

# Operational Strategic Plan

2024-2034

*"If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else."*

**Yogi Berra**

## **Prelude**

Strategic plans, by nature and by design, are intended to offer a glimpse at some desired future condition of a group, organization, or governmental body, usually setting goals to be attained. These plans will often contain manners and methods by which those goals may be met. Some plans include measurable objectives that can be used to gauge the success of the efforts to meet said goals, and some even include broad or specific timelines for implementation. However, one component that is oddly often omitted in strategic plans is a discussion of how the members of the organization will behave, act, and operate in order for the goals to be realized.

An organization is a team, very similar to a team of horses. The actions of each person or group within the organization have an impact on the movement of the organization. They must all know where the organization is going; when, how far, and how fast. In other words, the horses must be aligned to move the load. However, unlike a horse, for optimum team "horsepower" those in the organization must also know the why and long-term goals into which to put their full effort. The organization functions best when the team has knowledge and understanding of the guiding plan and vision. Organizational alignment is the result of the team's buy-in and engagement.

Organizational alignment is often not prioritized but is one of the most important aspects in effectively and efficiently moving forward. Highly functioning organizations have a greater degree of alignment. Average organizations have most people pulling most of the time; poorly performing organizations have only some people pulling or people pulling in different directions. Becoming out of alignment with organizational goals occurs subtly. Eventually, these subtle steps off the track lead to a significant misalignment. Although creating a long-term plan with an extended timeline may seem too far-fetched, it is the prioritized milestones that aid in keeping the organization on target.

The District's Strategic Plan sets broad goals, including tasks/projects and measurements. This will equate to the organizations' broad destination, like "North America." For many, these broad goals lack sufficient detail necessary to provide true direction, understanding, and motivation. To get people aligned and working at their best, most people need to turn those broad goals into actionable tasks with a specific strategy to accomplish those projects. This tells everyone the when, where, how, and why to pull. These implemented tasks/projects should be the bricks in the road of our strategic plan. This more detailed plan is like telling everyone we are going to "Snohomish, WA," and the specific roads that will get us there.

The first step in creating a plan is to identify all of the important tasks/projects. The second step is to prioritize those tasks which results in the Strategic priority, but it is not necessarily the implementation priority. Implementation Priorities are constructed from examining and evaluating the various items/initiatives and then ranking them based on a combination of need and ease of implementation.

There are many factors that determine the implementation order. This effort can be time consuming and difficult, but it can determine if the overall goals succeed or fail. The implementation priorities keep all of the horses ready, willing, understanding, and pulling in the same direction. The strategic and implementation priorities are largely based on the information and findings in the Standards of Cover (SOC).

When creating an operational plan, it is imperative that the needs and perceptions of various stakeholder groups are taken into account. In addition, it is important to understand how one task/project may change a group's perception or acceptance of other tasks. A few of the main groups to consider are the employees (various subgroups), the unions, the community (various subgroups), executive staff, partners (various subgroups), and regulators (many subgroups). While Strategic priorities will often stay fairly consistent over time, the implementation priorities must be living, breathing, and changing as information is evaluated and considered. Several factors can cause the implementation to shift; a legal issue, a budget issue, the awarding of a grant, or any of the other numerous factors. Under each task/project, there are reasonings, justifications, and references as to how they fit into the Standard of Cover, Washington Survey and Rating Bureau (WSRB) compliance, and Master Strategic Plan. It is important to note that work on some projects will allow for smoother and more efficient implementation of other projects.

This document, along with the 2021 Strategic Plan ("Master Strategic Plan"), 2021 Standard of Cover (SOC), 2021 Community Risk Assessment (CRA), and other more focused plans, like the long-term funding plan, will guide staff decisions and focus the organization on common, achievable, tangible goals. This creates common operating knowledge and communication tools by which operational personnel better understand how their involvement affects the plan. The District aims to have transparent decision-making processes in which the entire team can be invested in the results. This Operational Strategic plan intends to achieve that clarity. Without having a clear, attainable goal, the team could suffer from labor management issues, resistance to change, grievances, lack of support for initiatives, and morale issues. If the General Levy and EMS levy continue to be renewed, each on a 6-year renewal, most of the strategic plan should be accomplished by 2030. Without the passing of the 2023 Levy Lid Lift, most goals would be on hold until new revenue options could be evaluated and instituted.

All of the goals from the Master Strategic Plan (listed below) are met with this plan through increases in staffing and upgrades to the facilities and infrastructure.

1. Use an effective performance management system to monitor service delivery and focus improvement efforts.
2. Improve emergency incident response performance.
3. Enhance non-emergency functions to provide additional service(s) to the community.
4. Manage the Ray Lee Brown Training Site to support SCFD4 and regional training priorities.
5. Continue to explore the most efficient and effective ways to provide service to the community.
6. Communicate effectively with members of the community.
7. Enhance the District's ability to serve an increasingly diverse population.
8. Prioritize the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of District personnel.
9. Recruit and retain staff to reflect the makeup of the community

10. Nurture an inclusive and positive culture.
11. Embody learning as an organization and as individual team members.
12. Ensure all personnel have the information they need to perform their jobs effectively.
13. Uphold an exemplary standard for the stewardship of public resources.
14. Allocate resources to optimize the advancement of the District's strategic goals.
15. Use technology and other means to increase the efficient use of resources.

### **Current Status**

Since adopting the Strategic Plan in 2021, the District has already completed or implemented several projects that support the strategic goals listed above. The path towards these goals required allocation of additional resources, such as personnel and budgetary considerations. In 2024, SCFD#4 hired a Fire Marshal to develop a full program and two administrative office staff to support the growth and goals of the department. Staffing capacity has been increased by adding and hiring twenty new full-time firefighter positions (2021-2024). In addition to firefighters, the District added a training officer (2022) position and a new Safety and Support Assistant Chief (2021) position.. The staffing model for the full-time firefighters was changed to allow for increased efficiency and consistency. This also allowed for additional promotable positions, creating resiliency and better succession planning. The part-time program has also been modified to better match the full-time staffing model and to establish the same training standards for both (2022). Other projects were adopted such as the FIIRE program (2023), PulsePoint technology (2022) and an employee peer support group (2023). Operational changes that were made include collection of performance data (2022-2024), full automatic aid (2021), quick dispatch (2021), providing smartphones to all on-duty officers (2021) and acquiring mobile data computers for secondary apparatus (2022). The District also funded the purchase of an additional brush truck for the fleet (BR42) in 2021/2022. The short-term strategies allowed the District to start building the road; establishing a clear plan for obtaining long-term goals will provide direction for the District.

### **Implementation of the Strategic Projects**

The following initiatives are listed in order of implementation;the order was developed by staff in coordination with the Commissioners while accounting for district-specific funding, day-to-day logistics, and other factors as noted below. After each initiative the strategic priority of each task is shown in parentheses. The strategic order was recommended by the Board of Fire Commissioners based on the Strategic Plan, SOC, CRA, Facilities Assessment, Washington State Rating Bureau (WSRB), community needs, and community feedback. The rationale for each order is addressed in the sections below. Each initiative's reference and justification section provides sources for additional information on each topic. A focus on how these objectives advance the overall strategic plan is highlighted in a later section. (See Appendix E).

#### **Initiative 1. Two additional on-duty firefighters per shift. Total of 8-9 new positions (dedicated engine and medic)(1)**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** Additional on-duty staffing is a top priority for the District. However, adding personnel too fast is problematic due to the hiring, training requirements, and the physical housing capacity needed. Four new employees is the

optimum hiring amount, as it allows one per shift, while eight is the maximum. Eight is two per shift, which means there is a probationary firefighter at two of the three stations. It is not safe or practical to have more than one probationary firefighter per station because they have not been trained to fill the roles of driver or officer. The District goals are to hire four per year, so there is hiring capacity for unforeseen needs, such as retirements. Current housing issues for this staffing model will be resolved as the new facilities are completed, but the first is not set to be completed until 2027. The last 20 full-time positions added were simply to allow for consistent, proper staffing with a reasonable amount of overtime. Starting in 2025, new hires will be for additional staffing. As of February, one new and two retirement backfill positions have been hired and are in training. To mitigate the issues above, the District ensured that hiring full-time staff for consistent staffing was completed first, the capital facility plan (housing) has been adopted and funded, and the additional staffing will be done over two years (2025/2026). The District has applied for SAFER grants for the last two years but has not been awarded any grants. **Strategic Priority-** Additional positions provide resilience, succession planning, and redundancy. Additional staffing decreases overall response time, increases Effective Response Force (ERF), and allows the District's Special Operations Teams to be housed in one location. This will also enhance the District's ability to perform additional functions like pre-fire plans, business inspections, and hydrant inspections. Having two staffed units at a station reduces the impact of simultaneous calls. The District's busiest station, Station 41, is centrally located and is the primary or secondary response station for most of the District. Placing the additional personnel at Station 41 is the most efficient use of District resources. The District's ERF is 16 firefighters; adding two firefighters is a 13% increase to the ERF and a 22% increase to the District's daily staffing. Since Station 41 is likely to be the first or second unit on scene in the District, this arrangement will greatly impact the District's ERF times. Since the rural stations are farther apart, ERF times could be reduced by 1-3 minutes. The District's daily staffing has remained stagnant at 10 personnel since 2008, although staffing per call volume has decreased by 23% (2013-2023).

- b. **Reference/Justification-** Allows for the operational priorities, including ladder coverage and Technical Rescue Team. Supported by SOC Pages 3, 9 (Findings 4&5), 11, 32-37, 57-59, 61, 65. Strategic Plan Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 13, and 14.
- c. **Time Estimate-** 2025/2026
- d. **d. Cost Estimate:** \$1,000,000- \$2,000,000 yearly. The timing of implementation will determine the cost, as step increases will increase costs more dramatically over the first four years. .
- e. **Progress-** seven additional positions were added in 2024 and Q1 2025. This includes one position added in preparation for reduced debit hours, two positions as replacements of predicted retirements, and one position to help offset reduced part-time staffing. The District applied for a SAFER Grant in 2024 and 2025 , but has been unsuccessful.

## **Initiative 2. Station 41 Replacement (6)**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** This station should be built first to use resources most effectively. It has the greatest effect on response planning, as it is the best location for a Battalion Chief (BC), ladder, and uncrossed staffed (dedicated) units. It is also needed to set the foundation for many of the other goals within the plan and to better support the District's increase in staffing. Currently, staffing at Station 41 cannot be used for the District's secondary units (Brush and Tender) because those apparatus are housed at Station 43 due to insufficient space to house them at Station 41. Additionally, Station 41 and Station 43 are not well suited for the increased staffing model. Although Station 43 had been a higher priority to replace for many years due to the potential of structural instability during earthquakes, as well as the general design of the station, there would be no cost-effective alternatives to house administrative functions during construction. By constructing Station 41 first, the battalion chief response, administrative and support offices, meeting space, and limited training space can all be moved to the new Station 41. During the construction of Station 43, the two units from Station 43 can be run out of the current (old) Station 41. This greatly reduces the logistical needs/costs of rebuilding Station 43 first. It also allows the District to be positioned to implement other high-priority tasks/projects with the completion of Station 41. The new Station 41 will have the most bay space and will be able to accommodate varying apparatus as necessary. Completion of Station 41 allows for the following operational priorities: hiring two additional firefighters (FF's), hiring a 3<sup>rd</sup> staff on the medic, obtaining a ladder, hiring a 4<sup>th</sup> staff on the ladder, stationing a Tech Team, hiring a Fire Inspector, and hiring a Medical Supervisor Officer (MSO).
- b. **Strategic Priority-** Replacement of Station 41 is needed to meet the current health and safety standards, building codes, and industry best practices in the following areas: PPE storage and cleaning, workout facility, decontamination area, disaster resiliency, modern fire apparatus storage, even distribution of secondary apparatus (brush, tender, rescue, boat), personal and storage spaces for employees, modern alerting/tracking/data collection, and efficient resource deployment.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** Supported by SOC Pages 6 Recommendation 2, 9 Recommendations 5&6, 10 (Finding 28), 11, 67-74, 102, 111, and 112. Strategic Plan Goals 1, 2,4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15. Capital Facility Plan. Annual report data on response times and ERF.
- d. **Time Estimate-** 2025 through 2026
- e. **Cost Estimate-** An estimate of
- f. **Progress-** A contract bid has been awarded with an estimated completion date of Dec 2026.

## **Initiative 3. 3<sup>rd</sup> on dedicated medic(2)-**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** This project appears slightly further down on the strategic list so that infrastructure can be fully completed to support it. This later placement also

ensures continuation of the project by having long-term financial capacity. The ladder should be starting service in 2028. The addition of this proposed staffing would create a minimum of 6 personnel at Station 41, allowing the ladder to be fully staffed along with a cross staffed engine/ambulance. This staffing model would maintain all current capabilities and be supplemented by the ladder's capabilities. This also allows the District to have full credit from the WSRB for all functions. Additional positions also increase the efficiency of deploying the Technical Rescue resources by having a dedicated "Tech Team Station". It is logical to link the Tech Rescue Team with the ladder, as the ladder can be used during various technical calls (high directional, tree/tower rescue, etc.). The District will continue to explore grant opportunities for this additional staffing.

- b. **Strategic Priority-** This step will increase the District's staffing in an effort to satisfy NFPA 1710, ERF, and WSRB. It will also allow the ladder to function as a ladder and fully cross-staff an engine/medic at Station 41 with 3 firefighters. It will allow the medic unit to respond to nearly all calls by itself instead of a 2-person unit that will need additional resources on some calls.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** Supported by SOC Pg 3, Pg 9 Findings 4&5, 11, 32-37, 57-59, 61, 65. Strategic Plan Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 13, and 14.
- d. **Time Estimate-** 2027/28
- e. **Cost Estimate-** \$500,000-750,000 yearly.

#### **Initiative 4. Technical Rescue (Tech) Team Stationed (11)**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** Stationing the Technical Rescue Team is a no-cost item. However, creating a deployment model that centralizes this new function will allow the District to train, equip, and deploy the team in a more efficient manner. The Tech Team will be able to use the ladder for many of their functions and the training of the tech team also overlaps the skills and training of the ladder. Station 41 will also have the most staffing at one station, and the tech discipline is more labor intensive to meet the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) and best practices. It is for these reasons, the District will move to staffing Station 41 as the tech team, once the station is completed. The District is starting this process in 2025. Assigning this team to Station 41 headquarters buttresses the District's increase in staffing. The capacity for dealing with disasters or complex incidents would be increased.
- b. **Strategic Priority-** This allows for enhanced training, teamwork, pre-planning, and situational awareness. During incidents, command units consulting with trained technicians are able to develop better plans, incident control, and scene safety. Although the District could pursue coordinating a county-wide response plan for these resources, it is nonetheless appropriate for us to have our own trained teams housed at Station 41.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** Strategic Plan Goals 2, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14. This arrangement is a more efficient and effective deployment model than having personnel at different

locations every shift. Currently, there is no way to dispatch them effectively as the technicians are spread amongst the various stations and not able to be effectively equipped.

- d. **Time Estimate-** 2025-2027
- e. **Cost Estimate-** Minimal
- f. **Progress-** In 2024, five Technical Rescue members were added to the Snohomish County Team and five additional Tech Members were added in Q2 2025 for a total of ten Tech Rescue members on the Snohomish County Team. Operations is evaluating staffing models to work towards this initiative.

#### **Initiative 5. Station 43 Replacement (7)**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** After Station 41 is completed, the logistics will be in place to be able to rebuild Station 43. This scheduling will have a limited impact on the District's operations. Bidding for both stations at the same time under one contract is also recommended. This can reduce construction costs and the time needed to oversee both projects. This is the best scenario to accomplish the following operational priorities: the second hiring of two additional FFs, stationing a Water Rescue Team, construction of the maintenance area, establishing a chaplain workspace, and planning for an MSO. Although remodeling the existing Station 43 was evaluated several times as an option, following the most recent evaluation in the spring of 2024, it was determined to not be a cost-effective option for the District. The older building style, outdated systems, and structural shortcomings combined with new building codes does not make remodeling a suitable option. Alternatively, replacing Station 43 will reduce the size of the station by approximately 40% which will help reduce the long-term operating costs.
- b. **Strategic Priority-** Replacement is needed to meet the current health and safety standards and industry best practices in the following areas: provide PPE storage/cleaning/drying, a workout facility within the station to improve turn-out times, a decontamination area, disaster resiliency, housing of modern fire apparatus, even distribution of secondary apparatus (brush, tender, rescue, boat), necessary personal and storage spaces for employees, modern alerting/tracking/data collection means, and additional options for better deployment of future resources. This station is the most prone to damage from earthquakes and houses the majority of the District's assets. In the event of a major earthquake, the District's capabilities could be severely diminished.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** SOC Section 3, and specifically Pages 10, 67-74, 115 and 116. Strategic Plan Goals 7, 8, 12, 13, 15. Capital Facility Plan. Annual report data on response times and ERF.
- d. **Time Estimate-** 2025 through 2028
- e. **Cost Estimate-** Rough Estimate of \$13,000,000; cost will continue to be refined through Q3 2024, and the bid in Q1 2025 will determine final cost.

- f. **Progress-** The design is nearly complete. The Board will be able to review bid options in Fall 2024 for possible construction in 2027/2028.

Initiative 6. **Two Additional on-duty Firefighters per Shift-8-9 new positions (dedicated engine and medic) (3)-**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** Once the staffing at Station 41 is finalized, the next priority will be to eliminate the cross-staffing of E43/M43 to increase our resilience. However, the logistics of housing additional personnel must be considered. It is a priority to replace the facilities for Station 43. During the construction, the temporary station will not be able to house additional firefighters. For this reason, this initiative must wait until after the station has been rebuilt. Any delays in rebuilding the station will delay the additional staffing. Similarly to Initiative #1 above, the implementation of this initiative will be spread over two years to allow proper probationary staffing and reserve hiring capacity to mitigate unforeseen events. Having a staffing level of five personnel at Station 43 allows the Special Ops Water Team to become stationed there. The increased staffing supplies the community with dedicated units. The District is then able to have the capacity and resiliency to handle multiple calls at the same time and to quickly staff complex incidents within the District in a timely manner, such as a fire in a historic First Street building. The District will explore grant opportunities to fund this initiative.
- b. **Strategic Priority-** This increase will help to meet NFPA 1710, ERF, and WSRB guidelines for staffing. The intent would be to staff two units at Station 43 to move the District from the current 3 units to 5 units staffed, with 4 in the urbanized area. This increases resilience, redundancy, and capacity. It will also reduce our response time by ensuring a unit from the closest station responds more often. The capacity for dealing with disasters or complex incidents would be increased. This allows two secondary units to be staffed out of the station (Brush, Tender, or Watercraft).
- c. **Reference/Justification-** Supported by SOC Pages 3, 9 (Findings 4&5), 11, 32-37, 57- 59, 61, 65. Strategic Plan Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 13, and 14.
- d. **Time Estimate-** 2029-2030
- e. **Cost Estimate-** \$1,250,000-2,000,000 yearly.

Initiative 7. **Ladder Program(8)**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** It is imperative to start the process of obtaining a ladder as soon as possible. While it is feasible to enter into an Inter Local Agreement (ILA) to provide ladder coverage, a regional partner(s) is unlikely to guarantee this type of arrangement over the long term. As elected and executive leaderships change, they could revoke their cooperation. Obtaining a ladder takes time. Once money is available, the design, bidding, and building takes 3-6 years. The time needed to train personnel must also be considered. If the District used a cooperative agreement to station a ladder within the District and something changed, it could cause a six year delay in acquiring a



suitable replacement. The community is growing, and we should be planning for future needs. The strategic plan and long-term funding allow for a ladder and a medic/engine to be staffed at Station 41. The engine would be "on a delay" and would not be utilized except for structure fires and rescues, until it can be staffed with three firefighters (see Initiative #3 for the additional medic staffing). The ladder or other engines would handle the majority of other call types. For these reasons, it is recommended that the most prudent and cost-effective solution over the long term is to control the District's own resources through the purchase of a ladder. The Ladder Committee evaluated the pros and cons of ladder types and brands in 2024 with the minimum requirements being a 100ft, 750lb tip, and 1000gpm piped master stream. Developing a ladder culture, training, and experience will take time. Adding a ladder to the plan in 2024/ 2025 means it will probably go into service in 2028, after Station 41 is completed, and then take a few years to be functioning at a high level. Therefore, this is an investment for 2029 and beyond. Establishing an organizational culture that utilizes the specialized features, skills, and equipment of a ladder will be integral in the rate of learning within the District, which will help maintain greater expectations and performance throughout the organization. The ladder will also provide rescue-capabilities for the District and supplement the operational priorities that focus on establishing a Tech Rescue Team. The ladder and the additional staffing will naturally fit into the Special Operations Technical Rescue Team, which would be based out of Station 41.

- b. **Strategic Priority-** The District currently has five-story buildings, and the building codes allow them to be constructed in multiple areas. For example, the Pilchuck District and Bickford District have allowances from the City of Snohomish to build these five-story buildings in order to alleviate housing issues. WSRB expects ladder coverage once buildings are taller than four stories. No mutual aid ladder can respond to the District's service area in under 10 minutes. National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA 1710), WSRB, and current best practices show the District needs ladder coverage. The goal (best practice) would be to cover most of the District in 8 minutes, which can be done from Station 41. There are insufficient aerial apparatus to provide adequate service coverage in the South Central area of Snohomish County. The density and height of buildings, and the wide distribution of population around the major urban hubs of Clearview, Monroe, Lake Stevens, and Snohomish, indicate each area should have a minimum of one ladder. Currently, the areas which need ladder coverage are spread out enough so that no single station can adequately cover multiple areas. Overall, Snohomish has seen a 60% increase in assessed valuation from 2014-2024 (\$3.1 billion to \$7.76 billion) which has increased the District's need to increase its resources. A best practice would be to have a ladder positioned in each of the targeted areas listed above. According to the ILA signed with the City of Snohomish, a ladder must be stationed within the City Limits. The ladder will also assist in meeting an appropriate ERF for high-complexity calls, by supplying the correct number of firefighters and the appropriate types of apparatus in a timely manner.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** Supported by SOC Page 33, 40, 41, 57, 58. Appendix B below. Supported by WSRB Operations. Strategic Plan Goals 2, 3, 5, 8, 11, 13, and 14. The City

of Snohomish had an ordinance that they would pay for half of a ladder, this was substituted by the current ILA, which states the District will have a ladder within the City limits. The District also has a letter from former Chief Collins to the City of Snohomish in which the District would work with the City to purchase a ladder if the City should change zoning allowances.

- d. **Time Estimate-** Ordered in 2024 for an in-service time frame of 2028-2029
- e. **Cost Estimate-** \$3,000,000 spread over 2025-2028 including equipment and training dependent on the payment schedule selected. **Progress-** The design and bid award has been completed. A training TDA has been purchased and the initial train the trainer for the driving instructor is completed. A ride-along program with long-time ladder capable agencies has begun, along with other internal and external training. Integration of the operations committee internally is complete, and integration of ladder committees within the county has begun. Training and driving manuals are in the process of being developed.

#### **Initiative 8. Water Team (12)-**

- a. **Implementation Priority** Stationing the Water Rescue Team is a no-cost item that will fulfill an essential function for the community. However, creating a deployment model that centralizes this new function will allow the District to train, equip, and deploy the team in a more efficient manner. Station 43 allows for quick access to two major transportation routes and the Snohomish River. Station 43 will also have the second most staffing at one station, which allows for the greater ability to properly staff the station and the Water Rescue Team. It is for these reasons that the District will move to staffing this station as the Water Rescue Team, once the station is completed. The District will start this process in 2025. The minimum staffing at Station 43 must be increased to support the Water Rescue Team but not all personnel at the station would be required to be on one of the Special Ops teams. At this point, no Special Ops would be located at Station 42.
- b. **Strategic Priority-** This allows for enhanced training, teamwork, pre-planning, and situation awareness. Control and safety of an incident scene is increased when trained technicians and the incident commander develop a plan together.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** Strategic Plan Goals 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
- d. **Time Estimate-** 2025-2030
- e. **Cost Estimate-** Minimal
- f. **Progress-** Operations is evaluating staffing models to work towards this initiative. They are evaluating options that prioritize efficient deployment of specialized resources. An additional Rescue Swimmer was added in 2024.

### **Initiative 9. Fire Inspector(5)**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** The District can promote or hire a person who can fill this position and the public interface. This employee will also be able to be mentored to fill the Marshal position. The inspector position provides resiliency and succession planning within the inspection/prevention division. As the program grows and increases its range of responsibilities it will likely need additional staff time. As the Fire Marshal's office grows, further evaluation of the divisions' workload and needs will lead to the decision to utilize this position. The staff realizes the strategy can change and should change to take the most advantage of the situation. This initiative may change priority as the fire marshal/inspection program becomes fully developed, and the total workload is determined, and goals are prioritized.
- b. **Strategic Priority-** This hiring supplements the already implemented Fire Marshal project. A prevention/inspection/code program is of utmost importance. It is a key safety factor for the community and firefighters. This program also identifies other needs of the community and is a key liaison between important groups such as businesses and the City. The prevention/inspection offices typically can fill important roles in disaster planning/response, Emergency Operations Centers (EOC), public information and education, community risk reduction, and event preparation. The inspector position would also support the crews, provide focused training and be the primary liaison for issues once company-level inspections begin. The inspector will report directly to the Fire Marshal and do much of the work, especially the daily fieldwork.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** SCFD#4's Fire prevention score from WSRB. SOC pages 75-96. Strategic Plan Goals 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 14.
- d. **Time Estimate-** 2027-2028
- e. **Cost Estimate-** \$175,000/yr

### **Initiative 10. Station 42 Replacement (9)**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** Replacement is needed to meet the current health and safety standards and industry best practices in the following areas: provide a workout facility, decon area, accommodate PPE storage/ cleaning/drying, disaster resiliency, allow for all modern fire apparatus, ensure secondary apparatus (brush, tender, rescue, boat) are evenly distributed, provide needed personal and storage spaces for employees, incorporate modern alerting/tracking/data collection means, meet current codes and best practices, better deploy our resources (BC) This facility is being used past its intended lifespan and needs drastic repair and modernization (See Appendix C).
- b. **Strategic Priority-** From Board meeting notes (See Appendix D), most of the stations were designed for a full volunteer model, with low consideration for full-time living. Consequently the facilities were designed with lower-grade building materials, which are far past their expected/intended lifespan. The replacement Station 42 will be a smaller footprint helping to reduce turnout times, but will have more useable space

increasing firefighter safety and functionality. It will also likely be far cheaper to maintain. This will lower the District's yearly operating costs. The design for Station 41 and Station 43 will be easily modified to be suitable for the District's rural station by removing 1-2 bedrooms and then adjusting the dimensions of the support areas.

- c. **Reference/Justification-** Supported by SOC Pages 10, 67-74, 113 and 114. Strategic Plan Goals 1, 2, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, and 15.
- d. **Time Estimate-** Design 2026, bid 2027-2029, construction start 20228-2030.
- e. **Cost Estimate-** Rough estimate of \$13,000,000 with better cost estimates in 2026-2027

**Initiative 11. Additional staff for 4<sup>th</sup> on the ladder –one on duty position – 4 to 5 new hires.  
(5)**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** This has to be lower on implementation because it relies on Station 41 being built and the ladder being in service (2028/29). It would be best to try to establish the ladder culture before increasing the ladder staffing to 4 personnel. Getting two units in service at both Station 41 and Station 43 is also a higher priority to help with resiliency. A fourth person on the ladder allows the Tech Team to move to 7 personnel. The District will explore opportunities for funding via grants for the staffing.
- b. **Strategic Priority-** Increasing staffing from 3 to 4 on the ladder allows the truck to double the "teams" available and allows twice as much work per unit to be accomplished at most fires. This principle is supported by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and NFPA studies that led to NFPA 1710 Standard. Each team can accomplish a different task (assignment) at the same time. With limited ladder/rescue coverage, doubling the work that can be done at a relatively low cost is the most efficient use of staffing. Once this last increase is accomplished, the on-duty staffing of the District will have increased from 9 to 15 (not counting the BC). The total on-duty (with the BC) would be 16 personnel, which is the District ERF target. Currently, the District relies on at least 3 auto-aid units to accomplish our ERF. With this staffing, the District would staff a full ERF complement independently.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** Helps meet NFPA 1710, WSRB, and SCFD#4 ERF.
- d. **Time Estimate-** 2031
- e. **Cost Estimate-** \$750,000

**Initiative 12. Logistics/Maintenance Area (13)**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** Once Station 41 and Station 43 have been replaced, the current Station 41 (Maple Facility) will be available for use. By using old Station 41 (Maple Facility) the District does not have to pay to build new square footage, reducing overall costs.

- b. **Strategic Priority-** The logistics division needs functional, space, storage, and office improvements. Their storage, offices, and spaces are outdated, too small, and makeshift for the most part, resulting in reduced function, efficiency, and safety. After old Station 43 is razed for construction, there will be no facilities for maintenance and logistics. The District will explore the current cost models within the strategic budget to determine the impact of the full budget. If the impact is less than initially estimated, the time frame for implementation could be accelerated. The District will explore other alternatives via collaboration or other partnerships that could change the scope of this initiative and/or allow it to be implemented in alternative ways.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** The District determined that building new areas for the logistics and maintenance division was cost-prohibitive. Using the Maple Facility for the logistics and maintenance functions will have minimal cost. These activities are currently housed in Station 43, but will not be replaced at the new Station 43. The Maple Facility can serve the District, at a very low cost and can also serve as a reserve station for Station 41 and Station 43 in case of emergencies that cause one of the stations to be unusable for an unforeseen reason. It is also centrally located, allowing for logistics and maintenance function efficiency.
- d. **Time Estimate-** 2030
- e. **Cost Estimate-** \$200,000

### **Initiative 13. Chaplains Quarters (14)**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** Following the replacement of Station 41 and Station 43, the District can prioritize the repurposing of the Maple Facility as chaplain quarters. This will be low-cost as the project does not require new square footage to be built.
- b. **Strategic Priority-** Chaplains need a workspace to uphold their service to the community and responders. Space is needed for the office (computer access and files), general and supply storage, showers, decon, facilities for sleeping areas, food storage, kitchen facilities, and rehab equipment . With these capabilities, the chaplains can more effectively function and provide service to the District. With sleeping quarters, they can rest during high call volume or stay overnight during disasters and large incidents. This area would be equipped for making/preparing ice, food, and cold water in a temperature-controlled support unit which allows for better rehab during temperature extremes.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** The District determined it was cost prohibitive to build new areas for the chaplains. Repurposing the space at the Maple Facility will be of minimal cost. This allows the Maple Facility to serve the District, is very low cost and the Maple Facility also will be able to serve as a reserve station for Station 41 and Station 43 in case of emergencies that cause one of the stations to be unusable for an unforeseen reason. It also allows for the centralization of the chaplain group to better serve the personnel and community. Strategic Plan Goals 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14.

- d. **Time Estimate-** 2030
- e. **Cost Estimate-** \$100,000

**Initiative 14. Facility 40 strategic planning and need (17)-**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** Once Station 41 and Station 43 are replaced, the use and need for Facility 40 should be evaluated for the needs of the District and community. Currently, Facility 40 has limited operational value to the District and should be evaluated for future use planning, expected costs of major repairs/upgrades, functionality due to the building's infrastructure, long-term operational costs, and potential revenue.
- b. **Strategic Priority-** Ensuring capital facility and operational costs of the short term are balanced with potential long-term needs.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** SOC Pages 10, 67-74, 109 and 110. Strategic Plan Goals 5, 13, and 14.
- d. **Time Estimate-** 2028-2029
- e. **Cost Estimate-** Study costs \$50,000

**Initiative 15. New RLB tower (10)-**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** The funding for RLB improvements will come from the long-term capital plan starting in 2030 unless opportunities from grants, rental fees, or other funding arise. It is a priority to replace our outdated stations and improve staffing, and these must be accomplished before future funding is transitioned to the RLB.
- b. **Strategic Priority-** It is unknown how long the District's burn building will last. To meet live fire training requirements, the District is utilizing any allowable fire response, instructors at the academy, and other scenarios to limit burning at the RLB site. If needed, the District will evaluate a new 1-2 cell burn box or increased cost to send employees off duty to Sultan, North County, or North Bend for live fire as a stopgap once we can no longer burn. However, those three options do not provide a long-term, financially advantageous solution. Therefore, the District should replace the burn building as soon as it is financially feasible. Increasing the District's live-fire MCO abilities will pay off, especially as we continue to hire new employees throughout the plan.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** Strategic Plan Goals 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13, and 14.
- d. **Time Estimate-** 2030 or with a grant opportunity
- e. **Cost Estimate-** \$700,000-1,000,000. Study costs \$50,000.
- f. **Progress-** Beginning phases of a strategic plan for RLB.

**Initiative 16. 24 Hour MSO/Safety Officer (15)- D4 hire or ILA**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** The future growth of the District's population and staff will prompt the evaluation of the need for an MSO/Safety Officer. Currently, this middle-management position is not necessary within the District's deployment model, but it should be considered an option.
- b. **Strategic Priority-** As staffing grows, the District will need to determine if there is a need for additional middle management. An ILA could be put in place for that, or the District could secure long-term staffing by hiring (promoting) its own position. If the position is needed and the District has the capacity, it is best to ensure that the position is always serving the District in a way the District leadership deems the most valuable.
- c. **Reference/Justification-** Currently, the operational deployment is working well and the BC manages all needs. In the future as the call volume increases, and the number of personnel increases, there may be a need for additional management oversight. The MSO function may fill that role. However, as the District grows, other options such as Safety Officers, Specialty Captains, or other management that reduces the span of control should be evaluated.
- d. **Time Estimate-** 2032
- e. **Cost Estimate-** \$200,000 if needed.

**Initiative 17. Additional staff (16)- Move Part-Time to extra staffing.**

- a. **Implementation Priority-** It is important to move to a staffing model that is less reliant on part-time employees being used to fill regular full-time positions. In doing so, the training, staffing projections, hiring, and a host of other items become more stable. However, there is always a risk-benefit for decisions. At this time, the benefit to all the above staffing goals is worth the risk of reliance on a portion of the District staffing being achieved through a part-time model as we have designed it. Once our major goals are achieved, the benefits to the District are reduced, and a change becomes more beneficial.
- b. **Strategic Priority-** The next staffing priority will be relief positions that allow the District to meet its minimum staffing with full-time firefighters. Once this is done, the part-time program can be used as an adjunct that moves the part-time staffing to extra staffing on the medic/engines, which helps move our staffing towards NFPA 1710 and improves our ERF and WSRB. The Assistant Chief of Operations can determine where and when the additional staffing is suitable, either as a third on Medic 43 or as a fourth on Engine 41/Engine 43. Maintaining the part-time program in this way is positive for the community, the District, and the fire service as a whole. It allows more people of different backgrounds alternative means of entering the fire service beyond the traditional routes of testing and the normal hiring process, giving them valuable experience and the ability to understand the position and expectations. It also allows a more diverse population to test and move through the hiring process, giving the District access to individuals or groups other agencies do not target.

- c. **Reference/Justification-** It is important to maintain the part-time firefighter program for various reasons. It is valuable resource to give opportunities to non-traditional candidates and to provide entrance into the fire service for a greater number of people. It is also valuable for the District by training a larger pool for potential full time employment. If the past and current trends hold, there may be a point where the part time program cannot be reliable enough to relay on for daily minimum staffing. However, that does not mean the program cannot be designed for value. The program may not fulfill the full function as it is now, but the District should look at other value added options. One value would be to use them as relief and extra staffing. This means they are scheduled when we can find the right employees and training them. If they are on shift, they can fill in for unexpected vacancies, instead of calling for OT. If no vacancy ends up being created, they would act as the 4<sup>th</sup> firefighter on the ladder and/or engine or a 3<sup>rd</sup> staff member on a medic unit. This increase in staffing allows those units to be more efficient and safe, which is a value added for the community and would constitute a positive Return on Investment.
- d. Time Estimate- 2026-2035 (as necessary)
- e. Cost Estimate- \$750,000-\$2,000,000 yearly
- f. Progress- This task is being evaluated and worked on during every hiring process.

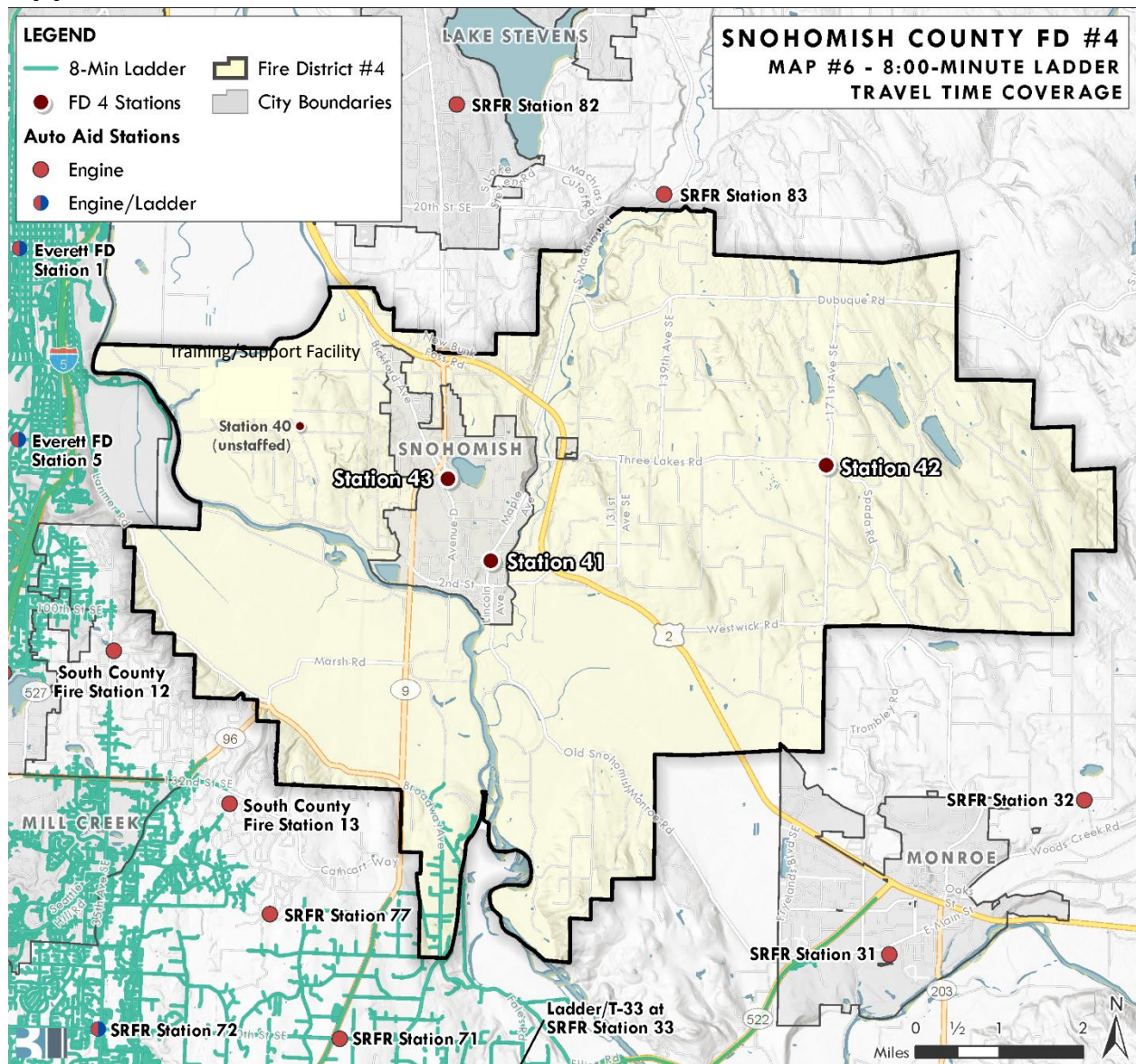
## Appendix A :

Goal	Strategic Order	Implementation Order
Two additional FF per shift (dedicated aid/medic/engine)	1	1
3 <sup>rd</sup> staff on dedicated medic	2	3
Two additional FF per shift (dedicated aid/medic/engine)	3	6
Additional FF on the ladder	4	11
Fire Inspector	5	9
Station 41 Replacement	6	2



Station 43 Replacement	7	5
Ladder capability/ coverage	8	7
Station 42 Replacement	9	10
RLB Tower Replacement	10	15
Tech Team Stationed	11	4
Water Team	12	8
Logistics and Maintenance moved to Maple facility	13	12
Chaplains Quarters moved Maple Facility	14	13
MSO/ Safety Officer Employee	15	16
Move PT staffing to more FT	16	17
Evaluate Station 40	17	14

## Appendix B :



## Appendix C : Building deficiencies ( Ref. SOC Section 3)

- HVAC/air conditioning/efficient heating
- Ergonomic layout in regard to response time (Station 42 and 43)
- Lack of appropriate bathrooms and showers,
- PPE cleaning/ storage,
- Decontamination facilities
- Earthquake seismic standards
- Bay size and space (Station 41 and 43)
- Enough sleeping areas (Station 41 and 43),
- Storage for personal items (bedding, uniforms, workout clothes, food, toiletries, reference/study material
- Enough administrative space
- Ability for future growth of operational personnel/operational capability/administration
- Ability to best deploy resources (Station 41)
- Station alerting
- Data collections
- IT/information
- Efficient operations costs

## Appendix D: April 15<sup>th</sup> 1995, Joint Board meeting minutes

### 6. ACTION ITEMS

#### a. Accept/recommend Station 41 construction bid

Mr. Ed Krikawa directed the Board's attention to the information in the agenda indicating the low bid contractor was Clements Brothers at \$389,890, which was well below the original estimate of \$488,000. Mr. Krikawa pointed out that eleven bids had been received, and the three lowest bids were within \$10,000 of each other. Architects who have worked with this company have been interviewed, as have project managers from various projects. All responses were positive. Chief Merritt noted that the main reason for the lower cost was the review and plan revisions done by Mr. Krikawa and Craig Heike. Mr. Krikawa acknowledged they had done a wall-by-wall analysis and removed those items which were not necessary for the contractor to build in or which were deemed "overkill." An example: this is a volunteer fire station and unmanned, so wall heaters were utilized rather than a full forced air heating system. This approach nets a significant savings because everything the contractor puts into a building, including equipment and landscaping, is marked up. Many items will still need to be done, but they will either be done by the firemen themselves or will be contracted for directly. Mr. Krikawa pointed out that a complete inventory had been done at the headquarters station to determine the "incidentals" which must be purchased before the building is occupied, from washing machines to stationery supplies. These "incidentals" amounted to \$175,000 at the headquarters station.

## Appendix E : Strategic Plan Goal Justification: A reflection of how the strategic goals are being advanced via the Operational Strategic Plan.

- 1. Use an effective performance management system to monitor service delivery and focus improvement efforts.** The Strategic Ops Plan being presented is driven from the data provided by the SOC, facilities assessment, and Geographic Information System (GIS) studies. The service deliverables that were measured include first-due coverage, ERF, building functionality, and turn-out times. For example, operational priority #7 to replace Station 43 follows recommendations from the SOC to enhance the ERF by creating a more functional station. In turn, replacing the outdated urban stations will provide the District with essential modern technology focused on improving responses. The current fire stations lack data management systems, tools for capturing response metrics and even digital dispatch integrations. Maintaining an in-house method of data collection will have great value to personnel and the community.
- 2. Improve emergency incident response performance.** Evaluation of the District's station locations, designs and staffing provides feedback on how the district can improve response performance. GIS and SOC consultations show that the current station locations are satisfactory. However, in order to meet ERF and first-due benchmarks the stations' design needs to be modernized for apparatus deployment and full-time staffing. The replacement of the stations will give the District the ability to track response performance and exemplify industry best practices for the community.
- 3. Enhance non-emergency functions to provide additional service(s) to the community.** The District can develop additional non-emergency services with the planned additional staff and Station 41 headquarters. Creating a staffing model that allows for public education services and disaster preparedness programs is integrated into this Operational Strategic Plan such as operational priority # 1 to add 8-10 new positions. The programs highlighted in that section, along with the addition of a fire inspector, benefits the public by providing a fire prevention effort.
- 4. Manage the Ray Lee Brown Training Site to support SCFD4 and regional training priorities.** Operational priority #10 is directly focused on supporting this facility and ensuring that long-term options are considered. SCFD#4 consistently utilizes the RLB for varying types of training ranging from structure fire simulations and rope/technical rescue training to MCI drills. The District has unique access to this training facility and provides District personnel (and regional partners) with the opportunity to have continual learning. This education can assist in promoting career development to individual personnel. Operational priority #10 sets the initiative to continue the use of this facility and budget for its upkeep.
- 5. Continue to explore the most efficient and effective ways to provide service to the community.** The facilities consultation served as a method to explore ways in which the District could be more efficient. Reviewing the District's abilities to deploy specialized resources provides the opportunity to be more effective for the community and to the region. Building Station 41 headquarters (operational priority #6) meets this goal by assessing the needs of the community and planning proper distribution of specialized resources. To determine the most effective ways to serve the community, the District explored how various variations of replacing Station 43 would affect response coverage.
- 6. Communicate effectively with members of the community.** Creating a space in which the District can increase visibility and communication with the community will aid in the goal of bettering community relations. Operational goals to increase staffing and build Station 41 as a unified city campus will let the District stay abreast with community outreach, public education and emergency preparedness. Station 41 headquarters has allocated meeting rooms, training spaces, and offices for the Fire Marshal to support this narrative. Overall, a modern centralized station will be more conducive for all citizens to interact with the District.
- 7. Enhance the District's ability to serve an increasingly diverse population.** The community of Snohomish interacts with the District's responders in diverse ways increasingly. Snohomish has seen a 9% increase in total population (2014-2024) with a 23% increase in call volume (2013-2023). Beyond the varying demographics within the population, the District responds to calls unique to the area due to the historic downtown, airfield, active railroad, rural area, as well as the large



recreational areas such as the Centennial Trail and Snohomish River. The District aims to account for diversity by creating a staffing model that supports hiring a fire inspector (operational priority #5) which will generate outreach to many diverse groups within the community.

- 8. Prioritize the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of District personnel.** The strategic goal to promote the health of personnel is also reflected in the SOC. The recommendations are to build facilities that meet standard health and safety guidelines. Replacing Station 41 and Station 43 with modern facilities will include the necessary attributes to meet these guidelines and to support the crews.
- 9. Recruit and retain staff to reflect the makeup of the community.** By studying the demographic trends in the community the District can reduce barriers to employment for potential hires. A community-centered headquarters can create more visibility for the District. Operational priority #17 to convert part-time personnel to extra staffing will allow more people of varying backgrounds to enter the fire service.
- 10. Nurture an inclusive and positive culture.** Integrating the District's core values in the workplace promotes staff to be aligned with the District's principles. Staff modeling and recognizing these positive behaviors promotes a positive culture. Operational priority #15 affirms this Strategic Goal by planning to support staff with a potential long-term middle management MSO/Safety Officer position.
- 11. Embody learning as an organization and as individual team members.** The District has made efforts to increase public education and presence, several operational projects will continue this and supplement the teams' learning. This can be evident in the fire inspector program as well as obtaining apparatus such as a ladder. Securing funding for a ladder will not only benefit the community, but it also provides a larger scope of training for district personnel. This will create career pathways for personnel to promote, and learn the new capabilities associated with a battalion with a ladder.
- 12. Ensure all personnel have the information they need to perform their jobs effectively.** One of the key takeaways from the staff survey was that communication and the basis of top-down/lateral communications could be improved across the organization. Operation strategies take this into account by creating spaces and roles to allow for better communication. This can be seen in the operational goal to staff an MSO/Safety Office and Fire Inspector, roles that are a supportive liaison for crews.
- 13. Uphold an exemplary standard for the stewardship of public resources.** By implementing the Operations Strategic Plan, the District is showing fiduciary responsibility by creating a plan, monitoring future tasks in the pipeline, and focusing improvement efforts. The priorities outlined show funding within the general fund and reducing the need for an increased levy to meet the community's needs.
- 14. Allocate resources to optimize the advancement of the District's strategic goals.** This goal can be met by enabling the District to provide adequate resource allocation to the community. The SOC reviewed the District's ability to provide appropriate types and amount of resources for responses. Several operational goals work towards this improvement, such as the allocation of an aerial ladder due to the District's geographical need.
- 15. Use technology and other means to increase the efficient use of resources.** The District aims to improve technology in the stations and invest in infrastructure for future technologies. Integrating technology into the building operations can decrease workload as well as increase services to the public. Certain operational steps will fulfill this goal, such as the replacement of Station 43 which will incorporate modern systems for data collection, alerting, and tracking.