

Identifying Strategic Planning Methods for Truro Township Fire Department

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the following statements are true:

1. This paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

2. I have affirmed the use of proper spelling and grammar in this document by using the spell and grammar check functions of a word processing software program and correcting the errors as suggested by the program.

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ABSTRACT

The problem is that the Truro Township Trustees had requested a strategic plan for the fire department, but the fire department had never produced such a plan. The purpose of this applied research project is to identify strategic planning methods to use within the Truro Township Fire Department. A descriptive research method was used to answer four questions: 1) Why is strategic planning essential in any organization? 2) How have other organizations implemented strategic planning? 3) Who should be involved in the planning process? 4) What structural elements of the strategic planning process should be used when producing an effective strategic plan for the Truro Township Fire Department?

Literature was reviewed in books, journals, and on-line documents and encompasses an evaluation of existing strategic plans from both public and private organizations. The literature review reveals a number of templates, models, systematic processes, and methodologies on the elements of a strategic planning process. The literature review verified the clear need for Truro Township Fire Department to develop and implement a strategic plan.

A survey was developed from the information gathered from the literature review. The purpose of the survey was to measure how other fire departments value the primary findings realized through the literature review. The following recommendations were made: submit a proposal outlining a strategic planning process to be approved by the Truro Township Trustees, identify stakeholders to the organization for the participation in the planning function, adopt key elements in the 10-step model outlined in the book, Fire department strategic planning (Wallace, 2006), and review the strategic plan at incremental benchmarks or after major changes that occur within the organization.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The problem that this research will address is that Truro Township Trustees had requested a strategic plan for the fire department, but the fire department has never produced such a plan. Having no strategic plan, Truro Township Fire Department (TTFD) has routinely addressed decision making in the present state with little regard to future impacts with the decisions made.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this applied research project is to identify a suitable outline for a strategic planning process that can be recommended to the Truro Township Trustees.

Research Questions

Using a descriptive research method, this applied research project will answer four questions:

1. Why is strategic planning essential in any organization?
2. How have other organizations implemented a strategic plan?
3. Who should be involved in the strategic planning process?
4. What structural elements of the strategic planning process should be used when producing an effective strategic plan for the Truro Township Fire Department?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Truro Township, Ohio is a small township situated in the southeast corner of Franklin County. According to the 2010 census, 26,837 people reside in the township, and of them 1,304 live within the unincorporated area. Many years ago, Truro Township covered a large geographical area in the southeast quadrant of Franklin County, but over time annexation by the City of Reynoldsburg, City of Columbus, and the Village of Brice reduced the unincorporated areas of the township to approximately four miles of roadway.

Truro Township is governed by three trustees who are elected to a four-year term. Two trustees are elected in the year after the presidential election, and one is elected in the year before it. The Township Fiscal Officer, also an elected position, serves a four-year term beginning on the year after the election. In summary, every two years, the elective board has the potential to change.

Truro Township provides two main services to its community; these areas include roads and cemetery as well as fire and emergency medical services. The Truro Township Road Department is staffed with one superintendent and one part-time seasonal employee. The Road Department provides snow removal, salt spreading, temporary road patching, mowing, berm work, road signs and the cleaning of storm drains for the unincorporated areas of the township, which encompasses approximately four miles of roadway. The Road Department's budget for 2014 was approximately \$88,000.00 with funding derived from the State's Motor Vehicle Gas and License Tax. The road department also maintains Silent Home Cemetery, a Truro Township facility that is 8.9 acres in size with over 3,500 burial plots and a Mausoleum. The cemetery's 2014 budget was approximately \$12,000.00. The budget is funded from the interest earned on a \$65,000 Cemetery Trust Fund and from cemetery fees.

Truro Township Fire Department (TTFD) employs 68 firefighter/paramedics; 43 are full-time and 25 are part-time members. There are four personnel assigned to the administrative division and 62 assigned to the operations division. The administrative officers include a fire chief, assistant fire chief, EMS coordinator, and a fire inspector. The operations division is staffed using a three-shift system, operating on a 24-hour on and 48-hours off rotation. Each shift is staffed with a battalion chief, two lieutenants, ten full-time firefighter/paramedics, and one part-time firefighter/paramedic operating out of two fire stations. Each station houses an advanced life support (ALS) engine and one ALS ambulance. The department's main station houses the on-duty battalion chief. TTFD responded to over 7,100 calls for service in 2014. Of these calls, 28% were mutual aid with Columbus, and 2% of the calls were with other surrounding communities. According to the Truro Township 2014 Comprehensive Financial Analysis Report (Truro Township, 2014), the township budget for fire protection and EMS services was \$7,756,860.00, funded through property tax and EMS billing revenues.

TTFD participates in automatic aid agreements with all of its contiguous neighbors. The department also belongs to the Metropolitan Emergency Communications Consortium (MECC). At the time of this research, the MECC is an informal group of six departments that collaborate to fund and manage an emergency dispatching 911 center. TTFD also belongs to the Metropolitan Emergency Consortium Emergency Medical Services (MEC EMS). MEC EMS is made up of twelve fire departments collaborating to manage medical direction, quality assurance, medical protocol, and education as it relates to EMS delivery.

TTFD holds a monthly officers' meeting on the first Wednesday of the month. This meeting is designed for the officers to discuss departmental issues and allows for the dissemination of departmental information to all officers in a face-to-face setting. The officers'

meeting agenda is set to allow for all officers to provide information and feedback or ask questions that may help in the day-to-day operations of the department. These meetings help with short-term operational planning for the time period between meetings, but they do not address any type of long-term strategic planning. TTFD has neither a strategic plan nor a master plan that conveys the mission, vision, or values of the department.

The only official planning that occurs is during the budget preparation each November when the chief and assistant chief prepare the annual budget. This budget process includes financial planning limited to the next calendar year. Input on expenditures for the next calendar year is solicited from all members of the department for the chiefs to consider while formulating the budget. However, this type of planning is short term and only deals with budget accounts for the following year.

TTFD provides many services to its community such as fire protection, fire and safety education, fire and life-safety inspections, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, and emergency management. With a small staff, keeping up with all of the mandatory training and reporting requirements while answering over nineteen calls for service a day can be a challenge and overwhelming at times. TTFD is comprised of a professional dedicated group of individuals who are well educated and competent; however, the majority of business decisions are made with a reactionary mind set and with very little planning as to how the decisions will affect the department not just in the short term, but also in the long term.

Currently TTFD operates on eight fire levies, equaling twenty mills, all of which are permanent. The last 3.9 mills were generated in 2012 when the administration discovered the emergent need for a levy. Because there was no strategic plan in place, decisions were made quickly with little data to use for future planning needs. TTFD made the decision that 1.8

million dollars was needed to keep from the layoff of three full-time firefighters and to continue to be able to provide the level of service that the community expected. During this time TTFD began to understand its need for strategic planning, and the Township Trustees requested for the fire department administration to develop a strategic plan so that this type of predicament would be identified well before its status would be deemed as urgent.

Truro Township Fire Department does not have a strategic plan to address its current and future needs. As with all governmental agencies, the demand to do more with less is unwavering and will exist well into the foreseeable future. This research will provide insight into the structural elements that help produce a strategic plan. The development of a strategic plan would provide a roadmap for success during the term of the plan and beyond. Such a plan would also provide a format whereby the department could clearly express the mission, vision, and values for all of its stakeholders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review utilized a review of books, journals, web-based literature and examples of current strategic plans. The literature review revealed models, templates, and methodologies for incorporating strategic planning within both public and private organizations. This section will identify important information in order to answer the following:

1. Why is strategic planning essential in any organization?
2. How have other organizations implemented a strategic plan?
3. Who should be involved in the strategic planning process?
4. What structural elements of the strategic planning process should be used when producing an effective strategic plan?

The meaning of strategic planning can be defined as the process of determining what an organization is, what the organization wants to be in the future, and how will the organization get there. The root word in strategic planning is strategy and is defined in three ways by Merriam – Webster’s Online Dictionary (2014) as the following:

1. “The science and art of employing the political, economic, psychological, and military forces of a nation or group of nations to afford the maximum support to adopted policies in peace or war.”
2. “A careful plan or method: a clever stratagem, the art of devising or employing plans or stratagems toward a goal.”
3. “An adaption or complex of adaption’s (as of behavior, metabolism, or structure) that serves or appears to serve an evolutionary success.”

James Bryson (2011, p 8), defines strategic planning as “a deliberative, disciplined approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an

organization (or other entity) is, what it does and why.” In short, strategic planning may be thought of as a “way of knowing” intended to help leaders and managers discern what to do, how, and why (Bryson, Crosby, & Bryson, 2009). Peter Drucker defines strategic planning as “the continuous process of making present entrepreneurial or risk-taking decisions systematically and with the greatest knowledge of the futurity; organizing the efforts needed to carry out these decisions; and measuring the results of the decisions against the expectations through organized systematic feedback” (Wallace, 2006, p. 46). Mark Wallace describes strategic planning as including “identifying the operations that need to be taken today to create an ideal future with a full understanding of the issues you face and the environment you function in” (2006, p.46).

The benefits that can be obtained utilizing a strategic plan are that it is results-oriented government (Jennings, 2010). A strategic plan affords direction and governance over the work of managers and employees to ensure their efforts are focused on achieving strategic goals and objectives (Poister & Streib, 2005). Barksdale and Lund explain that a strategic plan “serves as a communication vehicle for the company’s mission, vision, values and long-term objectives; and it inspires and excites employees, customers, partners, shareholders, and others about the organization as it operates today and in the future” (2006, p. 5). Furthermore, Cothran and Clouser (2009) describe the many benefits for strategic planning. An organization may benefit from the strategic planning process itself, in that they should have a better understanding of the organization’s present standing and its potential future standing. The organization can become efficient and effective, resulting in good strategically-routed decision making. Strategic planning also allows the organization to be able to articulate their mission, values, and values to their stakeholders.

Smriti Chand (2014) has concluded that there are six essential steps in the planning process:

1. Getting ready.
2. Defining the mission.
3. Assessing the situation/environment.
4. Developing strategies goals and objectives.
5. Implementing.
6. Evaluation and monitoring.

Chand believes the first step of the strategic planning process is getting ready as an organization. In order to start the planning process, there must be a basic understanding of the concepts of strategic planning. While there are a number of issues that must be dealt with assessing readiness, the leaders of the organization must truly be committed to the effort, and necessary attention and resources will need to be dedicated to the effort.

The second step is to define the mission. In this step, the organization develops a mission statement, which defines what its purpose is and why it exists. A mission statement usually describes an organization in terms of its purpose and values. The purpose articulates why the organization exists and what it seeks to accomplish by its methods and activities. The organizational values are principles or beliefs that guide the organization's members as they pursue the purpose.

The third step is assessing the situation /analyzing the environment. Once the organization has decided why it exists and what it does, it must assess its current situation. Current information is obtained about its strengths, weaknesses, and performance; this

information will highlight the critical issues that the organization faces and what the strategic plan must address.

The fourth step is to develop strategies, goals and objectives. Once an organization's mission has been asserted, its critical issues identified, the broad approaches to be taken (strategies), and the general and specific results to be sought (the goals and objectives) are developed.

Implementing plans/strategy implementation is the fifth step. Once the strategies have been designed, the next step is to implement them in order to find out if the desired outcomes are being achieved.

The final step is strategy evaluation and monitoring outcomes. This is when final feedback is generated about the outcomes of the strategy that was implemented. If projected outcomes are not evident in the end, then an alternative strategy must be developed.

The Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement (2014) has devised a four-phase approach to strategic planning. This approach involves assessing where the agency wants to go, looking at the agency's current situation, and developing and implementing approaches for moving forward. This approach develops a frame work encompassing four distinct stages.

Stage one is to prepare. In this stage, three critical steps are established prior to developing the strategic plan. Visioning, assessing, and the development and implementation of a planning process occur. In each of these areas, the need to review and build upon what is in place (i.e. vision statements, mission statements, agency assessments) and input from internal and external stakeholders takes place.

Stage two is to plan to plan. It establishes priorities by considering the agency's needs, strengths, and resources. Three questions need to be answered in this stage:

1. What do we want to accomplish?
2. What will we do when we get there?
3. How will we know if we are making progress?

The third stage of this approach involves implementation. The following steps are used to guide the work of the organization:

- Communicating or marketing the plan
- Managing the implementation of the plan
- Supervising the actual work
- Monitoring and reporting progress on the plan

The last stage is to review and revise. This stage starts the cycle over again allowing the plan to be a fluid process of updating. Continually reviewing and revising the strategic plan will keep it current and meaningful to the organization. On a continual basis the approach needs to:

- Assess its performance by collecting and analyzing information
- Review performance data and reassess goals, outcomes and strategies, and action steps and to make recommendations for revisions to the plan; and
- Revise the plan

Henry Cothran and Rodney Clouser in their paper Strategic planning for communities, non-profit organization and public agencies (2009) outlines the who, what, where, why, and how of strategic planning. They explain that individuals use planning all of the time in their own lives. The authors use the analogy of planning a family vacation, as in preparation of the trip, thought to what the family likes to do, how much do they have to spend, where they should go,

how should they travel, what should happen if plans change, etc. Most people put forth effort into planning a vacation. However, many do not see the importance in conducting the same type of planning in their organizations.

Cothran and Clouser (2009) go onto state that there are many benefits to strategic planning. The organization benefits in that they have a greater understanding of their current standing and its potential future standing. An organization utilizing strategic planning may become efficient and effective, resulting in strategically routed decision making. Strategic planning also provides a means of articulating their mission, values, and vision to their stakeholders.

Cothran and Clouser (2009) devised six tasks that need to be accomplished during the strategic planning. The first task is to “Get Ready;” getting ready involves:

1. Organizational profile development
2. Previous planning documents reviewed
3. Funding history development
4. Internal and external stakeholders that need to be included in the planning process are identified
5. Customer identification
6. Any needed outside assistance identified

The second task is to “Review the Organization’s Values, Mission, and Vision”. The organization needs to develop a list of core values that should be used while its members are conducting business day-in and day-out. If the organization already possesses a set of values, they need to be reviewed and updated accordingly.

Once the values are created, then the organization should develop a mission statement. An organization's mission statement describes its purpose, values, and business. Once completing the mission statement, a vision statement should be composed. A vision statement defines the purpose of the organization. It should answer the question of what you want to do.

Assessing the current situation is the third task. During this stage, the organization looks to analyze their strengths and weaknesses and works to identify both internal and external opportunities as well as threats (SWOT analysis).

Task four is to set goals for the future. In order to address the information obtained from the SWOT analysis, goals must be set. The authors offer a process using the acronym SMART to evaluate setting organizational goals. SMART stands for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.

The fifth task is to draft, revise, and adopt a plan. The draft plan connects the deliverables produced from the previous tasks into an interrelated document. This plan will provide detailed steps listing how, when, and by whom goals will be addressed. Also, the plan will include how to monitor progress, measure achievement, and report results.

The sixth and final task is to implement the plan. Using an operating plan, the strategic plan is implemented in incremental pieces. The operating plan is generally set up for a determined period of time, and it typically coincides with the organization's fiscal year. The strategies to be implemented for each section of the strategic plan are listed throughout the various sections of the plan.

American Society of Clinical Oncology (2009) explains that from an oncology practice perspective, there have been dramatic changes in reimbursements, technology, and the marketplace which should be a driving force to implement strategic planning. There is a need to

create direction and maximize options in an uncontrollable future. They believe strategic planning provides structure to make day-to-day decisions that are consistent with a larger vision. In their strategic planning model, they propose a similar model as discussed earlier in this paper. Their model includes composing mission and vision statements, conducting a SWOT analysis, determining goals and objectives, and developing an action plan to implement the strategic plan.

Jan Masaoka (2011) pointed out that in times of economic crises, a number of organizations are not able to work within their strategic plan due to the economy or because they made their plan without taking into consideration how they were going to fund it.

J.M. Bryson (2011) describes a ten-step strategic planning process as follows:

1. Identifying organizational mandates
2. Clarifying organizational mission values
3. Assessing the organization's external and internal environments
4. Identifying the strategic issues facing an organization
5. Formulating strategies and plans to manage the issues
6. Reviewing and adopting the strategies and plan
7. Establishing an effective organizational vision
8. Developing an effective implementation process
9. Reassessing strategies and the strategic planning process

Bryson promotes that these ten steps “should lead deliberately to actions, results, evaluations, and learning” (Bryson, 2011, p. 46). In short, implementation and evaluation are important parts of the process and should be constant throughout each step.

Samuel Frank states “strategic planning is a formal process that allows a governing board to assess the situation and prospects of the organization and to chart its future” (Frank, 2008).

Frank promotes formulating different kinds of planning into a comprehensive planning framework whereby public organizations can use an integrated planning process to achieve more reliable and significant results. The integrated planning process is comprised of plans for strategic planning, program planning, business planning, organizational development, identity development, advancement planning, human resource planning, technology planning, and facility planning. Strategic planning is a broad picture of mission and goals, and it should provide all staff with a sense of direction. Program planning covers the services the organization provides and the resources needed to deliver them. Business planning is critical for the organization in determining how it will be supported and how to sustain it. Organizational development includes recruitment and retention, professional development, and succession planning. Identity planning involves name recognition, branding, and marketing the organization. Advancement planning addresses the needs for advocacy, communications, and the need for potential fundraising. Human resource planning looks at a broad range of issues from professional development to personnel policies. Technology planning includes keeping up to date with technological advancements and comparing those to budgetary constraints. Finally, facility planning includes future construction and ongoing operating and maintenance issues.

The National Alliance for Media Art and Culture (NAMAC, 2014) developed a simple strategic planning model from the Alliance for Nonprofit Management. In the NAMAC strategic planning process model are five steps that includes areas on getting ready, articulating mission and values, assessing the situation, developing strategies, goals, and objectives, and finally completing the written strategic plan.

Within the NAMAC process model, Step One: Getting Ready addresses the organization's leadership commitment. This step determines whether the organization can

devote itself to the strategic planning process, considering any unforeseen circumstances that may hinder the plan's progress. For example, it would not be in the organization's best interest to begin the process if a funding crisis looms or if the organization is approaching turbulent times. During this step, a "work plan" is developed, which identifies specific issues the process should address, clarifies roles, develops the organization's profile, and collects vital information to make decisions.

Step Two: Articulating Mission and Vision identifies the organization's focus and purpose. Within the mission statement, it should be stated what the organization wants to achieve, its method used to accomplish its purpose, and its core principles that guide the organization's decision-making. The vision statement will describe and identify the organization's view of success.

Step Three: Assessing the Situation is the step where the organization identifies a data base of its own strengths, weaknesses, and current performance, highlighting critical issues the strategic plan should address. Examples of critical issues that an organization may need to consider may include: changes in leadership, training needs, and/or funding issues. The organization needs to agree upon the most important five to ten issues with which to organize the strategic plan.

Step Four: Developing Strategies, Goals, and Objectives identifies the approaches needed and the specific results the organization seeks. The group's leaders must agree upon the approach in addressing the critical issues. This step will most likely take a great deal of time, patience, and flexibility within discussions where oftentimes additional information will need to be gathered. During this step, conclusions may be reevaluated, and it is possible that new insights may alter the mission statement. It is not unusual for organizations to revert back and

revise previous steps in the process using new information and conclusions to create a better strategic plan. The end product of this step is an outline that includes the general approach, the organization's major goals, and objectives of the organization's critical issues.

Step Five: Completing the Written Plan is a compilation of the work completed in steps one through four, composed within a written document. The draft is presented to the leadership for review. Once the leadership has been provided time for review, there needs to be time provided for discourse in order to determine the plan's ability to be translated into a plan of action and to ensure that the priorities and goals of the organization have been met. The final product of the step is a strategic plan.

Carter McNamara (2011) teaches that there is no one flawless process when it comes to a strategic planning model. The planning model depends on the organization's perspective, culture, and needs. McNamara has developed six models for planning.

Model one is vision-based or goals-based planning. This is the traditional style of strategic planning. Determining the vision, values, and mission statement is core to this process.

Model two is issues-based planning. This model is tailored for organizations that are experiencing limited resources, several large current issues, and little or no experience in strategic planning. This planning approach takes on the major issues, provides solutions for the issues, and implements the plans in an attempt to fix them.

Model three is the alignment model. This model focuses on aligning the organization's mission and resources to the operations. This is sometimes used to adjust existing plans or refocus strategies.

Scenario planning is model four. This method can be used with other models to ensure strategic thinking is being used during the planning process. In this model, the organization

designs scenarios to test potential changes and external forces and how they might affect the organization.

Model five is the organic or self-organizing model. This model stresses referencing the organization's common agreed upon values and continually assessing actions as they relate to the values. This process is centered on learning about the organization and not necessarily the methods being used.

The final model, model six, uses real-time planning. This model uses a traditional style planning process for developing the initial plan, but also looks at real time information to assess trends, forecast customer changes, budgetary changes, and program changes.

After conducting the literature review, it was determined that there are several factors that must be considered when developing a strategic planning process for an organization. To be successful, an organization's leadership must be committed to the process, and all members must be educated on the structural elements that are involved in developing a plan. The organization must spend time planning to plan.

PROCEDURES

The Truro Township Fire Department has never had a strategic plan to provide direction in determining future goals and objectives. The descriptive research method was used to identify a suitable outline for a strategic planning process that can be recommended to the Truro Township Trustees. The descriptive methodology was used to research literature and opinions regarding strategic planning. This included research from the local library, the Internet, and the research database of papers submitted to the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy. Information and data on strategic planning was obtained from both public and private organizations.

The first question asked: Why is strategic planning essential in any organization? The literature review was used to analyze what benefits may be anticipated by the development of a strategic planning process. The review consisted of identifying elements of strategic planning and their direct positive impact on the organization. The review was focused to locate those elements of strategic planning that makes developing a plan essential for TTFD.

The second question asked: How have other organizations implemented a strategic plan? The literature was reviewed to study how other organizations have implemented a strategic plan and their experiences both positive and negative. The review consists of identifying links between successful implementation and links to unsuccessful implementation of strategic planning in organizations. The procedures are focused to identify elements to successful implementation and their potential for use at TTFD.

The third question asked: Who should be involved in the strategic planning process? The literature review was used to analyze many different planning processes and who from the organization was involved in the development. The review defines organization stakeholders

and how they could be utilized in the development of strategic planning. The procedures were focused on understanding who should be involved in developing a strategic plan at TTFD and how they should be utilized.

The fourth and final question asked: What structural elements of the strategic planning process should be used when producing an effective strategic plan for the Truro Township Fire Department? The literature was used to locate those elements that can be identified as pertinent to the current points of background and significance that face TTFD. The structural elements that make up strategic plans of other organizations and the comment, analysis, and experiences of others were reviewed for the probability that it could be applied at TTFD.

A survey was developed from the information gathered in the literature review. The purpose of the survey was to measure how other fire departments value the primary findings realized through the literature review. The survey questions closely correlated to the four questions of the applied research project. The survey was distributed to 592 fire chiefs in Ohio via email. The survey was developed, delivered, and the results analyzed through the program Google Forms. The data received was not separated by categories and was reviewed based on total responses.

Limitations of the Study

The research project is subject to certain limitations and assumptions. Due to the vast amount of reference material on the subject of strategic planning, the author choose to focus his research to that material that was centered on the process and structural elements of strategic planning that could be more easily adaptable to a fire service organization such as TTFD. Also, the author had little experience and knowledge in survey preparation, survey question

development, and data analysis and compilation. These limitations could lead to different results if the survey was completed and compiled by a researcher with significant experience.

An assumption was made that all respondents would understand the survey questions, possess the knowledge and ability to answer the survey appropriately and honestly, and would submit the survey in a reasonable amount of time.

RESULTS

The results of this applied research project have been compiled from the literature review and survey information. A survey was completed to collect information from other departments in Ohio regarding perspectives on strategic planning. The survey was emailed to 592 fire chiefs. These email addresses were obtained from the Ohio Association of Fire Chiefs email directory. Of the 592 emails sent, 129 fire chiefs completed the survey for a 22% response rate. The survey letter and survey are included in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. The survey results are included in Appendix 3. Of the 129 respondents 62.79% or 81 possess a strategic plan and 37.21% or 48 do not. The results of the survey relate to all four research questions. The following results are provided to answer the four research questions.

Why is strategic planning essential in any organization? All of the literature agreed that strategic planning was an essential aspect of a successful organization regardless it's type. When researching this question, much of it focused on fire service strategic planning. Mark Wallace stated in his book, *Fire department strategic planning: Creating future excellence*, "a department that isn't moving forward is dying or, at least, in danger of dying. The members of a department know this instinctively. A stagnant department is typified by frustrated and nonproductive members with low morale. A fire department that knows where it is going, knows the environment in which it must operate, and has identified how to get there has the best chance of achieving its goals and desires" (Wallace, 2006).

Question 1 of the survey asked to what degree it is important for a department to possess a strategic plan. Of the 129 respondents, 35.66% or 46 indicated strategic planning is very important, 43.41% or 56 indicated it is somewhat important, 17.05% or 22 were neutral, and

3.88% or 5 indicated it was not very important. The results indicate that 79.07% or 102 fire chiefs believe that it is important for a department to possess a strategic plan.

The respondents from the survey were asked to submit their department's strategic plan, which along with the literature review helped to provided information on how other organizations have implemented a strategic plan.

The Colerain Township Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services Strategic Plan (2015) is a five year plan. The fire department utilized the community-focused strategic planning process in the development of their plan. Representatives from township elected officials, fire department personnel, neighboring public safety officials, residents, and members of the business community made up the planning committee. The strategic plan is divided into the following areas:

1. Message from the fire chief
2. Organizational Overview
3. Mission, Vision and Values
 - a. Mission Statement
 - b. Risk Statement
 - c. Vision Statements
 - d. Values
4. The Planning Process
 - a. SWOT Analysis
5. Strategic Goals, Objectives and Critical Tasks
 - a. Strategic Plan Framework
 - b. Strategic Goal #1

- c. Strategic Goal #2
 - d. Strategic Goal #3
 - e. Strategic Goal #4
 - f. Strategic Goal #5
 - g. Strategic Goal #6
- 6. Plan Implementation
 - 7. Glossary of Terms
 - 8. Appendices
 - a. Appendix A: Strategic Plan Goal #1 Review Worksheet
 - b. Appendix A: Strategic Plan Goal #2 Review Worksheet
 - c. Appendix A: Strategic Plan Goal #3 Review Worksheet
 - d. Appendix A: Strategic Plan Goal #4 Review Worksheet
 - e. Appendix A: Strategic Plan Goal #5 Review Worksheet
 - f. Appendix A: Strategic Plan Goal #6 Review Worksheet

Each goal is supported by and accomplished through a series of objectives and critical tasks. The goals are defined as overarching visionary statements that help guide in the decision making for the department. The objectives attached to a goal, outline a plan of tasks or actions for accomplishing the goal. Goals are reevaluated annually as part of an overall review of the strategic plan.

The Washington Township Fire Department (Montgomery County) (2015) Strategic Plan is a five year plan. The strategic planning process was originally conducted in 2010. A community- centered strategic planning process was used to create the strategic plan update in 2015.

The strategic plan is divided into the following areas:

1. Executive summary
2. Table of Contents
3. Acknowledgements
4. Introduction
5. Organizational History and Overview
6. Mission, Vision, and Values Statement
7. Process
8. Goals
 - a. Goal #1
 - b. Goal #2
 - c. Goal #3
 - d. Goal #4
 - e. Goal #5
 - f. Goal #6
 - g. Goal #7
 - h. Goal #8
9. Appendix A (Public Input Survey)
10. Appendix B (internal Survey)
11. Appendix C (SWOT Analysis)
12. References

In this plan, key steps or critical tasks are identified for implementing each of the goals, resources needed, and a timeline for completion. Each individual goal was assigned a timeline

for review of: Short-term: up to one year, Midterm: one year to three years, or Long-term: three to five years.

The Loveland-Symmes Fire Department Strategic Plan (2013) is a three to five year plan. It is divided into the following areas:

1. Message from the Fire Chief
2. Organizational Philosophies
3. Master Strategic Goals
4. Detailed Goals and Objectives
 - a. Goal #1
 - b. Goal #2
 - c. Goal #3
 - d. Goal #4
 - e. Goal #5
 - f. Goal #6
5. Programs
6. Physical Resources
7. Human Resources
8. Training and Competency
9. Essential Resources
10. External Relationships
11. Appendix – Fire Station Distribution and Service Area Map

In this plan, each goal is supported by and accomplished through a series of objectives and critical tasks. A timeframe and funding estimate are also listed with each objective. This plan was developed using only internal stakeholders of the department.

The Sandusky Fire Department Strategic Plan (2012) is a three year plan that was designed by me members of the department and community advocates. The strategic plan is divided in to the following area:

1. Introduction
2. Strategic Planning Process
3. Sandusky Fire Department Organizational Chart
4. Strategic Planning Timeline
5. Functions
6. Demographics
7. 5 Year Budget Comparison
8. Sandusky Fire Department Organizational Chart
9. Mission Statement
10. Organizational Values
11. Code of Conduct
12. Initiatives
13. Strategic Initiatives 1/Objectives
14. Strategic Initiatives 2 / Objectives
15. Strategic Initiatives 3 / Objectives
16. Strategic Initiatives 4 / Objectives
17. Strategic Initiatives 5 / Objectives

18. Strategic Initiatives 6 / Objectives
19. Strategic Initiatives 7 / Objectives
20. Strategic Initiatives 8 / Objectives
21. Strategic Initiatives 9 / Objectives
22. Strategic Initiatives 10 / Objectives
23. Oversight and Review Committee
24. Appendix A – Participants
25. Appendix B – Progress Report

In this plan, each initiative is supported by objectives to be completed. Each initiative was assigned a gatekeeper and a committee to complete the objectives through a three month benchmarking progress. This plan was developed using internal stakeholders and external stakeholders of the department.

Who should be involved in the planning process? Multiple strategic plans were reviewed to determine which stake holders should be involved in the planning process. Colerain Township Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services used both internal and external stakeholders to produce their plan. Internal stakeholders were selected from a cross-section of the department ranging from command staff to line-level employees from throughout the organizational hierarchy. External stakeholders were made up from township elected officials, peer public safety agencies, residents, and business representatives of the community.

The Washington Township Fire Department used a community-centered planning process to complete their plan. A cross-section of the department's membership and external stakeholders from various areas of the community worked in conjunction during the planning

process. The Ohio Association of Fire Chiefs served as the planning team facilitator for the project.

Questions 3 through 9 of the survey focused on who should be involved in the planning process. When asked how important it is to have citizens of the community involved in your fire department's strategic planning process, the responses were 24.81% or 32 indicated it is very important, 31.78% or 41 indicated it is somewhat important, 33.33% or 43 were neutral, 7.75% or 10 indicated it was not very important, and 2.33% or 3 indicated it was not at all important. When asked how important it is to have elected officials involved in your fire department's strategic planning process, the responses were 44.96% or 58 indicated it is very important, 35.66% or 46 indicated it is somewhat important, 13.95% or 18 were neutral, 4.65% or 6 indicated it was not very important, and .78% or 1 indicated it was not at all important. When asked how important it is to have the fire chief involved in your fire department's strategic planning process, the responses were 88.37% or 114 indicated it is very important, 10.08% or 13 indicated it is somewhat important, and 1.55% or 2 were neutral. When asked how important it is to have command staff involved in your fire department's strategic planning process, the responses were 80.62% or 104 indicated it is very important, 17.05% or 22 indicated it is somewhat important, 1.55% or 2 were neutral, and .78% or 1 indicated it was not very important. When asked how important it is to have company officers involved in your fire department's strategic planning process, the responses were 53.49% or 69 indicated it is very important, 34.88% or 45 indicated it is somewhat important, 10.08% or 13 were neutral, and 1.55% or 2 indicated it was not very important. When asked how important it is to have firefighters involved in your fire department's strategic planning process, the responses were 40.31% or 52 indicated it is very important, 31.01% or 40 indicated it is somewhat important, 22.48% or 29

were neutral, 5.43% or 7 indicated it was not very important, and .78% or 1 indicated it was not at all important. When asked how important it is to have civilian employees involved in your fire department's strategic planning process, the responses were 12.40% or 16 indicated it is very important, 26.36% or 34 indicated it is somewhat important, 34.11% or 44 were neutral, 20.93% or 27 indicated it was not very important, and 6.20% or 8 indicated it was not at all important.

And finally, when asked how important it is to have consultants involved in your fire department's strategic planning process, the responses were 6.20% or 8 indicated it is very important, 18.60% or 24 indicated it is somewhat important, 34.88% or 45 were neutral, 29.46% or 38 indicated it was not very important, and 10.85% or 14 indicated it was not at all important.

What structural elements of the strategic planning process should be used when producing an effective plan for the Truro Township Fire Department? There were various authors that provided key structural elements for a strategic plan. The following are examples that will be valuable in developing a strategic plan for TTFD. In the book titled, *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement* (2011), the author describes a ten-step strategic planning process as follows:

1. Initiating and agreeing on a strategic planning process
2. Identifying organizational mandates
3. Clarifying organizational mission values
4. Assessing the organization's external and internal environments
5. Identifying the strategic issues facing an organization
6. Formulating strategies and plans to manage the issues
7. Reviewing and adopting the strategies and plan

8. Establishing an effective organizational vision
9. Developing an effective implementation process
10. Reassessing strategies and the strategic planning process

In addition, the book Fire department strategic planning (Wallace, 2006) the author identified the following structural elements in strategic planning:

1. Understanding and applying the values of the department
2. Identifying the department's mandates
3. Developing the mission of the department
4. Understanding and defining the philosophy of operation
5. Assessing the challenges and opportunities of the external environment
6. Assessing the weaknesses and strengths of the internal environment
7. Identifying the strategic issues faced by the department
8. Creating strategic goals for the strategic issues
9. Creating the department's ideal future through proactive futuring
10. Operational planning from a strategic perspective

DISCUSSION

The results of this applied research project undoubtedly show a need for TTFD to develop and implement a strategic plan. The purpose of this applied research project was to determine why strategic planning is essential for any organization, determine how other organizations have implemented a strategic plan, who should be involved in the strategic planning process, and to determine what structural elements of the strategic planning process should be used when producing an effective strategic plan for TTFD.

Before this research could begin, it was important to determine what exactly a strategic plan was, in order to understand its definition. Several authors describe strategic planning and provide the elements necessary for a productive plan, but seldom was there a true definition of strategic planning. James Bryson (2011, p 8), defines strategic planning as “a deliberative, disciplined approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does and why.” Peter Drucker defines strategic planning as “the continuous process of making present entrepreneurial or risk-taking decisions systematically and with the greatest knowledge of the futurity; organizing the efforts needed to carry out these decisions; and measuring the results of the decisions against the expectations through organized systematic feedback” (Wallace, 2006, p. 46). Having an understandable definition of what strategic planning was provided a clear perspective for the author and will assist in the development of a strategic plan for TTFD.

The next item of research was to determine why strategic planning was essential for TTFD. The author discovered through a wide range of research that no fire department, private entity, or public organization stated that strategic planning was a bad idea or that it is not recommended. The Strategic Planning Survey revealed, of the 129 responses, 101 fire chiefs

stated that strategic planning was somewhat or very important for their organization, with only 81 of the respondents actually having a current strategic plan. All literature and organizations reviewed demonstrated that strategic planning was essential to their department/organization's future. TTFD will need to move forward with the development and implementation of a strategic plan, as there will be more harm in doing nothing.

This study revealed there are many variables when implementing a strategic plan at TTFD. Carter McNamara's perspective on strategic planning centered on deciding what the desired goal of the project is. McNamara described six reasons that organizations adopt to guide their process. Two of the six listed strategic purposes, vision or goal-based and issue-based strategic planning was found in several of the other pieces of literature reviewed for this study. One additional purpose of strategic planning was demonstrated by several organizations which is community driven strategic planning. Colerain Township and Washington Township (Montgomery County) Fire Departments are great examples of how an organization with strong mission, defined vision, and clear values can implement this type of approach.

Strategic planning needs people to get accomplished. These stakeholders need to be committed to the process. Without out the buy-in of those involved, the project is doomed for failure or after completion to sit on a shelf never to be followed. Research conducted into who should be involved in the planning process for TTFD revealed a list of key internal and external stakeholders. It should be noted that no author recommended that only internal stakeholders be involved in the planning process. As part of the strategic planning committee, TTFD should assign individuals from a cross section of all levels of the organization to include firefighters, company officers, chief officers, and elected officials. External members should be represented

by community members, business owners, neighboring department members, and other public agency members that interact with TTFD.

The literature reviewed clearly illustrated the opportunity to draw on the several well-regarded structural elements to produce a strategic plan. The specific elements that will be incorporated into the plan should be realized in simple terms through self-assessment of organizational beginning, purpose, ethics, values, and future. There are four fundamental questions to be answered as suggested by Kouwe (2010):

1. Where are we now?
2. Where are we going?
3. How do we get there?
4. How do we measure our progress?

There were several pieces of literature reviewed for this project, all of which determined that while there are many different models that can be used in the strategic planning process, the one chosen must fit the organization. Strategic planning models are just that, models, and should be used to guide an organization through their own individual and unique process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem statement for this project was that the Truro Township Trustees had requested a strategic plan for the fire department, but the fire department has never produced such a plan. Having no strategic plan, TTFD has routinely addressed decision making in the present state with little regard to future impacts with decisions made. Based on this problem, the purpose of this applied research project was to identify the elements of a strategic planning process and identify a suitable outline for a strategic planning process that can be recommended to the Truro Township Trustees. The following recommendations are derived from the successful elements discovered through this applied research project that will assist TTFD in producing a quality strategic plan, one that will assist in sound decision making in an effort to realize a successful future.

The following steps are recommended to be used by TTFD in developing a strategic plan:

Step 1: Assist the fire chief in putting together a strategic planning proposal to be submitted and approved by the Truro Township Board of Trustees. This approved proposal will outline the planning process and the stakeholders involved.

Step2: Identify stakeholders to the organization to form a planning committee. Members of this committee should be assigned from the following areas:

1. Fire fighters (3 members, 1 from each shift)
2. Lieutenants (3 members, 1 from each shift)
3. Battalion Chiefs (1 member)
4. Assistant Chief
5. Fire Chief
6. Trustees (1 trustee)

7. Residents of Community (1 representative)
8. Business Community (1 representative)
9. City of Reynoldsburg (1 representative)
10. Reynoldsburg Police Department (1 representative)

Once the strategic planning committee is put together, it is recommended that the committee be provided education on the intent and purpose of a strategic plan. This education will help provide clear expectations and objectives for the strategic planning process.

Step 3: It is recommended that the strategic planning committee adopt key elements in the 10-step model as outlined by Mark Wallace in the book, *Fire department strategic planning* (Wallace, 2006). These key elements are:

1. Understanding and applying the values of the department
2. Identifying the department's mandates
3. Developing the mission of the department
4. Understanding and defining the philosophy of operation
5. Assessing the challenges and opportunities of the external environment
6. Assessing the weaknesses and strengths of the internal environment
7. Identifying the strategic issues faced by the department
8. Creating strategic goals for the strategic issues
9. Creating the department's ideal future through proactive suturing
10. Operational planning from a strategic perspective

The research data collected revealed multiple strategic plans with elements that appear to have both benefits and barriers; however, there was no one plan that appeared more outstanding than another. The elements outlined by Wallace are seemingly straight-forward, systematic, and orderly, and the elements' simplistic nature are a good match for a department with no strategic planning experience. With any planning committee, flexibility is essential in implementation, so some of the elements mentioned may be deemed unnecessary and others may need additional support, as assessed by the TTFD strategic planning committee.

Step 4: Once the committee produces a final strategic plan for TTFD, the fire chief will submit the document to the Truro Township Trustees for formal adoption.

Step 5: Review plan at scheduled incremental benchmarks or during any major change within the department.

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APPENDIX 1 – OFE SURVEY LETTER

Dear Chief,

My name is Jeff Sharps and I am an Assistant Chief with the Truro Township Fire Department in Reynoldsburg, Ohio. I am currently attending Class 14 of the Ohio Fire Executive program sponsored by the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association. As a requirement of the program, I am doing a research paper. My subject is strategic planning. Below, you will find a link to a survey. This survey has been developed to assist in gathering feedback and opinions regarding different facets of strategic planning. I will be extremely grateful if you would take a few minutes and complete this survey. No data collected from individual departments will be reported separately. All the responses will be reported as grouped data.

I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to read this email and complete the survey. Your assistance will help to enhance and complete my research efforts.

Please click this link to start the survey: <https://goo.gl/OeKZRI>

Regards,
Jeff Sharps
Assistant Fire Chief
Truro Township Fire Department
6900 E. Main Street
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068
Office #614-729-1902

APPENDIX 2 – STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY

Strategic Planning Survey

Please provide your department's name *

1. To what degree is it essential for a department to possess a strategic plan? *

1 2 3 4 5

not essential extremely essential

2. Does your fire department currently have a strategic plan? *

3. How important do you believe it is to have citizens of the community to be involved in your fire department's strategic planning process? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

4. How important do you believe it is to have elected officials to be involved in your fire department's strategic planning process? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

5. How important do you believe it is to have the fire chief to be involved in your fire department's strategic planning process? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

6. How important do you believe it is to have command staff (deputy chief, assistant chief, battalion chief) to be involved in your fire department's strategic planning process? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

7. How important do you believe it is to have company officers (captain, lieutenant) to be involved in your fire department's strategic planning process? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

8. How important do you believe it is to have firefighters to be involved in your fire department's strategic planning process? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

9. How important do you believe it is to have civilian employees to be involved in your fire department's strategic planning process? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

10. How important do you believe it is to have consultants to be involved in your fire department's strategic planning process? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

11. How important do you think the use of a mission statement is in developing a strategic plan? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

12. How important do you think the use of the department's vision is in developing a strategic plan? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

13. How important do you think the use of the department's values is in developing a strategic plan? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

14. How important do you think the use of the department's mandates is in developing a strategic plan? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

15. How important do you think the understanding and defining the philosophy of operations is in developing a strategic plan? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

16. How important do you think it is to assess the external environment in developing a strategic plan? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

17. How important do you think it is to assess the internal environment in developing a strategic plan? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

18. How important do you think identifying the strategic issues facing the fire department is in developing a strategic plan? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

19. How important do you think operational goals are in developing a strategic plan? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

20. How important do you think operational planning from a strategic perspective is in developing a strategic plan? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

21. Rate the value of resource allocation to appropriate areas as it relates to strategic planning: *

1 2 3 4 5

no value high value

22. Rate the value of awareness for needed change as it relates to strategic planning: *

1 2 3 4 5

no value high value

23. Rate the value of identifying fire department strengths and weaknesses as it relates to strategic planning: *

1 2 3 4 5

no value high value

24. Rate the value of identifying potential department opportunities or threats as it relates to strategic planning: *

1 2 3 4 5

no value high value

25. Rate the value of under-performing areas that can be identified and corrected or eliminated as it relates to strategic planning: *

1 2 3 4 5

no value high value

26. Rate the value of assessing operational issues as it relates to strategic planning: *

1 2 3 4 5

no value high value

27. How important is it for the strategic plan to address apparatus replacement? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

28. How important is it for the strategic plan to address personnel issues/staffing? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

29. How important is it for the strategic plan to address funding issues? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

30. How important is it for the strategic plan to address a customer needs assessment? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

31. How important is it for the strategic plan to address organizational structure? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

32. How important is it for the strategic plan to address stations/facilities? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

33. How important is it for the strategic plan to address services provided? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

34. How important is it for the strategic plan to address training? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

35. How important is it for the strategic plan to address succession planning? *

1 2 3 4 5

not important very important

37. Should a strategic plan be approved by the department's governing board prior to implementation? *

- yes
- no

APPENDIX 3 – STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Questions	Very Important	Some What Important	Neutral	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	Total	Weighted Average
	5	4	3	2	1		
1. To what degree is it important for a department to possess a strategic plan?	35.66% 46	43.41% 56	17.05% 22	3.88% 5	0.00% 0	129	4.11
3. How Important do you believe it is to have citizens of the community to be involved in your fire department's strategic planning process?	24.81% 32	31.78% 41	33.33% 43	7.75% 10	2.33% 3	129	3.69
4. How important do you believe it is to have elected officials to be involved in your fire department's strategic planning process?	44.96% 58	35.66% 46	13.95% 18	4.65% 6	0.78% 1	129	4.19
5. How important do you believe it is to have the fire chief involved in the strategic fire department's planning process?	88.37% 114	10.08% 13	1.55% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	129	4.87
5. How important do you believe it is to have command staff involved in the strategic fire department's planning process?	80.62% 104	17.05% 22	1.55% 2	0.78% 1	0.00% 0	129	4.78
6. How important do you believe it is to have company officers involved in the strategic fire department's planning process?	53.49% 69	34.88% 45	10.08% 13	1.55% 2	0.00% 0	129	4.40
7. How important do you believe it is to have firefighters involved in the strategic fire department's planning process?	40.31% 52	31.01% 40	22.48% 29	5.43% 7	0.78% 1	129	4.05
8. How important do you believe it is to have civilian employees involved in the strategic fire department's planning process?	12.40% 16	26.36% 34	34.11% 44	20.93% 27	6.20% 8	129	3.18
9. How important do you believe it is to have consultants involved in the strategic fire department's planning process?	6.20% 8	18.60% 24	34.88% 45	29.46% 38	10.85% 14	129	2.80
10. How important do you think the use of a mission statement is in developing a strategic plan?	44.96% 58	30.23% 39	17.05% 22	4.65% 6	3.10% 4	129	4.09
11. How important do you think the use of a vision statement is in developing a strategic plan?	51.94% 67	37.98% 49	6.98% 9	1.55% 2	1.55% 2	129	4.37
12. How important do you think the use of the department's values is in developing a strategic plan?	51.94% 67	41.86% 54	3.88% 5	1.55% 2	0.78% 1	129	4.43
13. How important do you think the use of the department's mandates is in developing a strategic plan?	32.56% 42	41.86% 54	24.03% 31	1.55% 2	0.00% 0	129	4.05
14. How important do you think understanding and defining the philosophy of operations is in developing a strategic plan?	43.41% 56	37.98% 49	17.05% 22	1.55% 2	0.00% 0	129	4.23
15. How important do you think it is to assess the external environment in developing a strategic plan?	43.41% 56	40.31% 52	13.18% 17	3.10% 4	0.00% 0	129	4.24
16. How important do you think it is to assess the internal environment in developing a strategic plan?	46.51% 60	38.76% 50	11.63% 15	3.10% 4	0.00% 0	129	4.29
17. How important do you think identifying strategic issues is in developing a strategic plan?	65.89% 85	30.23% 39	3.10% 4	0.78% 1	0.00% 0	129	4.61

Survey Questions Continued	Very Important	Some What Important	Neutral	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	Total	Weighted Average
	5	4	3	2	1		
18. How important do you think operational goals are in developing a strategic plan?	56.59% 73	34.88% 45	6.98% 9	0.78% 1	0.78% 1	129	4.46
19. How important do you think operational planning from a strategic perspective is in developing a strategic plan?	46.51% 60	46.51% 60	6.20% 8	0.00% 0	0.78% 1	129	4.38
20. Rate the value of resource allocation to appropriate areas as it relates to strategic planning?	36.43% 47	48.84% 63	13.95% 18	0.78% 1	0.00% 0	129	4.21
21. Rate the value of awareness for needed change as it relates to strategic planning?	48.84% 63	44.96% 58	5.43% 7	0.78% 1	0.00% 0	129	4.42
22. Rate the value of identifying potential department opportunities or threats as it relates to strategic planning?	55.04% 71	39.53% 51	5.43% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	129	4.50
23. Rate the value of under-performing are that can be identified and corrected or eliminated as it relates to strategic planning?	48.84% 63	41.09% 53	9.30% 12	0.78% 1	0.00% 0	129	4.38
24. Rate the value of assessing operational issues as it relates to strategic planning?	46.51% 60	43.41% 56	10.08% 13	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	129	4.36
25. How important is it for the strategic plan to address apparatus replacement?	52.71% 68	31.78% 41	13.95% 18	1.55% 2	0.00% 0	129	4.36
26. How important is it for the strategic plan to address personnel issues and staffing?	62.79% 81	30.23% 39	5.43% 7	1.55% 2	0.00% 0	129	4.54
27. How important is it for the strategic plan to address funding issues?	68.22% 88	26.36% 34	5.43% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	129	4.63
28. How important is it for the strategic plan to address a customer needs assessment?	63.57% 82	27.91% 36	7.75% 10	0.78% 1	0.00% 0	129	4.54
29. How important is it for the strategic plan to address organizational structure?	35.66% 46	50.39% 65	12.40% 16	1.55% 2	0.00% 0	129	4.20
30. How important is it for the strategic plan to address stations/facilities?	44.19% 57	44.96% 58	10.08% 13	0.78% 1	0.00% 0	129	4.33
31. How important is it for the strategic plan to address services provided?	64.34% 83	33.33% 43	1.55% 2	0.78% 1	0.00% 0	129	4.61
32. How important is it for the strategic plan to address training?	54.26% 70	34.88% 45	10.08% 13	0.78% 1	0.00% 0	129	4.43
33. How important is it for the strategic plan to address succession planning?	40.31% 52	45.74% 59	12.40% 16	1.55% 2	0.00% 0	129	4.25
34. How important is it for the strategic plan to address?	18.18% 8	40.91% 18	25.00% 11	13.64% 6	2.27% 1	44	3.59

	Yes	No	Total
2. Does your fire department currently have a strategic plan?	62.79% 81	37.21% 48	129
35. Should a strategic plan be approved by the department's board prior to implementation?	86.05% 111	13.95% 18	129