



# MARION FIRE DEPARTMENT

2023-2028

# STRATEGIC PLAN



Prepared for

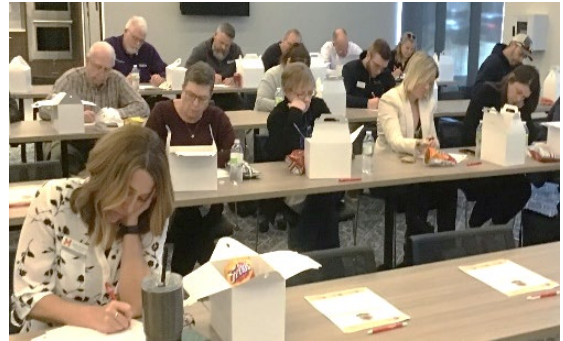


Facilitated by



The Center for Public Safety Excellence® (CPSE®) acknowledges and thanks the community and agency stakeholders for their participation and input into this community-driven strategic planning process. The CPSE also recognizes Fire Chief Tom Fagan and all who participated for their commitment to this process.

This community-driven strategic plan was developed in March 2023, beginning with a meeting facilitated by representatives from the CPSE for community members, as named below. The community stakeholders’ feedback considered by agency stakeholders in developing this strategic plan can be found in [Appendix A](#).



**Community Stakeholders**

Barry A’Hearn	Nick Glew	Laura Kriegermeier	Brad Neilly	Greg Smith
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Mary Pat Garland	Rhonda Kaczinski	Brian Mertes	Keith Rippy	Ryan Waller
Jackie Gillen	Mike Kitsmiller	Steve Moshier	Frank Sherman	

The agency stakeholder work sessions, conducted over three days, involved a group representing a broad cross-section of the Marion Fire Department (MFD), as named below. The agency stakeholders’ work session product can be found in [Appendix B](#).

**Agency Stakeholders**

Zach Brunscheen	Shawn Fluharty	Kean McBurney	Nathan Rompot
Zach Cooper	Cam Ford	Kale McBurney	Rob Schlitter
Ian Cruse	Jason Hansen	Traci Miller	Ryan Steffen
Tom Fagan	Jeff Madland	Jim O’Brien	Curtis Sutcliffe





## 2023-2025 STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

### VISION

Marion is an innovative city with vibrant neighborhoods and abundant opportunities for all.

### BRAND PROMISE

Marion is the best place in Iowa to raise a family and grow a business. Here, we reach higher!

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The City of Marion commits to the following:

- Acting with integrity
- Being accountable to the community and each other
- Fostering a collaborative work environment

### EQUITY STATEMENT

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are principles that bind us together to create a community where everyone belongs. The City of Marion is fully dedicated to addressing systems of inequity while building an accessible community where people of all cultures and identities can thrive. The City expects that its employees embrace this vision of inclusion and will strongly encourage its residents and community partners to do the same. By fulfilling this commitment, the City of Marion envisions a community that is inclusive and preserves the dignity of all people.

### FOCUS AREAS

1. Vibrant Community | To have a community that is accessible, attractive and open to all members of the community and visitors, and that aligns with having a high quality of life in Marion.
2. Efficient & Effective Government | To have all-encompassing internal support functions and departments for alignment to the focus areas.
3. Community & Economic Development | To have a community that provides excellent job opportunities, attracts, and retains quality businesses, and engages in partnerships and services that allow for ongoing growth in Marion.
4. Sustainable Infrastructure & Services | To invest in roads, water, and sewer, and create a long-term approach to maintaining the physical infrastructure for residents and visitors.
5. Safe Community | To have a community where all residents, businesses, and visitors feel safe.
6. Team Marion | To implement a clearly defined people strategy that attracts, engages, develops, and retains employees to achieve the City's mission of Reaching Higher!





# Message from the Fire Chief

It is my absolute pleasure to share the Marion Fire Department's 2023-2028 Community-Driven Strategic Plan! Thank you to the Center for Public Safety Excellence for facilitating this process; to Mayor Nick AbouAssaly, the Marion City Council and City Manager Ryan Waller for their visionary leadership and support; and a special thanks to the dozens of stakeholders who provided input and helped shape the plan.

Our community, and workforce, have evolved so much over the past several years. This community-driven process is vital to keeping the Marion Fire Department in-tune with what our community needs, while also adequately preparing and equipping our firefighters to execute their mission.

I'm proud of the work our team has put into creating this road map for the future. I hope you'll find it to be engaging and visionary as we support and deliver on our community promise to be the best place in Iowa to raise a family and grow a business.

The Marion Fire Department is committed to continuous process improvement in our pursuit of chasing excellence. We WILL be a leader in emergency services, guided by our updated mission and vision and in alignment with our renewed core values.

Thank you again for your support of the Marion Fire Department. Please feel free to contact me as we begin this journey together!

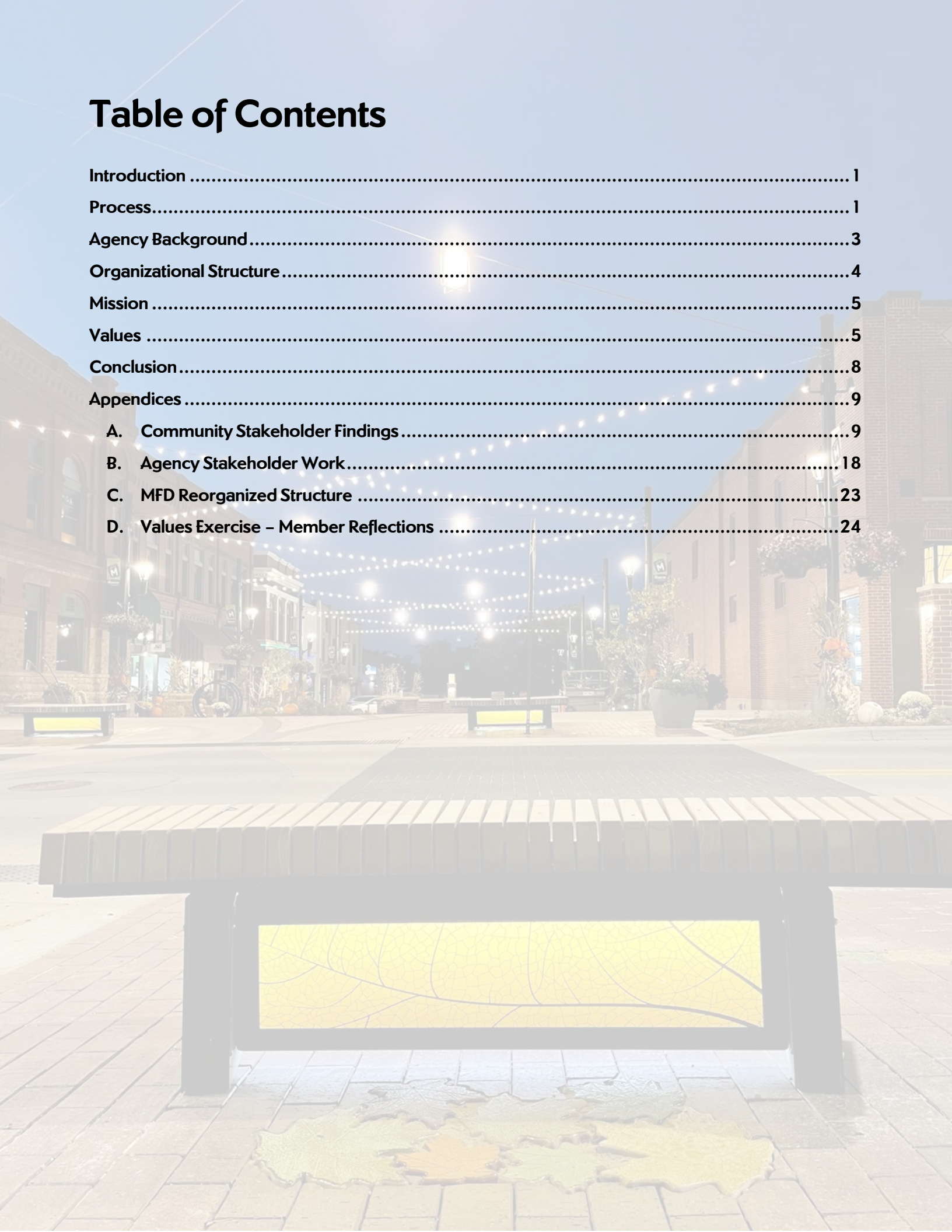


Tom Fagan  
Fire Chief  
Marion Fire Department



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# Introduction

The community serviced by the Marion Fire Department (MFD) receives professionalism and efficiency from the agency's proactive approach to risk reduction and emergency mitigation. As such, the MFD contracted with the CPSE to facilitate a community-driven strategic plan. The process utilized by the CPSE aligns with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International® (CFAI®) fire and emergency services accreditation model but also considers all parameters prescribed by the authority having jurisdiction.

The CPSE's approach to community-driven strategic planning gathers feedback and input from community and agency stakeholders while focusing on future change beyond the status quo. Beliefs, concepts, current processes, and values were among the many pieces considered and questioned to bring this planning document to reality. The MFD exhibited a commitment to the implementation and execution of this plan to become more efficient and effective in alignment with its community.

# Process

Understanding what the customer desires is vital to the success of any organization. In this case, the customer is the community that the Marion Fire Department serves. This applies even if the service organization is a governmental entity. Community-driven strategic planning ensures the community remains a focus of the organization's direction and community feedback is at the heart of all deliberations and development of this strategic plan.

The process of community-driven strategic planning and the plan itself represents the embrace of transition away from how an organization has always done things, seeking to find efficacies and outcomes based on change. The community-driven strategic plan provides a management roadmap built on a shared vision and structured for measurable results. With the involvement of a diverse group of agency stakeholders, the Marion Fire Department's community-driven strategic plan encompasses various experiences, perceptions, and perspectives that can also work to build more internal organizational symbiosis. For the desired, measurable results to be realized, the process and the strategic plan must focus on substance, not form. Only then can the MFD truly benefit from the process and realize its ultimate vision.



## Community Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Identify, from the community perspective, things the agency should and should not change.
- ✓ Identify the community's expectations for the agency, concerns about or for the agency, and aspects the community views as strengths or positives.
- ✓ Define the programs provided to the community.
- ✓ Establish the community's prioritized view of the programs and services provided by the agency.



**Community Stakeholder Work Session Participants**

## Agency Stakeholder Work

- ✓ Identify the agency's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results.
- ✓ Revisit the mission statement, giving careful attention to the services and programs currently provided and which logically can be provided in the future.
- ✓ Revisit the values of the agency's membership.
- ✓ Revisit the agency's current vision considering the consensus built from the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and desired results.
- ✓ Identify the agency's challenges, service gaps, and causal effects through a thematic sifting process.
- ✓ Determine, by consensus, strategic initiatives for outcome-based organizational improvement.
- ✓ Develop strategic goals, SMART objectives with relative timelines, and comprehensive critical task concepts focusing on outcomes.



# Agency Background

The Marion Fire Department was first organized in 1874 as a fire department for the city of Marion, Iowa. For \$1,800, the Marion city leaders procured two modern pieces of firefighting equipment, a Babcock chemical fire cart, and a hook and ladder cart. Both carts were hand-drawn, as horses were not readily affordable. Volunteer fire companies were created to provide fire service to the community.



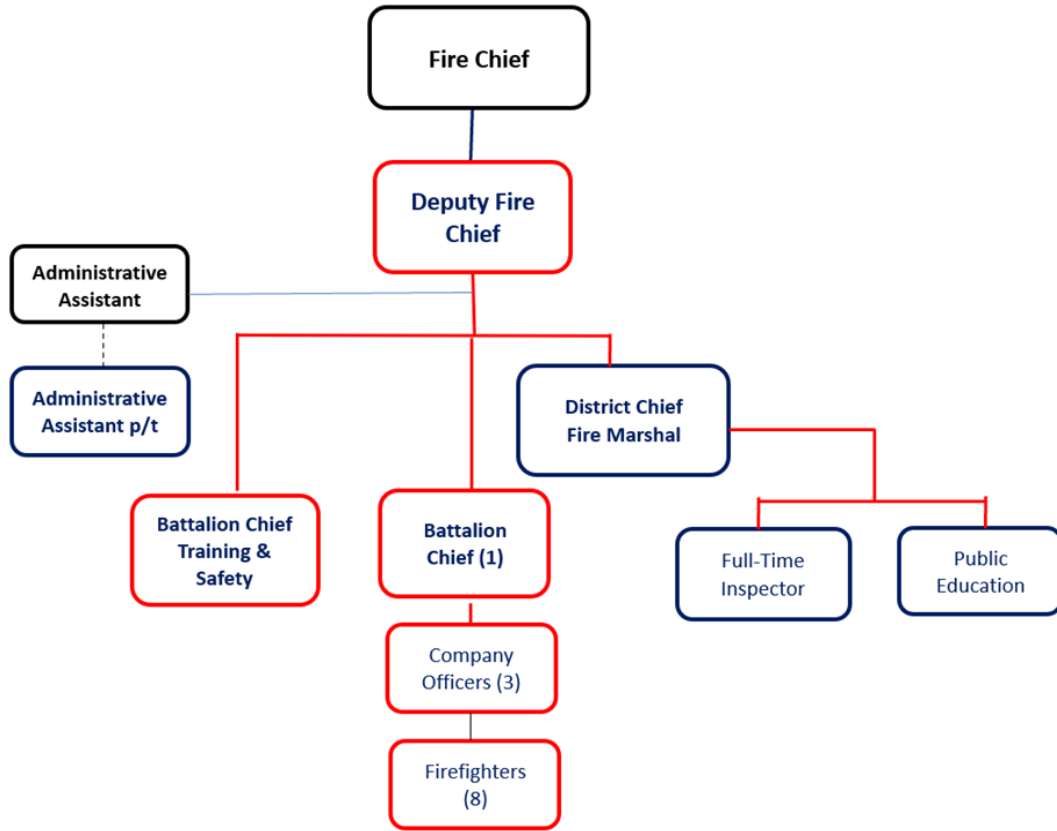
Over the years, the organization evolved from its original volunteer form to the present on-call and career configuration. The Marion Fire Department's personnel have been highly effective in providing a full spectrum of services and community involvement. Department efforts have resulted in being recognized as an Insurance Services Office (ISO) 3 rated fire department.



The Marion Fire Department serves an approximate population of 43,000 residents. In addition, the local area has thousands of visitors and many others employed within the community. Community growth has and will introduce risks for which the Marion Fire Department considers, prepares, and deploys its resources and personnel.

Today, the MFD reflects on its history and remains committed to providing all-hazards emergency services and education to the community with courage, leadership, and duty. The Marion Fire Department continues to provide quality services through its proactive focus on risks and deployment from three stations located strategically throughout the 75 square miles of coverage area. With integrity, a strong sense of duty, reliable response times and public safety awareness - the MFD can always be counted on to reduce loss of life and property in the community.

# Organizational Structure



Current Organizational Structure

The MFD has presented a 2023 Fire Department Workplan, including a new organizational structure, to City Council for consideration. That proposed organizational structure can be found in [Appendix C](#).



Agency Stakeholder Work Session Participants



# Mission

The mission provides an internal aspect of the existence of an organization and, to a degree, an empowering consideration for all MFD members. The purpose of the mission is to answer the questions:

- Who are we?
- Why do we exist?
- What do we do?
- Why do we do it?
- For whom?



Agency Stakeholders Work Session

A workgroup met to revisit the existing mission and after ensuring it answered the questions, the following mission statement was created, discussed, and accepted by the entire group:

**The Marion Fire Department takes pride and ownership in serving our community by protecting life and property through rapid response, community risk reduction, and emergency preparedness.**

# Values

Values embraced by all members of an organization are extremely important, as they recognize the features that make up the personality and culture of the organization. A workgroup met to revisit the existing values and those shown here were agreed upon by the entire group.

Department members were later asked to provide their reflections on these values. Those comments can be found in [Appendix D](#).

**The Marion Fire Department values service, for the betterment of our community, through:**

- Professionalism**
- Respect**
- Integrity**
- Dedication**
- Excellence**

The mission and values are the foundation of this agency. Thus, every effort will be made to keep these current and meaningful to guide the individuals who make up the Marion Fire Department to accomplish their goals, objectives, and day-to-day tasks.

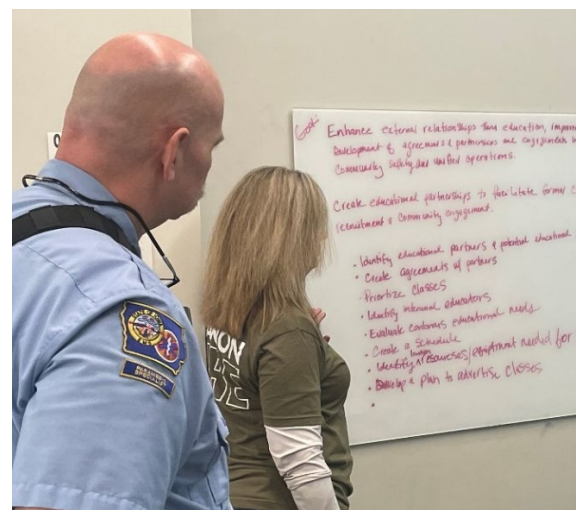
## Vision

An organizational vision exists to keep all agency members focused on the successful future of the Marion Fire Department and to guide quality change and improvement in alignment with the community. In support of the futurity created within the community-driven strategic planning process, the CPSE facilitated the development of the MFD's vision for the future. The agency will support the reality of this vision through successful plan implementation and goal achievement.

**The vision for the Marion Fire Department by 2028 is to be a leader in emergency services, recognized through the achievement of accreditation by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International.**

**Our department will be an attractive organization, providing quality services with an effectively staffed and highly trained team. We will leverage technology and community partnerships to maximize our commitment to community risk reduction and emergency preparedness. An enhanced focus on health and safety programs will improve the quality of life for our community and workforce.**

**Through these efforts, we will deliver on the community promise to be THE best place in Iowa to raise a family and grow a business.**



Agency Stakeholder Work Sessions



# Goals

Community feedback and the SOAR process led to the determination of strategic initiatives representing the high-level issues the agency stakeholders developed into goals. The MFD must now make these goals a focus of efforts that will direct the agency to its desired future. Goals with complete objectives, tasks, timelines, and assignments are included in a separate **Management and Implementation Guide**.



**Enhance external relationships through education, joint training, improved communication, the development of agreements and partnerships, and engagement to increase community safety and unified operations.**



**Identify and formalize the scope and level of services provided by the department to meet community expectations and support organizational planning.**



**Develop a staffing model that recruits and retains appropriate personnel and creates a pathway for professional member growth that aligns with the community and department needs.**



**Develop a community risk reduction program that identifies and creates partnerships, analyzes data, educates the public, and enforces the fire codes to improve overall community safety.**



**Enhance firefighter health and wellness by continuing and implementing new wellness initiatives resulting in a physically and mentally prepared workforce.**

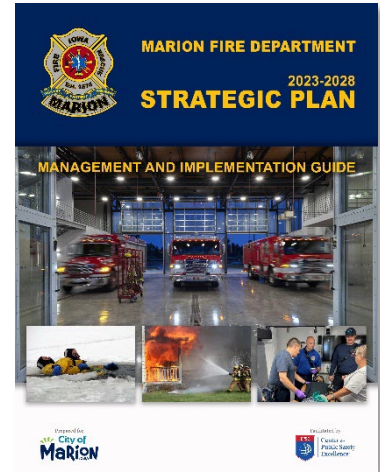


**Prepare for, pursue, achieve, and maintain international accreditation to better serve our community and embrace excellence through continuous improvement management.**

# Conclusion

Working with community and department members from all levels, this strategic plan was developed...but the work is truly just beginning. Agency stakeholders must now execute and institutionalize the plan to ensure the community’s expectations and the Marion Fire Department’s vision remain congruent. The accompanying **Management and Implementation Guide** will assist the MFD in the mechanics of implementation. The guide is not intended to be all-inclusive; rather, it provides flexibility to ensure future success.

It must be remembered that during this journey of regeneration through change and improvement, recalculation may need to occur to find the success desired.



“...we will chase perfection, and we will chase it relentlessly, knowing all the while we can never attain it. But along the way, we shall catch excellence.”  
Vince Lombardi

This strategic plan is a roadmap to help the Marion Fire Department navigate that change and futurity. The ability to pivot to meet the current environment as institutionalization and implementation occur provides a greater likelihood that the desired outcomes and efficacies will be realized as envisioned.



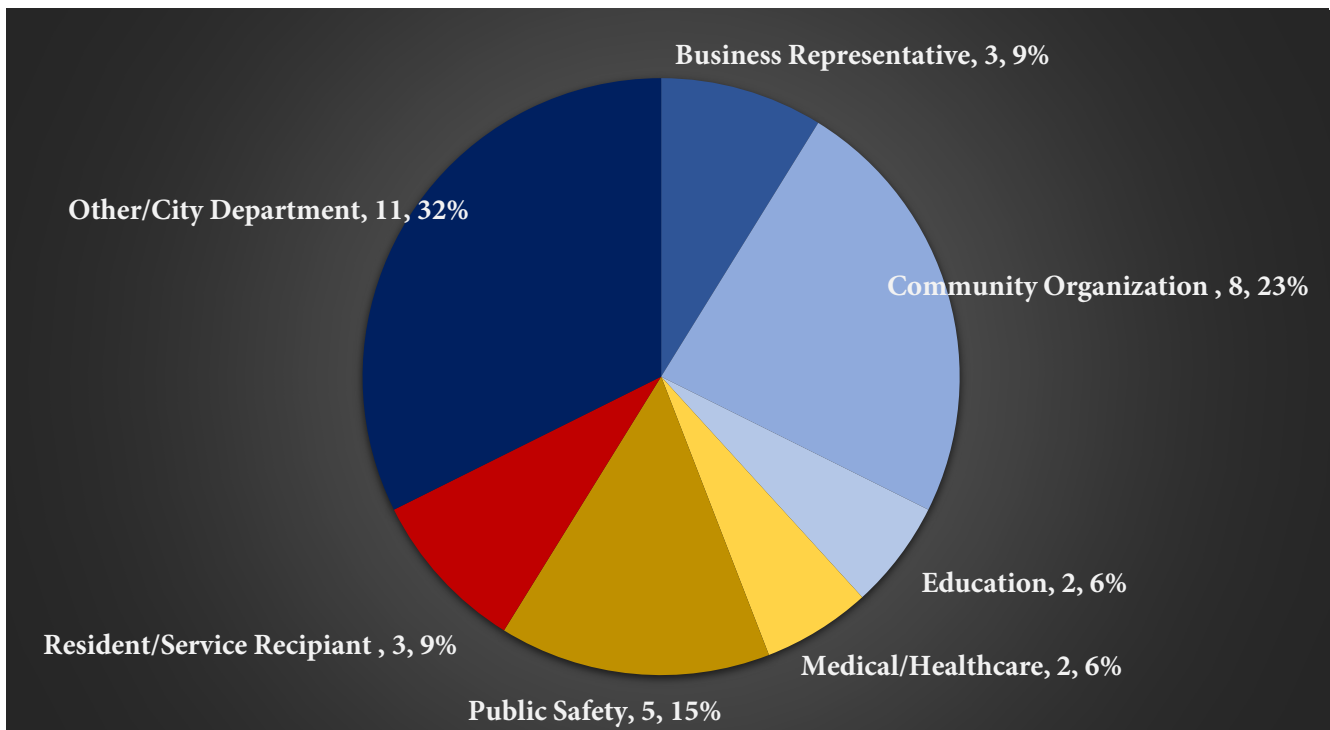


# Appendices

## A. Community Stakeholder Findings

The Marion Fire Department demonstrates a commitment to its community via a focus on community input and satisfaction. A community stakeholder session was held to gather feedback from the respondents on the agency and its various services delivered. The information gathered from the community stakeholder feedback provided understanding to the agency stakeholders of any misalignment with its organizational foundation and performance or values-based expectations or concerns from which new improvement strategies and processes may be created.

**Community stakeholders** were identified by the agency to ensure broad representation. The breakdown of groups represented is presented here:



Respondents were asked to list, in priority order, up to three subjects relative to expectations, concerns, and strengths or positives for the MFD. Expectations and concerns were then analyzed for themes and weighted. The numbers in the parentheses are the cumulative weighted value that correlate with the themes identified. While the themes are listed in prioritized, weighted order, all responses were important in the planning process. Strengths or positives are listed verbatim and may be repeated based on different respondents.

The specific data and findings from the community stakeholder respondents are provided to follow.

## Community Expectations of the Marion Fire Department (in priority order)

1. Speed - could be result of life or death - damage to property. Rapid response to calls. Rapid emergency/technical response. Quick response. Timely and professional response. Timely response to emergencies and natural disasters. Quick response times. Rapid quality emergency incident response. Quick and knowledgeable response to calls. Rapid response to calls. Fire calls in a timely manner. (99)
2. Basic medical knowledge for firefighters. Current and up-to-date training. Trained in fire and EMS. Highly trained staff. Trained to handle emergencies, fire, vehicle accidents, chemical/environment, training extremely important. Trained professional employees. Seek formal and informal educational opportunities for employees. use of state-of-the-art techniques. (34)
3. Protect life (residents and visitors) demonstrated via fire prevention and response, ex.: train community (youth, older adults) and MFD training within department. Bravery and educated on saving lives and protecting community assets. Provide on-scene command and control to ensure general wide area public safety. Fair assessment of situations. Protect and rescue. (31)
4. Fire prevention and inspection. Fire safety for businesses, commercial and industrial concerns (inspections). Quality fire prevention and code enforcement. Fire prevention/education. Enforcing codes during construction, re-construction, and scheduled visits. Fire suppression and prevention. Fire prevention. Fire prevention-education, outreach. (26)
5. Maintain and expand community outreach. Accessible to the public/residents. Connected stewards and ambassadors of the community. Positive role models and active in community events. Connection to community events, forums, and education opportunities. Communicate important information about your work to the general public. Be involved within the community, public relations, and community risk reductions. Community outreach for fire prevention. Consistent community outreach. Actively involved in the community and help provide education and opportunities that help manage risk. (21)
6. Train and collaborate with partners internal to Marion, external neighboring jurisdictions, and potential state entities. Utilization of other community partners such as social services, LE liaison, public health, etc. Active participation and regional partnerships. Collaborate with other city organizations. Be a regional partner as money gets tighter, be able to assist and use other emergency services when needed. Prepare for possible mutual aid situations with neighboring cities such as Hiawatha, Cedar Rapids, etc. They are coordinating with other entities to ensure properly trained and supported by others in a time of need. (15)
7. Responsiveness to emergencies. Act as referral point for at-risk residents who could benefit from community-based services. Responsive to emergencies and crisis. Be compliant to response times that offer the lowest insurance premiums for property owners. (12)
8. Education of fire safety for public. Educate community on everyday/emergency safety. Public education and emergency preparedness (inter-agency communication and coordination). Life safety education. (10)
9. Value each customer who uses the services you provide. Providing excellent emergency services to all citizens of Marion. (10)



10. Capability-firefighters should be physically fit. Safety procedures used and updated with current data and research. Stay physically fit so that they are always ready to respond. (9)
11. Effective medical first response. Medical calls for the public. EMS. (7)
12. Disaster response and preparedness. Emergency management. Public safety awareness. (5)
13. Care and trust-firefighters should care for property and community members. Treat each emergency medical patient as if they are one of your own family. (4)
14. Financial stewards who collaborate with partner jurisdiction for capital items and equipment. Work with people on projects within a budget. (4)
15. Technical rescue. (3)
16. Facilities to provide service/protection to keep up with the growth of Marion to date. To be proactive in readiness to city growth both in total land size and number of stories of buildings. (2)
17. Maintain adequate staffing and training. Firefighter retention- paid volunteers. (2)
18. Respect the diverse beliefs and backgrounds of each of your coworkers. (1)
19. Modern equipment. (1)

### **Areas of Community Concern about the Marion Fire Department** (verbatim, in priority order)

1. Do we have enough firefighters? Employment of adequate personnel. Staffing of the Fire Prevention/Education Bureau. Strategic utilization of staff. Staffing. Staffing to adequately handle day-to-day needs of the community. Do you have enough staff? Want to make sure they are always fully staffed. Staffing, I feel I cannot call them for mutual aid because they are already on their own calls. Number of on-duty firefighters, need additional members. Staffing levels and workload of current staff. Lack of depth when it comes to fire prevention personnel. (63)
2. Ability to reach outer limits of city/township. Future station(s) needs, doing more with less. Response times to all parts of the city equally. Response time to fire calls. Are response times the same in all parts of the city? Stations placed to address responses to city and township. Preparedness for the next station. Not enough fire stations but not spending a lot on new ones. Some areas of town have lower response times. (31)
3. Is training sufficient? Staff knowledge about availability of community-based services/referral points. May need more mental health, crisis, or dependent adult abuse training, they are put in a lot more crisis-driven scenarios, and it is important to know how to react. Emergency medical and technical rescue training. Do existing employees have the necessary education/training to provide excellent patient care for the citizens of Marion? Keeping policies and procedures updated and fresh to stay crisp on bookwork and operations. (28)
4. Cost of facilities. Expenses-takes a lot of money to support a great fire department, can we afford what we have? Mitigating impact of any funding challenges-keep focus on priorities when making difficult funding decisions when they arise. Cost they can put on priorities. Spending in general other than firefighters. Cost analysis of staffing three fully functioning stations as opposed to utilizing a station geared towards medical

- calls only and having two that can respond to fires. In a world where there is an emphasis on reducing taxes the affordability and availability to fund fire and EMS will be more strained. (27)
5. Do they enjoy what the job is! Turnover of employees/staff from burnout. Programs or outreach to young (besides citizens fire academy) for future recruitment. With the demographic growth of Marion is the department prepared and equipped to hire additional employees. Recruitment and retention. Retention of volunteers. (20)
  6. Customer service relative to fire inspectors. Follow up on unsafe or vulnerable situations with the community. Up-to-date inspections of existing buildings for current code requirements. Fire inspections-consistent expectations. Time for permit reviews/new building plan reviews. (15)
  7. Keeping pace with the community's growth. Marion is growing rapidly; can the fire department keep up? Growth of the city, may need more personnel to adequately respond to emergencies. (15)
  8. Strategic utilization of equipment. Investment in rarely used large fire engines, how do we evolve our need as today's buildings provide reduced risk of major fire. Adequate resources. The number of SUVs sitting largely unused in front of station #1, every time I drive by, I do not understand their purpose. Age of equipment. (13)
  9. Overworked and risk of burnout (no pun intended). Administrative and bureaucratic burden on personnel. Ensuring companies have the correct PPE on location. Mental wellbeing. (10)
  10. Being stagnant, doing things certain ways because that is always how they have been done. People in roles that we only do for seniority or way we have always done it, safety of crew members could be impacted. (8)
  11. Is there a clear system of communication, or a designated person who shares public information with the community? Increased involvement with community in newly developed areas. Lack of community connections for training with community training such as community college for staff training. (7)
  12. EMD/EPD/EFD dispatch capability missing. (5)
  13. Every person deserves care and compassionate interaction. (5)
  14. Lack of collaboration with other emergency service agencies with weak quality improvement processes in multi-agency responses. Be careful that outside influences do not deter you from partnering with high-quality entities who actually have your best interest at heart. (4)
  15. Dwindling size of the paid-on-call component. (3)
  16. Emergency management planning, so many different things to prepare for. Emergency management. (2)
  17. Lack of diversity. (1)
  18. Ability to focus on emergency response, work, and training over non-core concerns (social and political matters). (1)



### Positive Community Comments about the Marion Fire Department (verbatim, in no order)

- Engagement with community partners to provide education (safety classes, CPR, etc.)
- Visibility at community events like the farmer's market.
- Emphasis on staff mental health/wellbeing.
- Positive role models in the community.
- Good volunteer firefighter program.
- They run a great community firefighting academy program.
- They visit schools and daycares/ smoke alarm program.
- Positive/visible leadership.
- Community partners.
- Procedure driven.
- Responsive to calls.
- Community appreciative of the professionalism of the personnel.
- Good reputation in the community/area.
- Helpfulness.
- Sharing information.
- Professional appearance.
- They approach each challenge with honesty and integrity.
- Problem-solving based on experience and knowledge.
- Responsive.
- Community-driven.
- Open to feedback and support from the community.
- It has been my experience that MFD members are dedicated to the fire service on and off shift. Some serve other county fire districts and/or assist others departments with training. Linn county received a grant for a respirator fit tester due to the efforts of MFD and HFD representatives.
- MFD staff has trained the school staff on the stop the bleed program.
- MFD is a great partner of local schools.
- Kind and willing to care for me! When I need you most, you were there!
- Forward-thinking in planning for city growth and development.
- Interagency cooperation has always been a strength.
- The fire department has kept pace with the challenging community landscape.
- Assets and equipment are outstanding.

# MARION FIRE DEPARTMENT

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- New leadership=fresh perspective.
- Financial resources...city council support.
- Equipment and resources.
- Passionate employees who care about the future of the organization and city.
- Readiness of employees to improve the organization.
- Good history of community engagement.
- Great command staff.
- Quick response times.
- They ask for input.
- The care about the community.
- Well trained.
- Friendly group.
- Strong leadership.
- Good and caring personnel.
- Help for seniors, smoke detector batteries, etc.
- Quick response time.
- Willing to be active in community events.
- Knowledgeable.
- Resilient, the department overcomes obstacles and is able to overcome any threats without service being affected; my outside view.
- From the outside, it seems like the department is able to accomplish tasks with very little assistance, self-sufficient.
- Good employees! Always friendly, willing to assist/help. Seems like they like their job and the organization.
- Involvement in our community is established developed areas.
- Citizen fire academy.
- Awareness of the growth rate of our community and strategic planning to grow with it.
- Speed/quick to respond.
- Community involvement.
- Well thought of in the community.
- Modern equipment.
- Training is very good.



- The city council clearly hired a visionary leader, Tom Fagan, who is fully capable of transforming the department, collaborating with others, and leading the agreed-upon strategic plan. I look forward to collaborating with him to strengthen the Marion community.
- Since Chief Fagan and city manager Ryan Waller have been here, there is much more collaboration than previously. Their visions seem similar and on the same page.
- Lateral transfer is a good start for increasing numbers; along with widening mileage for new hires.
- The firefighters are well-trained and helpful.
- Good location of the stations.
- The focus on the overall wellbeing of the firefighters has become, and should continue to be important. This is a stressful job.
- The care and concern that the firefighters show to the citizens is very appreciative.
- The continued dedication of our “team.” Regardless of any one topic, we have dedicated individuals.
- Public opportunities. Always willing to attend public events and being present during those events.
- Working internally on self-development of the staff. Encouraging them to work on self-professional development.
- Alignment of department mission with the community growth.
- Quality of staff and personnel.
- Happy to be a part of the MFD community input.
- Willing to try new ideas.
- Dedicated personnel.
- I have observed their highly organized, well-prepared response to several events.
- New facility and equipment.
- New leadership is fresh, positive, and forward-focused.
- The staff seems positive and passionate about Marion.
- Community outreach at public events; Provides interactive items along with education.
- Seems like they are community quick to respond and have a high success rate on calls.

## **Other Community Comments about the Marion Fire Department** (verbatim, in no particular order)

- As fire departments have evolved, the bulk of their roles appear to be medical; why are we sending large, expensive fire trucks to medical calls?
- Thank you for all you do!
- Wonderful job on the creation of fire station #1; it is truly an asset to the community.
- Command staff should work to insulate firefighters from politicians and activists. More emphasis on public education and preparedness over code enforcement. Emergencies happen despite code.
- There will be continued challenges and preparation, and togetherness will be a key element.

## **Things the Community Feels the Marion Fire Department Should Change**

(verbatim, in priority order)

1. Broaden perspective to include other regional emergency service agencies and more teamwork outside MFD. Participation with cross-agency operations group. Not calling/requesting outside resources when needed, for example large fires, backfill, mutual aid. Increased collaborative efforts with Kirkwood. (4)
2. Evaluate staffing, volunteer/POC/part-time models. More fire stations and staffing. Increased staffing. Volunteer/paid-on-call firefighters/retention. (4)
3. Have an ambulance service. Provide full EMS services - ambulances. Revert to using SUVs for medical calls-speed. (3)
4. Focus less on high-class facilities. Spending on buildings, stop overspending. (2)
5. Visibility. Community presence. (2)
6. Not enough information on my part. More proactive public education and emergency preparedness planning. (2)
7. Remove PFAS (firefighting foam) from trucks. (1)
8. Greater activity as referral service for at-risk residents. (1)
9. Common sense thinking - lack of at times. (1)
10. The rearview-focused mindset. (1)

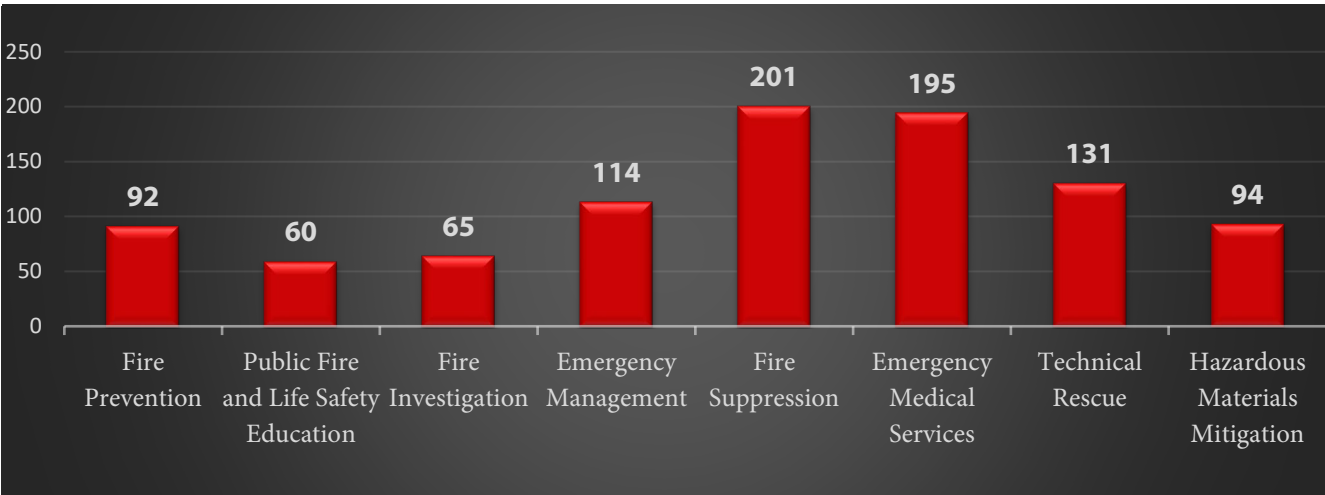
Things the Community Feels the Marion Fire Department Should NOT Change

(verbatim, in priority order)

- 1. Community response and education. Strong community presence. Educational classes/partnerships for community. Openness to feedback from community. Being present at community events. Community outreach. Community engagement. Community outreach. (8)
2. Decision-making based on community-wide service. The desire to be better and be community involved. Do not compromise the quest for excellence regardless of external factors-stay on mission. Openness to change/improving. (4)
3. Training. Keep training all the time. Do not decrease the training budget. (3)
4. Focus on serving people. Passion for service and community. (2)
5. Improving equipment and facilities. Allowing equipment to degrade for availability. (2)
6. Fight fires to save lives and minimize property and environmental damage. (1)
7. Pride and dedication to the community of Marion. (1)
8. New hire criteria. (1)
9. Funding should always be adequate. (1)
10. Do not remove/delete the paid-on-call component. (1)
11. Mutual partnerships across the region that maintain or enhance regional partnerships. (1)
12. Emphasis on mutual wellbeing of our first responder. (1)

Community-Prioritized Programs

Understanding how the community prioritizes the agency's programs and services allows the Marion Fire Department to ensure its focus on resource allocation aligns. With that, prioritization feedback was garnered with an instrument that compared the prioritization of the programs and services offered by the MFD. The results were as follows:





## B. Agency Stakeholder Work

A group of agency stakeholders representing the various segments of the MFD attended a three-day work session to review the community feedback, develop or revise the agency’s mission and values, and establish a quality focus on the way forward in developing this community-driven strategic plan. Additionally, the process included an environmental scan in the form of a strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results (SOAR) analysis to better understand the current situational aspects impacting the agency.

### SOAR

The agency’s internal stakeholders utilized a strategic environmental analytic method known as SOAR: where members consider the organization’s current strengths, opportunities, future aspirations, and strategic results to formulate a path for continuous improvement. The SOAR process was conducted for reflection, focus, and alignment with the organization’s set of values, its vision, and its mission. This appreciative inquiry process provided environmental scanning for strategic direction, associated plans through the application of innovative ideas, and a positive strategic framework that brings clarity to the agency’s vision for leadership in day-to-day functions.

### Strengths

Providing proper fire suppression to the city and townships	Willingness to go above and beyond our duties and responsibility for atypical situations
Response model changed to company response for better crew integrity, continuity, and safety, in addition to improved staffing for all call types	Community outreach through community events, such as fire prevention week, farmer’s market, educational, CPR
Implementation of operational plans and administrative direction	Fire prevention has resulted in low number of working incidents due to code enforcement
Willingness to change and improve, both individually and department-wide	Due to the supportive community, we have excellent equipment and facilities
Overall physical and mental wellbeing of employees	Our ability to work with other city entities
Our positive perception from the community	Customer service during responses and events
Dedicated, high-quality, friendly, and well-trained staff	Training program is widely embraced by all staff
Opportunities to grow and change	Community growth resulting in tax base increase
Opportunities to attend additional training	Inclusion of all staff in departmental changes
Current pay and benefits	Data-driven decision-making is used in the department
Relationship with external partners	Teamwork and adaptability, regardless of influence
Providing ALS care in a first response model	Current collaboration/communication with city officials

**Opportunities**

Creation of a community paramedicine program	Condense/refocus on the current mission creep
Create a staff and officer development program	Create a community risk reduction program
Create more engagement with mutual aid external agencies for training and service delivery	Evaluate a new shift schedule to create a better work/life balance for all employees
Evaluate/explore EMS training and service delivery	Develop new organizational structure
Evaluate fire facilities for staff comfort measures	Enhance policies, procedures, and protocols
Continuous improvement in dispatch efficiency	Explore/create different sources of revenue
Evaluate staffing for new work models and/or additional stations	Evaluate the fire prevention staffing for efficiencies of inspections, testing, and public education for CRR
Implement additional auto/mutual aid responses from a county-wide perspective	Evaluate the need to hire a data analyst to work with the budget, reports, and overall planning
Enhance community interaction through social media, surveys, and general distribution of information	Joint training and resource sharing with other fire service agencies
Opportunities for regional technical teams	Explore and evaluate the department’s daily workloads
Utilize resources to be a regional training host	Mandate wellbeing programs
Start a youth fire academy for high school and middle school and/or a day camp for elementary-aged kids	Using local schools for supplemental needs, such as audio-visual or information technology
Explore peer support enhancement, including a therapy dog	Implementation of an emergency operations plan
AEDs in personal vehicles	Formalized rookie academy
Yoga as part of the wellbeing program	New opportunities for data collection
Start a super-sitter program	Host a high school EMT class, recruitment

**Aspirations**

Be a destination fire department with world-class training, facilities, quality equipment, and firefighting that coordinates with local agencies, and the community	Have specialized companies in addition to engine companies, such as trucks and a heavy rescue company
Have four-person minimum staffing for engines and trucks	Develop and host our own fire conference
Have dedicated maintenance, EMS, and internal IT division chiefs	Become highly competitive for salaries, benefits, and a better work/life balance for all personnel
Cutting-edge agency in advanced medical trials for blood draws, ultrasound, and antibiotics	Become an accredited fire agency with credentialed staff and officers
Have a properly staffed fire prevention bureau	Be a leader in Linn County for auto-aid development
Unified dispatch center to improve responses and communication	Data-driven proactive department regarding response times and standards of practice
Develop an in-house EMS certification program	Be an ISO 1 rated fire department

## Results

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quicker turnout and response times</li> <li>- Reduced injury and sick leave</li> <li>- Improved district coverage</li> <li>- Reductions in property loss</li> <li>- More efficient use of city and department resources</li> <li>- Quicker resolution or decreased on-scene time</li> <li>- Good employee retention and increase in applicants</li> <li>- Better quality and more effective training hours</li> <li>- Overall increase in morale</li> <li>- Improved working relationships with other agencies</li> <li>- Improved recruitment and retention</li> <li>- Increase in credentialed officers, managing officers, and EFO graduates</li> <li>- Increase in outside training</li> <li>- Increase in revenue</li> <li>- Better trained leaders</li> <li>- Increased revenue stream</li> <li>- Higher quality of candidates</li> <li>- Improved ISO rating for neighboring departments</li> <li>- Increased fire department budget</li> <li>- Decreased tax burden on the taxpayers</li> <li>- Higher class enrollment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decrease in emergency calls</li> <li>- Improved patient/customer outcomes</li> <li>- An improved response force and better/safer outcomes</li> <li>- Improved staff health and safety</li> <li>- Increased community trust</li> <li>- More balanced workloads through the use of an efficient and effective work design</li> <li>- Cost savings to the community</li> <li>- Reduction in loss of life and property</li> <li>- Improved quality of life for the community</li> <li>- Spur growth in businesses and residential</li> <li>- Improved emergency communications with dispatch and crews</li> <li>- Improved department morale</li> <li>- Improved customer/patient outcomes</li> <li>- Increased staff engagement in department processes</li> <li>- A better-prepared and safer community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased employee application rates</li> <li>- Better employee retention and longevity</li> <li>- Increased health and safety for firefighters from four-person staffing of apparatus</li> <li>- Reduced workload on front-line staff by a new work design</li> <li>- Quicker response times with higher quality care</li> <li>- Reduced insurance costs for businesses and residents</li> <li>- Improved response with appropriate resources</li> <li>- Increased awareness of MFD, which also increases recruitment</li> <li>- Better and higher quality of care</li> <li>- Increased public education resulting in reduced fire loss</li> <li>- Increased citizen approval rating</li> <li>- Increased community support</li> <li>- Increased staffing</li> <li>- Improved relationships with neighboring departments</li> <li>- Improved crew integrity and accountability</li> <li>- Higher scores on promotional tests</li> <li>- Better preparedness for promotions</li> <li>- More qualified candidates for promotions</li> <li>- More opportunities for advancement</li> </ul>
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## Programs and Services

It is imperative that agency stakeholders distinguish between the core deliverables (programs and services) the Marion Fire Department provides and those supporting services that help the agency provide the core programs and services. With this understanding, the agency stakeholders can further define where the issues and gaps exist within the organization and provide more basis for the environmental scan that is conducted. To bring this understanding to fruition, the CPSE provided guidance and gained consensus understanding with the entire group so that the difference between the deliverables and the supporting functions were understood.



### Challenges and Service Gaps

After sifting through data and feedback provided by the community stakeholders, and the internal environmental scan conducted, the agency stakeholders, by consensus and group effort, determined that the following challenges and service gaps exist within the Marion Fire Department. Each challenge or gap listed is accompanied by the causal effects determined by the two groups. They are then linked to the strategic initiative identified by the agency stakeholders.

Group 1		Group 2	Initiative Link
<p>External Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lack of training</li> <li>○ Capacity</li> <li>○ Communication liaison</li> <li>○ Capabilities</li> <li>○ Resources available</li> <li>○ Agreements</li> <li>○ Partnerships</li> </ul>	<p>Department Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staffing/PIO</li> <li>○ Consistent transparency</li> <li>○ Lack of a method of delivery</li> <li>○ Funding</li> </ul>	<p>External Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Education partners</li> <li>○ Social media communications</li> <li>○ Mutually integrated technology</li> <li>○ Siloed training</li> <li>○ Emergency preparedness                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community</li> <li>▪ Other agencies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>External Relationships</b></p>
<p>Scope of Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Training</li> <li>○ Staffing</li> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Equipment</li> <li>○ Vision</li> </ul> <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Non-competitive compensation</li> <li>○ Lack of city funding</li> <li>○ Unbalanced workload</li> <li>○ Decreased applicants for employment</li> <li>○ Reduced health and wellbeing</li> <li>○ Lack of data collection</li> </ul>		<p>Scope of Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Total scope of services is not clear</li> <li>○ Currently too broad</li> <li>○ Service levels for awareness, operations, and technical</li> </ul> <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Applicants</li> <li>○ Outreach</li> <li>○ Call volume</li> <li>○ Health and safety</li> <li>○ Burnout</li> <li>○ Off-duty response</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scope of Services</b></p>
<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Time</li> <li>○ Facilities</li> <li>○ Staffing</li> <li>○ Commitment</li> <li>○ Agency collaboration</li> </ul>		<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lack of facilities</li> <li>○ Lack of funding</li> <li>○ Lack of backfill for the staff</li> <li>○ Lack of time due to workload</li> <li>○ Call volume</li> <li>○ Too many required skill sets</li> <li>○ Lack of continuity from previous staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Workforce Planning and Development</b></p>
<p>Community Risk Reduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Outreach programs</li> <li>○ Communication</li> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Community buy-in</li> <li>○ Referral resources</li> <li>○ Public education</li> </ul>		<p>Community Risk Reduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lack of staffing</li> <li>○ Lack of partnerships</li> <li>○ Lack of programs</li> <li>○ Lack of engagement with the community</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Risk Reduction</b></p>

Group 1	Group 2	Initiative Link
N/A	<b>Firefighter Health and Wellness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Low priority on physical fitness</li> <li>○ Peer support in its infancy</li> <li>○ Daily workload and call volume</li> <li>○ Schedule-lack of sleep</li> <li>○ Burnout</li> <li>○ Consistency</li> </ul>	<b>Health and Wellness</b>
<b>Emergency Response</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Geography/station locations</li> <li>○ Low amount of training</li> <li>○ Dispatch-multiple agencies.</li> <li>○ Communication, data/reporting</li> <li>○ Third-party EMS transport-lengthy response times, no MFD input</li> </ul> <b>Mutual Aid</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Other communities lack of service/response</li> <li>○ Lack of automatic aid</li> <li>○ No box alarm system</li> </ul>	<b>Accreditation/credentialing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lack of data</li> <li>○ Lack of expertise</li> <li>○ Workload capacity</li> <li>○ Low staff buy-in</li> </ul>	<b>Accreditation</b>

The following information is raw data from the deliberation of the two workgroups that are *not* linked directly to a strategic initiative but remain important. The department is best served to understand and embrace this other information as it moves forward for deliberative purposes and consideration of support of the strategic initiatives.

Group 1	Group 2	Topic
N/A	<b>Data/Analytics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lack of software</li> <li>○ Lack of staff to perform analysis</li> <li>○ Inaccurate historic data</li> <li>○ Quality proactive systems</li> </ul>	<b>Data/Analytics</b>
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funding</li> <li>○ Storage/equipment</li> <li>○ Staffing</li> <li>○ Communications</li> <li>○ Community outreach</li> <li>○ EOP/COOP</li> <li>○ Shelters</li> <li>○ Training</li> </ul>	N/A	<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>

## Strategic Initiatives

Based on all previously captured information and determining critical issues and service gaps, the following strategic initiatives were identified as the foundation for developing goals and objectives.

**External Relationships**

**Scope of Services**

**Community Risk Reduction**

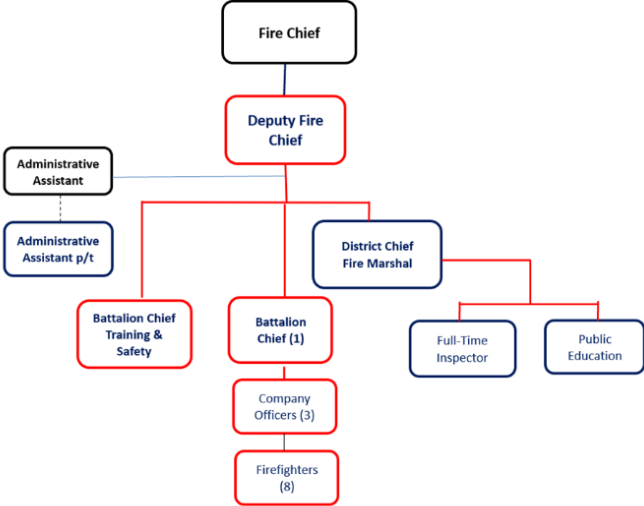
**Health and Wellness**

**Workforce Planning and Development**

**Accreditation**

C. MFD Reorganized Structure

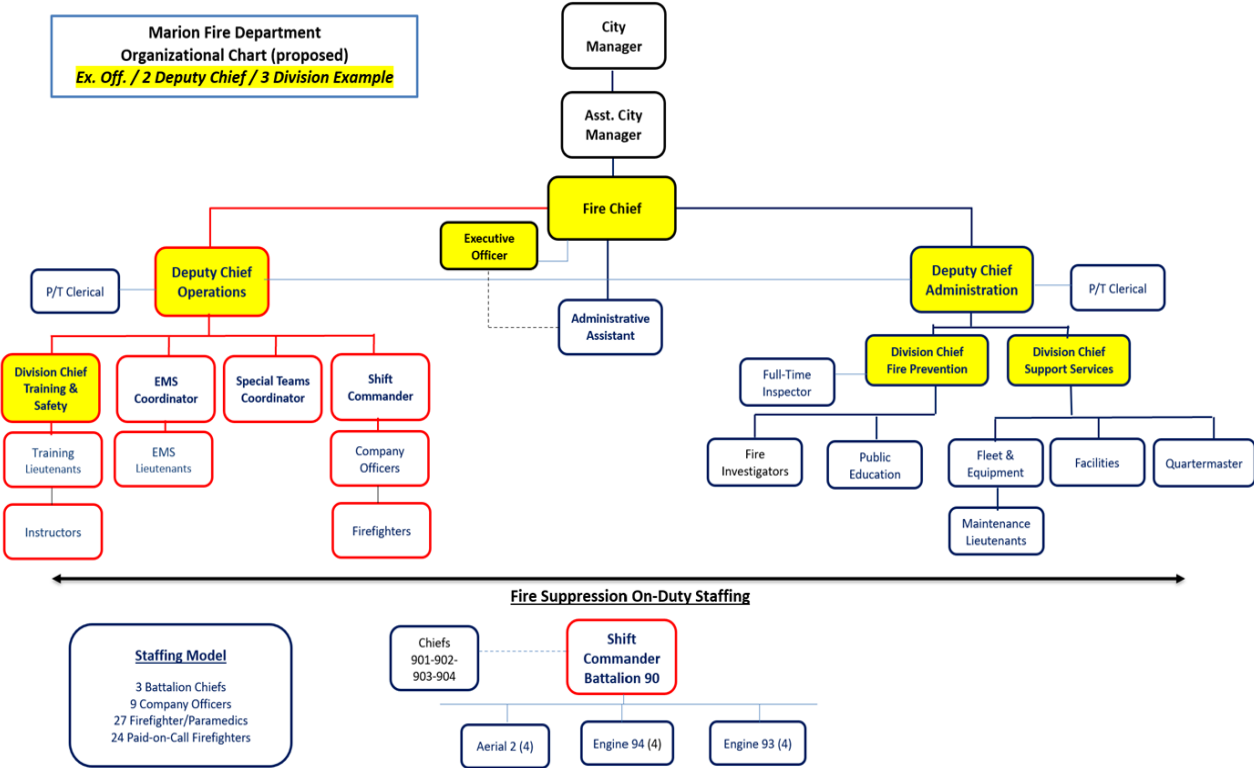
Current Organizational Structure



Work is not designed in an efficient and effective manner. The Deputy Chief must manage both operations and administrative tasks. Work volume and design have only increased and made this more evident. The fire chief is not able to effectively delegate or create a forward-thinking organization or manage growth, as most work is reactive focused on day-to-day actions.

2023 Fire Department Workplan as Presented to City Council

**MFD Reorganized Structure:** Admin. and ops. branches, divisions, and an executive officer.





## D. Values Exercise – Member Reflections

The Marion Fire Department values service, for the betterment of our community, through:

**Professionalism:** The quality of what we give back to the community through competence. Acting in a professional manner. Taking the job and each call or training seriously. Acting the part, doing the part, looking the part. A presentation of ourselves to our customers, that through cohesive strategy, uniformed appearance, and expert knowledge, elicits a strong sense of trust and reliability in the care and protection that our department provides. Being competent, reliable, and responsible with working with coworkers and the community. Possessing and delivering high standards of service. Proven through a polished appearance, competency, preparedness, and performance. To know your job, know your equipment, know how to perform your job at a high level. To conduct yourself in a manner that represents your department and yourself ("the name on the back of your coat") in such a way that you would expect from others. To understand that you represent Marion Fire while on and off duty. To be ready, vigilant, and brave. To exhibit good morals both on and off duty and to be a role model for the community. To remain focused on customer service even when faced with adverse circumstances or individuals trying to elicit a reaction from you. Treating all others with respect. Conducting oneself in a professional manner. Having a neat and tidy appearance that shows care for the mission. Look and act the part. Clean uniform, Clean hair, Punctual, good manners. To reflect our code of conduct.

**Respect:** Respecting each other, the severity of the work we perform, and the patrons of the community we serve. Treating patients and coworkers like you would your own family. Treat people right, treat people the way you want to be treated. Reliably demonstrate through actions and empathy that our customers and coworkers are worthy of our authentic and thoughtful consideration. Treat others with courtesy and kindness. Considerate of others. Holding a high regard and showing humility to those we serve and work with. To treat others the way you would like to be treated. "To treat the janitor the same way you treat the CEO". To give the same outstanding customer service to everyone regardless of race, sexual orientation, background ect. Treating each other equally. Being a good listener, trying to not just hear the other persons problem/point of view, but trying to understand it. Not judging anyone, especially based on appearance, race, beliefs, politics or social status. Showing respect to our colleagues and community. As well as showing our job the respect it demands to always be honing our craft. Be pleasant, and polite even if someone is being difficult. Be calm. Listen. Pay attention, be mindful of others time, beliefs, and opinions. Show compassion for others. Use please and thank you. Admiration of others and their values.

**Integrity:** Honesty when no one is watching. Being honest and putting forth your best self. Holding to your word. Doing what you say you're going to do. Being a man of your word. Doing what is right even if it is difficult or uncomfortable. A consistent adherence to moral and ethical decision making that supersedes personal pride and prejudice. Treat others with courtesy and kindness. Considerate of others. Accountability for strong moral principles of trust, honesty, and ethics. Doing the right thing even when no one is watching. Being honest at all times. Having outstanding self-discipline and morals. Making the right decision every time, no complacency. Be an advocate for doing the right thing. Honesty. And lastly,

Extreme Ownership. Take work seriously, be honest, be trustworthy. Hold yourself to a high moral standard. To earn and maintain the trust of others.

**Dedication:** Commit whole-heartedly to our profession and the community. Bettering yourself for the department and going above what is expected of you. Give it your all. Learning and growing during duty and off duty. A strong commitment to delivering quality service and care to our community. Working to better ourselves and others around us, including the community. Promise to provide exceptional services to improve our community's safety and quality of life. Always giving 110%. Training to perform tasks expected of us as well as tasks that are not expected of us. Learning every position on the fire department and sharing what you know with others who are trying to learn. Getting the job done regardless of what adverse conditions are present. Having an "all in" effort. Not cutting corners. Finishing work completely and correctly. Putting in the time to know and do what is expected of you and do it well. Pride and ownership of your craft. Be flexible, show up, help even when you don't want to b/c it helps your coworkers. Speak positively of the department and people. Commitment to our organization and those we serve.

**Excellence:** Completing the work we perform, to be the best of our abilities, every time. Giving the best service possible. Doing the best to our knowledge and skill. Not meeting but exceeding expectations. A waypoint along the path to expertise that is achieved through the constant practice of professionalism, respect, integrity, and dedication. Dedication and motivation to pursue being the best we can be every day and supporting those we work with and the community. Striving to surpass all expectations no matter the circumstance. Continually training, improving, learning new ways to accomplish specific tasks, in order to provide the absolute best at challenging skills while delivering high-quality customer service. Inspiring confidence from the people we serve. Allowing people to sleep at night knowing there are people who will respond and handle their problem confidently, effectively, and professionally. Knowing your job well. Keeping up with the latest technology and science. Performing your mission efficiently so it's done quickly with the least amount of cost (time/money). Above everything else. Just be the best you can be that day. Mastery level effort. To provide the utmost quality of work.



# 2023-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN