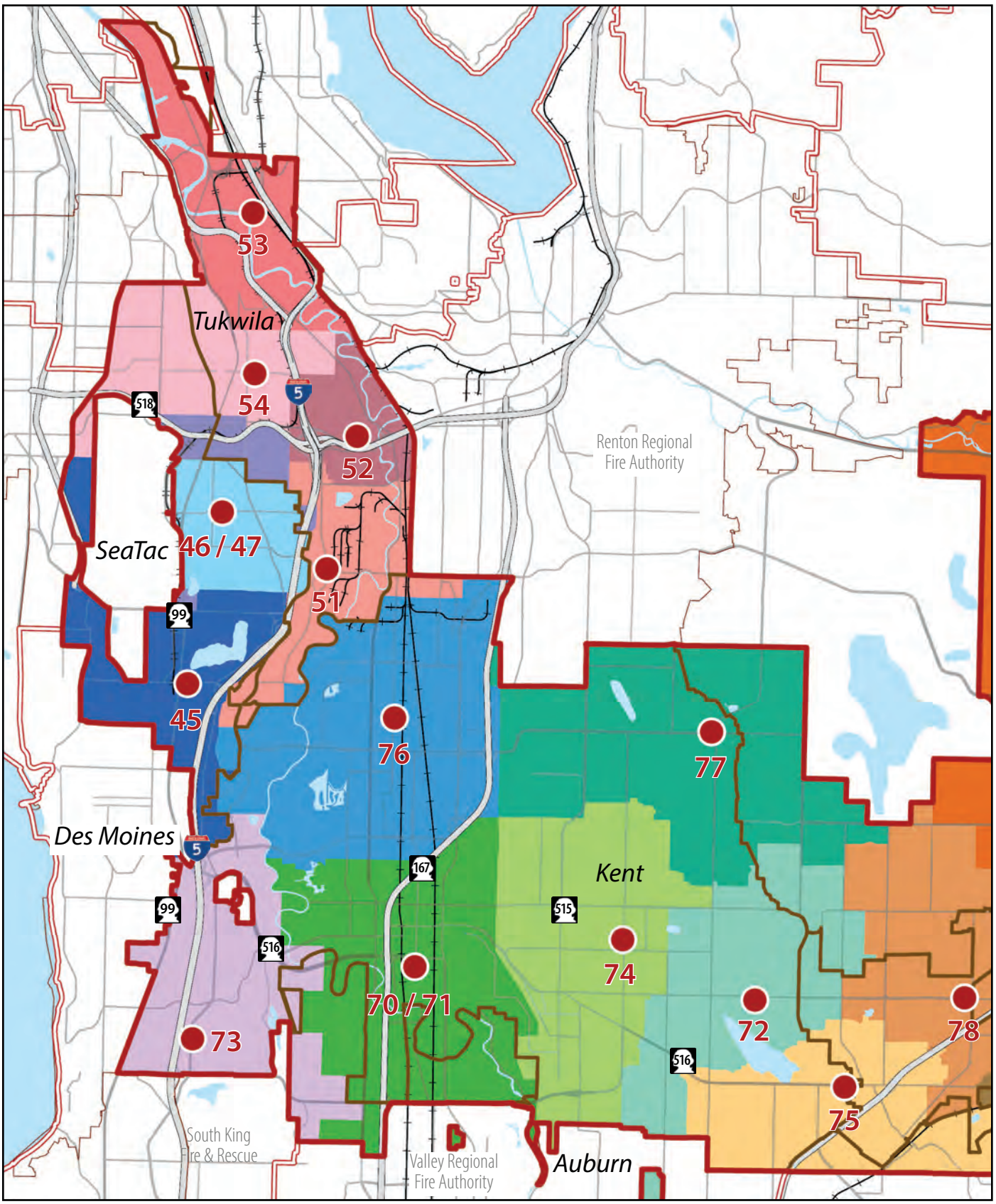
Emergency Management

Training

Fire Inspections and Permitting

Community Relations

Response Area



Station 74 HQ
24611 116 Ave SE
Kent, WA 98030

Station 45
3011 S 200 St.
SeaTac, WA 98198

Station 46/47
3521 S 170 St.
SeaTac, WA 98188

Station 51
17951 Southcenter Pkwy
Tukwila, WA 98188

Station 52
15447 65th Ave S
Tukwila, WA 98188

Station 53
4202 S 115th St.
Tukwila, WA 98168

Station 54
4237 South 144th St.
Tukwila, WA 98168

Station 70/71
504 W Crow St.
Kent, WA 98032

Station 72
25620 140 Ave SE
Kent, WA 98042

Station 73
26512 Military Rd S
Kent, WA 98032

Station 75
15635 SE 272nd St.
Kent, WA 98042

Station 76
20676 72nd Ave S
Kent, WA 98032

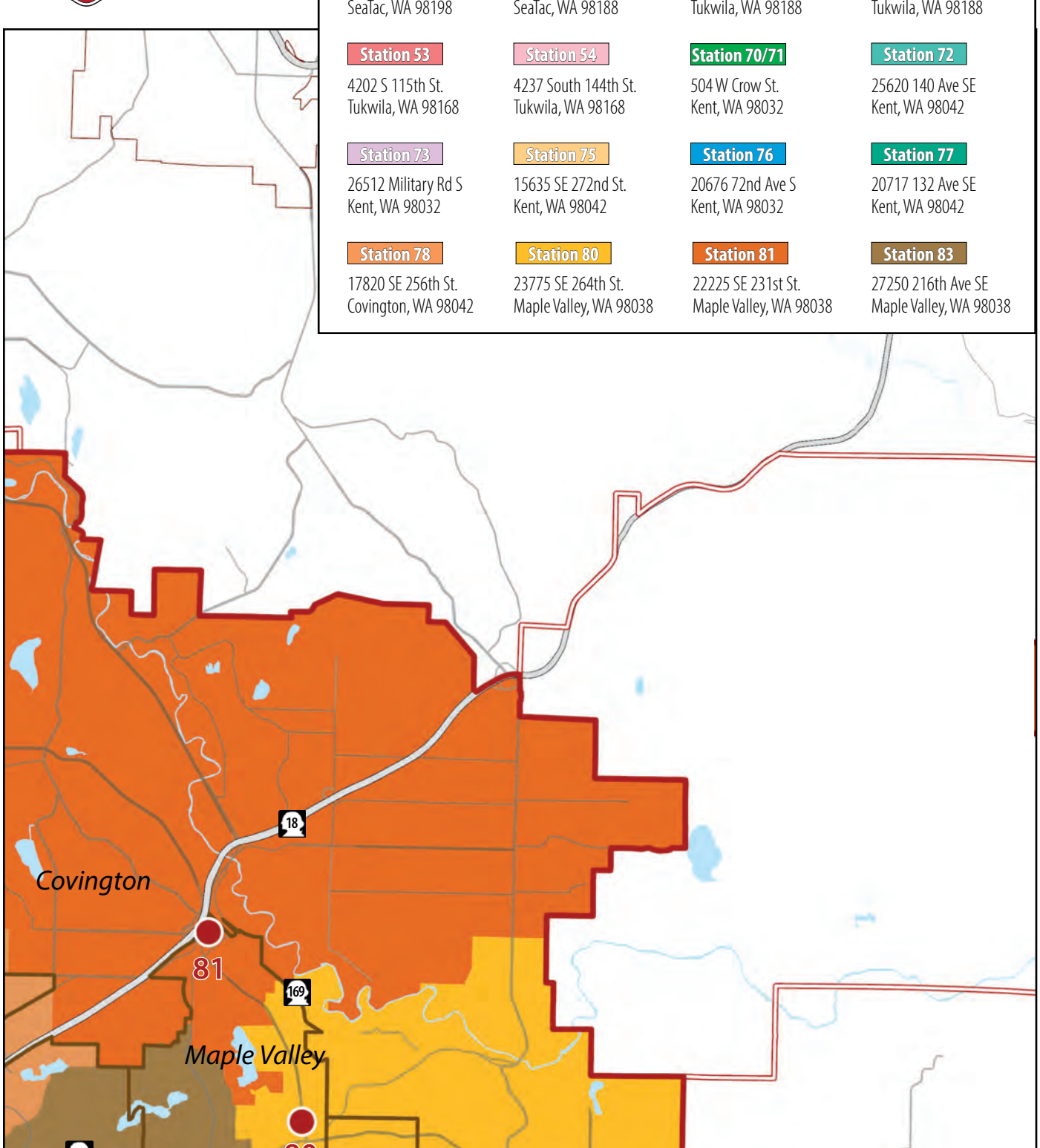
Station 77
20717 132 Ave SE
Kent, WA 98042

Station 78
17820 SE 256th St.
Covington, WA 98042

Station 80
23775 SE 264th St.
Maple Valley, WA 98038

Station 81
22225 SE 231st St.
Maple Valley, WA 98038

Station 83
27250 216th Ave SE
Maple Valley, WA 98038



Fire Station Apparatus Profile

As of January, 2024

Station 45

Battalion Chief 345
Engine 345

Station 46/47

Engine 347
Ladder 346
FD CARES 346

Station 51

Ladder 351

Station 52

Battalion Chief 352
Engine 352

Station 53

Engine 353
Rescue Boat 353

Station 54

Engine 354

Station 71

Engine 371
Engine 471
Heavy Rescue 307
Aid 371

Station 72

Engine 372
Rescue Boat 372
ATV 375

Station 73

Engine 373
Foam Trailer 373
(Zone 3 asset)

Station 74

District Chief 307
Engine 374
Ladder 374
FD CARES 374
Air Rig 374

Station 75

Quint 375
HAZMAT/Decon 375
Tender 375

Station 76

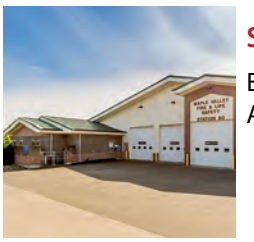
Quint 376
HAZMAT 376
Vehicle Maintenance

Station 77

Engine 377

Station 78

Engine 378
Brush 378
Tender 378



Station 80

Engine 380
ATV 380

Station 81

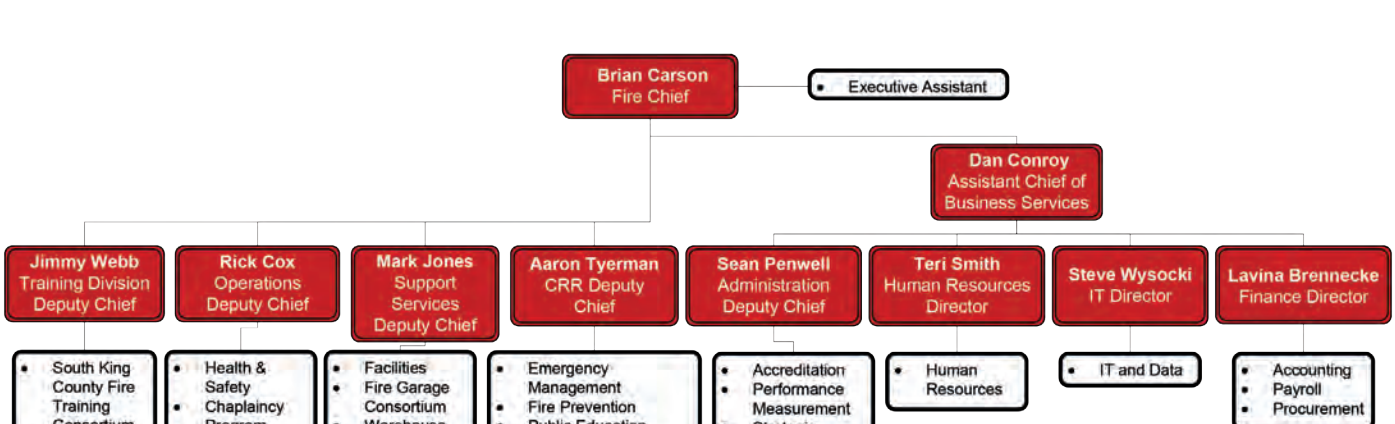
Battalion Chief 381
Engine 381
Brush 381
Tender 381

Station 83

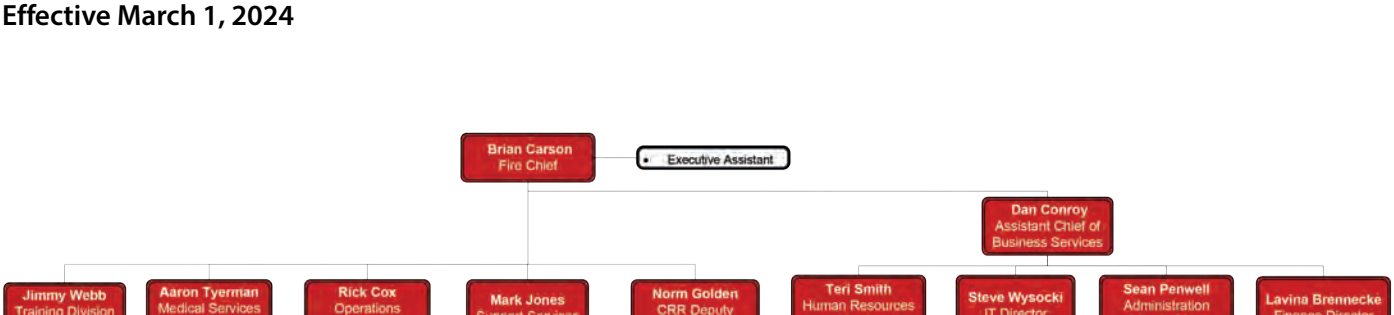
Engine 383

Organizational Structure

Effective November 1, 2023



Effective March 1, 2024



COMMUNITY-DRIVEN STRATEGIC PLANNING

Puget Sound Fire is an organization that is continually striving to meet the needs of an ever-changing community. One way we can accomplish this is to solicit feedback from key internal and external stakeholders during the strategic planning process. This focuses our efforts on where they can make the most difference for the communities we serve. This process allows Puget Sound Fire to be community oriented when planning.

Planning is the ART and SCIENCE of understanding a situation, envisioning a desired future, and determining effective ways to bring that future about. (ADP 5-0, pg. 2-1)

Strategic planning is the ongoing organizational process of using available knowledge to document an intended direction. This process is used to prioritize efforts, effectively allocate resources, align employees on the organization's goals, and ensure those goals are backed by data and sound reasoning. (Cote, 2020)

"I tell this story to illustrate the truth of the statement I heard long ago in the Army: Plans are worthless, but planning is everything." - Dwight D. Eisenhower

Effective planning requires a structured process employed across the organization. Planning is a continuous process. Execution must be measured against the plan and the plan adjusted as needed. While plans can be developed on a regular basis, it is the process of planning that is important, not the publication of the plan itself. Most importantly, planning can be an opportunity to unify management, employees, and stakeholders through a common understanding of where the organization is going, how everyone involved can work toward that common purpose, and how success is measured.

Community-driven Planning Process

1. Define the programs provided to the community.
2. Establish the community's service program priorities and expectations of the organization.
3. Identify any concerns the community may have for or about the organization, along with aspects of the organization that the community views positively.
4. Identify the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization.
5. Identify areas of opportunity or potential threats to the organization.
6. Identify the organization's critical issues and service gaps.
7. Determine strategic initiatives for organizational improvement.
8. Establish a realistic goal and objectives for each initiative.
9. Identify implementation tasks for the accomplishment of each objective.
10. Determine the vision of the future.
11. Develop organizational and community commitment to accomplishing the plan.

External Stakeholder Group Findings

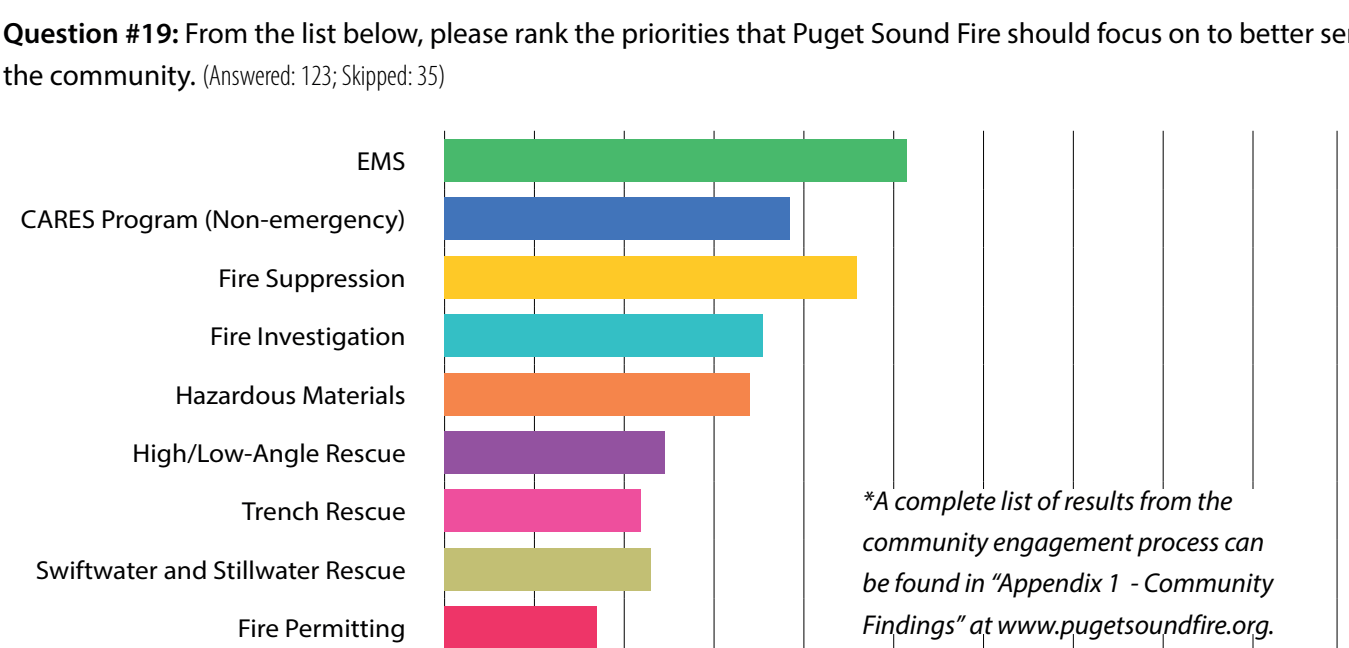
Puget Sound Fire is committed to exceptional service both internally and to the residents we serve. Our guiding statements make us a community focused organization. As an important part of our planning process, we invited the community to identify their priorities, concerns, and provide feedback on Puget Sound Fire service delivery. This feedback was solicited from the community at large through a survey. Puget Sound Fire also reached out specifically to business, local government, schools, community service groups, and our response partners in Law Enforcement and EMS. The feedback we received was used to understand challenges and priorities in the communities we serve.

Community Priorities

The best way to prioritize our efforts is to understand the community's expectations. Puget Sound Fire asked the community to identify what aspects of Puget Sound Fire's service delivery are most important to them. Below are the results.

Rank	Community Expectation	Score
1	Response times	7.33
2	Firefighter preparedness and training	6.20
3	Adequate resources	6.01
4	Fire prevention efforts	4.63
5	Communication and outreach	3.48
6	Mutual aid and inter-agency collaboration	3.08
7	Community engagement	2.85
8	Budgetary constraints	2.63

Question #19: From the list below, please rank the priorities that Puget Sound Fire should focus on to better serve the community. (Answered: 123; Skipped: 35)



**A complete list of results from the community engagement process can be found in "Appendix 1 - Community Findings" at www.pugetsoundfire.org.*

Internal Stakeholder Group Findings

Puget Sound Fire conducted 19 engagement meetings over the course of two months. These meeting gave civilian and uniformed staff the opportunity to provide feedback around the following questions:

1. What is Puget Sound Fire doing right?
2. What can we do better?
3. What future opportunities does Puget Sound Fire have?
4. What is our greatest challenge?

Members of Puget Sound Fire were also asked to answer a survey seeking insights on the strategic planning process and employee engagement. The key themes from this exercise and survey results were used to develop initiatives, goals, and objectives. The results of these exercises were communicated to the organization to keep them informed. The major themes are:

What are we doing right?

- Communication
- Performance
- Training
- Recruiting
- Excellent customer service
- Health and wellness
- Puget Sound Fire is a regional leader
- Decision making
- Community relations
- Good leadership

What can we do better?

- Communications
- Recruiting
- Facility maintenance
- Mentoring
- Training
- Apparatus
- Budget
- Health and wellness
- Internal processes
- Culture
- Operations staffing
- Recruit academy

What future opportunities do we have?

- Succession planning
- Expanding into new lines of service
- Regionalization
- Engaging the community/building partnerships
- Continued investment in health and wellness
- Communication of strategic objectives
- Empower individuals and crews
- Manage change
- Mentoring at all levels

What is our greatest challenge?

- Communication
- Managing growth
- Retirement – loss of experience, young workforce
- Recruiting and retention of quality firefighters
- Aging fleet
- Culture of merger departments
- Staffing
- Fire Garage support

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (S.W.O.T.) analysis helps an organization identify its positive attributes and its areas in need of improvement. Puget Sound Fire's Executive Team used the internal and external feedback to identify Puget Sound Fire's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the possible opportunities and potential threats. The following list highlights the major themes of the SWOT exercise:

Strengths

- Organizational flexibility
- Talented and diverse team
- Strong community stakeholder support
- Positive organizational culture
- Employee well-being and satisfaction

Weaknesses

- Communication challenges
- Overcommitment and lack of prioritization
- Decision-making processes
- Organizational structure and strategic planning
- Resource management and operational challenges

Opportunities

- Strategic growth and innovation
- Enhanced collaboration and community relations
- Technological advancements and communication
- Process improvement and program management
- Succession planning and talent development

Threats

- Financial and resource challenges
- Human resources and recruitment challenges
- Community, social, and service demand challenges
- External environmental factors

** A complete list of results from the Puget Sound Fire S.W.O.T. process can be found in "Appendix 3 - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats" at www.pugetsoundfire.org.*

CRITICAL ISSUES AND SERVICE GAPS

The Puget Sound Fire Executive Team conducted a distributed exercise to identify and describe critical issues and service gaps. Executives worked individually to identify issues and gaps from their perspective. The inputs for this exercise were the results of the community and internal engagements as well as the S.W.O.T. Analysis.

The results of this poll were part of an in-person Executive Team exercise to group the issues/gaps into buckets with common themes. The themes became strategic initiatives. The results of the exercise are below:

Critical Issues and Service Gaps Identified by Executive Team		
Theme 1 • Professional development • Performance evaluations • Officer Education • Building a core of SMEs • Succession Planning • Building strong leaders • Mentoring • Shifting from a reactionary mindset • Training agenda and quality • Quality of recruit firefighters	**Theme 2** • Staffing and workload • Restructuring battalions • Building response capabilities • Grow the wildland program	**Theme 3** • Health and wellness • Communication • Demographic impacts • Employee recognition • Rebuilding "Family" • Gap between Operations and support functions • Declining morale • Mission, vision, values • Consistent accountability • Internal customer service
Theme 4 • Performance measurement • Policy and process • Technology • Utilizing all ERP systems • Business process • Financial transparency • Project and program management • Decision-making framework • Data-informed decisions	**Theme 5** • Capital planning to build response capacity • Aging facilities • Apparatus age and quality • Fire Garage capacity	**Theme 6** • Connect with partner agencies • Community education • Recruiting and marketing

STRATEGY STATEMENT & STRATEGIC VISION

Strategy Statement

Objective

Transform Puget Sound Fire to focus on efficient, effective, and transparent business operations. Maintain our position as innovators and regional leaders.

Scope

We will prioritize developing our people, process, and technology while embracing our spirit of innovation. New opportunities to serve our communities and regional partners are not off the table but will be ruthlessly vetted.

Competitive Advantage

Our advantage is our culture of innovation. From the Governance Board to the individual, we embrace exploring new opportunities.

2024-2028 Strategic Vision

Build internal strength to empower regional innovation.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Initiative 1 — Invest in our people and our future.

Goal #1 – Professional development

Objective 1A Implement a performance evaluation program.

Objective 1B Implement a robust officer education program.

Objective 1C Build a cadre of subject matter experts for key skill sets.

Goal #2 – Build future leaders

Objective 2A Evaluate Puget Sound Fire's Succession Plan.

Objective 2B Develop a leadership training program.

Goal #3 – Conduct a holistic review of our Operations training

Objective 3A Increase the capabilities of our recruit firefighters.

Objective 3B Develop a coaching/mentoring program.

Initiative 2 — Enhance operational capabilities.

Goal #1 – Optimizing response

Objective 1A Evaluate staffing and deployment.

Objective 1B Match response capability to fill identified risks.

Initiative 3 — Strengthen our culture.

Goal #1 – Strengthen our Health and Wellness Program

Objective 1A Hire a mental health professional advisor and medical doctor advisor.

Objective 1B Develop a fire department fitness unit.

Objective 1C Develop a 24/7 incident safety officer position.

Initiative 3 — Strengthen our culture.

Goal #2 – Communication

Objective 2A Develop a robust employee recognition process.

Objective 2B Close the relational gap between Operations and the business side of Puget Sound Fire.

Objective 2C Reintroduce a "family" feeling into Puget Sound Fire.

Goal #3 – Develop a strong culture of accountability

Objective 3A Review the Mission, Vision, and Values of Puget Sound Fire.

Objective 3B Enhance our internal customer service model.

Initiative 4 — Transform our business practices.

Goal #1 – Make informed and strategic business decisions.

Objective 1A Enhance data and reporting capabilities with real-time dashboards, to enable informed and strategic business decision making.

Objective 1B Develop a strategic goal setting framework to enable each department to plan and inform day-to-day decision making.

Objective 1C Develop a structured executive decision framework to facilitate informed and efficient, high-level decision making.

Objective 1D Enhance data management capabilities to ensure efficient and strategic handling of organizational data.

Goal 2 – Meet diverse financial needs of Puget Sound Fire, its customers, and the public.

Objective 2A Create a comprehensive unified cost model to equitably allocate costs among customers, ensuring fairness in pricing.

Objective 2B Establish a system for delivering clear and accurate financial information to customers to enhance Puget Sound Fire's financial transparency.

Objective 2C Enhance and expand finance capabilities to meet the diverse financial requirements of all departments.

INITIATIVES

Initiative 4 — Transform our business practices.

Goal #3 – Fully harness ERP features and capabilities.

Objective 3A Define current state of implementation.

Objective 3B Define desired future state of implementation.

Objective 3C Conduct a gap analysis.

Objective 3C Develop, success metrics, SOPs, and governance.

Goal #4 – Align organization structure and roles with the evolving needs of Puget Sound Fire.

Objective 4A Execute a strategic reorganization with well-defined roles and responsibilities to align workforce structure with the evolving needs of the organization.

Objective 4B Implement a structured process for succession planning to reduce the impact of turnover and identify replacements with the proper skill sets needed to effectively backfill a role.

Goal #5 – Standardize project delivery across the organization.

Objective 5A Develop standardized business processes to ensure consistent and improved performance across all departments.

Objective 5B Establish a centralized project and process management structure and team to drive project delivery across the organizational a role.

Initiative 5 — Invest in our infrastructure.

Goal #1 – Allocate capital to support response capacity.

Objective 1A Develop a robust annual capital allocation process.

Objective 1B Review and rewrite the 20-year Capital Improvement Plan.

Goal 2 – Address aging infrastructure.

Objective 2A Identify, prioritize, and rectify aging facility needs.

Objective 2B Identify, prioritize, and rectify aging fleet needs.

Initiative 5 — Invest in our infrastructure.

Goal #3 – Communication

Objective 3A Identify root causes of capacity issues.

Objective 3B Address capacity issue based on space, people, workload, and technology needs.

Initiative 6 — Connect with our communities.

Goal #1 – Connect with our partner agencies.

Objective 1A Connect with leaders of different cultural groups within the community to determine how we can best serve their needs.

Objective 1B Collaborate with local law enforcement agencies on education and provide services beyond our current practice.

Objective 1C Explore opportunities to broaden our partnership with the American Red Cross.

Objective 1D Partner with Washington State Safe Kids Coalition.

Objective 1E Maintain strong connection Puget Sound Fire's emergency management team and build/maintain relationships with EM staff for Maple Valley and Tukwila.

Goal 2 – Educate our communities.

Objective 2A Implement the Impact Teen Drivers class for grades 6-12.

Objective 2B Create a brochure for local businesses about training opportunities.

Objective 2C Provide fire and life safety education to the multitude of different cultural groups within our community. Focus on those that speak other languages.

Objective 2D Produce fire and life safety educational videos to be shared on social media.

Objective 2E Reframe current curriculum for grades Pre-K through 2nd grade to make learning targets more age appropriate for students. Incorporate curriculum for grades 3-5.

Goal 3 – Build the Puget Sound Fire brand.

Objective 3A Re-define brand standards to increase brand equity and leverage that equity through materials that inform, educate, and foster community trust and support.

Objective 3B Establish best practices for internal and external communications.

Objective 3C Employ recruiting best practices to obtain top talent.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

"A good plan can be measured, and the data sets you free." – Allan Mullay

Puget Sound Fire leaders must determine **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)** for which they are fully accountable. OKRs were developed by venture capitalist John Doerr. They fill in the blanks of the statement, "We will *(insert objective)* as measured by *(this set of Key Results)*". These KPIs and OKRs ensure that Puget Sound Fire is delivering the results identified in our strategic plan. No plan survives first contact. Puget Sound Fire must use the insights provided by the KPIs to revisit and revise our goals and objectives. Managing for results should be utilized to ensure that Puget Sound Fire's Strategic Plan is achieving the intended results. This process should include:

- Identification of strategic goals and objectives;
- Determination of resources necessary to achieve them;
- Analysis and evaluation of performance data; and
- Use of data to drive continuous improvement in the organization.

Types of measures to consider that may be utilized include:

- *Inputs* – Value of resource used to produce an output.
- *Outputs* – Quantifiable units produced which are activity-oriented and measurable.
- *Efficiency* – Inputs used per output (or outputs per input).
- *Service Quality* – The degree to which customers are satisfied with a program, or how accurately or timely a service is provided.
- *Outcome* – Qualitative consequences associated with a program/service, i.e. the ultimate benefit to the customer. Focused on the "why" of providing a service.

Success of the Strategic Plan

Puget Sound Fire has focused its strategic planning process around community needs. We sought input from the community and members of the organization during plan development. The success of this plan rests upon support from our partner agency's governance, the members of the organization, and the community-at-large.

A plan that isn't communicated and executed is only a thought experiment. The success of this plan relies on thorough preparation and disciplined execution. Puget Sound Fire has implemented a Project Management Office to provide robust support to strategic projects. This support mechanism provides training, tools, and oversight to drive results-oriented execution.