

Vally Park Fire Protection District



Strategic Plan
August 2023



Valley Park Fire Protection District – Strategic Plan



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Message from Chief Polk

I am pleased to present the Valley Park Fire Protection District's Strategic Plan. The contents of this document are the result of many months of work completed by the Planning committee. This document will allow readers to view where the district has been, where it is now, and where it intends to go in the future. This plan will also assist the department in decision making and accomplishing specific goals, objectives, and tasks for many years.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate in this process. The input and work involved in producing this document is greatly appreciated. I look forward to accomplishing our goals and working together to better the district.

Yours in service

Jim Polk

Chief Polk



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Acknowledgments:

This document was generated from several different committees and groups. Original planning from the Tax/Bond Committee combined with the current Planning Committee helped complete this task. Members included residents of the district, mayors, directors, firefighters, paramedics, captains, and chief officers.

Planning Summary

The Valley Park Fire Protection District strategic plan will encompass the overall goals of the district moving forward. It will also show what we have accomplished over the past several years, the status of the district now, and the future long-term goals we strive to meet. It should be noted that this is a guide for our future and as such could be amended to suit the needs of the community as necessary.

The District

The Valley Park Fire Protection District was created by popular vote in April 1967. The district encompasses approximately ten square miles located in southwest St. Louis County, Missouri, approximately twenty miles southwest of the City of St. Louis. This includes all or a portion of the municipalities of the City of Valley Park, the City of Twin Oaks, the City of Manchester, the City of Ballwin and portions of unincorporated St. Louis County. The estimated population of the district is 17,000. The district provides fire, emergency medical, and rescue services.

The response area includes several miles of interstate highway, a river, an industrial park, a chemical plant, and a large residential population. Many firefighters are specially trained and



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qualified in rope rescue, water rescue, and provide instruction to new paramedics and firefighters.

Fire station 1 is located at 840 St. Louis Avenue in Valley Park. This station houses Pumper 1914, Ambulance 1917, a rescue boat, and a UTV. It is staffed 24 hours a day. Fire station 2 and the administrative offices are located at 47 Crescent Avenue in Valley Park. This station houses ladder 1922, Ambulance 1927, and all administrative offices and personnel. This station is staffed 24 hours a day.

Government and Organization

The Valley Park Fire District Board of Directors (the "**Board**") is comprised of 3 residents of the district. They are responsible for overseeing financial, personnel and governmental aspects of the district's operations. They are elected to a six-year term at the April general municipal election every two years on a staggered, rotating basis. The present members of the Board are as follows:

Name and Position

Chris Webster, Chairman and Director

Sheri Schmitt, Secretary and Director

Dan Wilburn, Treasurer and Director

District Employees

The Board appoints the Chief (the "**Fire Chief**"), who is the chief administrative officer of the district and is responsible for day-to-day operations of the District and for implementing the policies set by the Board. The current Fire Chief is Jim Polk. Chief Polk was appointed as the Fire Chief in January of 2018.



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The Assistant Chief is Raphael VanGaasbeek. The Assistant Chief is second in command and fills in for the Chief in his absence. He has been with the District since 2019.

The district currently has thirty seven full-time employees consisting of the Fire Chief, an Assistant Chief, one Deputy Chief, six Captains, twenty seven firefighter/paramedics, and one Office Manager.

Recent Accomplishment:

The last five years has been a busy time for the district. In 2018 the district formed a public committee to research the need for immediate improvements to the district. This committee was made up of community leaders and district personnel. This committee recommended a tax increase and bond measure to be placed on the ballot. Later that year the tax and bond measure were passed by the voters. This allowed for significant improvements to manpower, facilities, and equipment. Some of those improvements included:

Staffing: Staffing was increased from seven firefighter/paramedics per shift to ten per shift. The district has exceeded this goal and now has eleven firefighter/paramedics per shift. This has increased the overall staffing to thirty-three line personnel.

Facilities: Station 1 was completely remodeled to accommodate the additional staffing. A newly built Station 2 and administrative offices has also been completed.

Vehicles: A new pumper, ladder truck, ambulances, staff vehicles, and boat were purchased to replace aging equipment.

Equipment: Modernized equipment was also purchased to replace outdated equipment. Some of this included cardiac monitors, a breathing air compressor, turnout gear, patient stretchers, and rescue tools.



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Current Status:

Currently the district is operating in an all-hazards fashion. The district provides emergency medical services, fire suppression, vehicle rescue, and water rescue response. The district also provides fire marshal services, public education, and public relation services. Thanks to our gracious residents, the district is doing this with modern equipment and staffing.

Future:

What does the future hold for Valley Park Fire Protection District? The answer is simple. Provide the best, most efficient service to our residents. The remainder of this document will be our guide to help accomplish this task.

Labor management:

The Valley Park board of directors, administration, and firefighters operate within the guidance of a labor management relationship. These principles are developed and agreed to by the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the International Association of Firefighters in the true spirit of cooperation for the enhancement of the Fire/EMS service and the communities it serves. We recognize that mutual adherence to these values requires the constant effort of labor and management representatives.

Employee Hiring and Retention:

Hiring and retaining employees has proven to be an important goal of the district. Salary, benefits, and a collaborative work environment has proven to be key factors in this. Employee retention and remaining competitive with surrounding agencies to accomplish this



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is necessary. The district will continue to work through the labor management process and the Collective Bargaining Agreement to accomplish this task. The committee agreed that an improved pension benefit and retiree health insurance could increase employee retainage.

Staffing:

Staffing of apparatus and stations is a vital consideration of this committee. It was a goal of the tax measure to increase daily staffing to ten. This staffing model will keep a fire apparatus and ambulance in service at both stations. This has been accomplished as of 2022. At the present time the district has increased daily staffing to eleven and will evaluate the efficiency and the budgetary impact after a trial period. Optimal staffing of stations will continue to be monitored.

Career development:

Career development and succession planning was found to be an important issue with employee. Developing new hires, line officers, and chief officers is paramount. A desire to promote from within is preferred. The district will continue to model its career development and succession planning after the IAFC succession planning model. This process may be modified to suit the district's needs.

Training:

The training programs are overseen by the Assistant Chief/Training Officer and Deputy Chief/Medical Officer. In addition, the district has training agreements with Tri-County Training Consortium and West County Fire and EMS. Live fire, practical exercises, and classroom education is offered at both facilities. These 2 agreements help maintain the training requirements to meet NFPA standards. Additional education is offered by both agreements.



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Training and its effect on operations was discussed. The type and frequency of alarms was reviewed. The committee agreed that the district specializes in certain areas. These types of alarms are, in order; EMS, Fire, Water rescue, and Outdoor rescue. It is the goal to reflect training to mimic these specialties and prepare all employees to operate safely in these situations.

SOG, Policy, Rules:

The rules committee has been tirelessly working on updating all rules, policies and SOGs. This process will be finished by the end of 2023. SOGs of the district will continue to be modeled on NFPA standards and St. Louis County guidelines. Rules and policy will be guided by the labor management process and follow best practices.

Community Engagement:

Community engagement and public relations continue to improve. The district enjoys a positive public image and relationship with the community. The committee desires to continue and improve on this relationship. To accomplish this the public relations committee will be reconvened. This committee will undertake the districts social media, school programs, public events, and any other public relations. The committee will also review and recommend any capital expenses that may be necessary for public training (Smoke trailer, fire extinguisher prop, digital signs).

Paramedic and EMT ride-alongs were also discussed. It was agreed that paramedic students would benefit from riding at Valley Park. This program will be arranged by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer.



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Operations:

The location and response of certain specialized vehicles was discussed. In particular Ambulance 1997 and Boat 19BI. This review will continue. Response times continue to be evaluated with Central County E911 dispatch. The adjustment of response times will continue in order to provide the most efficient response.

Reporting, software, IT:

Reporting software was updated several years ago. This included fire, EMS, and inspection systems. A discussion is underway to review these systems and potentially make changes. This review will take place in 2024.

Bond Funds:

The District passed a bond measure in 2018 in the amount of \$12,000,000. The funds were allocated to improve all aspect of the district. Some of the improvements included a renovated Station 1 and a new Station 2. New apparatus were acquired including Pumper 1914, Ladder 1922, Ambulance 1917, Ambulance 1927, staff vehicle 1900, and staff vehicle 1901. Other purchases include EMS equipment, rescue equipment, and turnout gear.

Grant Funding:

The District continues to apply for state and federal grants. Several grants have a been obtained to offset the funding of purchases. A Volkswagon grant assisted in the purchase of an ambulance. Two American Rescue Plan Act grants were awarded to purchase EMS Lucas devices and a utility vehicle. A Missouri American Water grant has also been awarded to the district.



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Purchasing:

The long-term cost of capital expenditures was discussed in detail by the committee. The group agreed that remaining bond funds should be utilized for vital purchases. Other future capital expenditures will be paid out of general revenue or the reserve fund. Some of the foreseen capital expenditures are listed in the purchasing plan addendum.

As a general practice, capital purchasing will be reviewed by committee prior to being presented to the board of directors. Alternative funding in the form of grants or other revenue streams will be sought after to offset costs.

Immediate needs of the district include turnout gear. The turnout gear committee is being convened to review/replace turnout gear in a cost-effective manner.

DRAFT

Long Term Capital Purchasing

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2028</u>	<u>2029</u>	<u>2030</u>	<u>2031</u>	<u>2032</u>	<u>2033</u>	<u>2034</u>	<u>2035</u>	<u>2036</u>	<u>2037</u>	<u>2038</u>	<u>Total</u>
Equipment-Emergency																	
SCBA								250000									250,000
Turnout Gear		25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000									175,000
Rescue Equipment					75000												75,000
Thermal Imager				15000													15,000
Hose										25000							25,000
Rope/Misc					5000												5,000
Misc. Tools	15,000																15,000
																	0
Gas Meter			5500														5,500
ECG Monitor											200000						200,000
Radios					200000												200,000

Equipment-Facility																	
Station 1 Bay Heater		20,000															20,000
Digital Signage					70000												70000

Vehicles																	
1925													1,250,000				1,250,000
1914														1,000,000			1000000
Ambulance						350000					400000					450000	1200000
Staff			55000					65000					70000				190000
Boat/Metal									75,000								75000
1904 Upgrade		2500															2,500

Total: 4,773,000