



Panama City Fire Department

2021-2025 Strategic Plan

Strategic Planning Team

Panama City Fire Department Strategic Plan 2021-2025

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A-Battalion, B-Battalion, C-Battalion

Message from the Fire Chief

Panama City Fire Department Strategic Plan 2021-2025



After several months of collaborative effort from our administrative staff and all operations personnel, we are excited to present our Strategic Plan for 2021-2025. The purpose of this plan is to establish our department's strategic goals and objectives on what we want to accomplish within the next several years. When Hurricane Michael devastated our area in October 2018, we could have never imagined how much our organization would have changed just after one event. In just a short timeframe, the resilient men and women of Panama City Fire Department have banded together to rebuild and make our organization even better than it was pre-Hurricane Michael.

As we continue to recover, we must plan for our future and identify what type of department we want to become. With this in mind, several areas of improvement were identified throughout this planning process. This strategic plan will lay out the foundation for our organization to utilize to meet these goals and objectives listed and to ensure we are staying within our expected timelines.

When you read through this document, you will notice that we have focused mainly on our internal processes. During the accreditation process and as we meet several of our goals and objectives listed, we will begin to transition to more of a community-based approach. As the primary fire response agency, our core belief is built upon the needs of the community and we will continue to strive to be the highest trained and most effective fire service agency to the citizens of Panama City. We are extremely passionate about this and it is stated in our motto: "We are the Home of Florida's Best Trained Firefighters."

In closing, I am extremely excited to present this strategic plan to you. Our organization will continue to move forward with recovery and will transition into the premier fire department that we know we can be. We will continue to ensure that we provide the highest level of fire protection / medical response service to the citizens of Panama City and look forward to what the future holds; not only for us, but for all of Panama City.

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PCFD History

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PCFD Beginnings

In the early 1900's, the Panama City-Bay County area was beginning to grow and the need for a Fire Department was becoming apparent. As a result of this need, the City of Panama City established one of the first Volunteer Fire Departments in the Bay County area.

Established in 1912, the Fire Department's first equipment consisted of a couple of 2-wheeled hose carts carrying approximately 500 feet of hose. As a means for alerting the Fire Department, the city's first alarm bell was hung in an old oak tree in the City Park, was approximately 18 inches in diameter, and could easily be heard throughout the town.

In 1918, the department began its move toward more modern times and purchased its first piece of motorized fire apparatus. This initial unit was a 6-cylinder American LaFrance Pumper which was housed at the site of the old National Guard Armory in the vicinity of what is now 6th Street and Harrison Avenue. Jim Richards, the first driver / operator of this modern piece of fire equipment, drove the engine for a period of 12 years, from 1918 to 1930.

In 1926, Joe Alexander became the first paid Engineer / Driver of a Fire Apparatus and served in this capacity from 1929 to 1941.

In 1937, the Panama City Fire Department received its second pumper, a Peter Pirsch, with a positive displacement pump. It was also during this time frame that the city began the installation of water mains and fire hydrants to better meet the growing needs of the community.

Personnel

As the Panama City Fire Department transitioned through time, the Department was divided into 2 companies, "A" and "B", with each company consisting of 12 men. In that day and age, the only compensation Firefighters received was a \$6 refund of street taxes which was levied against all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 45.

In order to better serve the community, "A" company stored their fire cart at the lower end of the Main Street which is currently known as Harrison Avenue. In contrast, "B" company stored their fire cart at a location known as Cowser's Service Station which was in the vicinity of what is now the intersection of 4th Street and Harrison Avenue.

As time went on, the cost of providing fire service began to rise. In order to address this concern, the 1923 Town Council began to charge fees for all out-of-town calls. The fee schedule was based on the location of the incident and was implemented as follows: Lynn Haven - \$20, Saint Andrews - \$10, Millville - \$10, plus an additional \$1 per hour for each Firefighter to compensate for time away from the station. Moving forward to 1932, the City of Panama City established a fully paid department.

PCFD History Cont.

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Current Day

In contrast to the original department established in 1912, today the Panama City Fire Department currently operates 5 Engine Companies, a 102' KME Aerial Platform, and a 78' Rosenbauer Aerial which was added to the fleet thanks to a Port Security Grant provided by FEMA. In 2015, the department added a Rescue Truck to be primarily utilized by the department's Light Technical Rescue Team. This apparatus was also obtained through a Port Security Grant. In addition to these apparatuses the Fire Department also responds with one Command Unit and a Fire Boat for maritime emergencies.

Today the Panama City Fire Department consists of a total of 75 State of Florida Certified Firefighters staffing 5 strategically located fire stations to meet the needs of the community. In order to meet those needs, and in addition to Administrative Staff, the Department staffs 3 shifts (A, B, & C) and provides Fire and Rescue Services around the clock to the citizens of Panama City.

The Fire Department also employs a support staff of 5 additional personnel at the Central Station Headquarters.

The current system for alerting the Fire Department consists of an Enhanced 911 System via multiple radio frequencies and a backup telephone network. In addition, the city's water system provides a reliable network of more than 1600 city and privately owned fire hydrants which may be utilized for fire protection.



Mission, Vision & Core Values

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Mission Statement

As first responders to fires, public safety and medical emergencies, PCFD protects the lives and property of Panama City residents and its visitors. This is accomplished through fire suppression, rescue, code enforcement, public education, fire investigation, emergency medical response, and continual professional development through training and education.

Vision Statement

The Panama City Fire Department will continuously strive to meet the changing needs of our community and to be the best Fire Department in the State. We will accomplish this by providing a modern and technologically advanced Fire Department, an enhanced and highly trained medical response service, maintain a high level of readiness for any type of emergency, and focus on the professional development and training of all our personnel. We hold ourselves accountable to our motto of being the “Home of Florida’s Best Trained Firefighter’s” and will continue to do so to ensure we provide the most responsive and effective emergency service to the citizens and visitors of Panama City.

Core Values

Service: We will continue our unyielding commitment to protect and serve the community and its citizens.

Professionalism: Demonstrating the highest levels of customer service while ensuring skills and knowledge are maintained and mastered.

Innovation: Always looking into the future and leveraging technology and training to enhance the safety of our personnel and the services which we provide to our citizens.

PCFD Operations & Performance

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PCFD Staffing & Resources

Operations Personnel	Administrative Personnel	Stations	Engines	Reserve Apparatus
75	9	5	4	3
Towers	Ladders	Rescues	Marine Units	
1	1	1	1	

Incident Data for 2016-2020

Years	Fire Calls	EMS Calls	Non Fire Calls*	Total
2020	130	2275	1367	3772
2019	153	3124	1622	4899
2018	162	3882	2008	6052
2017	144	3542	1531	5217
2016	174	1299	1500	2816

* Non Fire Calls Include Incidents Such as Motor Vehicle Accidents, Rescues, Water Emergencies, etc.

Incident Data for Structure Fires (2020)

Performance Objectives (Averages)	Benchmark Goals	Benchmark Outcomes
Turnout Time	80 Seconds / 1 Minute 20 Seconds	1:33
First Unit Travel Time	240 Seconds / 4 Minutes	4:29
Total Unit Response	480 Seconds / 8 Minutes	5:09
Civilian Injuries	0	2
Civilian Deaths	0	3

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (S.W.O.T.)

Current Panama City Fire Department Strengths

- The Fire Department's Specialized Teams consisting of:
 - Region 1 Light Technical Rescue Team (LRT-101)
 - Joint Agency In-Water Strike (JAWS) Dive Team
 - Maritime Boat Operations
 - Self-contained Breathing Apparatus Maintenance Team
- The size and staffing of the Fire Department
- Continual updating of our equipment and apparatus fleet
- Company training which is regimented and professional
- Enhancements to the Fire Prevention Office to ensure that 2600+ commercial occupancies are inspected in a timely fashion, inspection violation fines, fees for services and additional personnel
- The Fire Department makes a concentrated effort to be involved in community to ensure sound public relations, community involvement, public education and to continue to have an excellent reputation in the community
- The Fire Department's personnel are dynamic, experienced, educated, and in peak physical condition
- The communications between administration and line personnel allow for an organized department with a rank structure that provides for strong fire control and training. This leads to a solid command infrastructure and focus operations in firefighting activities
- Through stringent hydrant maintenance and testing program, the Fire Department ensures an adequate water supply for firefighting activities
- Through excellent communications and agreements with our surrounding Fire Departments, we ensure effective interagency partnerships

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (S.W.O.T.)

Cont.

Current Panama City Fire Department Weaknesses

- Employee pay is not competitive
 - Creates difficulties with retainability
 - Experience of department is reduced
 - Loosing personnel to surrounding agencies
- A new hire/probationary program for all levels of the Fire Department
 - Because of the influx of new personnel there is an overall lack of practical fire experience.
- The City Fleet Maintenance Division has limited experience, knowledge base or certifications to work on fire department equipment, specifically fire apparatus.
 - Cycle of time for repairs are longer than necessary
 - Maintenance/repair of equipment must be outsourced in many cases
- Resources / Budget restraints
- Security Management
 - Facility hardening
 - Secure access to facilities
 - Designated control points

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (S.W.O.T.)

Cont.

Current Panama City Fire Department Opportunities

- Future growth into Panama City North
 - Addition of Fire Stations (1-2)
 - Addition of Firefighting personnel
 - Addition of updated equipment
 - Secondary training facility
 - Enhanced services provided to the City of Panama City
- Funding of the Fire Department
 - Ability to obtain funding through various grants
 - Implementation of a Fire Assessment fee as an equitable method of supporting a portion of the department's budget
 - Because of various land development projects and expansion of Port Panama City in Panama City North, there is potential to cooperate with developers for building new fire stations
 - New developments in the City of Panama City can be an opportunity for increased City revenue which can lead to enhanced resourcing of the department
 - Continued development of the State Road 77 & 23rd Street corridors represents opportunities for change in apparatus needs
- Training
 - There are many opportunities of the Fire Training Facility
 - The opportunity of bringing regional training to Panama City
 - The opportunity to cooperate with other local fire departments and offer combined training opportunities
 - The opportunity to cooperate with colleges to bring in advanced training courses to the Fire Training Facility
 - The opportunity to develop a Mentoring program to help Fire Department personnel better prepare themselves for upward mobility

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (S.W.O.T.)

Cont.

Current Panama City Fire Department Threats

- Threats such as Weather/Hurricanes/Terrorism/Environmental can have a long-lasting impact on the City of Panama City as well as the Fire Department
- As Fire Department personnel retire and separate from the Fire Department the knowledge base can weaken. This can also lead to a limited pool of candidates for promotion throughout the Fire Department. Employee morale can suffer if workloads increase, and compensation remains stagnant
- New developments in Panama City can lead to an increase in call volume. The Fire Department needs to be prepared by having the appropriate number of resources to respond (i.e Staffing, Equipment, Facilities, Training)
- The threat of losing tourism to Panama City Beach can have an impact on the City's business tax revenue leading to budget reductions
- The threat of a stagnant local government can lead to a City in decline. Panama City must regain its competitive edge to remain vital in the region
- The Fire Department's aging facilities will have an impact on the Fire Department's future budget. Three of the five fire stations are thirty years old or older. They are in current need of renovation if not replacement

Panama City Fire Department Strategic Plan Guide 2021-2025



Goals & Objectives

As Panama City Fire Department continues moving forward, we will do so in coordination with the City Managers' four lines of effort, which are the following:

- Safety & Security
- Infrastructure (Water Supply)
- Economy
- Quality of Life

These four lines of effort have laid the foundation for this strategic plan. As you read through this plan, each objective and task has developed with four additional lines of effort which are specific to Panama City Fire Department.

- Firefighter Safety & Mental Health
- Equipment
- Facilities
- Readiness

The goals and objectives listed in this strategic plan layout Panama City Fire Departments' short-term and long-term goals. This document serves as a tool to both our external and internal shareholders to ensure there is an understanding and a shared vision of what our organization is wanting to accomplish over the next five years.

This strategic plan was formulated by our strategic planning committee and with routine input from all members of Panama City Fire Department. With the identification of the S.W.O.T. analysis and input from the members of the department, this strategic plan was developed and implemented to begin working towards the premier fire department that we know we are and will continue to be. This document will serve as a tool to identify those areas we are working to improve and enhance, while providing a way to track progress at each of the various stages.

A review of this strategic plan will be conducted on a periodic basis to ensure we are meeting our benchmarks and deadlines. The success of our plan will come down to the implementation of this plan and through a concerted effort to better our organization and services provided to our citizens.

Strategic Goal #1: Implement Programs Which Promote and Foster Professional Development and Organizational Growth

Objective 1: Incorporate Professional Development Standards Within the Organization.

Tasks

- **Obtain CPSE / CFAI Accreditation**
Projected Completion: 2-3 Years
Cost: \$8500 Initial, \$6400 Annually
Responsibility: Fire Chief
- **Leadership Development for Future Officer's (Courses Obtained Through CPSE)**
Projected Completion: 1-2 Years
Cost: None
Responsibility: Assistant Fire Chief
- **Develop an Annual Leadership Program for Current Staff Officer's**
Projected Completion: 1-2 Years
Cost: None
Responsibility: Fire Chief
- **Enhance Officer Involvement with Developing Future Leaders**
Projected Completion: 1 Year
Cost: None
Responsibility: Assistant Fire Chief
- **Implementation of Career Development Plans (All Ranks / Personnel)**
Projected Completion: 1 Year
Cost: None
Responsibility: Assistant Fire Chief
- **Update Correspondence Manual to Assist with Proper Documentation Completion & Submission Requirements**
Projected Completion: 3 Months
Cost: None
Responsibility: Assistant Fire Chief

Strategic Goal #1: Implement Programs Which Promote and Foster Professional Development and Organizational Growth

Objective 2: Enhance Current Training Program

Tasks

- Meet Minimum Hourly ISO Requirements for Operations Personnel
Projected Completion: 1-2 Years
Cost: None
Responsibility: Chief of Training
- Meet Minimum Hourly ISO Requirements for Fire Prevention Personnel
Projected Completion: 1-2 Years
Cost: None
Responsibility: Chief of Training & Fire Prevention
- Enhance Mental Health Training (CISM) & Certifications of Firefighters
Projected Completion: 3-5 Years
Cost: \$2400 Annually
Responsibility: Chief of Training
- Development of Job Performance Requirements (JPR's)
Projected Completion: 3-4 Years
Cost: None
Responsibility: Chief of Training
- Development of a Secondary Training Facility
Projected Completion: 1-2 Year
Cost: None
Responsibility: Chief of Training

Strategic Goal #2: Enhance and Improve Awareness to the Public of PCFD's Services and Programs

Objective 1: Develop an Online Presence to Promote Transparency to the Public and all External Stakeholders

Tasks

- **Update Current Web Page**
Projected Completion: 1 Year
Cost: None
Responsibility: Fire Chief
- **Enhance Online Presence Through Social Media Platforms**
Projected Completion: Continuous
Cost: None
Responsibility: Fire Administration
- **Establish Transparency Through Monthly / Annual Report Posting**
Projected Completion: < 1 Month
Cost: None
Responsibility: Fire Chief
- **Development of a PSA Program on Various Fire Safety Topics**
Projected Completion: 1-2 Years
Cost: None
Responsibility: Chief of Fire Prevention
- **Obtain Community Input on Community Risk Reduction and Departmental Improvements**
Projected Completion: 2 Years
Cost: None
Responsibility: Fire Administration

Strategic Goal #2: Enhance and Improve Awareness to the Public of PCFD's Services and Programs

Objective 2: Develop Fire Safety Initiative Programs to Increase Awareness to the General Public

Tasks

- Develop & Implement a Youth Firesetter Program
Projected Completion: 1 Year
Cost: \$1000
Responsibility: Chief of Fire Prevention
- Development of a Community Risk Reduction Program
Projected Completion: 1-3 Years
Cost: None
Responsibility: Chief of Fire Prevention
- Meet 100% Completion Goal of Conducting Annual Inspections of All Commercial Structures in Panama City
Projected Completion: 1-2 Years
Cost: None
Responsibility: Chief of Fire Prevention

Strategic Goal #3: Provide Improvements to Infrastructure and Equipment

Objective 1: Provide Improvements & Updates to Current Fire Stations

Tasks

- **Move & Build Station 5**

Projected Completion: 3 Years

Cost: In Design Phase

Responsibility: Fire Administration

- **Move & Build Station 4**

Projected Completion: 5 Years

Cost: In Pre-Design Phase

Responsibility: Fire Administration

- **Move & Build Station 3**

Projected Completion: 4-5+ Years

Cost: In Pre-Design Phase

Responsibility: Fire Administration

- **Develop & Build a Fire Station in**

Panama City North

Projected Completion: 4-5+ Years

Cost: In Pre-Design Phase

Responsibility: Fire Administration

- **Incorporate Cancer Preventative**

Measures in all Stations

Projected Completion: 3-5 Years

Cost: Various / Grant Opportunities

Responsibility: Fire Administration &

Supply / Maintenance Captain

Strategic Goal #3: Provide Improvements to Infrastructure and Equipment

Objective 2: Update Aging Apparatus Fleet & Equipment

Tasks

- **Reinstitute Schedule for Apparatus Replacement Program**

Projected Completion: < 1 Year

Cost: None

Responsibility: Fire Administration & Supply / Maintenance Captain

- **Develop Schedule for Equipment Replacement Program**

Projected Completion: < 1 Year

Cost: None

Responsibility: Fire Administration & Supply / Maintenance Captain

- **Form Apparatus Committee to Design New Apparatuses**

Projected Completion: <1 Year

Cost: None

Responsibility: Fire Administration

- **Form Apparatus Committee to Design New Fire Boat Vessel**

Projected Completion: <1 Year

Cost: None

Responsibility: Fire Administration

- **Coordinate with Logistics Department to Build Robust Fleet Maintenance Program / Facility**

Projected Completion: 1-3 Years

Cost: None

Responsibility: Supply / Maintenance Captain

- **Update Current RMS Program with Apparatus / Maintenance Repairs & Scheduling for Better Tracking**

Projected Completion: 1 Year

Cost: None

Responsibility: Supply / Maintenance Captain

Strategic Goal #4: Improve Emergency Services Response & Capabilities

Objective 1: Provide Access to Data on All Apparatuses

Tasks

- **Install MDT's on All Apparatus**

Projected Completion: < 1 Year

Cost: \$32,500

Responsibility: Supply / Maintenance

Captain

- **Update RMS Data for Occupancy Management**

Projected Completion: 1-2 Years

Cost: None

Responsibility: Chief of Fire Prevention

- **Update RMS Data for Equipment / Apparatus Maintenance**

Projected Completion: 1 Year

Cost: None

Responsibility: Supply / Maintenance

Captain

Strategic Goal #4: Improve Emergency Services Response & Capabilities

Objective 2: Enhance Response Capabilities to Improve Response Times and Emergency Response

Tasks

- Enhance Overall Response Times / Provide Reduction in Turnout Times
Projected Completion: Continuous
Cost: None
Responsibility: Fire Administration / Operations Personnel
- Utilize Adaptive Modeling Software to Update Station / Apparatus Locations
Projected Completion: 1-5+ Years
Cost: Approximately \$17,000 Yearly
Responsibility: Fire Administration
- Update Apparatus Response Zones
Projected Completion: < 1 Year
Cost: None
Responsibility: Fire Administration
- Begin Planning for Expansion into Panama City North
Projected Completion: 1-5 Years
Cost: None Upfront / Various for New Station Builds, Equipment, Personnel
Responsibility: Fire Administration