



BELLEVUE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Strategic Plan 2012

Protecting Our Community, Strengthening Our Organization



City of Bellevue

Conrad Lee
Mayor

Jennifer Robertson
Deputy Mayor

Claudia Balducci
Councilmember

John Chelminiak
Councilmember

Don Davidson
Councilmember

John Stokes
Councilmember

Kevin Wallace
Councilmember

Steve Sarkozy
City Manager

Brad Miyake
Deputy City Manager

Fire Department Executive Team

Chief Michael Eisner

Deputy Chief Mark Risen
Bureau of Operations

**Deputy Chief Michael
Remington**
Bureau of Support Services

Ken Carlson
Fire Marshal

Luke Meyers
Emergency Manager

Battalion Chief Bruce Kroon
Commander, Training Division

Battalion Chief Mark Moulton
Commander, EMS Division

Battalion Chief Lou Faehnrich
A Platoon Battalion Commander

Battalion Chief Marty LaFave
B Platoon Battalion Commander

**Battalion Chief Steven P.
Thomas**
C Platoon Battalion Commander

Stacie Martyn
Fiscal Manager

Lieutenant Troy Donlin
Community Liaison Officer

Strategic Planning Committee

Chief Michael Eisner

Deputy Chief Mark Risen
Bureau of Operations

**Deputy Chief Michael
Remington**
Bureau of Support Services

Battalion Chief Bruce Kroon
Commander, Training Division

Battalion Chief Lou Faehnrich
A Platoon Battalion Commander

Stacie Martyn
Fiscal Manager

Carol Dunn
*Emergency Management
Coordinator*

Lieutenant Troy Donlin
Community Liaison

Lieutenant Richard Burke
Engine 4, B Platoon

Lieutenant Dan Gallaway
Ladder 1, C Platoon

Firefighter Tom Fields
IAFF 1604 Union President

Engineer Steve Linden
Engine 4, B Platoon

Travis Ripley
Assistant Fire Marshal

Nuri Thobani
Emergency Medical Services

Firefighter Michelle Wright
Engine 1, C Platoon



“Helping Communities and Organizations Create Their Best Futures”

Founded in 1988, we are an interdisciplinary strategy and analysis firm providing integrated, creative and analytically rigorous approaches to complex policy and planning decisions. Our team of strategic planners, policy and financial analysts, economists, cartographers, information designers and facilitators work together to bring new ideas, clarity, and robust frameworks to the development of analytically-based and action-oriented plans.

2025 First Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, Washington 98121
P (206) 324-8760
www.berkconsulting.com

Letter from the Chief

It gives us great pride to introduce the Bellevue Fire Department Strategic Plan 2012: *Protecting Our Community, Strengthening Our Organization*. This Plan is a product of countless hours of effort by representatives of all ranks and workgroups throughout our Department and will serve as a guide as we continue to strengthen and improve the organization.

The 2012 Strategic Plan serves as a roadmap for our organization through the most difficult economic times that any of us have ever known, coming at a time when the local and national economies are in a slow but hopeful recovery. The goals set within this plan recognize this reality, yet continue to move the Bellevue Fire Department forward.

Our Strategic Plan is a living document and its publication is not the end of the story. Through an ongoing process of review and implementation that will include members from all workgroups and ranks in our organization, work on realizing the ideas contained in this document will continue over the coming years.

Our thanks go out to the many individuals from our organization, our City, and our community who helped to develop this Plan, and to those who will make the goals described in these pages a reality.



Chief Michael Eisner



Contents

Introduction	2
Current Topics & Critical Issues.....	3
Managing from this Plan.....	6
Governing Statements	7
Summary of Goals & Action Strategies.....	10
Goals & Action Strategies.....	12
Keep Our Community Safe	12
Invest in Our Employees & Expertise	20
Maintain Appropriate Infrastructure.....	24
Strengthen Our Ability to Engage Effectively with Our Public.....	30
Summary of the Strategic Planning Process	34

Introduction

Bellevue Fire has a long tradition of excellence, as evidenced by its performance in preventing, preparing for, and responding to emergencies, its strong public image, as well as its reputation among partners and peers in the region. The Department has passed a rigorous accreditation process by the Center for Public Safety Excellence three times since 1998 making it one of six fire departments in the State of Washington to currently hold this designation.

Rather than see these accomplishments as a reason to rest, we see them as a challenge. To meet our own standards – and the expectations of the communities we serve – we must continue to improve, addressing both areas of strength and areas of weakness. The goals and ambitions of this Strategic Plan are inspired by that commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

We recognize that we do not act alone in this effort. The Department is deeply committed to our ongoing partnerships with the City of Bellevue; the cities that contract with us to provide services;

the residents, businesses, and community-based organizations that make up those communities; and other providers serving these communities and the region.

This Plan was written during a time of great change and uncertainty, and has been designed to provide guidance while allowing for ongoing flexibility and adaptation as conditions change. While we know the major issues and challenges we will continue to face, we do not assume to know specifically when and how they will manifest. Many actions or decisions throughout this document are dependant on particular “triggers,” or changes in the environment, that would cause us to respond. The following section outlines the most significant of such changes we see occurring in the environment and within our own organization.

CONTRACT CITIES

The following cities currently contract with the Bellevue Fire Department for the provision of services:

- Beaux Arts
- Clyde Hill
- Hunts Point
- Medina
- Newcastle
- Yarrow Point



Current Topics & Critical Issues

Public safety is a top priority for Bellevue residents. The City of Bellevue’s 2010 and 2012 Budget Surveys asked Bellevue residents about their top budget priorities for City services. Public safety was identified as the most important priority in both 2010 and 2012, as the chart below indicates.

BUDGET PRIORITIES	RANKING	
	2010	2012
Safe Community	1	1
Improved Mobility	6	2
Economic Growth and Competitiveness	4	3
Health and Sustainable Environment	2	4
Responsive Government	5	5
Quality Neighborhoods	3	6
Innovative, Vibrant, and Caring Community	6	7

Source: City of Bellevue 2012 Budget Survey, February 2012, ORC International

Survey respondents were also asked to rank the importance of a long list of City services, as well as their relative satisfaction with each. “Responding to fires” was identified as both the most important service and the function residents are most satisfied with. “Providing emergency medical services” ranked second in importance and fourth in satisfaction.

Four primary topics are affecting the Fire Department at this point in efforts to exceed high community expectations for its services:

- Changing Demographics and Calls for Service
- Economic Challenges
- Technology Innovations
- Internal and Organizational Issues

The impacts of these forces have been felt for some time, and will no doubt persist into the future. While this Plan is influenced and informed by these factors, it cannot and does not offer a final resolution. These forces, which manifest as both opportunities and challenges, will continue to be the issues that City leaders and Department leadership and personnel wrestle with for the foreseeable future. What this Plan does is acknowledge their significance, establish a structure that we can use to frame the issues, and create a sense of direction, purpose, and priority.

Each of these four forces of change are explored in some detail on the following pages, with more information provided in this Plan’s Technical Appendix, which includes a compilation of the analytic inputs that were considered in the development of the document. The following section describes in more detail how this Plan will be used to help the Department navigate and make decisions going forward.



Changing Demographics & Calls for Service

Between the 2000 and 2010 Census, the population of Bellevue Fire's service area grew by 12.3%, with the City of Bellevue accounting for 83% of this increase. This growth, however, represents a slowdown from the 14.3% growth that occurred between 1990 and 2000. Downtown Bellevue has been the fastest growing neighborhood, seeing a population increase of 176% between 2000 and 2010. This trend is expected to continue, with more businesses and about 3,000 more residents expected to locate in Downtown. The density and 24/7 nature of this population creates particular challenges and demands for fire, emergency medical, and emergency management services. Population and development expanding into other areas such as the Bel-Red Corridor will also require adaptations in the Department's facilities and staffing.

While continued future growth is likely, it is difficult to predict at what rate it will occur for the service area overall, and impossible to estimate for particular sub-geographies such as Downtown, the Bel-Red Corridor, or other neighborhoods or communities. This Plan, therefore, makes no such assumptions, but establishes trigger points and performance measures that will indicate when changes are becoming necessary, allowing the Department sufficient time to adapt in anticipation of new concentrations of population density and related demands for services.

The area is becoming more and more diverse by any measure, including race, ethnicity, country of origin, and language spoken at home. In addition to enriching the fabric of our community, this diversity creates particular challenges for the Department. More than half of the residents of some neighborhoods and one third of the City of Bellevue's overall population speaks a language other than English at home. The presence of populations with different cultural backgrounds, life experiences, and native languages requires fire personnel to be flexible, creative, and sensitive in communicating and interacting effectively. This is true both during preparedness outreach prior to an emergency and during an actual event. These requirements have clear implications for the Department's hiring practices, training of staff, and communications systems.

Changes in our communities' demographic makeup and the success of fire prevention efforts are also contributing to a shift in the nature of the calls we receive. Strengthened building codes and other fire prevention efforts have contributed to reducing the number of fires and suppression calls per 1,000 population over the past decade. Fueled by an aging population, calls for emergency medical services have increased by 13% since 2001, constituting 81% of call volume in 2011 versus 73% in 2000.

This trend is being experienced by communities across the country, has an impact on the way we train, equip, and otherwise prepare our personnel for duty, and will be a continued area of innovation. It is also important to note that the Department's current facilities and staffing models are highly efficient in this context, with fire personnel well-positioned to respond quickly and effectively to both fire and emergency medical incidents. We are proud of this dual role that our firefighters play and believe strongly that this model makes the most sense for our community, with opportunities to continue to improve and innovate.

Economic Challenges

The current economic recession has had a significant impact on regional employment figures, with 2010 employment totals barely surpassing 2000 totals.

This slow-down has had a significant impact on the ability of the City of Bellevue and other cities in the region to fund public safety, despite strong efforts to preserve these vital services. Through these challenging times, the Department remains committed to excellence and has maintained a disciplined, deliberative approach to extracting the most value possible from each dollar. Efficiencies were found to maintain established levels of service in most areas, but cuts in training, community outreach, and – in early 2012 – on-the-ground staffing have meaningfully impacted the Department’s core functioning.

In the current environment, we recognize the importance of strong financial stewardship, creativity, and collaboration with community partners and the broader City organization. This Plan identifies many such opportunities to achieve our mission more efficiently. When requests for additional resources are made, we are careful to describe why such items have been identified as a priority investment for the good of the communities we serve.

Technology Innovations

The rapid evolution of technology continues to revolutionize the fire, emergency medical, and emergency management disciplines. New tools allow us to respond to emergencies with effectiveness we would not have dared to hope for ten years ago. In addition to technological innovations in our equipment, apparatus, and facilities, changes in communications technologies have significantly affected how we communicate internally, with partners, and with the public.

Technology creates enhanced capabilities as well as challenges, most notably the challenge of remaining current. The need for continued investment in training and equipment is in tension with our constrained fiscal environment, and these demands must be weighed carefully against other potential investments.

Internal & Organizational Issues

In addition to the environmental changes described above, there are specific pressures and challenges internal to the Department that require our attention. A large percentage of our personnel are going to retire in the next several years, with more than 25% of our employees eligible for retirement today, and almost 50% eligible for retirement in the next several years. With this aging workforce comes a need to focus on the health and wellness of our personnel, as well as succession planning, ensuring we cultivate the next generation of Department leadership.

The 2012 Fire Department Staff Survey also highlighted the need to invest in how we communicate internally, our connection to the communities we share, and the creation of a culture that truly embodies our Core Values of commitment to employees and innovation. Our employees are truly our greatest asset and the source of our most valuable innovations, and this Plan establishes specific, actionable strategies to protect and cultivate this resource.



Managing from this Plan

This Plan identifies the most significant issues and opportunities facing Bellevue Fire today and establishes the foundation for the Department's response. Every action and investment contained in this document is important to protecting the safety, well-being, and prosperity of our community. The Department has the capacity to advance all the action items contained in the Plan, allocating existing resources when possible, and requesting additional resources when necessary.

Given the fluid nature of our operating environment and the need to continue to be flexible and adaptive, adoption of this Plan does not mark the end of discussion and decision making. This document identifies decision points that will be evaluated when key indicators are seen in the environment or when our performance tracking indicates change is necessary. When our service area's population grows beyond the ability of the Department to continue to perform according to specified standards, for example, changes in staffing and facilities may be necessary. This Plan identifies those decision points, triggers, or indicators, but does not specify when they are likely to be reached or lock in plans for tactical implementation. The ongoing process of monitoring the need for change and adapting when appropriate given changes in our environment is illustrated to the right.

Goal I, Action Strategy C on page 16 describes our commitment to publish an annual report of the Department's performance. This report will be shared broadly with internal and external audiences, ensuring that we continue to operate in a transparent fashion, fully accountable for our successes and our shortcomings. As part of this process, we will update surveys of Fire Department staff every other year and community residents every two years as a number of the performance measures throughout this document rely on regular updates of these instruments.

Annual Review & Workplanning Process

Strategic Plan

- Goals (numbered: 1, 2, 3, 4)
- Action Strategies (capital letters: A, B, C, etc.)
- Implementation Steps (numbered, with blue boxes)



Annual Report

- Review performance data from last year
- Evaluate tactical adaptations



Annual Retreat

- Update Strategic Plan Implementation Steps
- Determine operational execution



Annual Workplanning

- Shape budget-setting
- Inform workplans
- Drive performance reviews



Governing Statements

Our Vision

A protected, prepared, and healthy community.

Our Mission

Assist the public in the protection of life and property by minimizing the impact of fire, medical emergencies, and potential disasters or uncontrolled events.

Our Values

Bellevue Fire embraces the City of Bellevue's Core Values and is committed to upholding and embodying them in our policies, culture, and daily actions. The nature of our work brings a particular focus to these Values, as described on the following page.



Our Values, continued

Exceptional Public Service

To effectively accomplish the Mission of the Department and to exceed the expectations of the people who depend on our services, we commit to exceptional public service for all our of customers by:

- Adhering to the highest ethical standards.
- Valuing the contributions of citizens, partners, and stakeholders.
- Providing equitable, consistent, and responsive service.
- Striving to anticipate the needs of our diverse customer base.
- Maximizing the utilization of current resources before additional requests.

Stewardship

We take pride in the diligent and visionary management of all of the community's resources – environmental, financial, human, and physical. We accept the responsibility for enhancing and preserving our resources and for balancing competing needs. We value the public trust and recognize that today's decisions will have a significant impact on the health of tomorrow's community.

Commitment to Employees

The Department invests in its employees and continually demonstrates how valuable each person is to the organization by:

- Encouraging and rewarding employee development and personal growth.
- Striving for a culture in which we treat each other with dignity, respect, and trust, recognizing each other's contributions.
- Inviting suggestions for how to improve how the Department functions from any member of our organization.
- Building on our commonalities and diversity.
- Believing that investing in employees fosters good government and quality public services.

Integrity

Our leadership is centered on sound principles of trust:

- We behave ethically, honestly, and fairly.
- We perform our work with steadfastness to truth, responsibility, and open communication.
- We are explicit about our Values and strive to make them visible and consistent throughout the organization.

Innovation

Continuous improvement requires a solid foundation and a commitment to innovation, adaptability, and a willingness to embrace appropriate change, with a pledge to:

- Encourage and reward proactive and creative problem solving and planning.
- Be empowered to explore new ideas and introduce cutting-edge solutions.
- Support taking reasonable risks to find better ways to deliver our services.
- Continue our tradition of leadership.

Our Guiding Principles

Operational decisions related to our facilities, staffing, training, apparatus, and equipment are informed by our commitment to meet specific requirements and standards. These Guiding Principles give us direction and remind us of the high standards we are dedicated to meeting. In particular, the Bellevue Fire Department will continue to:

- Attempt to utilize efficiencies, prevention, automation, and technological solutions before requesting additional staffing to accomplish our service mission.
- Strive to meet appropriate response time standards for fire, basic life support, and advanced life support services as described in the Center for Public Safety Excellence deployment manual and as established by the City of Bellevue.
- Ensure that staffing, operations, training, and equipment decisions reflect all legal requirements for worker safety and risk management.
- Maintain present standards of quality, safety, and capability of our apparatus, equipment, and facilities. The Department will take reasonable measures to ensure that fire facilities can function during foreseeable disasters at the Operational Continuity Level.
- Be a regional contract service provider when advantageous to the City of Bellevue and other parties.
- Ensure that Center for Public Safety Excellence accreditation status is maintained, along with the best possible Fire Protection Insurance Class rating.

Summary of Goals & Action Strategies

1 Keep Our Community Safe

- A. Prevent Fire & Medical Emergencies
- B. Prepare for Disasters in the Communities We Serve
- C. Provide Timely, Effective, & Consistent Emergency Responses Across the Communities We Serve
- D. Maintain Our Standard of Excellence in Emergency Medical Services
- E. Leverage Regional Partnerships to Enhance the Effectiveness & Efficiency of Our Services

2 Invest in Our Employees & Expertise

- A. Continue to Invest in & Find More Efficient Ways to Provide Employee Training
- B. Improve Our Internal Communications
- C. Invest in Our Employee's Safety, Health, Career, & Future

3 Maintain Appropriate Infrastructure

- A. Ensure Our Facilities Meet Future Department Needs
- B. Employ Technology & Communications Solutions that Provide Efficiencies & Improve Services
- C. Ensure all Necessary Apparatus & Equipment are in Good Working Order

4 Strengthen Our Ability to Engage Effectively with Our Public

- A. Build the Department's Multicultural Connections and Capabilities
- B. Expand Our Opportunities for Effective, Quality Public Engagement

1 Keep Our Community Safe



The Fire Department's fundamental role is to create a safe environment so the communities it serves – and the individuals, families, and businesses that makeup those communities – can thrive. The Department's first focus is to protect life and property, whether from fire, natural or human-caused disasters, or medical emergencies. We are recognized as a leader in the region because of our excellence in providing these services, and the residents of the community rely on our expertise and responsiveness. They rely on the Department not only for fire and emergency medical calls, but for any number of other situations when they simply do not know who else to call.

The Department's first strategies in addressing its public safety mission are prevention and preparedness, with the understanding that it is better to prevent fire and medical emergencies than it is to have to respond to them. Similarly, when considering natural and human-caused disasters, it is important first to prepare, and second to respond to, the full range of events that may occur. When emergencies do happen, the Department strives to provide excellent service quickly and efficiently with well trained staff.

This Goal also addresses the importance of leveraging regional partnerships and constant innovation to be as effective and efficient as possible. In the current economic climate, it is critical to aggressively pursue the efficiencies that may be gained through regional collaborations in training and service delivery.

A. Prevent Fire & Medical Emergencies

The best way the Fire Department can serve the public safety needs of the community is to prevent as many fire and medical emergencies as possible before they occur. For fire safety and emergency management, this involves establishing a strong foundation in public education, building codes, inspections, and code enforcement. For medical emergencies, a focus on prevention inspires the Department to proactively seek to improve people's health within the community by raising awareness and promoting healthy lifestyles.

1. Prioritize resources for prevention activities to reduce the frequency and severity of fires and medical emergencies in the communities we serve.

- a. Invest proactively in the health of our community by providing public education on a wide range of preventative health topics.
- b. Leverage building codes and inspections to ensure buildings in Bellevue and the communities we serve are as fire-resistive as reasonably possible.

2. Ensure the effectiveness and consistency of fire inspections.

- a. Ensure adequate technical AND customer service training for personnel conducting fire inspections to ensure a consistent, fair, and practical application of the fire code.
- b. Ensure there are adequate and visible mechanisms to hear, record, and address public concerns related to fire inspections.

Performance Measures

- Maintain a downward trend in the five year rolling average of total fire loss.
- Maintain a fire loss benchmark lower than the national average.

Budget Considerations

- The approach described in [Action Strategy A](#) does not carry significant budget considerations as it reflects a continuation and focusing of existing efforts.





B. Prepare for Disasters in the Communities We Serve

The Fire Department has two primary roles in emergency management and disaster preparedness.

First, we have a responsibility to communicate effectively with the public before, during, and after an event. We work continuously to educate and inspire residents to prepare themselves, so that each member of the community has a plan in place and supplies on hand to get safely through an emergency. A key element of this work is creating a

clear understanding of the limit of what the Department and other service providers will be able to do, and what members of the public will have to do for themselves.

Communication with the public during an event becomes more tactical, sharing details of what has happened, where and when resources and assistance will be available, and, if necessary, organizing evacuations. To ensure our communities respond well during future disasters, we must continue to invest in the skills and abilities of Department staff tasked with public education and information, and in the procedures and systems required to convey consistent and accurate information.

Secondly, we need to be sure that the City and the Fire Department are themselves well-prepared, with plans in place to ensure the continuity of key decision making and operational capacities. Our ability to effectively plan for, respond to, and recover from disasters is founded on our understanding of what events may occur. We need to invest in this basic intelligence by assessing and evaluating potential threats to the communities we serve, addressing both natural and human-caused hazards. With this information and these plans in place, we will be able to focus on the needs of others when emergencies occur.

1. Enhance our public education and disaster preparedness outreach

- a. Develop and document a program for engaging high risk and vulnerable populations before, during, and after an emergency event.
- b. Develop, maintain, and test procedures for public information for high risk and vulnerable populations.

2. Strengthen our ability to communicate with the public during a disaster.

- a. Develop training program for Public Information Officers, including the capability to operate a Joint Information Center (JIC).
- b. Adopt procedures for when and how Department Public Information Officers should form a JIC or multiple JICs.
- c. Develop and maintain a plan to disseminate emergency alerts and warnings to vulnerable populations.

JOINT INFORMATION CENTERS

A Joint Information Center (JIC) serves as a single point of coordination for all public information operations during an emergency. When a JIC is designated during an emergency, the Department's public information officials will use it to provide information to the public and issue public news releases to the media. When multiple JICs are established, they must communicate and coordinate with each other on an ongoing basis.

3. Improve operational and recovery planning.

- a. Develop plans that address Continuity of Government and Continued Operations, ensuring critical City of Bellevue functions continue to operate during a disaster.
- b. Develop a Recovery Plan to address short- and long-term recovery priorities.

4. Increase our awareness of local hazards and vulnerabilities.

- a. Geographically assess the risk and vulnerability of people, property, environment, and City operations from natural and human-caused hazards.
- b. Conduct consequence analysis for the hazards identified to consider the impact on continuity of operations and continued delivery of service.

Performance Measures

- Increasing percentage of participants of the Department's disaster preparedness classes who report having taken the steps necessary to be self-sufficient for three days following a disaster.
- Increasing number of City departments prepared to continue operations following a significant emergency event.

Budget Considerations

- Continue to leverage partnerships and grant funding to enhance planning capabilities and public outreach opportunities. As the downward trend in federal and state grant funding continues, seek additional City funding or other regional funding to maintain planning and outreach activities.





C. Provide Timely, Effective, & Consistent Emergency Responses Across the Communities We Serve

When emergencies occur, the Fire Department must respond as quickly and as effectively as possible in all of the communities it serves. The Department regularly evaluates its performance across its geographic service area, comparing how quickly it responds to different types of calls

and how quickly the emergency was resolved once they arrived, to established performance targets. If the Fire Department finds it is not performing up to the standards it has set, it will take immediate action to understand and to address the factors contributing to this under performance.

The Department commits to the regular and public review and communication of its target standards and its actual performance. Patterns of under-performance will be addressed in the most resource-efficient manner possible, focusing first on staff training, then the placement and location of staff, and environmental factors such as road design or traffic signal control. Only after such lower cost options have been considered will a request for additional staffing be considered.

1. Adopt and adhere to measurable standards and clear performance targets.

Our core public safety performance measures include the following:

- Arrive within 6 minutes from the time of call 90% of the time.
- Arrival of complete 1st alarm assignment (effective firefighting force) within 10 minutes of alarm notification.
- Continue to study the effects of vertical response times on medical and fire related incidents.
- Confine fires to the room of origin 85% of the time.
- Meet or exceed a cardiac save rate of 45% using Utstein Criteria.

UTSTEIN CRITERIA

The Utstein Criteria were established during a major international meeting held in the Utstein Abbey outside Stavanger, Norway in 1991. The Criteria establish a set of common definitions for cardiac arrests and standards for how they should be reported.

2. Formalize our process of analyzing, evaluating, and communicating our performance.

- a. Annually evaluate our public safety effectiveness by sub-geography across the communities we serve, as well as on the many performance measures described in this Plan.
- b. Provide annual updates to the City Manager and City Council.
- c. Communicate a summary annual report to our employees, contract cities, community groups, and business and regional partners.

3. Make changes to address under-performance.

In cases of under-performance, more cost-efficient adaptations will be considered before more costly options are considered. Changes will be considered in the following order:

1) Training

- Evaluate training
- Evaluate route choices
- Evaluate turnout times

2) Environmental and Infrastructure Improvements

- Need for road improvements
- Traffic signal control
- Other potential improvements

3) Facility Planning

- Redeploy/move resources and/or stations

4) Staffing

- Peak time staffing (partial shift staffing)
- Add resources to handle non-emergency calls for assistance

4. Develop a system of measures to indicate where additional staffing should be considered.

Indicators may include the following:

- Response time increases
- Unit call volumes
- Unit out of service times
- Second due units responding into adjoining areas
- Training/inspection/maintenance workloads

Performance Measures

- Develop an annual performance report documenting the Department's performance with regard to the key performance indicators discussed in **Implementation Step 1**, above.

Budget Considerations

- Budget implications will be driven by performance. As described, efforts will be made to be as efficient as possible in adapting to changes in demands for our services.





D. Maintain Our Standard of Excellence in Emergency Medical Services

Like many fire departments around the country, the Bellevue Fire Department is seeing an increase in calls for medical emergencies primarily related to the aging of the population. Prompt response to emergency medical incidents is critical if patient care is to be effective. While Bellevue is a national

leader in resuscitation, our Core Values of Exceptional Public Service and Innovation fuel a desire to evaluate our performance critically and continue to learn how to improve. New technology such as Lifepack 15 units and associated “CodeStat” computer software now allows medic crews to review and learn from resuscitation events that involved EMTs.

1. Continue to effectively partner with King County Emergency Medical Services.

This role includes the following activities:

- Serving as a regional Advanced Life Support provider.
- Collaborating with other fire service agencies as part of the county-wide EMS delivery system.
- Fully engaging in King County EMS science-based initiatives and studies directed at improving resuscitation and other field EMS delivery outcomes.

2. Reintroduce the robust review of Basic Life Support Medical Incident Report Forms.

3. Institute a timely review process for resuscitation events.

Performance Measure

- Continue to achieve a high percentage of positive outcomes in EMS-related calls by meeting or exceeding a cardiac save rate of 45% using the Utstein Criteria per **Action Strategy C** on page 16.

Budget Considerations

- The strategies above do not carry significant budget considerations.

E. Leverage Regional Partnerships to Enhance the Effectiveness & Efficiency of Our Services

The current economic downturn elevates what should always be a key consideration: how the City of Bellevue and its neighbors collectively provide the most effective and efficient public safety services possible for residents of the region. While regionalization efforts may promise cost-efficiencies, it is also clear that they are not always desirable from a quality of service perspective, ensuring that service providers are responsible to and reflective of the needs of their individual communities. The pros and cons of regional partnerships need to be weighed carefully, on an ongoing basis, to monitor quality service.

Regional partnerships for some public safety functions are easier to consider than others. The region has a long tradition of collaboration in training, the purchase and staging of specialized equipment and teams, disaster preparedness planning, and mutual aid. As noted in the discussion on training in **Goal II, Action Strategy A**, the demand for additional investments in training can be met in part by achieving cost efficiencies through a more formalized regional approach. Similar opportunities should be evaluated and – if appropriate – acted upon in other areas.

1. Collaborate with City of Bellevue and regional leadership to establish a vision for the best way to provide public safety services for the region.

- a. Work with the City Manager and elected officials to provide an accurate understanding of current and potential future partnerships.
- b. Develop a long-term, strategic vision in which elected officials explore regional service provision.

This vision should at a minimum address the following areas:

- Regional training
- Regional purchasing
- Regional provision of specialized equipment and teams
- Regional consolidations or fire authorities

2. Work towards agreements or relationships that allow agencies to look at resources regionally rather than locally when considerations for deployment are made.

Budget Considerations

- A greater focus on regional partnerships may lead to significant budget efficiencies.



2 Invest in Our Employees & Expertise



While a child’s first association with the words “fire department” may be red trucks and fire stations, we recognize that the real core of the Department is the men and women who work here, whether in the field or at City Hall. This Goal focuses on strengthening our internal communications, aligning and coordinating the efforts of our employees, and investing in their training, safety, health, and future.

A. Continue to Invest in & Find More Efficient Ways to Provide Employee Training

Reflecting the diverse and complex array of emergency services we provide, we are motivated by state law, industry requirements, and our own high standards to provide significant training that is specific to the role of each individual staff person. Recent surveys of employees and citizens indicated numerous areas on which we should focus improvement, in addition to managing ongoing programs and services.

In addition to increasing training focused on core and emerging areas of emphasis, the strategies below also identify ways to provide training more efficiently. By approaching our training needs in a regional and collaborative fashion, we can coordinate efforts with neighboring fire departments and other partners and find opportunities to share and reduce costs.

1. Focus our training efforts on core and emerging areas of need.

- a. Increase the effectiveness of job-specific training.
 - Provide supervised training sessions using Training Division staff.
 - Provide regular “hands on” training.
 - Utilize subject matter experts to increase the quality of training.
 - Provide appropriate ongoing training for administrative staff.

- b. Encourage all personnel to attend National Fire Academy and Emergency Management Institute training courses as appropriate given their position.
- c. Strengthen the Department’s current and future leadership and management by establishing a robust Bellevue Fire Department Officer Development Academy.
- d. Provide cultural diversity training through Human Resources to help staff respond appropriately to people of different cultural and language backgrounds during medical responses, routine inspections and fire incidents.
- e. Lengthen recruit academy to assure adequate recruit training prior to deployment on the line.

2. Increase the efficiency and impact of our training resources by exploring opportunities to provide training regionally or adopt “train-the-trainer” approaches.

- a. Formalize agreements with the East Metro Training Group to provide regional fire training across Zone 1.
- b. Conduct joint Recruit Firefighter Academies with Zone 1 fire departments.
- c. Train and utilize in-house instructors for required special rescue training to reduce the cost of sending additional personnel to outside training.

ZONE 1

King County Regional Emergency Coordination Zone 1 consists of fire departments in the north eastern portion of King County.

Performance Measures

- Consistency in the percentage of residents who agree that Bellevue Fire plans for and is well prepared to respond to emergencies. In 2010, 95% of respondents reported that this was the case. Survey residents every three years to regularly measure public perception.
- Consistency in the percentage of personnel who report they are well or very well prepared to do their job; 95% indicated this was the case in the 2012 Staff Survey.
- Reductions in the percentage of personnel expressing a desire for more training. In the 2012 Staff Survey, 59% of respondents indicated they would like additional training.

Budget Considerations

- Requesting additional staff for the Training Division should be considered when revenues improve in future budget cycles to assure adequate staffing for the development and training of personnel. Creating partnerships and consolidating Zone 1 Fire Department Training Divisions would reduce redundancy, improve efficiency, and encourage collaboration.
- Each of the above recommendations for investing in employee training meet City goals for establishing a high performing workforce, continuous improvement, planning, and preparation.



B. Improve Our Internal Communications

Bellevue Fire is a complex organization, with more than 240 personnel assigned to various roles within fire prevention, fire suppression, emergency medical response, emergency management and disaster preparedness, and administration. Overlaying this functional complexity is a staffing model that assigns personnel to City Hall or one of nine stations, and across a multitude of shifts to ensure coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Effective and regular communication across this complex organization is absolutely necessary to align and coordinate efforts. Perfecting the art of effective communications requires dedication to constant re-evaluation and improvement.

1. Conduct a detailed survey focused on internal communications to better understand how we can more effectively communicate in our modern environment.

- a. Collaborate with Human Resources to provide employee training on effective communications to build teamwork, enable personnel to speak with complete candor, learn to promote the best ideas, save time with fewer meetings, and build more alignment around better decisions.
- b. Work with the City's Information Technology Department to develop technological solutions to improving communications within work groups and fire stations.
 - Explore the use of live conferencing for Battalion Chief Morning Messages, Post Incident Analysis following major incidents, training classes, and messages from the Fire Chief.

Performance Measures

- Increases in the percentage of employees reporting they feel "somewhat connected" or "very connected" to the broader Department; 68% of employees indicated this was the case in the 2012 Staff Survey.
- Reductions in the percentage of employees reporting that they fear retribution if they were to raise concerns or expressed criticisms of the Department; 52% of personnel reported they would in the 2012 Staff Survey.

Budget Considerations

- Providing every employee with training on effective communications would require commitment of funding for certification of in-house trainers. The technological solutions of linked video conferencing, currently being deployed throughout the City, will reduce the number of in-house trainers necessary to effectively train our staff.

C. Invest in Our Employee's Safety, Health, Career, & Future

As our workforce continues to age, the stringent physical fitness requirements of our business requires us to focus diligently on preventing and recovering from injuries and related time loss. Unless we invest now in succession planning and the cultivation of the next generation of Department leadership, future retirements may lead to the loss of key experience, leadership, and skills

Each of the strategies described below confirms our commitment to employees – a Core Value shared by the City of Bellevue and the Department – and prepares the Department for the future.

1. Prevent injuries and speed recovery by expanding a wellness program.

- a. Charge a task force with improving and expanding the Department's wellness program.
- b. Seek grant funding to initiate a comprehensive wellness program and identify a long-term funding source.

2. Establish a task force to advance proactive succession planning throughout the organization.

The task force should consider the following options, as well as other opportunities:

- Requiring completion of the King County Officer Development Academy for all new officers.
- Developing succession folders containing job descriptions, position work assignments, responsibilities, and current projects.
- When appropriate, striving to provide transition periods with job shadowing prior to job openings occurring.
- Establishing a paramedic candidate mentoring program to encourage the development of qualified firefighters for paramedic training in the future.
- Encouraging employee development and cross-training for administrative staff.

Performance Measures

- Increases in the percentage of Department personnel reporting that the Department well or very well embodies its Core Value of "Commitment to Employees." In the 2012 Staff Survey, 66% of respondents indicated that this was the case.
- Measure the Wellness Program budget impact after five years to confirm a positive return on investment.

Budget Considerations

- Wellness programs require initial startup costs but may reduce overall disability expenditures in the long term.

3 Maintain Appropriate Infrastructure



Our facilities, apparatus, and equipment are essential to our ability to perform our duties. Without proper, well-functioning equipment, staff cannot perform their jobs at a high level, no matter how well-trained they are. Maintaining appropriate infrastructure involves ensuring our facilities, such as fire stations, are ready and well-positioned to support timely responses to changing call patterns, as well as making sure that the apparatus staff uses to respond to calls and the equipment they need to handle medical emergencies, fight fires, perform rescues, and other actions are in good working order. It means planning for new construction and purchases before there is a deficiency, as well as maintaining existing structures and equipment to make them last for their full expected lifespan.

A. Ensure Our Facilities Meet Future Department Needs

The Department currently has a major maintenance plan for all of our facilities. Facilities are inspected annually to track their condition and to identify needed repairs. Major maintenance is funded through the City's Capital Improvement Plan, which has sufficient funding to meet current needs.

The Department's facilities range in age from 10 to 40 years old. The Department will develop a long-range, major capital plan to ensure we can continue to provide the same level of emergency services in the future.

1. Monitor changes in the community and demand for services to determine future facility needs.

Key indicators that we will continue to monitor include:

- Demand for service: location, number, and type of calls for service.
- Our performance: response times and other key performance statistics.
- Industry standards.
- Land use policies and projected development.

2. Maintain current facilities to ensure a safe and livable work environment.

- a. Establish and maintain minimum Department facility standards.
- b. Annually assess facility conditions to ensure they meet the Department's minimum standards.
- c. Annually update a preventative/regular maintenance plan for all facilities.
- d. Invest in projects that minimize facility repairs and operating costs.
- e. If necessary, request additional resources to fund the preventative/regular maintenance plan.

3. Prepare for future growth and the upgrade, renovation, and/or replacement of fire stations.

- a. By 2014, complete a citywide assessment of fire station locations vis-à-vis anticipated growth, particularly in the Bel-Red Corridor, to determine the need to relocate current stations and/or add additional stations.

This should be done cooperatively with other City departments and neighboring jurisdictions.

- b. Work with the Civic Services Department to develop a facilities plan by 2014 to meet anticipated long-term facility needs.

This plan should address: 1) the need for additional stations and/or the relocation of existing facilities to meet anticipated future service demands; and, 2) the need to upgrade, renovate, or replace facilities to meet current industry standards and future service demands.

- c. In preparation for 2015-16 budget development, work with the Finance Department and City Administration to identify a funding source for new stations and/or the upgrade, renovation, and/or replacement of existing fire stations.

4. Make progress towards establishing a Downtown Fire Station.

In 2002, the City completed the Downtown Implementation Plan to identify future public service needs as Downtown Bellevue continues to grow. The study considered projected growth, densities, and traffic, estimating response times not only for arriving at the building, but also the time required to travel by elevator to the appropriate floor for incidents occurring in highrises. Such vertical response times – which add an average of 3 minutes – become an increasingly important factor in urban environments because high-rise buildings require personnel to wait for elevators or climb stairs to reach fire and emergency medical incidents. The study concluded that a new Downtown station was needed to maintain response times and service levels at the Department's established standards. The Department has secured \$1.7 million to date to partially pay for the new facility.

- a. Begin working with City administration and other City departments to locate and acquire land for the new station.
- b. Determine short- and long-term staffing needs based on current performance measures.
- c. Develop a plan and identify funding sources for constructing, staffing, and equipping the new station.
- d. Build the new station ahead of growth projections that would cause the Department to be out of compliance with established performance measures.



5. Maintain our Bellevue Public Safety Training Center.

Maintenance of a public safety training center within the City of Bellevue maximizes training opportunities, reduces costs, and increases efficiencies. Access to a local training center allows for additional and more frequent training, and provides the opportunity to train while on duty, minimizing costly overtime. The Department is currently working with neighboring fire departments to enhance training opportunities, including the incorporation of best practices. Future identification and evaluation of training facilities should

incorporate the needs of the City of Bellevue and its regional partners.

[This topic is related to general discussion of the Department's training needs in [Goal 2 Action Strategy A](#) beginning on page 20.]

- a. Continue to look for partnerships to maximize facility usage and minimize costs.
- b. Monitor condition of the facility and changes in standards to ensure the facility remains safe.
- c. Ensure facilities are designed and equipped in ways that minimize impact on the environment and surrounding neighborhood.
- d. Regularly survey Bellevue and partner agencies to ensure the facility meets future training needs.
- e. Work with training partners and City finance and facility staff to develop and maintain a plan to meet future needs and to identify a funding source for capital and maintenance costs.

Performance Measures

- Complete annual facility inspections and update preventative/regular maintenance plans for all facilities.
- Acknowledge 90% of work orders within one to two business days of receipt.
- Maintain at least 85% satisfaction rates in an annual survey of firefighters who use the Training Facility.

Budget Considerations

- A number of facilities-related budget considerations have been evaluated, some driven by ongoing maintenance and other representing more significant long term capital investments. The majority of needed capital investments do not occur until the 2015-16 budget cycle, giving the Department time to analyze expected costs and identify potential funding sources. Investments in facilities are driven by our commitment to maintaining current standards for response times and levels of service across the communities we share.

B. Employ Technology & Communications Solutions that Provide Efficiencies & Improve Services

Technology and communication tools help Department staff act in a more coordinated and efficient way and allow them to achieve better results. We currently have a number of communication and technology projects in different stages of development. Some projects are fully funded, including new equipment for the North East King County Regional Public Safety Communication Agency or NORCOM, which provides regional emergency management dispatch services, and investments in better electronic patient care reporting. Other projects are in the early planning stages, with the amount and source of capital and ongoing financial support yet to be determined.

An Innovation/Technology Committee could help us ensure that we are continually monitoring emerging technologies and using them to our advantage. The committee should include members from a variety of disciplines including Operations, IT, Business Process, and Finance, and should serve as champions for new projects. New projects should be implemented to maintain or enhance internal and external communications and emergency and non-emergency operations. Whenever possible, multi-department and regional solutions should be sought to increase interoperability and maximize efficiencies.

1. Complete current communication and technology projects.

2. Establish an Innovation/Technology Committee to research emerging technologies and recommend new projects.

3. Test future communications and technology projects to ensure they are likely to be successful.

Relevant tests include ensuring that:

- Projects are fully scoped.
- All appropriate stakeholders have been involved in the planning process.
- Project timelines have been established.
- Project deliverables have been identified.
- Funding sources have been identified.
- The project includes a training plan.

CURRENT COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS

- NORCOM/New World – replacement of regional police and fire computer-aided dispatch and records management systems.
- Emergency Service Operations – King County EMS field reporting and records management.
- Fire prevention and inspection field reporting.
- 800 MHz radio system re-banding.
- New county-wide emergency radio system.

Budget Considerations

- Beyond completing current communication and technology projects, the strategies listed above seek to make the most efficient use of investments in new technologies. The implementation of new technologies and their budget implications are driven, in large part, by the Department's participation in City-wide and regional activities.



C. Ensure All Necessary Apparatus & Equipment are in Good Working Order

To perform their jobs successfully, staff need apparatus and equipment that are in good working order. The Department currently depends on a number of internal and external specialists to perform test, maintain, and repair apparatus and equipment. These efforts will be continued to minimize failures during emergency responses.

In addition, the Department has separate Apparatus and Equipment Committees to assist with the development of specifications and acquisitions. Under the strategies below, the role of these Committees will be expanded to help manage the apparatus and equipment beyond the initial acquisition.

The Department is fortunate to have many of its larger assets on regular replacement schedules, however some essential equipment lack an identified funding source for future replacement. To ensure essential apparatus and equipment are available in the future, a replacement plan will be developed for all equipment.

1. Inspect and evaluate apparatus and equipment annually.

- a. At a minimum, ensure that all apparatus and equipment continue to be inspected annually to ensure it is in good working order.
- b. Involve internal and external specialists in the annual evaluation of equipment to determine additional maintenance needs and an appropriate replacement schedule.

2. Strengthen our systems and procedures for regular equipment testing and maintenance.

- a. Address testing and maintenance requirements in Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- b. Record testing and maintenance activities and results in the City asset management system whenever possible.
- c. Maintain up-to-date apparatus and equipment inventories at the Department and station level.
- d. Inventory data should include the date of purchase, value of equipment, the source of funding if purchase was made with grant funds, as well as the equipment's useful lifespan.

3. Expand the roles of the Department's Apparatus and Equipment Committees.

4. Charge the Apparatus and Equipment Committees with:

- Developing apparatus and equipment specifications and approving new acquisitions.
- Developing maintenance and testing schedules for the new equipment.
- Developing a training plan as necessary for new and/or replacement equipment.
- Modifying existing SOPs to reflect the use of the new and/or replacement equipment.

5. Identify and document funding sources for all future equipment replacements.

- a. By 2014, document all current apparatus and equipment replacement plans. Where needed, work with Finance and Civic Services to identify future funding sources for other equipment.
- b. Once established, replacement plans should be evaluated biannually as part of the budgeting process to ensure sufficient funds will be available for future replacements.

Performance Measures

- Complete required hose, self-contained breathing apparatus, and ladder testing for all equipment as appropriate.
- Complete preventative apparatus maintenance on schedule 95% of the time.

Budget Considerations

- Current inventories and replacement plan will be updated by 2014. Where needed, the Department will work with Finance and Civic Services to modify replacement schedules and to fund future replacement needs.



4 Strengthen Our Ability to Engage Effectively with Our Public



Public engagement is critical to prevention and preparedness, as well as to effective responses during a fire, medical emergency, or disaster. As our communities continue to grow, we are both pleased and challenged to meet increasing demands by the public for outreach activities, including safety fairs, visits to schools, and CPR training. In addition to these event-based efforts, we will continue to run two significant engagement programs:

- The Strengthening Preparedness Among Neighbors (SPAN) program is a neighborhood-oriented emergency preparedness effort which engages community members in preparing their homes and families for natural and human-caused emergencies.
- Explorer Post 311 provides the opportunity for young adults 14 to 20 years old to become familiar with career opportunities available in the fire service. The program is designed to provide knowledge of fire protection and safety and to encourage teamwork, cooperation, responsibility, effective communication and leadership skills.

As our communities grow more and more diverse, we recognize the need to better convey our messages to individuals from different backgrounds and language groups, including an increasing number of non-native English speakers. The efforts and strategies described below emphasize increasing the effectiveness of the tools and techniques we use to engage with the public as we know that the current economic climate does not support substantial additional investment. Our focus, therefore, is on creating better results with our current staffing, tools, and level of effort. As discussed below, additional resources can be deployed when feasible to further strengthen our efforts in this important area.

A. Build the Department's Multicultural Connections and Capabilities

The Bellevue Fire Department's service area is comprised of people who communicate in a tremendous range of languages and styles. Some populations are not literate in written English or their home language, meaning that pictograms and other mechanisms must be used to convey information. In some parts of Bellevue, over 50% of the residents speak a language other than English at home. According to Census data, about 8% of Bellevue's households report that no one in the household speaks English very well. In addition to this cultural and linguistic diversity, the population in Bellevue is aging, which means more and more people are experiencing changes in their ability to hear and speak.

The focus of the items below is to increase our ability to communicate effectively with the diverse range of people living and working in the communities we serve.

- 1. Create a prevention outreach program that uses evidence-based research to target and communicate with groups facing the highest risks from fires, disasters, and health emergencies.**
 - a. Increase the participation of community members in our prevention outreach planning efforts to define community concerns, increase the effectiveness of our efforts, and increase the level of trust between the Department and the diverse communities we serve.
 - b. Establish policies and procedures to ensure that materials and outreach events are created with culturally-appropriate formats and content to maximize comprehension among members of our target audience.
 - c. Establish writing standards that focus on clear communication with target audiences.

- 2. Leverage technology to improve communication with diverse communities when we do not have the ability to deploy specialized personnel with relevant expertise.**
 - a. Include the use of these tools in training, SOPs, and drills.





B. Expand Our Opportunities for Effective, Quality Public Engagement

Many members of our community have indicated that they would like greater interaction, education, and communication from the Fire Department. Our intention is to increase our ability to provide meaningful and effective engagements - that is, interactions in which the member of the public feels that he or she has gained or learned something useful.

1. Increase the frequency and ways community members encounter information about Fire Department services by increasing the people and media communicating our messages.

- a. Prioritize outreach projects that leverage City and community partnerships.
- b. Increase the number of people who are communicating our messages.
- c. Include fire and disaster education communication training for all firefighters.

[This item is related to additional discussion on training [Goal 2, Action Strategy A](#) beginning on page 20.]

- d. Explore opportunities to leverage community volunteers.
- e. Continue to use email and social media to raise awareness of Fire Department services and successes.

2. Continuously improve our efforts through evidence-based assessments of the effectiveness of our programs.

- a. Create tools to measure the effectiveness of our outreach and tailor our efforts to maximize effect.

MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

One tool to measure the effectiveness of a program is to ask for feedback from program participants. Some examples of questions that could be used to elicit feedback from participants in the Department's public engagement activities include:

- Did our Emergency Preparedness Class change long-term behavior?
- Did our CPR class provide lasting confidence among participants?
- Did our Fire Prevention Week have a positive and lasting impact on the community?

Budget Considerations for Goal 4

- The number of people seeking a greater connection with the Fire Department far outstrips the current resources available for meaningful public engagements. While we will continually seek to improve existing engagement opportunities, significant improvement will require a greater portion of our budget to be dedicated to this purpose. An immediate priority is funding for increasing community participation in our fire prevention outreach planning efforts as described above in **Implementation Step B.1**. Additional funds will also be needed for the creation of illustrations, translations, and to improve the overall impact engagement opportunities, including the targeted use of graphic design contractors.

Performance Measures for Goal 4

- Develop surveys and other mechanisms to efficiently acquire and evaluate the short- and long-term impact of our prevention, preparedness, and medical classes. Measure whether our messages are both being heard and being acted upon by a representative sample of the population of our service area.



Summary of the Strategic Planning Process

The process of developing this Strategic Plan was just as important and valuable as the outcome, creating an opportunity to engage our whole staff and members of the communities we serve in determining what role the Department should play and how it should pursue its business. The planning process followed guidance established by the Center for Public Safety Excellence and included the following components:

- **Situation assessment and strategy development by the Department's Executive Team and Strategic Planning Committee.** The planning process began with an exploration of internal and external challenges and opportunities by members of the Department's Executive Team and a Strategic Planning Committee constituted specifically to represent a diversity of perspectives in informing this strategic planning process. These two groups helped shape the survey instruments and interview protocols used to gather input from residents, key stakeholders within and external to the City, and Department staff. They were also responsible for discussing the implications of this input and shaping drafts and final drafts of this Plan.
 - environment, and opportunities for enhanced collaboration. A roundtable conversation with leadership from other City Departments, a phone interview with the Department's Finance Director, and a phone interview with the City Manager explored similar topics.
- **Community Survey.** Two hundred and seventy one residents of the Department's service area responded to an online survey in January 2012. This survey explored service priorities, levels of satisfaction with Department services, community expectations for organizational behavior based on relative importance of the Department's five Core Values, and desired formats for ongoing communication.
- **Interviews with External Stakeholders and City Leadership.** In addition to the Community Survey, targeted phone interviews were conducted with key stakeholders representing local developers and property managers, the Bellevue School District, social service providers, fire and emergency management partners, and the Department's contract cities. The interviews explored the Department's strengths, opportunities for improvement, meaningful changes occurring in the
 - **Staff Survey.** Approximately half of the Department's personnel provided insights and input in an online survey in January 2012. The survey asked participants to comment on the Department's embodiment of its Core Values, how well prepared they feel to do their job, and how connected they are to the broader Department and to the communities they serve. Other questions explored staff's comfort level in raising opportunities for improvement, the Department's greatest strengths, and the most significant opportunities to provide better service to the community.
 - **Analysis of Demographic and Economic Context.** Recognizing the importance of establishing a common and current understanding of the Department's operating environment, a summary level compilation of current trends was compiled. This succinct document describes trends in population, demographics, race and ethnicity, housing stock, and employment for the City of Bellevue and the communities that contract services through the Department.

Each of these inputs has been carefully considered in developing this strategic plan, ensuring it is fully representative of community, staff, and stakeholder expectations, and is placed in context with a clear and comprehensive understanding of the current operating environment.