



PENNSYLVANIA'S 1ST REGIONAL COMBINATION FIRE DEPARTMENT



# Strategic Plan

# 2022-2024

Adopted by the York Area United Fire and Rescue Commission on April 19, 2022

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## *Message from the Fire Chief*

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As the Fire Chief for York Area United Fire and Rescue, I am extremely proud to be able to present this Strategic Plan to all our stakeholders. This Strategic Plan is the culmination of countless hours of hard work by our department personnel and community-involved Strategic Planning Committee. It was a pleasure to be able to participate with members of our residential and business community, forging relationships that will help this department grow as a vital resource for the people we serve. The input, and commitment to contribute, by our community and business stakeholders cannot be overstated. Their engagement and willingness to participate beyond the confines of the planning process should serve York Area United Fire and Rescue well into our future.

Our Strategic Plan redefines our mission and vision and outlines the goals and objectives that will guide our priorities and decision making. This document establishes a framework to ensure that we continue serving our regional first due area with excellence. As a routine part of the strategic planning process, this document will be reviewed and modified periodically as priorities, budgetary issues, departmental and community needs evolve.

This plan identifies staffing and deployment locations as our top priorities. We look forward to working with charter municipalities and community leaders to develop a plan to address these issues, in addition to solving other current concerns of our community and safety responsibilities internally, while continuing to be an appropriate value to the taxpaying public.

Willingness and ability of charter municipalities to fund departmental priorities will prove to be a challenge due to uncertain economic conditions. However, recognizing and planning to achieve an acceptable level of risk is our primary objective. This plan, and outstanding contributions by internal and external stakeholders, will guide us toward achieving success in these and other areas. Nothing contained within this Strategic Plan is out of our reach as long as we have the commitment from our charter townships and a willingness to travel unchartered routes to reach our goals.

I believe the planning that we have undertaken will set the stage for a level of greatness within this organization never before imagined. The vision provided by current staff will outlast many, if not most, personnel and will be the legacy for a group of men and women that represent the best of humanity.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel J. Hoff".

Daniel J. Hoff, Fire Chief

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## **Organizational Background and Community Characteristics**

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York Area United Fire and Rescue (YAUFR) was created in 2008 as a regional, combination fire department, a result of the merger of the Springettsbury and Spring Garden Township fire departments. In 2018, Manchester Township joined as the Department's third charter member. The Department exists as a separate and unincorporated nonprofit association, governed by a Fire Commission of two members and one alternate from each member municipality, as well as a citizen member at large. The Department provides fire and rescue service to Manchester, Springettsbury, and Spring Garden Townships, as well as mutual aid assistance to its surrounding municipalities upon request. Four volunteer fire companies serve under YAUFR's umbrella, supplementing operations.

YAUFR operates from five fire stations, with five engine companies, two ladder trucks, and a heavy rescue. The Department employs 48 full-time firefighters and company officers, five full-time battalion chiefs, two full-time administrative personnel, and the full-time fire chief. Several part-time firefighters and battalion chiefs supplement staffing as needed. Volunteer personnel respond to incidents when available.

YAUFR serves a 39.04 square mile area. Communities served are a mix of rural, suburban, and urban neighborhoods, with rapid growth and redevelopment ongoing or planned in many areas. Current population, based on the 2020 Census data, is about 60,256, a 5% increase over 2010 data, but a 25% increase over 2000. Land use is a mix of agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial. Over the past 5 years, development of large warehouse/logistics centers has increased. The Department is on-track to handle over 4,000 calls for service in 2021, an approximate increase in overall call volume of 16% from 2018. Call volume within the primary response area is on track to see a 43% increase over 2018.



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## *Strategic Planning Process / Stakeholder Input*

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York Area United Fire and Rescue's previous strategic plan, adopted in 2014, was a 3-year plan covering 2015 through 2017. While the plan was developed by a team of internal and external stakeholders, the external stakeholders were largely comprised of appointed and elected officials from state and surrounding local governments. Goals and objectives focused primarily on marketing the Department and creating lines of communication with municipal officials. The plan did not contain an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), nor did it review any existing programs or operations. A Community Risk Assessment/Standard of Cover did not exist. A review of the plan, conducted in 2017, indicated that all identified goals and objectives had been addressed and met.

Since the conclusion of the 2015-2017 strategic plan, Manchester Township was added as the third Charter Member, and the Department has also committed to pursuing national accreditation through the Center for Public Safety Excellence. This strategic plan was developed following guidance provided by the 10<sup>th</sup> edition CFAI Accreditation model. A committee of 40 internal and external stakeholders was assembled. Internal stakeholders represented both career and volunteer ranks of the Department. External stakeholders were selected as an equal number of residents from each charter township, as well as representatives from community businesses, institutions, and partner agencies. The York County Planning Commission and York County Economic Alliance were also invited to participate, however neither group responded to their invitation.

The strategic planning committee began meeting at the end of March 2021. Due to ongoing COVID-19 concerns, meetings were offered in a hybrid environment. A meeting room camera was acquired to enable virtual attendees to see the meeting room and hear all in-person discussions, allowing all attendees to be able to interact. All sessions were recorded, and links made available to attendees who were unable to participate in a session. During the kickoff meeting, participants were provided with an overview of the Department, then invited to attend a series of demonstration/hand-on sessions held at the York County Fire School over the next three weeks, where they were exposed to a variety of fire suppression and vehicle rescue evolutions. These sessions were intended to allow participants unfamiliar with fire service operations to experience some basic fire service operations.

At the end of April 2021, the committee began meeting bi-weekly. During each session, members were presented with an overview of several departmental programs or services, along with a strengths and weaknesses assessment of each. Group discussions followed, further refining strengths and weaknesses, as well as developing a list of opportunities and threats.

In July 2021, Committee members were asked to complete an anonymous survey. Each member was asked to share the survey with at least three other people outside the committee who either lived or worked in the communities served. Survey participants were asked to consider Mission, Vision, and Values of the Department, expectations of the Department and service delivery, and to rank a list of strategic initiatives. The survey was viewed 115 times and started 73 times. Ultimately, 51 people completed the survey, including 36 Department members, 9 Strategic Planning Committee members (not Department members), and 6 community members.

In August 2021, the Committee reconvened to discuss survey results. As a result, this group recommended changes to Mission and Vision statements. Recommended changes more accurately aligned the Department's current operation with expectations of the community and Department leadership. The Committee also formulated a list of 8 Goals, based on the ranking of strategic initiatives in the survey, answers to open-ended questions, and follow-up group discussions. Command Staff created a list of objectives for each goal, as well as task items associated with each objective. Goals and objectives were presented to the Department's company officers for additional input prior to publishing the draft plan.

# Strategic Planning Committee Members

## Internal Stakeholders

Daniel Hoff	<i>Fire Chief</i>
Joseph Madzellan	<i>Battalion Chief, Accreditation Manager</i>
Scott Ryno	<i>Battalion Chief, Planning Session Facilitator</i>
Matthew Arnold	<i>Battalion Chief</i>
Brett Graham	<i>Battalion Chief</i>
Ed Morin	<i>Local 2377</i>
G. Lester Rhoads	<i>Local 2377</i>
Anthony Sawyer	<i>Local 3503</i>
Travis Ort	<i>Local 3503</i>
Nick Zambito	<i>Alert Fire Company</i>
Todd Evans	<i>Springetts Fire Company</i>
Paul Grubbs	<i>Grantley Fire Company</i>

## YAUFRR Commission Members

Austin Hunt	<i>Member-at-Large</i>
Charles Wurster	<i>Springettsbury Township Supervisor</i>
Daniel Rooney	<i>Spring Garden Township Commissioner</i>

## Partner Agency

Barry Albertson	<i>UPMC Life Team EMS</i>
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## Municipal Officials

Timothy James	<i>Manchester Township Manager</i>
Mark Hodgkinson	<i>Springettsbury Township Manager</i>
Marcy Krum-Tinsley	<i>Spring Garden Township Manager</i>

## External Stakeholders

Mario Ellis	<i>Manchester Township Resident</i>
James Sanford	<i>Springettsbury Township Resident</i>
Kathleen Phan	<i>Springettsbury Township Resident</i>
David Raver	<i>Spring Garden Township Resident</i>
Jere Matthews	<i>Rutter's Corporation</i>
Andy Seebold	<i>WellSpan Health, Spring Garden Twp Resident</i>
Matthew Shields	<i>Central York School District</i>
Dr. Scott Krauser	<i>York Suburban School District</i>
Robert Lehman	<i>Penn State York, Spring Garden Twp Resident</i>
Dave Schmidenberg	<i>York County Solid Waste Authority</i>
Dave Vollero	<i>York County Solid Waste Authority</i>

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## *Mission, Values, and Vision of the Department*

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### **Mission**

The Committee discussed the Department's current Mission Statement. While most survey respondents thought the current statement was good, some felt it was too wordy. Mission statements are generally to be short, concise, and easily memorized. The previous mission of York Area United Fire and Rescue was:

*“The mission of York Area United Fire and Rescue is to provide the highest level of proactive, professional service to the citizens and businesses of our participating municipalities, through the provision of regional fire suppression, fire prevention, emergency medical services, disaster planning and public education.”*

The Committee felt this statement was too long and appeared to constrain our delivery of professional service to our member municipalities. Based upon further discussion, the revised Mission Statement is more concise, without limiting the delivery of service to participating municipalities.

## **Mission**

*“The Mission of York Area United Fire and Rescue is to serve the community by providing the highest level of comprehensive and timely emergency services.”*

### **Values**

Throughout the stakeholder sessions, there were no comments or suggestions regarding current values of the Department. Based on Committee concurrence, the Department values will remain as unchanged.

## **Values**

***Commitment** to our community, to our service, to each other and to proactive, relevant education.*

***Professionalism** in the performance of our duties.*

***Honor** in placing service before self.*

***Pride** in being a premier provider of emergency services within the region.*

***Embrace** change and recognize that continuous improvement is necessary to remain the best we can be.*

## Vision

A similar discussion was held with regard to the Vision Statement. While there were not many negative comments nor suggestions made on the current Vision Statement, discussion was held on the current statement being too limiting, in that it focused singularly on operational support to fire departments in York County. In fact, Department personnel are often involved in numerous aspects of assistance to all types of emergency services organizations, both regionally and nationally. The previous Vision of York Area United Fire and Rescue was:

*“YAUFRR aspires to be a collaborative, inclusive, world-class fire department that operationally supports, as needed, the firefighting and fire prevention efforts of all departments in York County, through our dedication to professionalism, education, training, community involvement and support of those beyond our municipal borders.”*

Based upon the recommendation of the Committee, the Department Vision Statement was revised.

## Vision

***“York Area United Fire and Rescue strives to be a model, world class, fire department. We accomplish this through our dedication to professionalism, education, training, collaboration, and community involvement. We take pride in supporting the success of all emergency services organizations in our region.”***



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# *Environmental Scan/Department Assessment*

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In late 2017, the Insurance Services Office (ISO) conducted a survey of the Department, receiving a rating of 3/3X, an improvement over the previous 4/9 rating. In 2019, the Department began a process to seek accreditation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) via the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). Throughout late 2020 and early 2021, Department personnel conducted community risk assessments and began preparation of a standard of cover document. It was determined that this information would be utilized to provide a current assessment of the Department as the foundation for strategic planning process discussions. During planning sessions, internal and external stakeholders discussed programs and services provided by the Department. A list of strengths and weaknesses were developed, as well as an identification of opportunities and threats (SWOT).

## **SWOT Analysis**

### **Strengths**

*Personnel*

*Training program*

*Quality of service*

*Turnout times*

*Apparatus and equipment replacement plans*

*Policies and Procedures*

### **Weaknesses**

*Staffing*

*Special Service availability*

*Program evaluations*

*Opportunities for career progression*

*Fire Station coverage*

*Lack of a cohesive volunteer program*

*Lack of a fire/life safety inspection program*

*Quality of data entry*

### **Opportunities**

*Accreditation*

*Community partnerships*

*Creation of a community advisory group*

*Expansion of table of organization*

*Increased availability of virtual training delivery*

*Negotiation of a joint labor agreement*

*Grant funding*

*Joint training with mutual aid partners*

*Expanded quality assurance program*

*Alert Fire Company facility*

### **Threats**

*Failure of neighboring volunteer systems*

*Pandemic challenges*

*Training demands due to “all-hazards” response*

*Records management system changes*

*Increasing call volume*

*Lack of support for increased funding requests*

*Staff workload/span of control*

*9-1-1 Center staffing/procedures*

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## **Critical Issues/Service Gaps**

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Department personnel utilized a SWOT analysis combined with stakeholder survey feedback to identify broad critical issues and service gaps facing York Area United Fire and Rescue. These are the broadest challenges faced by the Department, impacting the delivery of programs and services. Based upon further review and discussion by internal stakeholders, the following Critical Issues and Service Gaps were identified:

**Staffing:** the ability to assemble an effective response force to successfully mitigate an incident.

**Resource Deployment:** locating fire units to ensure they available at an incident scene in a timely manner.

**Community Risk Reduction:** steps taken to minimize the frequency and impact of incidents.

**Operational Program Delivery:** ensuring incident response capabilities match the identified risks and hazards.

**Recruitment/Retention:** attracting and keeping quality personnel at all levels within the Department.

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## **Strategic Initiatives**

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Strategic Initiatives are very broad categories that become the basis for development of goals and objectives within this Strategic Plan. They are developed based on a review of critical issues and service gaps and consensus on the ability of the Department to successfully address them within the duration of the Strategic Plan. Department personnel determined that the following strategic initiatives shall be the foundation for this Plan.

### **Operational Effectiveness**

York Area United Fire and Rescue will ensure readiness and deployment of adequate resources to manage risks and mitigate incidents, achieve established response time and effective response force goals, and minimize the impact to our community safely and efficiently. Beyond emergency response, YAUFR will ensure delivery of quality, professional programs to proactively minimize risk and meet community needs and expectations.

### **Community Risk Reduction:**

York Area United Fire and Rescue will take a proactive approach to identify risks present within the response area and strive to reduce the probability of an incident occurring and impacts an event may have.

### **Workforce Development:**

York Area United Fire and Rescue will strive to recruit and retain quality candidates, develop knowledgeable and professional personnel, and foster an environment in which personnel have an opportunity to advance their emergency services career.

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## *Goals and Objectives*

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Goals are broad targets for improvement of an organization. Objectives are created in support of achieving a targeted goal. Goals should be **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound). Critical Tasks are specific steps that can be used to measure accomplishment of objectives. The Department developed a list of goals and objectives based upon the established Strategic Initiatives. They will improve upon York Area United Fire and Rescue's strengths, address weaknesses, leverage opportunities, and ideally minimize threats. These goals and objectives are intended to be implemented within the span of this Strategic Plan.

### **Goal 1: Ensure the Department is adequately staffed, and resources positioned to ensure delivery of a timely and sufficient response to community service demands.**

#### **Objectives:**

**1A:** Publish and annually update a Standard of Cover. In conjunction with the Standard of Cover, evaluate service gaps between baseline and benchmark response data for assembly of effective response force.

Timeframe: Annually, starting in 2022

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Annually, evaluate and adjust staffing budget to ensure sufficient apparatus staffing.
- Research and pursue additional revenue sources to expedite apparatus staffing improvements.
- Identify potential alternative staffing solutions, considering future growth scenarios.

**1B:** In conjunction with the Standard of Cover, complete a response analysis of box areas and identify potential response time improvements based on response plan changes, unit staffing, fire station locations, and resource deployment.

Timeframe: End of 2022

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Identify and evaluate potential locations for additional fire stations to improve coverage gaps.
- Present resource deployment plan to municipalities for review and consideration.
- Develop staffing and resource deployment plan to ensure units are properly staffed and positioned and increase special service unit availability.
- Ensure the apparatus replacement program accounts for any potential need for additions to the fleet.
- Coordinate with Alert Fire Company on facility improvements, discussing potential future role this location may play in the future of the Department.

**1C:** Review response plans and box assignments annually to ensure effective use of outside resources, address challenges and threats within those areas and account for changes in mutual aid response successes and capabilities.

Timeframe: Mid-2022

Lead: Fire Chief

Critical Tasks:

- Establish mutual aid agreements with surrounding agencies, including minimum staffing requirements and joint training obligations.
- Update box assignments to reflect use of mutual aid agencies based on travel and turnout time.
- Conduct biennial assessment of mutual aid turnout times and adjust as needed based on recent historical performance data.

**1D:** Develop a revised command structure/table of organization to properly manage span of control and personnel workloads and create pathways for career progression.

Timeframe: Mid 2022

Lead: Fire Chief

Critical Tasks:

- Create/update job descriptions for all positions.
- Negotiate position specifics with collective bargaining units as required.
- Develop a plan for expansion of the table of organization based on Department needs.

**1E:** Develop a comprehensive volunteer program that better integrates volunteer personnel into the Department and allows for potential expansion as required.

Timeframe: Early 2023

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Appoint command staff and company officers to function as volunteer liaisons.
- Adopt and publish specifications for equipment, PPE, and apparel purchases to ensure consistency throughout the Department, yet accounting for the volunteer companies' heritage.
- Develop and implement a streamlined budgetary and procurement process.
- Identify needs, concerns, and expectations of outside agencies and develop strategies for addressing these items and assisting these organizations.
- Develop an onboarding plan for future volunteer organizations.
- In conjunction with Objective 1D, create pathways for evolution and expansion of volunteer involvement within the Department.

## **Goal 2: Ensure Department personnel are properly trained and possess knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their jobs safely and efficiently.**

### **Objectives:**

**2A:** Review and expand the existing training plan to address volunteer and mutual aid training.

Timeframe: End of 2022

Lead: Training Battalion Chief

Critical Tasks:

- Revise existing plan to include minimum training requirements for volunteer personnel.
- Ensure all personnel receive and understand revised training requirements.
- Establish a training process that includes sufficient opportunities for volunteer participation.
- Work with immediate mutual aid agencies to schedule joint training sessions in accordance with ISO requirements and national guidelines.
- Appoint company level officer(s) to assist in training program supervision.

**2B:** Develop a defined career progression path for all personnel.

Timeframe: End of 2022

Lead: Training Battalion Chief

Critical Tasks:

- Review and update job descriptions to identify required and preferred training and qualifications.
- Develop and publish a career training matrix outlining required and elective training, and educational goals based on rank and career path goals.
- Establish a regular schedule of required training opportunities and incorporate into the training plan to ensure availability of required training.

**2C:** Provide additional training and educational opportunities to support career growth and development, ensuring personnel are better prepared for career advancement.

Timeframe: Mid 2023

Lead: Training Battalion Chief

Critical Tasks:

- Seek partnerships with educational institutions to provide personnel with formal educational opportunities outside normal vocational training programs.
- Incorporate non-vocational academic programs into the existing vocational training program.
- Identify potential incentives and assistance to encourage personnel to expand their education.



## **Goal 3: Ensure the Department is prepared to respond to special incidents, including technical rescues and hazardous materials incidents.**

### **Objectives:**

**3A:** Review and enhance the Department’s technical rescue capabilities in accordance with the Community Risk Assessment/Standard of Cover.

Timeframe: End of 2024

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Review and update existing technical rescue response plans to ensure deployment of an effective response force in accordance with the Community Risk Assessment/Standard of Cover.
- Develop partnerships with existing technical rescue agencies, to include joint training, resource sharing, and incident support.
- Provide technician level training to all personnel in water, confined space, high angle, trench, and heavy vehicle/machinery rescue.
- Provide operations level training to all personnel in structural collapse.
- Conduct a review of current equipment and ensure the Department possesses appropriate resources to respond to technical rescue incidents at identified service levels.
- Implement an improved apparatus deployment and staffing plan that increases special service availability.
- Review current and future apparatus needs as they pertain to the technical rescue response mission and ensure that future apparatus specifications and procurements can accommodate.

**3B:** Review and enhance the Department’s hazardous materials incident response capabilities in accordance with the Community Risk Assessment/Standard of Cover.

Timeframe: End of 2024

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Review and update existing hazardous materials incident response plans to ensure deployment of an effective response force in accordance with the Community Risk Assessment/Standard of Cover.
- Develop a partnership with County Haz-Mat Team, to include joint training, resource sharing, and incident support.
- Provide hazardous materials technician-level training to all personnel.
- Conduct a review of current equipment and ensure the Department possesses resources appropriate to respond and provide initial mitigation efforts at hazardous materials incidents.
- Review current and future apparatus needs as they pertain to the hazardous materials response mission and ensure that future apparatus specifications and procurements can accommodate.

## **Goal 4: Increase Community Risk Reduction efforts through pre-fire planning and life safety code compliance.**

### **Objectives:**

**4A:** Improve efficiency of the pre-fire planning process to ensure all hazards are preplanned annually.

Timeframe: Mid 2022

Lead: Planning and Preparedness Battalion Chief

Critical Tasks:

- Review and revise the pre-fire planning general order to ensure annual preplans are completed.
- Implement Inspection Reports Online (IROL) Community Risk Assessment module so business/property owners can update building information themselves.
- Provide community education/orientation on use of the IROL system.
- Implement process to import IROL risk assessment data into the Department's records management system.

**4B:** Establish a fire/life safety inspection program encompassing all commercial properties in the Department's primary response area.

Timeframe: Start of 2023

Lead: Fire Chief and Planning and Preparedness Battalion Chief

Critical Tasks:

- Ensure adoption of a current fire code by all participating municipalities, with York Area United Fire and Rescue designated as the enforcement authority.
- Implement the IROL Third-Party Service Provider submission program to ensure fire alarm and protection systems are inspected and maintained.
- Implement an annual fire inspection process utilizing a combination of inspections by Department personnel combined with self-assessment/self-certification by businesses.
- Provide fire inspection training and certification for all personnel.
- Develop a plan for creation of a Community Risk Reduction division, including staffing needs and funding sources.

## **Goal 5: Improve and expand upon current public education and outreach efforts.**

### **Objectives:**

**5A:** Review current public education programs to identify topics and populations missed.

Timeframe: End of 2022

Lead: Public Education/Community Outreach Battalion Chief

Critical Tasks:

- Review community population demographics according to Community Risk Assessments, current U.S. Census data, and other available data sources.
- Identify topics and intended audiences of current programs.
- Create a catalog of public education programs available, including a matrix for topics covered, intended audiences, delivery methods, etc.
- Ensure program materials are up to date and available in alternative languages when possible.

**5B:** Improve public education program delivery effectiveness.

Timeframe: End of 2024

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Provide Life Safety Educator training to all personnel, mandatory for all officers, offered to all interested personnel.
- Develop standardized programs for delivery of public education programs to ensure consistent delivery.
- Develop a series of pre-recorded public education programs, made available for on-demand viewing by the public.
- Develop and implement a method to evaluate public education programs for effectiveness, to include participant feedback.
- Develop and implement a process for program review and updates that incorporates customer feedback and accounts for changes in technology, population, and other factors.

**5C:** Expand public education program scope to include education of the public on who we are and what we do.

Timeframe: Mid 2023

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Develop a marketing plan for the Department.
- Develop community outreach programs depicting who we are and what we do.
- Identify opportunities to hold open discussions with community members.

**5D:** Create a community advisory committee to assist department personnel with projects and feedback.

Timeframe: Mid 2023

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Develop the role and expectations of the committee.
- Solicit community members to serve on the committee.
- Hold regular committee meetings to maintain engagement.

## **Goal 6: Provide for recruitment and retention of quality personnel, to include succession planning.**

### **Objectives:**

**6A:** Review and expand personnel recruitment processes to expand applicant pools and improve diversity within the ranks.

Timeframe: Early 2022

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Identify and utilize additional outlets for recruitment, reaching a wider, more diverse audience.
- Solicit feedback from recruits after completion of a hiring or recruitment process.
- Implement feedback into future efforts to improve recruitment and hiring processes.
- Develop focused recruitment materials for all positions, to include appropriate demographic outreach, description of opportunities, compensation, and benefits (as applicable), and an onboarding process outline.

**6B:** Develop a career progression and succession plan for all ranks within the Department.

Timeframe: End of 2023

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Develop an employee/volunteer mentoring process that pairs personnel with an appropriate leader or mentor, establishing a mutually beneficial relationship.
- Provide formal mentoring training for all command staff and company officers.
- Review and update the Department's table of organization to include future roles and positions.



## **Goal 7: Enhance disaster response and preparedness capabilities through the increased role of Emergency Management.**

### **Objectives:**

**7A:** Increase the number of trained emergency management personnel.

Timeframe: Early 2023

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- In conjunction with Objective 6A, develop an emergency management volunteer recruitment process.
- Solicit cross-participation from current volunteers serving in other roles.
- Request municipalities appoint staff members to fill roles within the emergency management structure.
- Develop a plan to utilize off-duty career staff to supplement emergency management functions.
- Increase EMA personnel involvement to maintain engagement through major event planning, storm response, etc.

**7B:** Increase awareness and buy-in of the role of emergency management with municipal leaders and department heads.

Timeframe: End of 2022

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Hold an informational session for municipal leaders and department heads.
- Ensure that appropriate municipal staff and supporting agencies are represented and participate in emergency management trainings, drills, and activations.
- Utilize emergency management personnel and processes for event planning to maintain familiarity.

## **Goal 8: Establish a formal fire cause investigation program.**

### **Objectives:**

**8A:** Develop a process for investigation of all fires.

Timeframe: End of 2022

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Appoint a Battalion Chief to manage the program.
- Update existing and create additional General Orders governing investigative processes.
- Create and adopt forms and checklists for investigations.
- Create and implement a training plan to provide minimum investigation training to personnel.
- Identify needed equipment and prepare an associated budget request.

**8B:** Integrate the investigation process with outside agencies as necessary.

Timeframe: End of 2023

Lead: Command Staff

Critical Tasks:

- Coordinate and integrate procedures with local police departments.
- Coordinate and integrate procedures with State Police fire marshals.
- Coordinate and integrate procedures with York County District Attorney's office.

**8C:** Establish and expand the Juvenile Fire Setter program.

Timeframe: End of 2023

Lead: Public Education/Community Outreach Captain

Critical Tasks:

- Continue to coordinate with York County District Attorney's office on creation of the program.
- Establish and implement a training program.
- Develop a plan for program administration outside the Department's primary coverage area.

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## Appendix

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### **Stakeholder survey results**

As part of the strategic planning process, strategic planning committee members were asked to complete a survey on their experience and departmental expectations. Each committee member was also asked to share the survey with other stakeholders outside of the committee. IAFF Local representatives were asked to share the survey with their membership. Survey participants were first asked to identify their role or involvement with the department. Survey questions varied based upon perspective and level of involvement. Thirty-six internal and fifteen external stakeholders completed the survey. External Stakeholders included nine strategic planning committee members and six who were not directly involved with this planning committee.

### **Internal stakeholder (YAUFR Employees and Volunteers) survey results (36 respondents)**

*Question 1: Overall, what is your impression of York Area United Fire and Rescue?*

- Excellent: 7
- Good: 28
- Poor: 1

*Question 2: What is your opinion of the quality of services provided by York Area United Fire and Rescue?*

- Above expectations: 8
- About what I'd expect: 22
- Below expectations: 6

*Questions 3: What do you see as the most critical issue(s) facing the Department?*

75% of the internal respondents identified adequate staffing as a critical issue. 32% indicated the number of in-service apparatus and unit/fire station locations as another major concern. Other responses indicated concerns over recruitment and retention of quality personnel, career growth, and succession planning. Examples of responses to this open-ended question:

- “Staffing to meet the demands of our customers, keeping our providers safe, and improving our performance.”
- “Staffing, retention and training. Also most effective locations of fire station.”
- “Rising operational costs and the ability to fund the necessary costs to achieve the vision. Also, the decline in the number of volunteer firefighters in PA.”
- “Staffing and apparatus/station locations.”
- “There are multiple issues that our department faces. First is staffing, we need more people. Our mission statement says we provide the highest level of proactive service to our community, I feel that is true for what we do with the amount of firefighters that we currently have. However, I believe with more staffing we can make that statement even more true to the citizens. Our vision statement is fantastic and would not change it. We reference our department as world class, I feel as though we are but without a compliment of full staffing, I'm not sure that is true. As well, the studies have shown that we need more fire stations to cover our areas appropriately in a timely manner accordingly to national standards. More staffed stations obviously would require more staffing as well. As time moves forward and our area continues to grow with both business and population base we need to change as a department and make the growth with the changing times. I feel as though the department needs to

make reactive changes in those areas to make us hold true to our mission and vision statements. If we can make those changes reactively that will make us the proactive department that we're striving to be. With more staff on board will allow us to be even better at our daily job duties, we keep getting busier with call volumes, pre-plans, trainings and so forth it's hard to keep up some days. More employees equal more hands to complete the tasks that continue to grow and they will be able to be completed at a more proficient professional level."

- "Keeping up with the growing incident volume. While trying to continue to provide community fire prevention, as well as building inspections and plans reviews. This will take additional personnel in key positions to make sure these can be completed. These are vital in keeping the community safe."

*Question 4: Do you feel the Department's current Fire incident response system meets the needs/risks of the community?*

83% of the respondents gave a negative response. The most frequent explanation given for the negative response was lack of adequate staffing. Insufficient fire station locations and proper use of mutual aid were also listed as factors in a negative response. Only 17% responded that they feel the current fire response system is adequate. Examples of responses to this open-ended question:

- "Not at all."
- "I think it does but needs improvement, obviously we need to work on the staffing levels. But also if we have a mutual aid volunteer company listen to respond to our area, they need to be getting out. If not, we need all the YAUFRR units to respond first to guarantee to get the minimum of firefighters to the call"
- "No, we are not staffed to meet the requirements of our own general orders safely. We routinely operate in situations where limited personnel increases risk and decreases efficient response."
- "I feel the department is not keeping pace with the growth of the municipalities served. Example- staffing, codes, and growth."
- "The 89-5 West end is in need of protection. Manchester Twp is the only single station district in 89. Adequately staffed (greater than 2) apparatus being able to reach all areas in a timely fashion."
- "Not 100%. We need more staffing and stations."

*Question 5: Do you feel the Department's current Technical Rescue incident response system meets the needs/risks of the community?*

36% of respondents indicated that they feel the technical rescue capabilities are adequate. Similar to Question 4, the majority of the negative responses indicated concerns over staffing and specialized training as the primary concerns. Examples of responses to this open-ended question:

- "I feel the department does a good job exploring the areas of technical rescue and training on them. We should work more closely with specialized teams that perform these services on a technical and regular basis."
- "The department is doing a good job of getting the newer personnel the training they need to meet the needs."
- "No, need to have the rescue company fully staffed at all times and not left unstaffed while the truck is on a call."
- "We've made great strides in equipment. However, the training still needs some work. Not everyone is interested in tech rescue. I think we need to look at a dedicated core group on each shift to staff all three special service units. This would help to bridge the gap between YAUFRR and County/Regional assets."

*Question 6: Do you feel the Department's current Haz-Mat incident response system meets the needs/risks of the community?*

62% of respondents indicated that the Department's hazardous materials response capabilities meet the needs of the community. The primary concern indicated is the uncertain future and response capability of the County Haz-Mat Team, due to its primarily volunteer staffing.

- "Yes, as we do not run that many hazmat incidents and the hazmat team is in our first due."

- “Minimally, we aren’t staffed or equipped for large incidents and rely on a limited and all volunteer county team.”
- “We are lacking equipment, depend on the county Haz-Mat team, which is struggling as well.”
- Yes. We have specialized teams for hazardous material responses and have the means to stabilize incidents until their arrival.
- “Yes. HazMat should be handled at a county level. The low call volume in hazmat calls and cost of equipment does not make it a good choice for the department to increase capability.”
- “Like tech. rescue, not everyone is interested in Hazmat. I think we need to look at a dedicated core group on each shift to staff all three special service units. This would help to bridge the gap between YAUFRR and County/Regional assets.”
- “No. We take the refresher course once a year, but most take it as a formality. We should up the training in this area by offering the Tech class and perform more training at the company level.”

*Question 7: Do you feel the Department's current Training program meets the needs of the Department and of your professional development?*

67% of respondents indicated they do feel the current training program is adequate. Primary concerns expressed concerned future funding for training, availability of training, and concerns for proper new recruit training.

- “No, there needs to be a better standard of minimum training within the department and certifications that new members must obtain within a certain time. Specialized training to ride the special services.”
- “Yes, but I would request that the captains who are carrying out the training plan to be more encouraged to use creativity with it, and to not just follow the bullet points.”
- “The training program is a good guide to keep our providers up to date and current to dictated standards. As far as continued personal professional development, it is not individually customized for each member's goals. Goal setting and professional development remains unguided for most, with some members receiving assistance where others do not. Professional development provided through favoritism rather than equity leads to moral and complacency concerns.”
- Yes

*Question 8: Do you feel the Department's current apparatus and equipment maintenance and replacement plans meet the needs of the Department?*

94% of respondents answered yes to this question. Several indicated concern for continued funding of apparatus replacement cycles. It was also suggested the Department research creation of an in-house mechanic position.

- Yes!!

*Question 9: What would you do to improve personnel recruitment, retention, and career paths in the Department?*

The majority of responses to this open-ended question indicated staffing, pay, and benefits. Most respondents indicated that the Department should enact a competitive pay scale and offer a retirement program that allows firefighters to retire at a reasonable age. Other comments included a desire for additional promotional opportunity and career growth. It should be noted that this survey was released at a time when one of the two bargaining units was awaiting an arbitration decision that included the potential for a revised pay and benefits package.

- “To improve the number and quality of new recruits the starting salary could be raised. By broadening the Departments scope into A Fire prevention Bureau/Fire Inspection and Investigation, we can provide additional career paths for firefighters farther into their careers as well as providing a broader scope of protection for the community.”
- “Our department is still relatively small, so there is a large workload for a small number of people. I think increased staffing and compensation would be a step in the right direction.”



- “More public outreach and looks into our day to day (Photos, videos, outreach etc.)”
- “Up staffing would potentially create more upward mobility thus helping with retention.”
- “Add to the rank structure within the department to allow for additional promotional opportunities for current members. Establish a department ran career recruit academy for new hire personnel.”

**External stakeholder (Residents, business and institutional representatives, and external agencies) survey results (15 respondents, including 6 active participants of the strategic planning committee)**

*Question 1: Have you ever used or witnessed the use of our services?*

- Yes: 12
- No: 3

*Question 2: What was the context of your encounter with our personnel?*

- Experienced or witnessed an incident: 8
- Public Education or training session: 9
- Pre-fire planning or disaster exercise: 4

*Question 3: Based on your observations or interaction with our personnel, please rate our department and personnel in each of the following areas:*

- Appearance:
  - Excellent: 9
  - Average: 3
- Professionalism:
  - Excellent: 11
  - Average: 1
- Knowledge:
  - Excellent: 12
- Promptness/Timely Arrival:
  - Excellent: 11
  - Average: 1
- Courtesy/Compassion:
  - Excellent: 10
  - Average: 2

*Question 4: Overall, what is your impression of York Area United Fire and Rescue?*

- Excellent: 11
- Good: 4

*Question 5: What is your opinion of the quality of services provided by York Area United Fire and Rescue?*

- Above expectations: 6
- About what I'd expect: 8
- I'm not really sure what services are provided: 1

*Question 6: What do you see as the most critical issue(s) facing the Department?*

- Facilities space. Additional support through volunteers

- It doesn't seem like there are enough people and fire trucks to take care of daily business and emergencies. Firemen kept having to leave fire extinguisher training to go to emergencies, and there were only two firemen on the truck. That can't be enough to fight a fire.
- The community is growing very quickly. Is the fire department growing along with it? If not, it should be.
- dedicated, properly trained staff, lack of community support, budget issues
- Staffing and Training for today's challenges
- Getting qualified personnel able to respond to our growing needs
- The need for additional well-trained Personnel
- Adequate number of career and volunteer firefighters to respond to calls
- First and foremost is the need to grow. It seems as though growth has been stagnant, yet the community continues to grow rapidly. The second issue, and certainly in conjunction with the first, is leadership. It is concerning that little, if anything, has been done to recognize the need to keep up with changes in the community.
- Recruitment and retention
- recruitment and retainment of personnel
- recruitment and retention ex. Salaries and benefits
- Minimal amount of volunteer staff
- Additional staffing is needed to protect both YAUFRR employees (extremely risky job with only two firefighters initially arriving on scene) and to meet the growing demand for services. Also recommend 1) additional career ladders for growth (i.e.. asst. chief), 2) dedicated unit/staffing specific for fire inspections, 3) improved connection/understanding between Commission and fire fighters, 4) improvements made to a few of the fire department facilities, 5) communications committee established (including both internal and external experts) to best tell the story and create greater awareness about YAUFRR, 6) must critically explore ways to get volunteer firefighters, 7) evaluate development of codes enforcement team who would work collaboratively with businesses for fire prevention and ultimately generate new income for department, and 8) focused strategy and execution for expanding service area through additional consolidation of neighboring fire departments. You are doing amazing work with limited resources. If resourced properly, YAUFRR would be even more of a shining example throughout the state and country.
- Labor and capital costs.

*Question 7: Do you feel the Department's current Fire incident response system meets the needs/risks of the community? (This question was only asked of committee members, as they received an overview of the current program)*

- Unsure
- Yes
- No. The statistics presented show that the Department fails to meet basic response standards in many areas.
- Yes
- No
- Yes, except for how many firefighters are on a truck
- In its area yes - when the department needs to rely on other departments (especially all volunteer) , it could cause an issue
- As stated previously, there is a need for additional firefighters to meet the growing needs of our region.
- Preferred to have more coverage thus quicker response time in the areas that may be outside the current ideal response time areas.

*Question 8: Do you feel the Department's current Technical Rescue response system meets the needs/risks of the community? (This question was only asked of committee members, as they received an overview of the current program)*

- Unsure
- Don't have enough information to judge the technical rescue capabilities of YAUFRR

- No. It seems that outside assistance is relied upon too heavily, given the risk potential.
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- I believe so. However, need to determine a regional approach to this need.
- To the best of my knowledge, yes.

*Question 9: Do you feel the Department's current Haz-Mat incident response system meets the needs/risks of the community? (This question was only asked of committee members, as they received an overview of the current program)*

- Unsure
- Yes, given the fact that York County EMA provides a county wide hazardous materials response.
- No. Again, will the outside resources be available at all times when they are needed?
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Unknown
- Yes. However, we again need to understand a regional response to this need.
- To the best of my knowledge, yes.

*Question 10: Do you feel the Department's current training program meets the needs of the Department? (This question was only asked of committee members, as they received an overview of the current program)*

100% of the respondents answered “Yes”.

*Question 11: Do you feel the Department's current apparatus and equipment maintenance and replacement plans meet the needs of the Department? (This question was only asked of committee members, as they received an overview of the current program)*

100% of the respondents answered “Yes”.

*Question 12: What would you do to improve personnel recruitment, retention, and career paths in the Department? (This question was only asked of committee members, as they received an overview of the current program)*

- Align with High Schools and advertisement using all channels including social media
- More public education about YAUFRR and the staffing issues faced with a declining number of volunteer firefighters to support the career firefighters
- To recruit and retain a top-notch workforce, it is important to ensure that wages and benefits remain competitive with other fire departments. It is also important to develop a rank structure that allows for promotion and career progression. It would be helpful if the department provided support for educational opportunities that supports career growth.
- Target recruiting middle school and high school students to get them interested. Work with local colleges and universities to offer college credit for some of the training courses
- broaden the scope of job descriptions/responsibilities. What response planning and implementation can the dept offer to community and business?
- Review salaries and benefits and educational reimbursement
- I do not know what is causing the department not to reach its goals in these areas if that is case - has there been focus groups with the current or past employees? We need to ask ourselves....what is the problem we are trying to solve? Until we know the problem (and not symptoms) it is very difficult to answer this question.

- As stated earlier, I would have new roles to encourage growth and retention. Examples include asst. fire chief, fire prevention specialist (codes enforcement - would be a great role for older or injured firefighters).
- Continue to reach out to the younger interested demo and connect in a variety of options to pique interest in Firefighting as a career.

*Question 13: Do you have any other comments, concerns, or suggestions for YOUR fire department?*

- I think the current team is talented and have the compassion necessary for the job
- More public education about YAUFR
- More community presence and outreach to interest citizens
- We are very fortunate to have the expertise, professionalism and response rate that we have within YAUFR. Beyond thankful for everyone's commitment and passion for this important work.
- Costs associated with ongoing capital needs.

### **Ranking of priorities**

All survey participants were provided with a list of goals and priorities that were developed throughout the program reviews and strategic planning discussions. Participants were asked, from their perspective, to rank them in order of priority. The final ranking of priorities was developed based upon the average position among all responses.

1. Adequately staffed and timely response to fire and medical incidents (#2.9 average)
2. Training, knowledge, and professionalism of fire department personnel (#3.59 average)
3. Properly trained and equipped for response to technical rescue incidents (High Angle, Trench, Confined Space, Water/Ice, etc.) (#5.22 average)
4. Properly trained and equipped for response to hazardous materials incidents (#5.59 average)
5. Pre-fire planning of buildings/situational awareness by fire department personnel (#6.16 average)
6. Delivery of Public education and fire prevention programs (#6.67 average)
7. Fire/Life Safety code education/enforcement (#6.92 average)
8. Recruitment and Retention of quality personnel, succession planning (#7.86 average)
9. Facilities are up to date and adequate in size and location to serve community/department needs (#8.04 average)
10. Emergency Management, Disaster Response and Preparedness (#8.49 average)
11. Plan review of new developments and commercial building construction (#9.12 average)
12. Fire Cause Investigation (#9.92 average)
13. Public Relations/Community feedback (#10.53 average)