

ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

2023-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN



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Introduction

The community serviced by the Abington Township Fire Department (ATFD) receives high levels of professionalism and efficiency through the department's proactive approach to emergency mitigation and risk reduction. Considering this, the ATFD contracted with the Center for Public Safety Excellence® (CPSE) to facilitate a community-driven strategic plan. The process utilized by CPSE aligns with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International's® (CFAI) fire and emergency service accreditation model and considers all parameters prescribed by the authority having jurisdiction.

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 ATFD exhibited a commitment to implementing and executing this plan to become more efficient and effective in alignment with its community.



ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

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Organizational Background

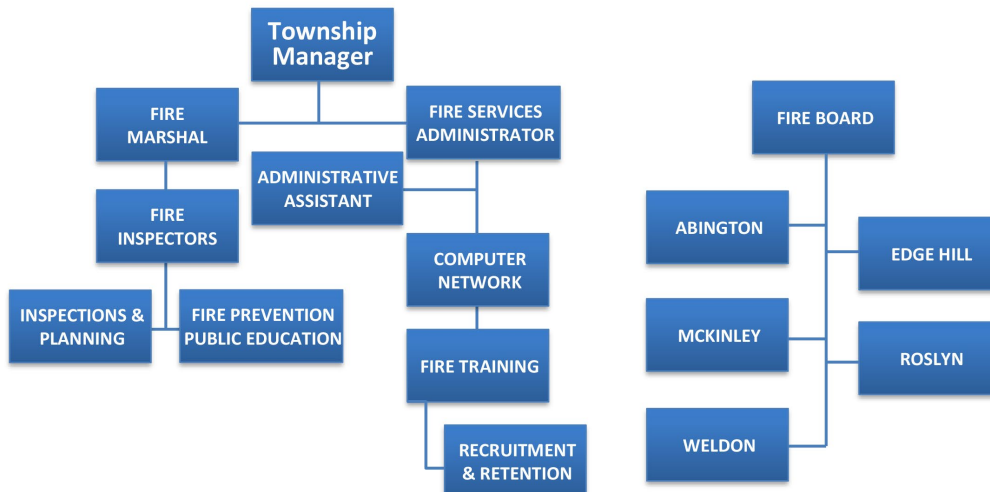
Abington Township has a long, rich history dating as far back as 1709. Located in southeastern Montgomery County, approximately 15 miles north of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and is the twelfth largest community/government in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The township’s communities of Abington, Ardsley, Baederwood, Crestmont, Edge Hill, Elkins Park, Jenkintown, Glenside, Meadowbrook, McKinley, North Hills, Roslyn, Rydal, and Willow Grove are home to a residential population of 58,471 (U.S Census). The townships land use includes commercial, light industrial, parkland, and suburban properties containing numerous businesses, industries, and institutions, including the Willow Grove Park Regional Mall, SPS Technologies, Abington Memorial Hospital, Holy Redeemer Hospital, the Abington School District, Manor College, and the 40-acre campus of Penn State University – Abington.

The Abington Township Fire Department (ATFD) provides the approximately 15 square miles of Abington Township with fire suppression, emergency rescue, fire prevention, public education, and other special operations services. Comprised of Abington Fire, McKinley Fire, Weldon Fire, Edge Hill Fire, and Roslyn Fire companies, the ATFD operates five fire stations with an all-volunteer force of approximately 225 volunteer firefighters and officers. Administrative offices at the Abington Township Municipal Building are staffed by the Director of Fire & Emergency Management Services, Fire Marshal, Fire Prevention Specialist, and Administrative Secretary. The ATFD is governed by an elected Township Board of Commissioners and Township Manager.

Abington Township is bordered on the east by Rockledge Borough and the City of Philadelphia. To the north are Upper and Lower Moreland Townships, and Abington’s west border is with Upper Dublin Township. Abington Township also surrounds the Borough of Jenkintown in the central area.



Organizational Structure



Community-Driven Strategic Planning

Understanding what the customer desires is vital to the success of any organization. In this case, the customer is the community that the Abington Township Fire Department serves. Just because the agency is a governmental entity does not minimize the needed customer-based focus for strategic planning. 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 strategic planning and the plan itself represent the embrace of transition away from how an organization has always done things, seeking to find efficacies and outcomes based on change. The strategic plan provides a management roadmap built on a shared vision and is set up for measurable results. With the involvement of a diverse group of agency stakeholders, the Abington Township Fire Department's strategic plan encompasses all varieties of 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 ATFD genuinely benefit from the process and realize its ultimate vision.

The Community-Driven Strategic Planning Process Outline

1. Define the programs provided to the community.
2. Establish the community's service program priorities and expectations of the organization.
3. Identify any concerns the community may have about the organization and aspects of the organization that the community views positively.
4. Revisit the mission statement, giving careful attention to the services and programs currently provided and which logically can be provided in the future.
5. Revisit the values of the organization's membership.
6. Identify the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization.
7. Identify areas of opportunity or potential threats to the organization.
8. Identify the organization's critical issues and service gaps.
9. Determine strategic initiatives for organizational improvement.
10. Establish a realistic goals and objectives for each initiative.
11. Identify implementation tasks for the accomplishment of each objective.
12. Determine the vision of the future.
13. Develop organizational and community commitment to accomplishing the plan.

Process and Acknowledgements

The strategic planning process was conducted in November 2022 after extensive preparation work by the ATFD to ensure broad representation from its community and agency stakeholders. The Center for Public Safety Excellence commends all department members who assisted in the preparation and execution of the process, ensuring quality representation and a strategic plan that provides the future roadmap for improvement.

The CPSE also acknowledges those community stakeholders (as named below) and agency stakeholders (as named later) for their candor, involvement, and support of ATFD's future improvement and success.

Abington Township Fire Department's Community Stakeholders

Bobby Cardano	Tony Heiser	James Melchor	Terry Roman
Diane Cardano	Judith Herbst	Patrick Molloy	Earl Saurman
Cyndy Clarke	Steve Hochwind	Harry Myers	Grace Sekelewski
Romaine Crawford	William Hollin	Mike O'Neill	Lisa Steiert
Ken Davidson	Philip Klaski	Dr. Susan Packer-Rubin	Robert Stone
Joe Faust	John Livingood	Chuck Payne	Mindy Wawrzyniak
Brendan Gallagher	Richard Manfredi	Jamey Piggot	Tara Wehmeyer
Theresa Giardino	Ashley McIlvaine	Adam Reiff	Gary Wiley



Community Stakeholders Work Session



Community Group Findings

The Abington Township Fire Department exhibits a commitment to its community through a focus on satisfaction and the desire to know what the community thinks. A community stakeholder session was held to gather feedback from the respondents on the department and its various services delivered.

The information gathered and processed 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. The specific data and findings received by the community stakeholder respondents are provided in [Appendix 1](#) of this document.

Agency Stakeholder Group Findings

The agency stakeholder work sessions were conducted over five days. These sessions served to discuss the organization’s approach to community-driven strategic planning, focusing on the department’s mission, values, core programs, and support services. Attention was also given to the organization’s perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The work sessions involved participation by a stakeholder group representing a broad cross-section of the department, as named and pictured here.



Agency Stakeholders

Abington Township Fire Department’s Agency Stakeholders

Dylan Barnett	Shawn Blake	John Bothwell	Jim Dougherty
Bill Ernst III	Bill Ernst IV	Bud Gerhard	Jonathan Gerhard
Charles Gerhard III	Bob Green	Steve Hartman	Joe Hoffman
Mike Jones	Mike Jones, Jr.	Ed Lambert, Jr.	Keith Maslin
Tom McAneney	Jelani McCoy	Chris McLoone	Matt Orzechowski
Shawn Philipson	Chris Platz	Frank Ploszay	Steve Plum
Lorrie Praeger	Mike Ratka	Charles Rohrer	Mike Rubin
Frank Schuck	Larry Siefken	Bob Woodard	Ralph Yerkes

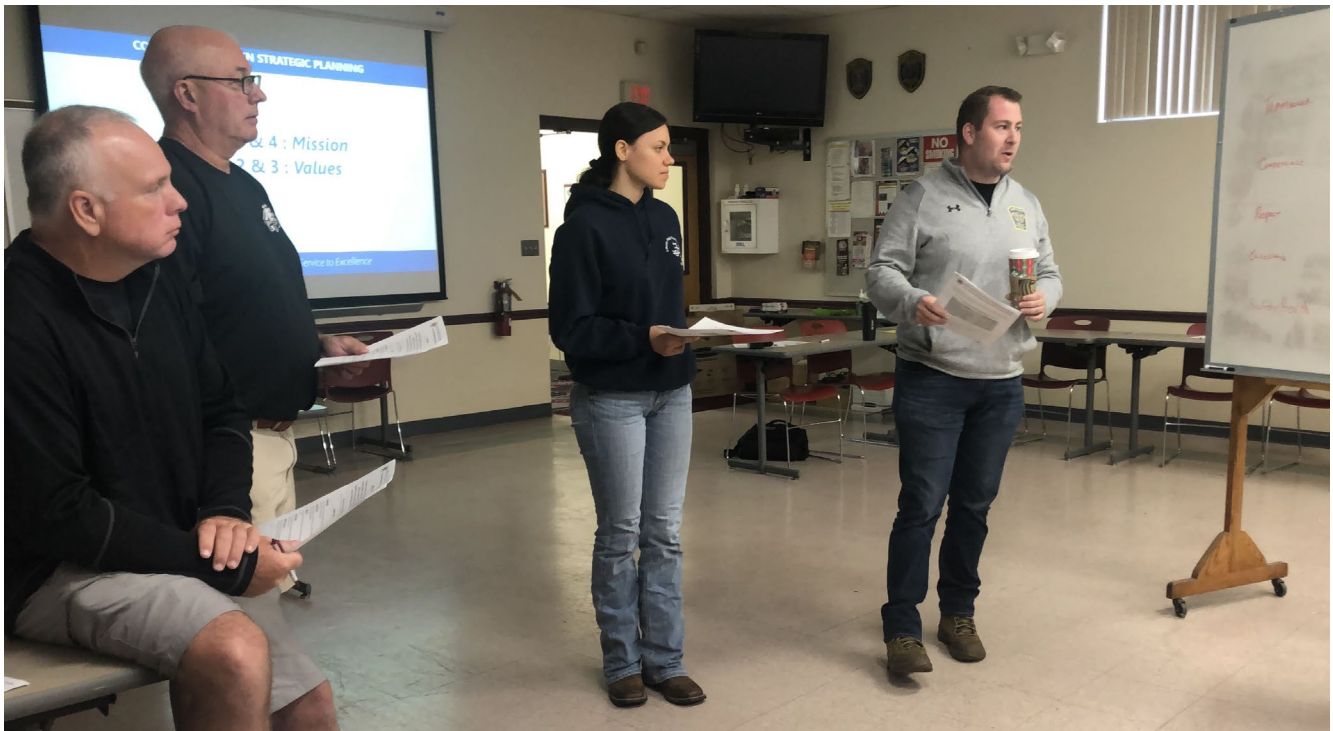
Mission

The mission provides an internal aspect of the existence of an organization and, to a degree, an empowering consideration for all department 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?

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 Abington Township Fire Department is a unified team of five individual volunteer fire companies providing excellent fire services to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our community and members.



Agency Stakeholders Work Session

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 proposed a revision that was discussed, enhanced further, and agreed upon by the entire group:

TEAMWORK

We are dedicated to providing professional services by five individual fire companies working together as a unified department.

RESPECT

We value respect for our fellow firefighters and the community by compassionately caring for their needs.

EXCELLENCE

We embrace excellence that demonstrates itself through consistent professionalism, pride, and a positive attitude.

SAFETY & HEALTH

We prioritize the safety and health of our firefighters and will provide policies, programs, training, and equipment to ensure their welfare.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We are committed to outreach and service to our community through engagement in communication, events, and partnerships.

The mission and values are the foundation of this organization. Thus, every effort will be made to keep these current and meaningful so that the individuals who make up the Abington Township Fire Department are guided by them in accomplishing the goals, objectives, and day-to-day tasks.

Programs and Services

To ensure a deeper focus exists in determining issues and gaps within an organization, there must be a delineation between core programs and supporting services. Core programs are those core deliverables provided by the department. Supporting services are all the internal and external programs and services that help the ATFD deliver its core programs.

The importance of understanding the difference is that issues and gaps may exist in core programs or supporting services, and the department's strategic approach may bring forth different considerations for improvement. Additionally, supporting services may be internal or external to the organization and requires an understanding of how the difference impacts their location within the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats if identified. Finally, it is important that the agency stakeholders understand that many local, state, and national services support its delivery of the identified core programs.

Through a facilitated brainstorming session, the agency stakeholders agreed upon the core programs provided to the community and many of the supporting services that support the programs. This session provided the sought understanding of the differences and the key elements of the delineation.



Agency Stakeholders Work Session

SWOT Analysis

An organization candidly identifies its positive and negative attributes through a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). The SWOT analysis also provides an opportunity for an organization to evaluate its operating environment for areas it can capitalize on and those that pose a danger. Agency stakeholders participated in recording ATFD's strengths and weaknesses and the possible opportunities and potential threats. Information gathered through this analysis guides the larger issues and gaps within the agency. The information gleaned will assist the agency in finding its broader critical issues and service gaps.

[Appendix 2](#) consists of the SWOT data and analysis collected by the agency stakeholders.

Critical Issues and Service Gaps

Following the identification and review of the department’s SWOT, two separate groups of agency stakeholders met to identify themes as primary critical issues and service gaps (found in [Appendix 3](#)). The critical issues and service gaps identified by the stakeholders provide further guidance toward identifying strategic initiatives, which ultimately lend direction for the development of goals, objectives, critical tasks, and timelines.

Strategic Initiatives

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

Community Outreach	Recruitment and Retention	Staffing Engagement
Health and Safety	Physical Resources	Standardization

Goals and Objectives

To continuously achieve the mission of the Abington Township Fire Department, realistic goals and objectives with timelines for completion must be established. These will enhance strengths, address identified weaknesses, provide a clear direction, and address the community’s concerns. These should become a focus of the department’s efforts, as they will direct the organization to its desired future while reducing the obstacles and distractions along the way. Leadership-established work groups should meet and manage progress toward accomplishing these goals and objectives and adjust timelines as needs and the environment change. Regular reports of progress and changes should be shared with the AATFD’s leadership.

Goal 1 **Increase and improve the active firefighting force to ensure adequate staffing for all responses.**

Objective 1A **Gather and analyze data on the number and participation of department members to determine activity.**

Timeframe	1 month	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain rosters of company members and their classification. <input type="checkbox"/> Compile reports on member call responses, training attendance, and activity participation. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop department-wide benchmarks for incident, training, and participation based on national standards and industry best practices. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify deficiencies and opportunities for improvement to ensure Fire Department and community expectations are met. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:

Objective 1B **Develop Action Plans and programs to increase involvement where gaps exist in department operations.**

Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate compiled deficiencies to create a prioritized list of objectives. <input type="checkbox"/> Research industry solutions that address objectives. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a set of plans to address prioritized objectives through data-driven decision-making. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:

Objective 1C **Develop an internal awareness and education program for developmental opportunities.**

Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate compiled deficiencies to create a prioritized list of objectives. <input type="checkbox"/> Research industry solutions that address objectives. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a set of plans to address prioritized objectives through data-driven decision-making. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:

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Objective 1D Determine funding needs and opportunities for programs.

Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify costs of proposed programs that address identified deficiencies. <input type="checkbox"/> Perform a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed program against stated objectives. <input type="checkbox"/> Research potential funding sources from local, state, federal, and other available resources. <input type="checkbox"/> Secure funding and prioritized programs based on cost-benefit analysis and acquired funds.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 1E Implement activity plans to strengthen member participation.

Timeframe	12 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop policies, criteria, training, and evaluation metrics to achieve program goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Create awareness of programs through internal and external outlets not limited to mailings, meetings, and media. <input type="checkbox"/> Educate participating members on the goals, policies, and expectations of programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Launch program with participating members, tracking participation against established benchmarks.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 1F Evaluate program impacts and explore potential improvements based on results.

Timeframe	6 months-ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Gather data on participation for each implemented program. <input type="checkbox"/> Analyze data against program objectives and associated benchmarks to determine the effectiveness of each. <input type="checkbox"/> Report findings to relevant stakeholders. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop potential adjustments to the program to increase effectiveness.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Goal 2 Maintain and improve the current membership levels through an enhanced recruitment and retention process that ensures adequate personnel to accomplish our mission.

Objective 2A Identify and analyze existing recruitment and retention programs.

Timeframe 3 months **Assigned to:**

- Critical Tasks**
- Create committees with representation from all five fire companies and department administration to identify and implement recruitment and retention programs.
 - Identify current recruitment programs utilized by the department.
 - Analyze recruitment trends over the last five years.
 - o COVID and pre-COVID
 - o Age demographics
 - Develop and implement a new member questionnaire to obtain data to establish recruitment metrics.
 - Evaluate participation in existing programs to determine effectiveness.
 - Implement and develop a survey of existing members to determine current and potential program interests.
 - Create a reporting system to track the collected data.

Funding Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:
Estimate Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 2B Research and identify recruitment and retention program incentives to enhance membership.

Timeframe 6 months **Assigned to:**

- Critical Tasks**
- Use data collected through the survey to identify additional program(s) and their respective incentives to help recruit and retain department members.
 - Research and compare potential incentives and programs to surrounding municipalities and fire departments of similar size.
 - Identify and prioritize potential program incentives based on feedback from membership surveys to conduct a feasibility study.

Funding Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:
Estimate Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:

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Objective 2C Evaluate current membership and training requirements to expand membership.

Timeframe 6 months **Assigned to:**

Critical Tasks

- Identify current membership categories and requirements across all five fire companies.
- Identify and create new membership categories that are standardized across the ATFD in order to increase recruitment results.
- Standardize the training requirements for the newly created membership categories.

Funding Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:

Estimate Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 2D Determine the potential effectiveness of the identified recruitment and incentive programs based on a cost-benefit analysis.

Timeframe 3 months **Assigned to:**

Critical Tasks

- Determine the cost of current recruitment programs and analyze the cost per new member.
- Determine the cost of current incentive and retention programs and conduct a cost analysis per person.
- Analyze the cost of identified new recruitment and retention programs.
- Prioritize new and existing recruitment and retention programs based on an overall cost-benefit analysis.

Funding Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:

Estimate Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 2E Develop and implement recruitment and incentive programs that support the department’s mission.

Timeframe 12 months **Assigned to:**

Critical Tasks

- Establish guidelines and criteria for selected programs.
- Develop guidance for the committee’s work.
- Identify funding streams for the established programs.
- Secure funding and implement the programs.

Funding Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:

Estimate Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 2F Evaluate the implemented program’s effectiveness and costs.

Timeframe 3 months-ongoing **Assigned to:**

Critical Tasks

- Gather data on the participation and costs of implemented programs.
- Compare and analyze new data in relation to established guidelines and prior years’ recruitment and retention program results.
- Report findings and make program adjustments as necessary to close any performance gaps.

Funding Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:

Estimate Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Goal 3 Enhance department-wide standardization to streamline administrative and operational processes to provide cohesive services to the community.

Objective 3A Conduct an inventory and analysis of current standardized processes utilized by the department.

Timeframe 3 months **Assigned to:**

- Critical Tasks**
- Collect information on current SOGs, policies, processes, by-laws, disciplinary/human resource policies and procedures, benefits, and insurance in core programs and supporting services.
 - Determine which elements are effective, interpreted, and illustrate a consistent use by the companies.
 - Compile lists of those that need adjustment and those that meet standardization intent.
 - Document the findings of recommendations for changes and disseminate to associated companies.

Funding Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:
Estimate Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 3B Based on conducted inventory and analysis, determine potential process areas that can and should be standardized.

Timeframe 9 months **Assigned to:**

- Critical Tasks**
- At the company level, evaluate the recommended findings from the inventory analysis.
 - Based on evaluation analysis, select SOGs, policies, and processes that should be standardized.
 - Document any new processes or systems that need to be added to the inventory for standardization.

Funding Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:
Estimate Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 3C Seek consensus from the five companies for the creation of new standardized guidance, policies, and processes from recommended list.

Timeframe 12 months **Assigned to:**

- Critical Tasks**
- Propose recommended changes in standards through each of the company’s and ATFD’s processes.
 - Collect and review feedback from the companies on their specific recommendations.
 - Collate a list of changes and create overarching revisions to the standardization elements impacted.
 - Continue the cycle of review until completed.

Funding Capital Costs: Consumable Costs:
Estimate Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 3D Institutionalize the standardized processes and any SOGs and policies tied to them.

Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete an administrative review that includes the five companies’ chiefs using the agreed-upon processes. <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize any specific action plans to implement the standard processes to ensure a seamless application. <input type="checkbox"/> Based on those plans, implement the processes. <input type="checkbox"/> Review the results of that implementation to determine gaps that require training. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:

Objective 3E Build and deliver training curricula for the companies based on a review of the institutionalization actions taken.

Timeframe	6 to 12 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop training programs that are specific to the gaps identified in the administrative review. <input type="checkbox"/> Deliver the curriculum that meets the specific needs of each company. <input type="checkbox"/> Review results and collect feedback from end users to adjust training. <input type="checkbox"/> Redeliver to close any gaps in awareness and/or use by the companies. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:

Objective 3F Build an evaluation system to collect and report the department’s data from the instituted standardization processes.

Timeframe	6 months-ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Determine the measurables needed for the evaluation and analysis. <input type="checkbox"/> Collect the identified measurables. <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate and analyze the measures collected for installed standardized processes. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine any improvement opportunities and create a recommendation list for administration consideration. <input type="checkbox"/> Make adjustments approved through the administrative review and create a list of training needs if applicable. <input type="checkbox"/> Review annual program appraisals produced in compliance with CFAI’s core competency in Category 5 of the accreditation model to ensure impacted changes are recorded. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:

Goal 4 Create and implement a public outreach system to improve stakeholder participation and educate the community about the fire department activities and programs.

Objective 4A Identify and analyze existing community outreach programs and processes in the system.

Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Gather data on existing community outreach programs and platforms being used. <input type="checkbox"/> Analyze participation in existing community outreach programs to determine effectiveness. <input type="checkbox"/> Analyze the various outreach platforms being used, such as social media contacts. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the goals of the existing community outreach programs to determine if there are any gaps or missed opportunities.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 4B Research and identify potential new community outreach programs.

Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Determine the goals of new potential outreach programs to either fill identified gaps or expand on existing programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify potential new programs being used by other organizations to determine if they would be adaptable to the ATFD. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine the cost of the proposed new programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Create a prioritized list based on costs for future budget development.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 4C Develop standardized policies for internal stakeholders' roles in the community outreach programs.

Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify existing policies and platforms used by internal ATFD stakeholders for community outreach. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify additional platforms that will be effective in reaching the community to communicate awareness of the ATFD as well as the goals and objectives of the ATFD. <input type="checkbox"/> Draft a standardization policy for the platforms, the content that can/should be shared, and what should not be shared on ATFD and individual fire company platforms. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and deliver any training that may be required based on policy changes.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

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Objective 4D **Develop and implement new outreach programs to improve external stakeholder participation and educate the community about the ATFD.**

Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop goals, criteria, and procedures for implementing proposed new and/or continuing existing community outreach programs, including determining metrics for success. <input type="checkbox"/> Secure a source of funding for the new and/or continuing community outreach programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Implement new and/or continuing community outreach programs to achieve the goals of that particular program.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 4E **Create awareness in the community through a consistent, uniform message of the fire department’s programs and activities.**

Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Create a consistent, uniform message for communication on all ATFD and individual fire company platforms to ensure the community knows the ATFD’s needs, programs, and activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate the uniform message to the five fire companies to ensure that the message is consistently communicated across platforms. <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor feedback and participation using the metrics available inside each media platform. <input type="checkbox"/> Create a report of findings for use in the overall evaluation process.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 4F **Evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented programs by analyzing participation in community outreach programs.**

Timeframe	12 months-ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Gather data on the participation in each implemented community outreach program. <input type="checkbox"/> Analyze the participation data based on the established metrics to determine the success of each program. <input type="checkbox"/> Report the effectiveness findings of each program and review the findings with each company based on the specific program deliveries. <input type="checkbox"/> Compile a list of recommended adjustments and complete any needed cost analysis for budget consideration. <input type="checkbox"/> Make adjustments to each program as warranted by the information.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Goal 5 Maintain, improve, and acquire physical resources to meet the objectives and expectations of the fire department and the community.

Objective 5A Evaluate current physical resources and technologies through a department and community needs assessment.

Timeframe	3 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Review the department’s standards of cover to analyze community attributes, needs, and expectations. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete a department-wide inventory of physical resources, technologies, and supporting infrastructure. <input type="checkbox"/> Compare current inventory to national standards and industry best practices.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 5B Review current programs to determine opportunities for improvement.

Timeframe	1 month	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Collect program expenditure data from current Capital and Preventative Maintenance programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Perform detailed analysis of collected data. <input type="checkbox"/> Recommend improvement of existing programs and creation of new initiatives.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 5C Perform a cost analysis based on the completed needs assessment.

Timeframe	2 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Gather relevant historical expenditure data on current programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Collect estimated costs for proposed new initiatives. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine projected long-term increases for both current and new initiatives. <input type="checkbox"/> Compile a proposed budget outline.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

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Objective 5D Ensure fiscal responsibility through the identification of additional funding sources.

Timeframe	2 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify available internal funding opportunities through reallocation of appropriations. <input type="checkbox"/> Research potential for funding sources outside municipal budget appropriations, such as grants and other fundraising opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> Based on revenue achievement of supplemental funding, develop budget requests to cover deficits.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:

Objective 5E Create a prioritized implementation program so identified needs are acquired, deployed, and maintained.

Timeframe	4 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Purchase assets and contract services as outlined in approved budget requests. <input type="checkbox"/> Record inventory of acquired assets. <input type="checkbox"/> Review contractual obligations to confirm compliance with established outcomes. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop maintenance and replacement schedules following applicable guidelines, standards, and/or manufacturers' recommendations. <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute assets based on needs assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and facilitate training programs per manufacturer recommendations or required certification in coordination with scheduled deployment. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete maintenance and replacement in compliance with developed schedules.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:

Objective 5F Monitor program effectiveness to ensure program deliverables meet fire department and community expectations.

Timeframe	12 months-ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Generate evaluation process to validate program effectiveness. <input type="checkbox"/> Collect feedback from relevant stakeholders. <input type="checkbox"/> Compile and evaluate data against the program's stated objectives. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify strengths, weaknesses, and needed improvements of programs. <input type="checkbox"/> Adjust program initiatives based on identified improvements. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to evaluate programs in accordance with established timelines.	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:

Goal 6 Develop a standardized health and safety program to mitigate occupational injury and illness among members.

Objective 6A Analyze the department’s existing health and safety programs to establish baseline information on deliverables and results.

Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish a committee with representation from the department’s five companies. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and collect all existing policies and review them for currency and applicability. <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a needs assessment by researching contemporary trends and other industry best practices compared to the department’s current standing. <input type="checkbox"/> Compile a list of recommendations for the current policies for future consideration.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

Objective 6B Identify policy changes required to ensure consistency of results.

Timeframe	12 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Based on the policy review and assessment findings, create a new set of health and safety policies. <input type="checkbox"/> Review the new policies to ensure consistency across the companies is obtainable. <input type="checkbox"/> Make adjustments based on committee feedback from the review. <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain approval for the created policies utilizing the department’s current administrative process.	
Funding Estimate	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:

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Objective 6C	Based on previous needs assessment, develop a comprehensive program that includes policies, procedures, and systems that ensure the desired consistency.	
Timeframe	6 months	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct additional research of identified overall needs that collects department-appropriate industry best practices and standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a program from the collected information and review against applicable NFPA standards and industry best practices. <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize the program’s elements and create a needed training curriculum based on content. <input type="checkbox"/> Deliver training and obtain feedback to adjust for future training delivery. 	
Funding	Capital Costs:	Consumable Costs:
Estimate	Personnel Costs:	Contract Services Costs:
Objective 6D	Build a new procedure to evaluate the consistency and effectiveness of the health and safety programs.	
Timeframe	3 months-ongoing	Assigned to:
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Establish benchmarks based on minimum standards addressed in the policy and procedures of the program. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine data points needed to collect for analysis. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the department’s records management system can collect the needed data. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish frequency of evaluation of measures against benchmarks. <input type="checkbox"/> Make program adjustment recommendations based on the completed evaluation and reintroduce the program to the department. 	

Vision

On the final day of the process, the CPSE presented a strategic plan vision of where the organization will be in the future if the strategic plan is accomplished. This is not to override the department's global vision but rather to confirm the futurity of the work designed by the agency stakeholders. This vision is intended as a target of excellence to strive toward and provides a basis for its goals and objectives.

Abington Township Fire Department's 2028 vision is to be known as an internationally accredited department committed to the continual pursuit of excellence. As a unified team of companies, we will provide a standardized, cohesive delivery system with an improved stakeholder engagement process that educates and protects the township's community and department members. Additionally, we will strengthen our physical resource acquisition and maintenance system through a collaborative approach that produces efficacies for those we serve.

In recognition of our greatest resource of human investment, we will make every effort to develop, support, and prepare our members to be the best they can be. We will achieve this through effective health and safety programs and staffing engagement processes supported by contemporary volunteer member recruitment and retention methods. We envision a future fire service-focused department that welcomes new, inventive members who embody organizational accountability to our mission and values while always striving to make this vision a reality.

Performance Measurement

To assess and ensure that an organization is delivering on the promises made in the strategic plan, its leaders must determine performance measures for which they are fully accountable. As output measurement can be challenging, the organization must focus on assessing progress toward achieving improved output. Organizations must further be prepared to revisit and revise their goals, objectives, and performance measures to keep up with accomplishments and environmental changes.

To establish that the district's strategic plan is achieving results, performance measurement data will be implemented and integrated as part of the plan. The integrated process of Managing for Results is based upon:

- The identification of strategic goals and objectives;
- The determination of resources necessary to achieve them;
- The analyzing and evaluation of performance data; and
- The use of that data to drive continuous improvement in the organization.

Measures typically utilized to indicate and measure performance includes:

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

The Success of the Strategic Plan

The department has approached its desire to develop and implement a strategic plan by asking for and receiving input from the community and members of the organization during the development stage of the planning process. To assist in developing this plan, the department used professional guidance to conduct a community-driven strategic planning process. The success of this strategic plan will not depend upon the implementation of goals and related objectives but on support from the authority having jurisdiction, the members of the organization, and the community at large.

Provided the community-driven strategic planning process is kept dynamic and supported by effective leadership and active participation, it will be a considerable opportunity to unify agency and community stakeholders. This can be accomplished through a jointly developed understanding of organizational direction, focusing on all vested parties working to achieve the mission, goals, and vision. Further consideration must be made on how the organization will measure and be accountable for its progress and successes.

Glossary of Terms, Acronyms, and Initialisms

Accreditation	A process by which an association or agency evaluates and recognizes a program of study or an institution as meeting certain predetermined standards or qualifications. It applies only to institutions or agencies and their programs of study or their services. Accreditation ensures a basic level of quality in the services received from an agency.
CFAI	Commission on Fire Accreditation International
CPSE	Center for Public Safety Excellence
Customer(s)	The person or group who establishes the requirement of a process and receives or uses the outputs of that process; or the person or entity directly served by the department or agency.
Efficiency	A performance indication where inputs are measured per unit of output (or vice versa).
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
Environment	Circumstances and conditions that interact with and affect an organization. These can include economic, political, cultural, and physical conditions inside or outside the boundaries of the organization.
Input	A performance indication where the value of resources is used to produce an output.
Mission	An enduring statement of purpose; the organization's reason for existence. Describes what the organization does, for whom it does it, and how it does it.
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
Outcome	A performance indication where qualitative consequences are associated with a program/service, i.e., the ultimate benefit to the customer.
Output	A performance indication where a quality or number of units produced is identified.
PPE	Personnel Protective Equipment
SCBA	Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
SOG	Standard Operating Guideline
Stakeholder	Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on, or influence the organization's resources or outputs, is affected by those outputs, or has an interest in or expectation of the organization.

Strategic Goal	A broad target that defines how the agency will carry out its mission over a specific period. An aim. The final result of an action. Something to accomplish in assisting the agency in moving forward.
Strategic Objective	A specific, measurable accomplishment required to realize the successful completion of a strategic goal.
Strategic Plan	A long-range planning document that defines the mission of the agency and broadly identifies how it will be accomplished, and that provides the framework for more detailed annual and operational plans.
Strategic Planning	The continuous and systematic process whereby guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future, develop procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is to be measured.
Strategy	A description of how a strategic objective will be achieved. A possibility. A plan or methodology for achieving a goal.
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
Vision	An idealized view of a desirable and potentially achievable future state - where or what an organization would like to be in the future.

Appendix 1 – Community Feedback

Understanding the community’s perspective allows the department to change or bolster processes and strategies to fulfill community needs. The following includes feedback from participating community stakeholders, collected and processed by CPSE on behalf of the Abington Township Fire Department.

Should Change

Respondents were asked to provide one thing the department should change. The data were processed thematically and listed with the number of responses that matched the theme, as represented by the number in the parentheses. The following are the responses related to what the department should change:

1. Think about paying firefighters. Some form of compensation for members-benefits at cost to taxpayer. Find a way to compensate volunteers. Consider paid PT/FT paid first out team. (5)
2. Do not keep their importance a secret. Communication with the public. Let the community know who and what you are. More active on social media channels. (4)
3. More community events. More community education in childcare centers. Provide more inspections/education. (3)
4. Dispatch, response use other fire companies not in the township. Handling of mutual aid agreements with neighboring departments. (2)
5. Modernize firehouse meeting rooms. (1)
6. Provinciality. (1)
7. Stop using the WW2 air raid siren. (1)
8. Staffing diversity. (1)
9. Additional educational opportunities. (1)

Should Not Change

Respondents were asked to provide one thing the department should *not* change. The data were processed thematically and listed with the number of responses that matched the theme, as represented by the number in the parentheses. The following are the responses related to what the department should change:

1. Level of service they provide. Dedication to service. Commitment to quality service. Continue responding quality to emergencies. Its response. Overall service to the community. (6)
2. Community involvement and participation. How community-driven they are. Partnership and communication with community. Citizen’s communications. Engagement with community. (5)
3. Dedication of their leadership. Leadership. Dedication of its members. (3)
4. The volunteer aspect of the jobs. Community/volunteer aspects. (2)
5. Commitment to excellence. Focus on excellence. (2)
6. Maintaining the best equipment and people. (1)
7. That they have come together. (1)
8. Become paid. (1)
9. Always courteous, helpful. (1)
10. Fast response to alarms. (1)
11. Keep stations in close proximity to township residents. (1)
12. Loyalty to safety of residents. (1)

Community Expectations

Respondents were asked to list, in priority order, up to three subjects relative to expectations for the Abington Township Fire Department. Responses were then analyzed for themes and weighted. The numbers in the parentheses are the cumulative weighted value that correlated with the theme identified. While the themes are listed in prioritized, weighted order, all responses were important in the planning process. The following are the expectation responses of the community stakeholders (in priority order):

1. Respond in a timely manner to emergencies. Faster response times by allowing neighboring departments to be first in. show up in a timely manner to put out fires. Show up fast. Fast response. Respond to a fire quickly. Timely response to emergency calls. Arrive in a timely manner. Able to respond rapidly and safely to all emergencies. Timely response. Quick response to fire situations. (105)
2. Have sufficient training/education to deal with complex situations. Education/training for both the community and FD. Training. All members receive required training to complete tasks. Trained members capable of handling incidents. They know what they are doing. Firefighting knowledge. Confident on how they attack. Sufficient, well-trained, and experienced first responders. (28)
3. Respond to our needs with sufficient appropriate equipment and personnel. Be properly equipped to respond to emergencies. Modern apparatus equipped with the best tools and equipment. Staying current with equipment. They are equipped and trained to handle the calls they respond to. Well-maintained, up-to-date equipment. Maintain the best available equipment. (24)
4. community / public relations and programs - participation in food drives, parades, carnivals, grand openings for new business, etc. provide a focal point for community pride. Provide community education. To educate the community about safe practices/habits. Provide community education, including children in childcare/school settings. Community relationship building. To attend events and teach children at a young age about the possibility of being a volunteer firefighter. Accessibility to Fire Marshal and Assistant Fire Marshal. (23)
5. Protect life safety. To resolve emergencies with minimal injury/loss. Emergency response-protect life. Life safety. Life safety - preserve life. (23)
6. Proper number of firefighters responding. 24/7 operations. Respond to fires/emergencies. Safe and effective fire response. Responsiveness. (17)
7. Volunteers. To hire men/women who are emotionally and physically able to assist in fire emergency. Maintain adequate staffing levels of volunteers. Recruit volunteers so each station is sufficiently staffed. (10)
8. Inspections and tours. Reasonable code compliance. Inspections are used to educate business owners in real-time and consistently. (7)
9. Protect property. Keep our homes and buildings safe. (6)
10. Safety. (5)
11. Service. (5)
12. information dissemination. Good communication. Letting the public know what happened. (5)
13. Coordination during an emergency situation. Fire and police on location. (4)
14. Excellence. (3)

15. Help dealing with serious car accidents. (3)
16. Integrity. Being nice - compassionate - care about victims. (2)
17. Know or be knowledgeable of who, what, when goes on in businesses, schools. Good communication skills. (2)
18. Have sufficient resources who understand our specific needs (mutual aid). (1)
19. Leadership emphasis on safe operations in the field. (1).

Areas of Community Concern

Respondents were asked to list, in priority order, up to three concerns they have about or for the department. Responses were then analyzed for themes and weighted. The numbers in the parentheses are the cumulative weighted value that correlated with the theme identified. While the themes are listed in prioritized, weighted order, all responses were important in the planning process. The following are the concerns of the community stakeholders prioritized and weighted accordingly (verbatim, in priority order):

1. Staffing shortage - not enough volunteers. Lack of volunteer members. Staffing issues, current talent, and future requirements. Not properly staffed. Staffing/sustainability. Maintaining appropriate staffing. They have enough personnel to do the job they are asked to do. The amount of volunteers today and the commitment needed to stay a volunteer department. Number of members. Enough volunteers. Future staffing / relying on volunteers. Need more staffing and support (paid) and resources for administration. (55)
2. Proper funding and staffing of FD. Funding - receive the needed funds for operations. Funding and effect on taxes. Funding issues for equipment resources, etc. That they can afford the money needed to keep/acquire top-notch equipment. Do you have enough funding? Funding. Future funding of five FDs, possible need to consolidate. (35)
3. They can keep it community-based. Provide more educational programs for children in childcare besides once a year for fire prevention week. Communication between FD and small private schools that do not have access to public school info/resources. Concerned that the community as a whole has no idea of the inner workings of a firehouse. Greater community outreach. Getting population to buy in. (25)
4. The ability to continuously recruit and retain sufficient volunteers. Is FD able to recruit enough volunteers to sustain its function? Hiring the right people to serve. Maintaining and retaining volunteers. Ability to recruit new volunteers. All volunteer department-is recruitment sufficient to maintain an adequately staffed response team? (22)
5. Not showing they are ready. Consistency of training. The amount of required training we require volunteers to dedicate to the fire service - all without compensation. (12)
6. Facilities and equipment are up to date. Not properly equipped. The necessity to keep their equipment up to date and the expenses involved. Facility age. (10)
7. not being asked to respond to our needs in a timely manner. They can maintain fast response times. Slow response in certain areas of the township. As a volunteer organization can they respond in time? (9)
8. Availability of members during business hours. Resources. Utilization/duplication of resources. (9)
9. Understanding/knowing state regulations that childcare centers must follow. Knowledge of community and its school systems. (8)
10. Collaboration of programs between fire and police departments. Coordination in emergency management drills. (6)
11. Life safety for firefighters. Overall safety of all volunteers, both physical and mental. Safety and health of volunteers who may not consistently train. Having healthy competent members. (6)

12. Rivalry between stations within department and who is in charge. Ego, cliques within companies. (6)
13. Can be confusing as to one fire department vs fire stations as a resident. (5)
14. Volunteerism. (5)
15. Life safety. (5)
16. Code enforcement. Is there enough code enforcement? (4)
17. not being able to respond to our needs with sufficient personnel and equipment. Sized properly should there be additional stations within the township. (4)
18. That they need to deal with some very unstable people/situations. (3)
19. Need more community appreciation (especially staff and volunteers. (3)
20. Willing leadership. (1)
21. I fear that our local fire department's profile within the community may diminish over time as the township's population grows. (1)
22. Continued self-reflection toward improvement. (1).

Positive Community Feedback

The CPSE promotes the belief that the community's view of the organization's strengths must be established for a strategic plan to be valid. Needless efforts are often put forth in over-developing areas that are already successful. However, proper utilization and promotion of the strengths may often help the organization overcome or offset some identified weaknesses. The following are the identified strengths recognized by the community stakeholders (verbatim, in no particular order):

- Community relations are excellent.
- They have awesome equipment.
- Firefighters are well-trained.
- Quick rapid response.
- Always at community (Santa, easter bunny) programs.
- Communication with community.
- Collaboration on safety issues and training – particularly schools,
- Courtesy.
- Availability of leadership.
- Very committed to serving our community.
- I feel safe.
- The volunteers – the people who show up because they care.
- Commitment to education and accreditation.
- Prioritizing the health of volunteers and limiting exposure.
- Good communication.
- Reasonable expectation of the community.
- They are part of the community consistently – local and visible.

- Incredibly responsive to questions asked, nothing is ever “too much.”
- Qualified and knowledgeable – able to guide us.
- Extremely dedicated and hard working.
- Quick response time emergency situations.
- Open houses – the community loves them!
- Engagement with the community, particularly presence at neighborhood and school district events.
- Responsive when called.
- Pride of members as a community-based (volunteer) organization.
- Professional – highest standards.
- Dedicated – all volunteers sacrifice so much for the community and seek nothing in return.
- Community-oriented – always willing to partner with community and other stakeholders to provide fire prevention education, and assistance, etc.
- Consistent fast response to fire alarms.
- Always accessible when contacted for assistance or needed information.
- Friendly, positive communicative skills both fire marshall and assistant.
- Feel safe that the firehouses are close by to assist in a fire emergency.
- Use of the firehouse for our Thanksgiving pie community program to give support.
- Give young kids a dream to be a firefighter and give them service and learn sacrifice for others at a young age.
- Responsiveness.
- Courtesy.
- Tom McAlhaney works fabulously with us.
- Extremely dedicated individuals who give freely of their time and talents.
- Very professional.
- Well supported by township.
- Great to work with.
- Very knowledge members.
- Work well with surrounding townships to accomplish the job.
- Their level of commitment to community service is awesome!
- Edge Hill fire volunteers know our building and what to expect when they show up for an alarm.
- Many volunteers either work for the township or attended our program so they personally know the building.
- They provided fire safety, emergency planning, and introduce training to our center at least yearly or wherever asked to.
- The training facility and its uses to keep everyone up to date with skills as they can be.
- Their outreach programs with the community and willingness to meet their goals is excellent.
- They present themselves as being completed and professional while maintaining a volunteer status. They are prideful.
- Because they are volunteers, they keep our taxes low.
- Commitment to community.

- Support of township/community members.
- Modernization/innovation of equipment.
- Several local departments in Abington.
- Easy to reach.
- Halls are available to the community.
- Incredible sense of purpose and calling.
- Envidable camaraderie.
- High profile during holidays.
- Community involvement by members who are residents and care about the community at large.
- Image of department with regards to how it is viewed by other departments and agencies.
- Excellent leadership.
- Well-trained to handle emergencies.
- Properly equipped with the needed tools to complete tasks.
- It's people.
- Their commitment.
- Public support.
- Excellence within the FD.
- Accredited FD.
- Loyalty from an all-volunteer agency.
- Very responsive, well trained.
- Available for questions/concerns.
- Well-networked with other emergency response agencies for mutual aid.
- Communications – the leadership at the fire marshal and Emergency Management always respond, assist, and make recommendations that enable us to resolve issues.
- Code compliance able to understand the specific need of our facility.
- Positive and professional approach to our needs.

Other Thoughts and Comments

The community was asked to share any other comments about the department or its services. The following written comments were received (verbatim, in no particular order):

- Well-funded/well-run.
- Must keep up with proper funding and bring in new volunteers.
- The public/community does not know the cost of what a single firefighter needs for gear.
- Interaction of companies, pretty much all companies go to a call – Edge Hill is at Abington who helps Weldon, who helps Roslyn, etc.
- Cooperation from neighboring townships, relationships? Good partnerships?

- Day-to-day uniforms feel dated and not approachable (white shirts and black pants). Appearance is impactful, could I see myself as approachable?
- Start/provide a community appreciation group via a volunteer group (across the township).
- Worry about future recruitment for volunteers with the generational shifts.
- Different fundraising strategy is needed for support (maybe a small fee to home/business owners where they can earn “badges” to display etc.
- I have lived and worked in six states and Abington Township. Fire Marshal and Assistant (Chris Platz) are far superior to all other experiences.
- The community does not know what the fire department could do for them, just the expectation of putting out a fire.
- Get more awareness of the fire department and enroll community in values and emotional strengths.
- ATFD is excellent! A professional organization.
- I noticed that the other departments are allowing “live in” arrangements for some firefighters. I like the idea of offering this to college student firefighters or others that can defer college costs – or as a service thing for young people.
- I do worry that not enough people in the community fully understand and respect the incredible sacrifices these men and women make for us all. I worry there will be shortages in our departments as future generations become less community oriented and more self-centered.
- Genuine concern for fire safety and training/enlightening residents (i.e., fire prevention month, etc.). Although I am distressed with the township government at this time, I still hold our public safety agencies (police/fire/EMS) in high regard.
- Are these plans/thoughts about sharing services with other local communities?

Community Priorities

Understanding how the community prioritizes the department’s programs and services allows the ATFD to ensure its focus on resource allocation aligns. With that, prioritization feedback was garnered using an instrument that allowed for comparing all programs and services offered by the department. The results were as follows:

Programs	Ranking	Score
Fire Suppression	1	119
Basic and Advanced Technical Rescue	2	90
Emergency Management Planning	3	75
Code Enforcement / Fire Inspections	4	62
Hazardous Materials Mitigation	5	60
Community Fire Safety Education	6	40
Fire Investigation	7	37

Appendix 2 - SWOT

Strengths

It is important for any organization to identify its strengths to ensure that it can provide the services requested by the community and that its strengths are consistent with the issues facing the organization. Often, identifying organizational strengths leads to channeling efforts toward primary community needs that match those strengths. Programs that do not match organizational strengths, or the organization’s primary function, should be seriously reviewed to evaluate the rate of return on staff time and allocated funds.

Through a consensus process, the agency stakeholders identified the department’s strengths as follows:

Training facilities)local and capable	The variety and frontline apparatus
Dedication and experience of members	Operational planning (standards of cover)
Funding (dedicated fire tax)	Working relationships between all five companies
Group purchasing ability (PPE, SCBA, etc.)	Number/proximity of stations
Community-oriented	Low-cost volunteer fire service
Utilization of township workforce	Physical program (annual)
Existing partnerships with mutual aid agencies, utilities, public works, police, and EMS	Membership benefits, including medical, insurance, others, and length of service award program
Training facilities (local and capable)	Accreditation
Amount and maintenance of apparatus and equipment	Improvements made in preplanning through technology
Experienced personnel	Company identities (pride, community)
Diverse personnel skill sets	FF1 program conducted locally

Weaknesses

For any organization to either begin or continue to move progressively forward, it must be able to identify its strengths and those areas where it functions poorly or not at all. These areas of needed enhancements are not the same as threats but rather those day-to-day issues and concerns that may slow or inhibit progress. The agency stakeholders identified the following items as weaknesses:

Lack of standardization of SOGs, fire company policies, procedures, and processes, including by-laws, benefits, and human resources/disciplinary issues

Lack of data-driven decisions of who to recruit and retain	Lack of youth – interest/recruitment
Community awareness – fire department, not aware the department serves with volunteers	Age and funding of facilities
Full-scale exercise with supporting departments and agencies	Age of some of the apparatus
Standard operating procedures awareness and needed updates	Internal lack of understanding about accreditation
Lack of mentoring, succession planning, and officer development	Lack of inclusivity (new/all members)
Lack of social media content and its consistency without a specific public information officer	Time commitment and availability of members to companies' operations
No health and safety officer program in the department	80/20 rule
Lack of apparatus and equipment replacement schedule	Lack of a common training calendar
Lack of uniform fire prevention program and associated data	Training as a unified team
Increasing response times due to a variety of reasons (e.g., number of daytime calls)	Inconsistency between station SOGs – drivers, officer qualifications
Insufficient staffing in the fire marshal's office to supplement	Reduced availability of daytime staffing

Opportunities

The opportunities for an organization depend on identifying strengths and weaknesses and how they can be enhanced. The focus of opportunities is not solely on existing services but on expanding and developing new possibilities inside and beyond the traditional service area. The agency stakeholders identified the following potential opportunities:

Increased mutual aid	Increased teamwork and camaraderie
Better insurance – injuries/death (better coverage) – standardize a minimum amount of coverage across all ATFD fire companies	Citizens fire academy (experience)
	Grant applications for staffing, building, equipment, and training
Increased recruitment through community events, youth sporting events, and local colleges	Standardization of policies, processes, and systems across the companies
Increased length of the service award program	Inter-agency training
Mental health awareness	Group purchasing
Social media engagement to inform the public	Additional tax incentives
Standardize township employee response – day	Tech school recruitment

Threats

By recognizing possible threats, an organization can reduce the potential for loss. Fundamental to the success of any strategic plan is the understanding that threats are not entirely and/or directly controlled by the organization. Some of the current and potential threats identified by the agency stakeholders were as follows:

Funding – grant availability, cost outpacing funds, loss of tax revenue, tax increase hesitation	Radio interoperability with police department is limited due to encryption
Code/zoning – type V construction, zoning changes, outdated codes, increased demand	Unfunded mandates and misaligned focus from political climate change
Membership retention – time, training, external training, mandates	Economic environment – supply / increased costs and increased build times for apparatus
Technology (electric vehicles, composite frames, solar / battery backup)	New construction (lightweight – identification and tracking)
Increased population (proposed construction)	Decreased staffing (increased call volume)
Exposures – health and legal	Lack of public knowledge/understanding
Hoarding/mental illness	High cost of housing/affordability
Decreased relief funding	Increased training requirements for new recruits
Negative social media posts	Lack of transition of experience to younger members
Aging population and properties	

Appendix 3 – Critical Issues and Service Gaps

The following information is the raw data comprised from the deliberation of the two workgroups. The information in each table is linked to a strategic initiative that the overall group, by consensus, determined was something the department should pursue for change and continuous improvement.

Initiative Link	Group 1	Group 2
Community Outreach	Community Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Broaden platforms ○ Content ○ Consistency ○ Organizational support 	Community Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Awareness ○ Participation of members ○ Marketing ○ No strategy
Recruitment and Retention	N/A	Recruitment and Retention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economy (housing, work, COL) ○ Availability (two jobs, kids, activities) ○ Awareness ○ Incentives ○ Training days ○ Data-driven recruitment and retention ○ Exterior/support options ○ Inclusivity (lack of) ○ Mentoring
Standardization	Standardization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy (administration) ○ Operational guidelines ○ Training ○ Planning ○ Benefits 	Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mixed expectations ○ Unified ○ Awareness ○ Lack of tracks/focus ○ External opportunities
Health and Safety	Health and Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physicals ○ Coordination ○ Fire Code ○ Mental Health ○ Policy 	Health and Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Awareness ○ Lack of policies ○ Cancer (awareness and prevention) ○ Mental health ○ Equipment
Staffing Engagement	Personnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruitment ○ Development ○ Retention ○ Participation 	Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Duty crew ○ Daytime staffing ○ Stipends/Incentives ○ Overworked few
Physical Resources	Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aging equipment ○ Apparatus ○ Equipment ○ Budgets 	Physical Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aging facilities ○ Apparatus ○ Equipment ○ Benefits ○ Age/replacement ○ Distribution ○ New technology ○ Facility assessment



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