

WINCHESTER FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN



2021-2026



City Officials

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John Hill, Vice-Mayor

Kim Herbstritt, Vice President

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Jon Henschel, Fire Chief

James Orndorff, Assistant Fire Chief

Matthew DeHaven, Deputy Chief of Operations

Jeremy Luttrell, Deputy Chief of Community Risk Reduction

Larry Baker, Operational Battalion Chief

Drew DeHaven, Operational Battalion Chief

Timothy Vaught, Operational Battalion Chief

Strategic Planning Committee

Jon Henschel, Fire Chief

Hadden Culp, Interim Fire Chief

James Orndorff, Assistant Fire Chief

Timothy Vaught, Operational Battalion Chief

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Patrick Ewell, City Manager's Office

Erin Malloy, Emergency Communication Center Director

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Message from the Fire Chief

It is my pleasure to present the 2021-2026 Winchester Fire and Rescue Department Strategic Plan. This plan was crafted in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders that have a vested interest in seeing our organization address challenges and meet the increasing service demands we face. Our community deserves the best from their fire department, and it is our goal to ensure we accurately evaluate all aspects of the services we provide by comparing them against applicable regulations, industry standards and best practices. The traditional fire service model is evolving to include new and unconventional functions that require innovation and changes to standard practices. Our organizational members have a shared vision of the future and embrace the opportunity to enhance our roles to best meet the needs of those we serve.



Our strategic plan was developed in conjunction with the City of Winchester Strategic Plan that identifies a goal of promoting and improving public safety for all community members. The purpose of our plan is to identify methods that can be utilized to enhance and sustain our infrastructure, increase staffing, community outreach programs, training programs, firefighter and officer development, specialized services, operational efficiency through use of advanced technology and promotion of regional partnerships. We recognize that our diverse population has a variety of needs and we will strive to address those needs to increase the quality of life for all of our community members.

In closing, I would like to thank all of our dedicated volunteer and career fire service members, our city leadership team, elected officials, and most of all our citizens for their continued support of our organization. We look forward to continuing to serve you and this great community every day!

Sincerely,

Jon D. Henschel, Fire Chief

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon D. Henschel".

Executive Summary

The Winchester Fire and Rescue Department (WFRD) is an all-hazards organization that provides fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials mitigation, technical rescue services, fire investigation, fire prevention, fire safety education and other community risk reduction programs to the residents of the City of Winchester. The WFRD has a proud tradition of providing exceptional customer service to those we serve and strives to meet the ever-changing demands we face. The growing demand for new and improved services and the rising costs associated with fire service activities dictate the need for an effective strategic plan to be established. An effective plan will ensure the organization continues to meet our high standards and the expectations of our community members. This document is a culmination of the efforts made by key stakeholders to identify organizational and community member needs, determine the priority of those needs, determine associated funding streams, and establish timeframes to achieve meeting the needs.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to utilize the mission of the organization to develop a guide that identifies and addresses the many challenges faced and opportunities available to continue to provide exceptional emergency services to the community. The plan will serve as a living document that may change as the environment or situational circumstances dictate. The planning process challenged key stakeholders to critically examine community risk, current system strengths and weaknesses, evolving services, paradigm shifts and fiscal constraints as members worked to determine a vision that encompassed the needs of the organization coupled with the needs of the community. Planning committee members did an outstanding job identifying the various goals and objectives necessary to provide a comprehensive plan that will carry the organization into the future.

The WFRD is committed to maintaining public trust by adhering to our organizational values of fairness, integrity, respect, service and trust. We will ensure responsibility and accountability are upheld at the highest levels. We will make every effort to be fiscally responsible in our decision-making as we evaluate options to achieve strategic plan results. We will treat every community member with the utmost dignity and perform the duties of our profession to the best of our abilities.

Organizational Overview

The WFRD is comprised of four volunteer owned stations that are strategically located throughout the city. Volunteer personnel consist of a mix of administrative and operational personnel that conduct weekly fundraising and/or ride the fire and rescue apparatus. The WFRD staffs the four stations with 68 career fire and EMS certified personnel. The station personnel work a 24-hour (on) / 48-hour (off) schedule with a “fixed Kelly Day” every three weeks. The Department also has Administrative support staff, a Logistics person and a Community Risk Reduction Division. WFRD works in collaboration with four volunteer organizations to provide staffing, facilities, training, apparatus and equipment.

Station #1—Friendship

The Friendship Fire Company is located at 627 North Pleasant Valley Road in Winchester. Friendship provides engine company operations and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) transport and is first due to the northeast section of the City of Winchester.

Station #2—Rouss

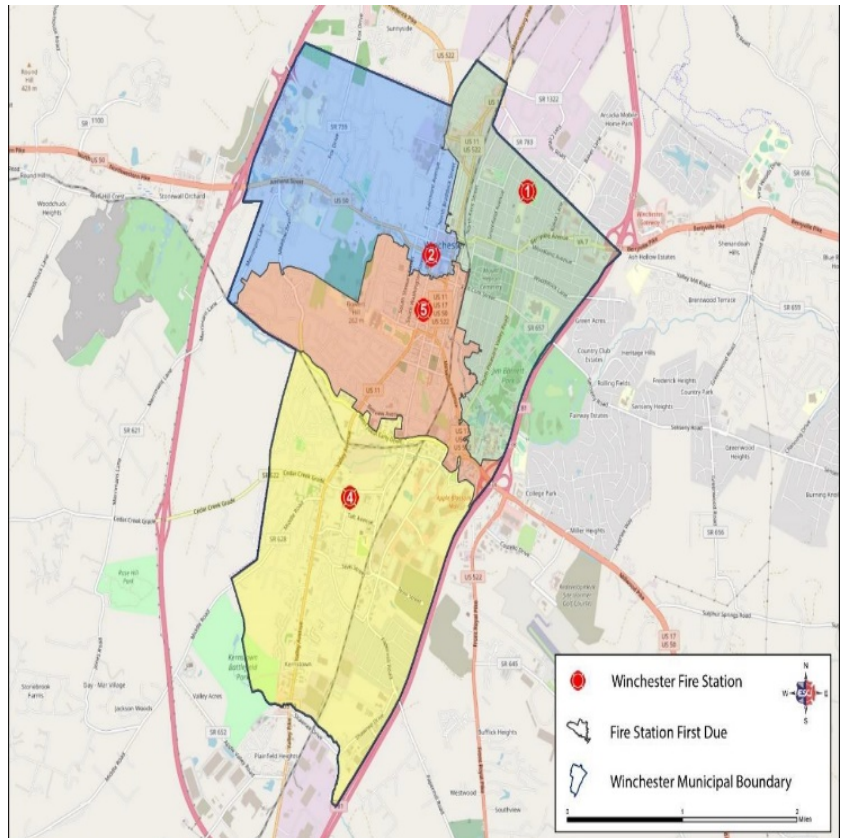
The Charley Rouss Fire Company Inc. is located at 3 South Braddock Street in Winchester. Rouss provides truck company operations for the City as well as vehicle extrication.

Station #4—Shawnee

The Shawnee Fire Company is located on the south side of Winchester at 2210 Valor Drive. The station operates an engine, a wagon, two ambulances, and a utility truck.

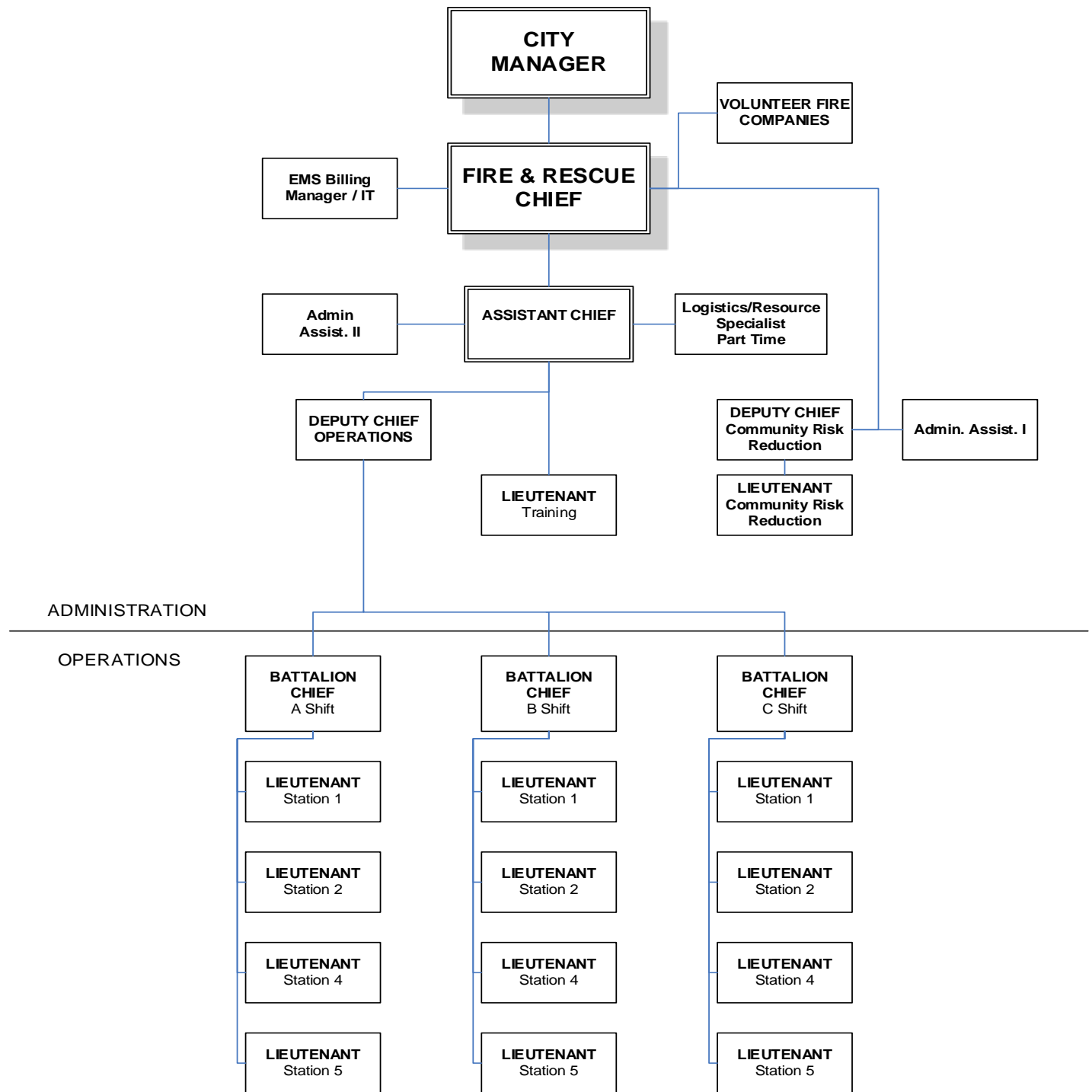
Station #5—South End

The South End Volunteer Fire Company is located at 17 West Monmouth Street in Winchester. The station operates an engine, a wagon, and two ambulances.



Detailed information about WFRD and the Volunteer organizations is available at: <https://www.winchesterva.gov/fire-and-rescue/about-us>

Organizational Chart



Firefighter/EMT I, II, Firefighter Tech, Master Technician,
Firefighter/EMT Intermediate or Paramedic assigned to Lieutenants

Winchester Fire
and Rescue Department

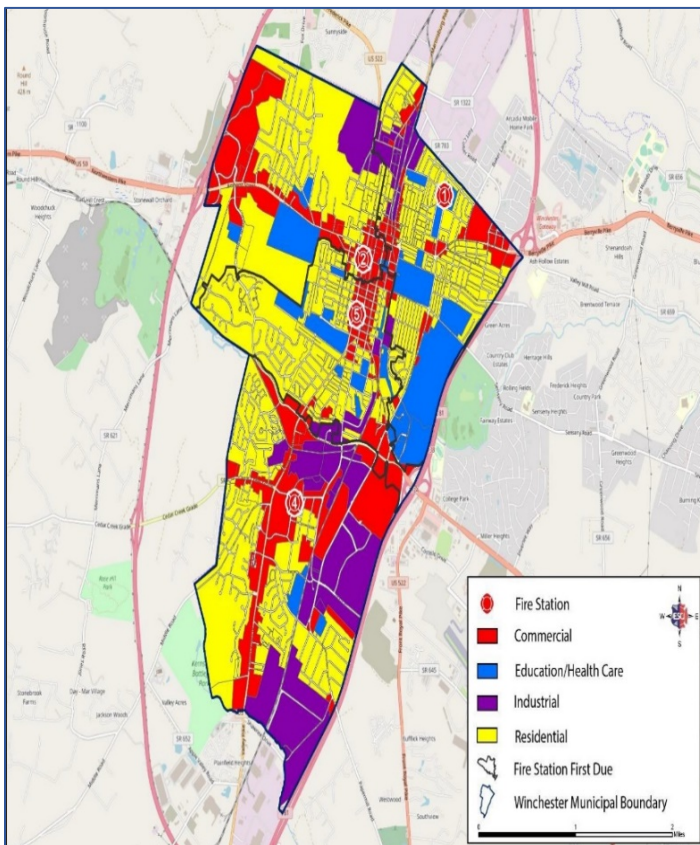


Demographics

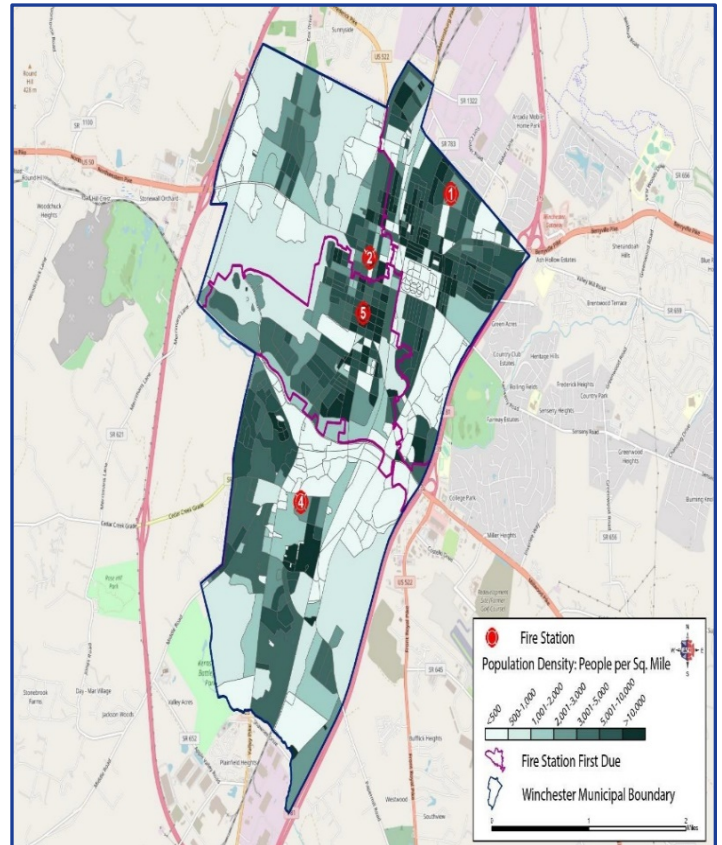
Winchester, Virginia, is located 15 miles northeast of the northern peak of Massanutten Mountain in Frederick County. The city sits at the mouth of the Shenandoah Valley, which stretches 200 miles between two mountain ranges—the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east and the Allegheny Mountains (part of the Appalachian Mountain Range) to the west. Two rivers bind the Valley—the Potomac River to the North and the James River to the South. The City is approximately 75 miles to the west of Washington, D.C. Interstate 81 borders the city to the East running north and south, while Routes 50, 522 and 7 intersect through the city running east and west providing major travel corridors between West Virginia and Washington, D.C. A large historic district is surrounded by a mixture of low, medium and high-density residential structures that boast a wide range of age and building types. A mix of commercial and industrial occupancies may be found throughout the city. Active railroad tracks run through the city to serve various industrial manufacturing and storage facilities.

The service area of the Winchester Fire and Rescue Department is comprised of the 9.3-square-mile City limits of Winchester. WFRD serves a population of over 28,000 residents with daytime demographics swelling to over 70,000 due to business and leisure attractions found throughout the city. City population density is dependent upon residential occupancy type and locations.

General Zoning for Winchester, VA



Population Density for Winchester, VA



Guiding Principles

The items listed below serve as overarching statements for WFRD members to base their decisions upon.

Mission Statement

To professionally provide and enhance life safety and fire protection services in a safe, resolute and respectful manner for all our community partners.

Vision Statement

Winchester Fire and Rescue Department strives to be a leader in combination Fire and Rescue Services.

Core Values

F – Fairness

I – Integrity

R – Respect

S – Service

T – Trust

Leadership Philosophy

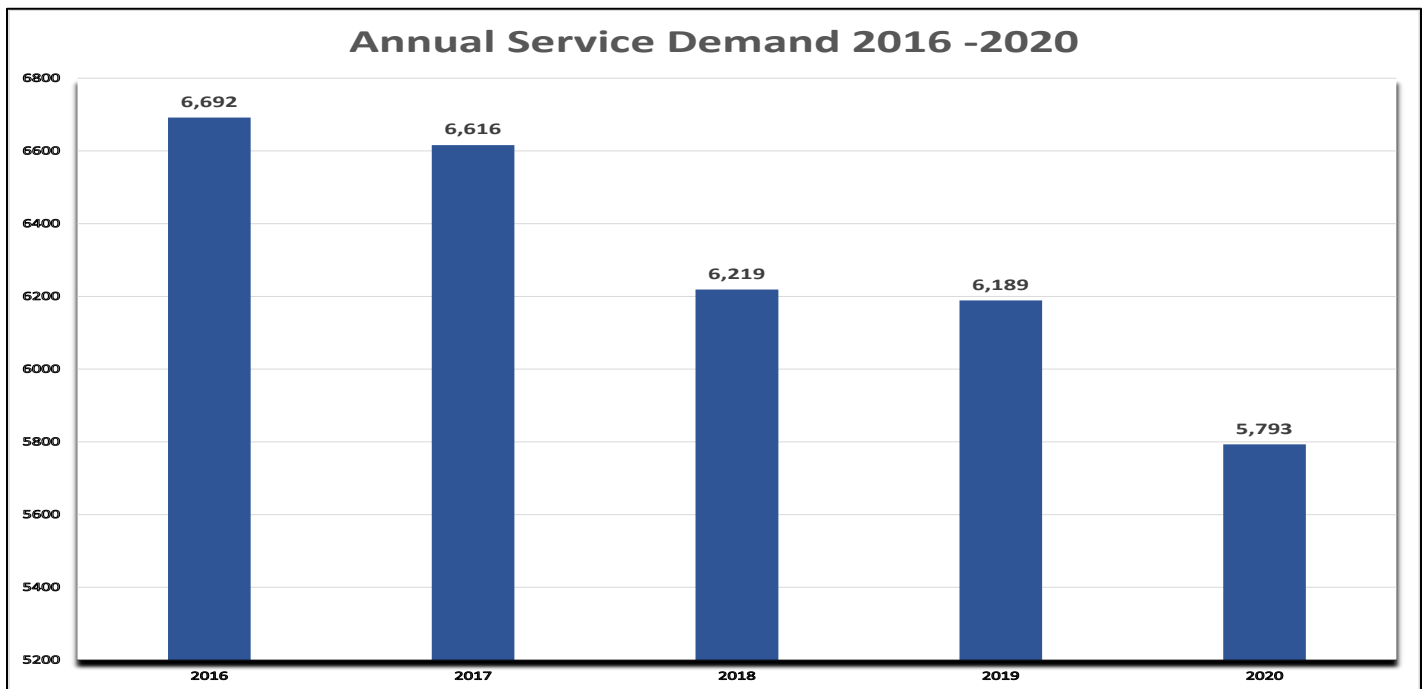
Our focus is to empower members to grow rather than be content. Personnel are expected to be the very best in their profession, accountable, at all levels, and to make critical decisions that best benefit the community and department.

Strategic Goal

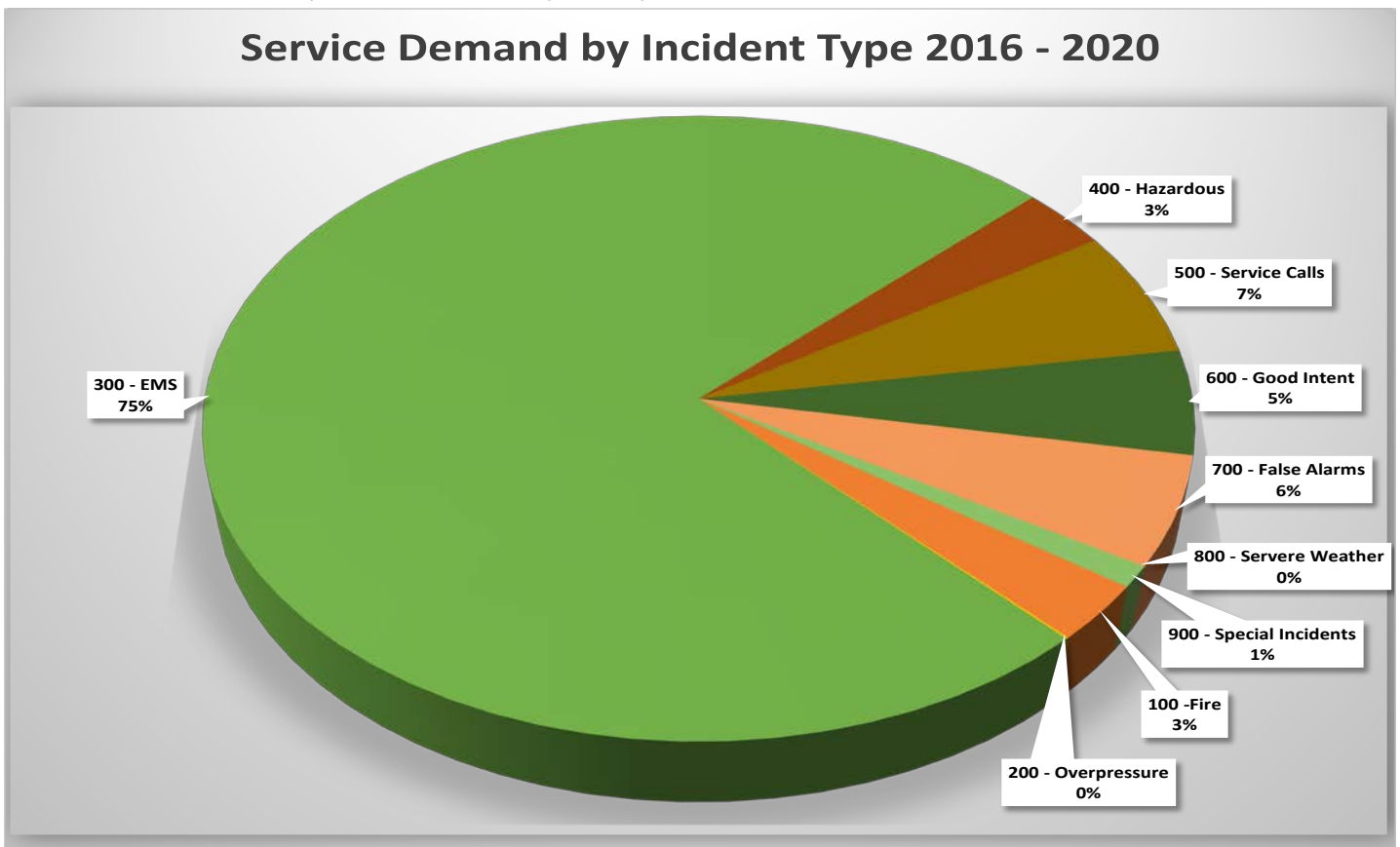
WFRD will continuously work to meet the 16 Life Safety Initiatives to make sure “Everyone Goes Home” as defined by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. We will serve the community through strategic planning that focuses on staffing, infrastructure and resources. We will strive to increase career and volunteer recruitment and retention.

Fire and Rescue Performance Information

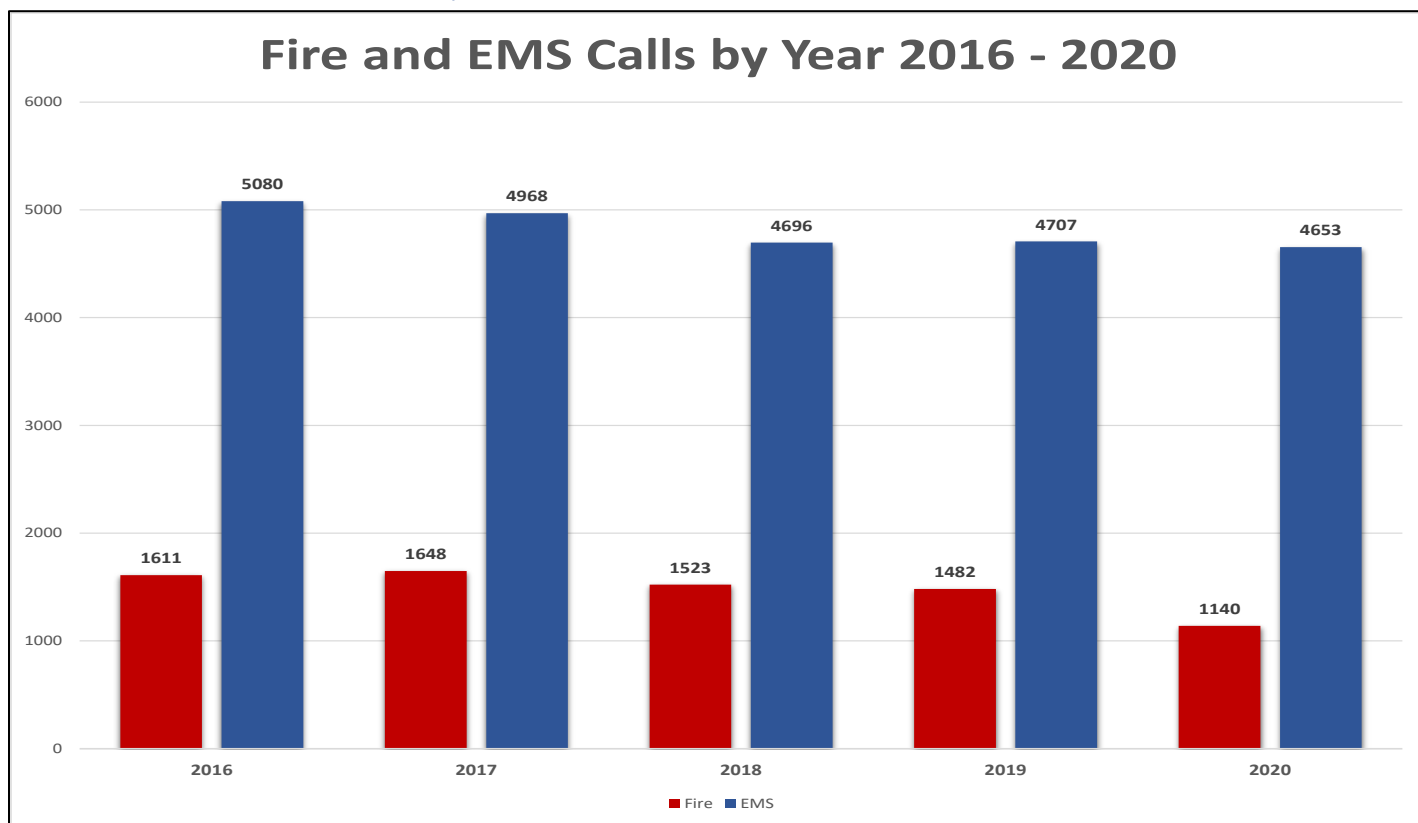
Annual Service Demand



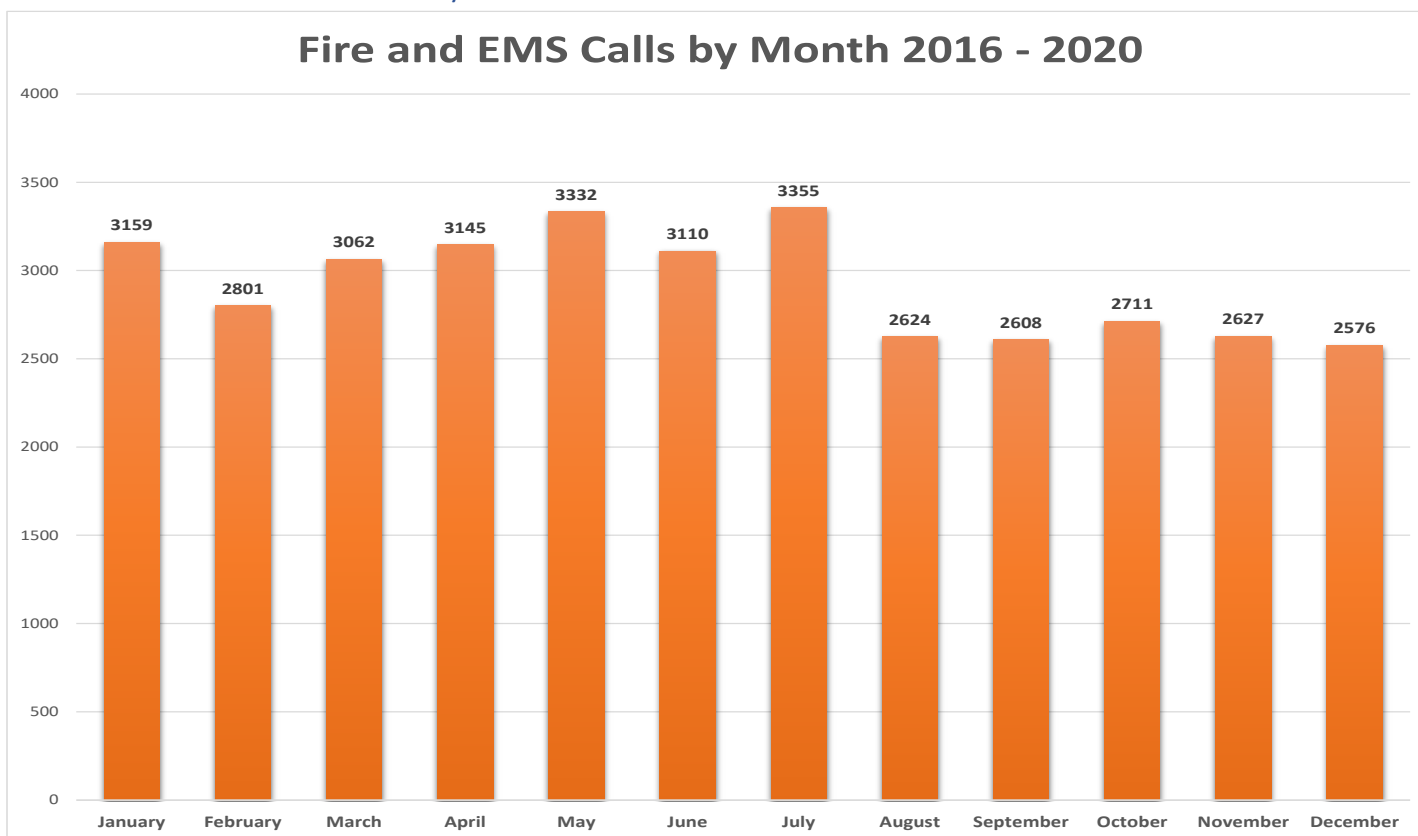
Service Demand by Incident Frequency



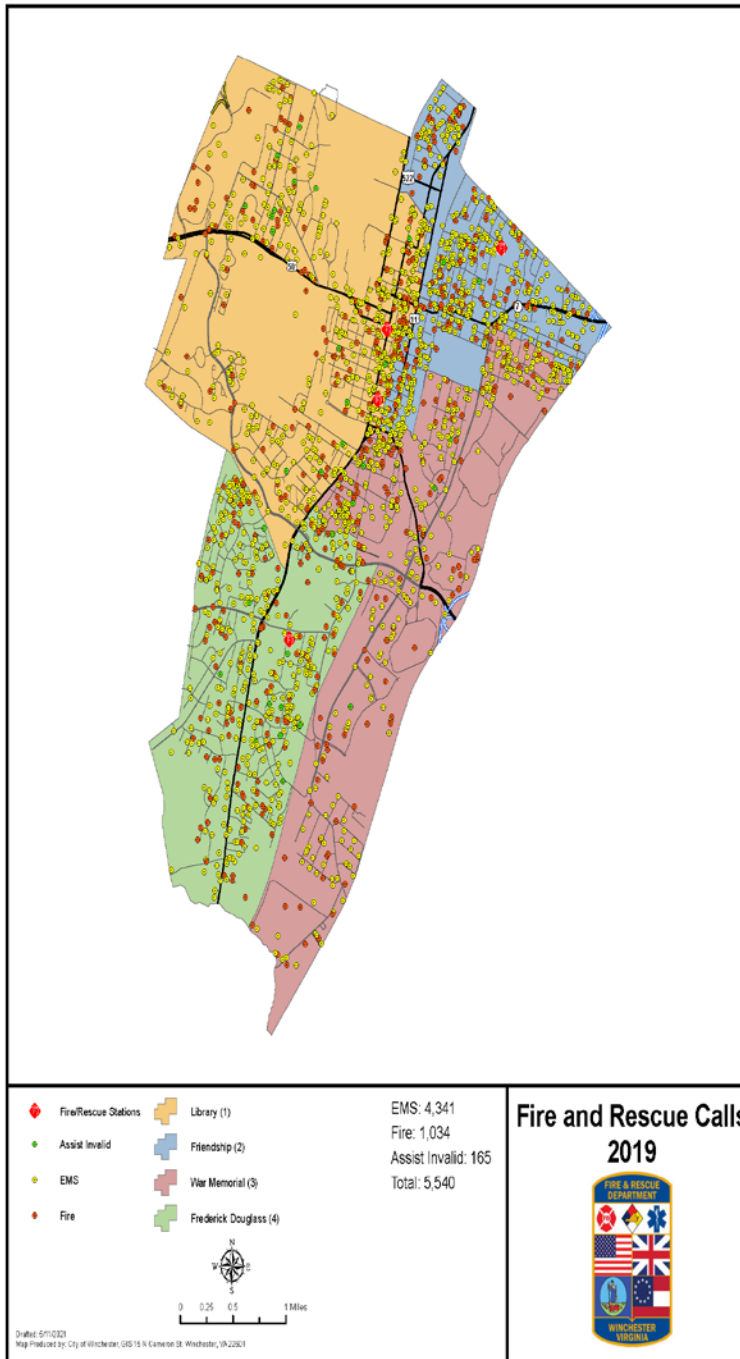
Fire and EMS Call Totals By Year



Fire and EMS Call Totals By Month



Fire and Rescue Call Data by Location



Strategic Planning Process

In April 2020, the City of Winchester Council was presented with a final report on a fire and rescue system study the Council had requested. This study was conducted by Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) and is referred to as the ESCI Report and the WFRD Master Plan. Steps to address recommendations for improvement were immediately implemented and quarterly reports on department progress have been presented to Council. The ESCI Report, WFRD Master Plan and quarterly updates are available at <https://winchesterva.civicweb.net>. The recommendations in the ESCI Report have been considered in the development of this Strategic Plan.

The Fire Department Strategic Planning process began with review of data gleaned through the 2020 ESCI study from community members and other key stakeholders. WFRD Senior Staff then participated in the City of Winchester’s process to update the City’s 5-Year Strategic Plan. WFRD Senior Staff gathered a group of key stakeholders to discuss community needs, priorities, funding streams and the WFRD’s ability to meet the needs.

Community Input

Community members were reached through a community forum and an online survey. Input consisted of several factors community members felt were of critical importance and needed to be improved upon.

Critical Services Needed in Winchester

- Fire and EMS Service Delivery 97.8%
- Technical Rescue Response 64.9%
- Hazardous Materials Response 39.5%
- Public Safety Education 31.8%
- New Services Requested – Community Paramedic Program and Car Seat Installations

Response Times Considered Too Slow	55.1%
Staffing Levels Too Low	85.5%
Cost of Service Underfunded	73.1%

Community Members Expectations of the Winchester Fire and Rescue Department

time provide Fire timely fashion respond called emergencies
Fast needed emergency medical response life professional

Community Members Concerns about the Winchester Fire and Rescue Department

pay people need building fire need new station low staffing
feel None enough town concerned department

Key Stakeholder Input

Volunteer firefighters take great pride in providing fire stations, apparatus and personnel to the city, but the leadership at all four volunteer organizations expressed concerns about future sustainability of the system. Revenues have been on the decline for a number of years, likewise the number of volunteers entering the system has declined. There is growing concern about internal succession planning in finding younger members willing to take on leadership roles. Some volunteer leaders identified a need to consider additional city assistance by providing apparatus maintenance, purchasing or sharing purchasing cost of apparatus, and incentivizing volunteer participation in the system.

Career members of the fire department expressed concerns about inadequate staffing levels, technology issues that hamper operational progress and monopolize work time, training needs, recruitment and retention needs, and enhancements to succession planning through officer and career development initiatives. Career members felt that the department needed to do a better job of building and maintaining relationships with neighboring departments and becoming more engaged with community members.

City officials and Council Members shared a desire to provide quality fire protection and emergency medical response to community members. Council members expressed concerns about the future sustainability of the current combination system, with the city providing the labor force and the volunteer fire companies providing the infrastructure. City employees expressed concerns about the fire department's ability to handle an increased demand for service as a result of new building developments and increase in population that could tax the current systems capabilities. All members expressed a desire to ensure that the city is well positioned to provide for the future fire protection and EMS needs of the community.

Strategic Planning Committee

The Strategic Planning Committee was formed with a group of internal and external members that have a vested interest in the future of Winchester's Fire and Rescue Department. Members discussed community needs requiring action in order to improve and enhance services to our residents. Four collective goals and their associated action items were established in this effort. Action items were assigned a priority level based upon the significance of need and possible revenue streams were identified to offset the cost of implementation. Members involved in the process were tasked with weighing community need with organizational need to ensure that the items of consideration were relevant, realistic and achievable. Members worked diligently to determine the many variables that may impact fulfilling the obligations of this plan in an ever-changing environment. The results of this document were a collaborative effort of stakeholder input and committee member insight into the future of the fire service in the City of Winchester.

Strategic Goals

Goal #1 – Utilize Partnerships to Augment and Improve Fire and Rescue Response

	Action Items	Anticipated Funding Source	Lead	Time Frame (1yr, 2-3, >3)	Priority (L, M, H)
1.1	Evaluate Urgent Care Support and BLS Transport Options	N/A	Fire Chief	2-3 years	Low
1.2	Assess Community Needs and Explore Regional Heavy Technical Rescue Team (HTR) Enhancements	Grant Opportunities General Fund	Deputy Chief of Operations	1 year	Medium
1.3	Evaluate Effectiveness, Needs and Capabilities of the Regional Hazardous Materials Team	Grant Opportunities Hazmat Budget	Deputy Chief of Operations	1 year	High
1.4	Improve Training Efforts and Coordination with Regional Partners	Grant Opportunities Training Budget	Assistant Fire Chief	1 year	High
1.5	Evaluate Automatic and Mutual Aid Conditions, Needs and Opportunities	N/A	Fire Chief	1 year	High
1.6	Explore opportunities for Community Rescue Squad and BLS Program Partnerships (Shenandoah University and Handley High School)	N/A	Fire Chief	1 year	Medium
1.7	Assess Opportunities to Enhance Interoperability and Communications with Frederick County Fire & Rescue	N/A	Fire Chief	1 year	High

Goal #2 – Develop Fire and Rescue “Human Capital” or Develop F&R People and Processes

	Action Items	Anticipated Funding Source	Lead	Time Frame (1yr, 2-3, >3)	Priority (L, M, H)
2.1	Build a New Resource Deployment Model Based Upon Community Need and System Capabilities	Federal Funding Grant Opportunities General Fund	Fire Chief	2-3 years	High
2.2	Redevelop a Departmental Staffing Model Based Upon Updated System Deployment Needs	Federal Funding Grant Opportunities General Fund	Fire Chief	2-3 years	High
2.3	Identify Technological and Procedural Improvements for Incident Pre-Planning	Federal Funding General Fund	Deputy Chief of Operations	1 year	High
2.4	Improve the City's ISO Rating During the 2022 Re-Evaluation	N/A	Assistant Chief	2-3 years	Medium
2.5	Evaluate Opportunities to Prepare for Future CPSE Accreditation Efforts	N/A	Fire Chief	>3 years	Low
2.6	Evaluate Training Division Needs and Capabilities	Grant Opportunities Training Budget	Assistant Chief	1 year	High
2.7	Enhance Volunteer and Career Personnel Recruitment and Retention	Grant Opportunities General Fund	Fire Chief	1 year	High
2.8	Strengthen Departmental Succession Planning Through Officer and Career Development Initiatives	General Fund	Fire Chief	1 year	High

Goal #3 – Plan for Fire and Rescue Facility, Equipment and Apparatus Capital Requirements

	Action Items	Anticipated Funding Source	Lead	Time Frame (1yr, 2-3, >3)	Priority (L, M, H)
3.1	Develop a Long-Term Apparatus Procurement and Replacement Schedule	Federal Funding Grant Opportunities General Fund	Deputy Chief of Operations	2-3 years	Medium
3.2	Evaluate Fire Station Conditions and Needs	Federal Funding Grant Opportunities General Fund	Fire Chief	2-3 years	Medium
3.3	Enhance ECC Capabilities and CAD Integration	Grant Opportunities General Fund	Assistant Chief	2-3 years	Medium
3.4	Establish Greater System-Wide Standardization of Key Equipment and PPE	General Fund	Assistant Chief	2-3 years	Medium
3.5	Develop Fire Training Center Master Plan	Grant Opportunities Training Budget	Assistant Chief	>3 years	Low
3.6	Conduct a Comprehensive Review of Logistics Division Needs and Capabilities	General Fund	Assistant Chief	1 year	High
3.7	Develop Equipment Maintenance and Replacement Plans	Federal Funding Grant Opportunities General Fund	Deputy Chief of Operations	2-3 years	High
3.8	Explore Alternative Revenue sources and Cost-Recovery Options	N/A	Assistant Chief	1 year	High

Goal #4 – Engage the Community for Improved Risk Reduction

	Action Items	Anticipated Funding Source	Lead	Time Frame (1yr, 2-3, >3)	Priority (L, M, H)
4.1	Evaluate and Enhance Community Mental Health Partnerships	N/A	DC of Community Risk Reduction	2-3 years	Medium
4.2	Explore Community Paramedicine Program Opportunities	Federal Funding Grant Opportunities General Fund	Fire Chief	1 year	Medium
4.3	Evaluate and Enhance Community Education & Preventative Outreach Programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify Impacted Populations & Data Trends - Develop and Implement a Senior Fire/Fall Risk Reduction Program - Develop and Implement a Safety Education Program for Winchester Public Schools 	Federal Funding Grant Opportunities General Fund	DC of Community Risk Reduction	1 year	Medium
4.4	Bolster and Expand Safety Inspections	N/A	DC of Community Risk Reduction	1 year	High

Conclusion

Strategic planning is an ongoing process that will continue long after the implementation of this document and will require consideration of changing needs, budgetary constraints and continued support from volunteer leadership, city leadership and our community members. This strategic plan provides us with a framework that will help guide organizational direction over the next five years to ensure a continuation of reliable and high-quality community service. City fire service leadership will strive to consider fiscal impact to the community, seek collaboration with community members and stakeholders, and identify new partnership opportunities that may aid in the implementation of the critical items identified through this process.

I would like to express my gratitude to our committee members for considering the broader scope of what our service entails as they explored the future of the Winchester Fire and Rescue Department and how we can best serve our community.