



Southern Marin Fire Protection District

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

A nationally recognized, forward leaning all-risk service provider that delivers excellence in all-hazards risk response, in maintaining strategic community partnerships, in hiring, training and retaining exceptional people, and in implementing efficiencies in service provision to ensure fiscal sustainability, stewardship, and accountability to the communities we serve.

Last Updated: 2020



INTRODUCTION

Establishing a vision can be best described as visualizing a future state of the organization. It is a defined set of aspirations. Think of it in terms of, “As I reflect on my career in my retirement; where do I want my District to be”?

Articulating a vision is the foundation of the work we do, and the choices we make in designing a strategic plan, an annual work plan, and the choices we make each day at work. It helps us answer the question, “what am I doing today that moves us closer to that aspired destination”?

This document comes from reflecting on our past as an organization and lessons learned; those experiences that capture our organization’s strengths and weaknesses, and the future which is firmly rooted in the analysis of our organization’s needs in achieving our mission and commitment to our community.

Most of us choose this profession because we enjoy serving others; wanting to continually improve our service delivery positively impacts the lives of those we serve and is a worthwhile and moral pursuit. It is within this spirit that we create a vision of the future. This then leads us to setting goals and objectives and continually focusing on those goals and objectives. It is an important business and cultural process or more simply said, it is the work.

This vision is not mine alone. This vision is a collection of conversations, research, history, industry trends and other informational sources that are motivated with the goal of improving our organization. They represent a collective desire for what we want to see as an organization with respect to the services we deliver, the value we bring this community, and how we are to behave in that pursuit.

Each of us has an obligation to make a contribution and to leave our mark during our time. We all know the competitive nature and the challenge of attaining the noble calling of a firefighter. This attainment brings with it great responsibility and we must not forget how fortunate we are to have been given the opportunity to serve as a firefighter. We should not only celebrate this accomplishment, but more importantly recognize our responsibility to do something valuable with it that goes beyond us individually.

It is my deepest hope that the work I do lays a foundation for future growth and that when my time has come to depart, I will have made a contribution that continues to serve each of you, and this community. It is my hope that each of you will feel the same way and in that collective coordination we have power and can attain our vision of the future of this District.

We can accomplish great things if we set our mind to the task. Ours is a noble calling and we are obliged to serve this community with nothing less than our very best.

My Vision includes several target areas:

- Cultural / Professionalism
- Influence
- Training
- Public Education
- Mentoring & Succession Planning
- Staffing, Equipment and Facilities
- Benchmarking
- Economic Resiliency



MY VISION FOR OUR DISTRICT

- *I envision a culture that reflects the greatest ideals of our profession: The Desire to Serve, The Ability to Perform, and The Courage to Act, and that this culture pursues actions and attitudes that reinforce the public trust we enjoy.*
- *I envision a future where our District and our staff share their skills and abilities constructively and as a result are influential at the local, state and federal levels.*
- *I envision a future where we pursue academic and technical excellence and have the resources we need to be highly proficient in all that we do; to perform our mission safely and exceed our citizens' expectations.*
- *I envision a future where community risk reduction is highly valued and recognized as our first line of defense.*
- *I envision a future where we develop a culture that fosters an environment of mentoring, and values and invests in succession planning.*
- *I envision a future whereby the Fire District is supported by state of the art facilities and equipment that are well maintained thereby allowing firefighters to provide premium level services to a community that highly values Quality of Life.*
- *I envision a greatly improved set of internal processes of planning and benchmarking of performance that educate and inform non professionals and community leaders and demonstrate how the Fire District contributes greatly to the Quality of Life enjoyed by the Southern Marin Communities.*
- *I envision a future where the economic resiliency of the organization is sound and built to weather the ebb and flow of economic cycles.*



CULTURAL / PROFESSIONALISM

I envision a culture that reflects the greatest ideals of our profession: The Desire to Serve, The Ability to Perform, and The Courage to Act, and that this culture pursues actions and attitudes that reinforce and strengthen the public trust we enjoy.

Our behaviors and attitudes are predictors of our future and the success of our District is predicated on establishing and maintaining the highest professional standards, behaviors and attitudes. This is vital and not optional. Our behaviors and attitudes are a reflection of our culture and we should set our sights on excellence, but what does this mean and how do we translate this into action?

- A culture that represents the diversity of the community we serve.
- A culture that understands and embraces the reality that our services and livelihood is wholly predicated on the public's trust.
- A culture in which we hold each other accountable and where we celebrate individual and organizational excellence.
- A culture that strives to exceed our citizen's expectations.
- Leadership from our formal and informal leaders that inspires our staff to achieve their potential and demands the pursuit of excellence in all we do.
- A relationship with our Community, our Board of Directors and our neighboring agencies that is best described with the adjectives: Integrity, Trust; Respect; Honor; Inspiring.
- A work environment that is enjoyable to be a part of and where we each are respected as individuals.
- An organization that recognizes and values experienced members who are willing to share their wisdom while also encouraging new ideas, fresh perspectives and innovation.
- A culture that sees the potential and opportunity and says why not us, and then makes it happen.
- A career for each member of our District that concludes with a comment like, "What a Great Adventure – I will miss this place and these people deeply."
- A cultural that does not make decisions based on fear but rather embraces new opportunities as an adventure in which we can learn and apply new things to the benefit of our District.



INFLUENCE

I envision a future where our District and our staff share their skills and abilities constructively and as a result are influential at the local, state and even federal levels.

Leadership is about our ability to influence. We have already demonstrated that the size of a District is no predictor of its ability to influence. We can and have a responsibility to bring our skills and abilities to the table and influence the strategic direction of issues that affect the fire service, of our District and our community. What are ways that as an individual and as a District we can influence our industry?

- Recognition within our organization that influence begins by earning the trust and respect by those around us and engaging in behaviors that personify this belief.
- Being passionate about the pursuit of excellence.
- A culture that embraces diversity, recognizing the value this brings to the organization and those we serve.
- Seizing opportunities to make our community safer; to not be governed by fear but rather by curiosity and the selfless pursuit of public service.
- By capturing areas of opportunity to regionalize our services, in those areas that benefit the organization and the community, demonstrating our ability to wisely use taxpayer funds to extract the greatest value out of every dollar.
- An Accredited Fire District; an accomplishment that our Board and Communities view with pride.
- To see all our Officers personally accredited.
- An improved ISO rating that places value in reducing commercial and residential insurance policy rates, and improving fire protection for this community.
- A culture that embraces and pursues opportunities to forge and build new and long lasting relationships that translate into positive influence within our community and industry.



TRAINING

I envision a future where we pursue academic and technical excellence and have the resources we need to be highly proficient in all that we do; to perform our mission safely and exceed our citizens' expectations.

We do important work and our community has high expectations of us individually and as an organization. The ability to deliver professional and competent service is partly predicated on the pursuit of knowledge. Knowledge is the application of information. The life of a firefighter is one in which we become and dedicate ourselves to the lifelong role of student. It becomes part of who we are individually and organizationally. What does this mean relative to the future of our organization?

- A culture that embraces and pursues academic and technical skill opportunities individually and organizationally.
- A recruitment culture that recognizes the challenges and obstacles our industry place to those of color and other minorities and pursues opportunities to break down those barriers.
- An educational environment that is reflective of our responsibilities and our regulatory requirements; having sustainable resources that support this goal and commitment.
- An increased emphasis on the value of academics, not just technical skills, and values the importance of critical thinking skills in all facets of the Districts Operations. Our job is primarily rooted in people, requiring skills that are beyond just the technical and operational skills we deploy to mitigate emergencies.
- A Training Program that is reflective of our regional approach to the delivery of operational services.
- Training resources that provide our members with the opportunity to stay current with the ever-evolving demands of the fire service, and to operate at peak performance levels relative to their skills, abilities and knowledge.



COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

I envision a future where public education is highly valued and recognized as our first line of defense.

During periods that stress public budgets, it is traditionally public education and prevention programs that bear the brunt of the impacts of these economics. Public Education and Code Enforcement are two of our first lines of defense for mitigating the impacts of emergencies and disasters. Providing our community with the knowledge and tools to prevent or manage these events oftentimes eliminates or reduces the need for the services we provide and facilitates the ability of individuals and businesses to return to a previous optimum state.

- A global approach to risk management that identifies areas and levels of risk within our community, and develops strategies and tactics to reduce or manage those risks, (Community Risk Reduction).
- An organization that has increased resiliency; identifying risks within the demographics of our community and organization, and developing plans and tools to effectively manage those risks.
- Sharing the benefits of our learned knowledge, with the community to teach them ways to prevent or manage events so as to minimize the impacts of emergencies and disasters.
- A sustainable funding stream that reflects the value of managing risk and increasing resiliency.
- An organizational culture that values and invests individually and organizationally in risk reduction and increased resiliency.



MENTORING & SUCCESSION PLANNING

I envision a future where we develop a culture that fosters an environment of mentoring, and values and invests in succession planning.

Our District has been blessed in attracting high quality people and desires keeping excellent firefighting staff. Our firefighters have longevity and within this context often gain wisdom and experience that is of value and should be shared with younger members. Much like a family, parents establish the values and direction for their children. They invest in their future and often sacrifice on their behalf. This is the responsibility of leaders. The District leadership (formal and informal) have an obligation to clearly define the values and behaviors expected within the District. Those who wish to pursue formal leadership roles and positions should be provided with a clear road map towards attainment of that goal, and be supported and encouraged in that pursuit.

- A culture that embodies and practices the ideals of mentoring at all levels of the organization.
- A culture that embraces opportunities to recruit and mentor women and minorities.
- A culture that forecasts personnel needs and positions itself to place the right people in the right position at the right time.
- A Succession Plan that identifies each position within the District and details the educational, technical and academic requirements and needs of each of those positions and provides a roadmap for those who seek more responsibility and influence.
- An adopted mentoring and succession plan that is regularly reviewed and adjusted to meet the changing requirements within our industry and community expectations.



STAFFING, EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES

I envision a future whereby the Fire District is supported by state of the art facilities and equipment that are well maintained thereby allowing firefighters to provide premium level services to a community that highly values Quality of Life.

Marin County citizens see Quality of Life as a Value that they consider paramount within this community. The Fire District is a contributor to this value and our ability to deliver premium services that contribute to the quality of life, is in part supported through the acquisition and deployment of infrastructure that support the attainment of this goal and allow our services to be delivered at an optimal level.

- A deployment model that is fiscally responsible, operationally efficient and is sustainable.
- The development and deployment of an economic model that identifies and prioritizes all large capital type expenses, and effectively manages that projected liability in an economic model that is sustainable and matches our operational needs.
- A culture that extracts the value out of every purchase, maintenance and replacement process. The development of tools and procedures that continually support the pursuit of this goal and provide the necessary analytics to share with our community.
- Deployment of technology that reduces or eliminates redundancies; makes existing processes easier and less complex. Technology that positively contributes to the Fire District in telling its story and providing the necessary tools to conduct and demonstrate the responsible use of taxpayer funds.
- A staff that represents the diversity of the community we serve, and the development and institutionalization of systems and processes to support this critical objective.



BENCHMARKING

I envision a greatly improved set of internal processes of planning and benchmarking of performance that educate and inform nonprofessionals and community leaders and demonstrate how the Fire District contributes greatly to the Quality of Life enjoyed by our community.

The Mission of the Fire District is a noble one. Though our work is highly valued, it does not eliminate the need to continually demonstrate the value and performance of our services. Setting performance standards, regularly measuring ourselves against those standards, making the necessary adjustments to achieve or exceed those standards, and reporting those standards is simply good business practice and perhaps equally important, is a mechanism in which we can ensure we demonstrate and maintain the public's trust.

- The development of a Standards of Coverage document that is utilized as a working plan to help guide the District in its decision making processes.
- A Strategic Plan that incorporates our vision of the future, and is utilized as a tool in informing community leaders and making decisions about the services provided by the Fire District.
- An annual work plan that is clear, attainable and funded.
- The establishment of benchmarks that clearly define the values of the services we provide, and are utilized by the District in its decision making processes.
- Budgeting and reporting tools that optimize our employees' time and efficiency, and provide the mechanism to demonstrate achievement of these goals.
- Processes that allow our employees to understand their role and contribution, and to know at all times where the organizations is headed, and how far on that journey we have travelled.
- Reporting tools that tell our story.



ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

- *I envision a future where the economic resiliency of the organization is sound and built to weather the ebb and flow of economic cycles.*

The Fire District has navigated some very difficult times economically. OPEB has had a significant impact on the District's ability to generate responsible reserves, provide greater operational flexibility, and provide the economic tool to expand or enhance services where it meets the needs of the District.

- The development and execution of a comprehensive review process of the District's revenue streams, identifying opportunities to generate new sources of income, ensuring we are collecting revenues commensurate with District policy and legal mandates.
- The development and execution of a comprehensive review process of the District's expenditure streams, identifying opportunities to generate new efficiencies thereby extracting greater value out of each dollar of revenue.
- The creation of a culture that thrives on the pursuit of economic responsibility and embraces the regular assessment of all aspects of the economic model and choices of the District's operations.
- A culture that embraces and pursues sustainable practices that yield greater value from our revenue streams.