

1C. Basic Future Assumptions

Adopted 6 February
2001

Internal



“While the District will continue to rely primarily on volunteer responders, it will be increasingly difficult to recruit new members and retain existing members.”

The basic assumptions of future (10 years) of internal (within the organization) and external conditions effecting the District include:

Professional:

- Requirements for member training will increase in both complexity and time demand.
- In order to meet increasing demands of its members, a wide array of methods of delivering training will be developed for flexibility; training effectiveness will be based on performance not time/duration.
- Health and safety issues (including incident operations, workplace accident prevention, health monitoring) will provide a greater influence in overall policy, operations and administration in the District.

Social:

- While the District will continue to rely primarily on volunteer responders, it will be increasingly difficult to recruit new members (increased competition with job, family and other pursuits) and retain existing members (increased demand on time, limitations for incentives).
- Recruitment of volunteers may involve targeting for “non-traditional” roles (e.g. specialties for EMS-only, public education, clerical support, non-combat fire operations support).
- Volunteers will need to be kept abreast of the array of benefits that are available to them through the District.
- Even with expanded information technology, the need for quality face-to-face personal communications will increase (especially for change management).

Fiscal:

- The cost of operations will continue to increase, with an increasing share of funding being allocated to personnel costs (calculated at an average of 6 to 7.5 percent per year based upon current historical trend analysis).
- A decreasing rate of growth in revenues (calculated at an average of 3 percent per year) will force the District to evaluate alternative capital financing options (e.g. leasing, short-term debt, reduction of other costs, and consideration of special levies).
- Current general obligation bonds (issued in 1996) will expire in 2013.
- The District will establish and implement a plan and allocate funding for a long-term capital repair-replacement program.

Internal (Continued)

“The Board will continue to support strong core values of volunteerism, accountability and resourcefulness for the [District].”

Political:

- Stronger management systems in the District will be demanded, driving more focus of current staff on management issues; other non-management issues (e.g. manual tasks, emergency response) will need to be gradually delegated or otherwise provided for.
- More emphasis will be placed on pro-active management of issues.
- The Board’s role will be policy level decision making and overall responsibility for the District; operations and administration will be the responsibility of the Fire Chief.
- The Board will continue to support strong core values of volunteerism, accountability, and resourcefulness for the organization.
- There will be an increasing demand on Staff for effective management and motivation for volunteers.
- Emphasis will be placed on quality decision making and the preservation of internal organizational health (morale).

Technological:

- While increases in technology will effect fire suppression and EMS operations (“tools”), the greatest demand for change will be in the support areas (i.e. information management, particularly communications).
- The District will continue to enjoy up-to-date technology, based upon prudent planning and purchasing practices; “cutting-edge” technology will be carefully evaluated prior to any effort to purchase or implement.

External

“Changes in industry-wide service characteristics will produce changes in requirements for emergency operations, equipment & apparatus.”

Professional:

- The District will continue to participate in external organizations (e.g. associations, joint ventures, boards and committees) actively promoting the values of the District, and expecting accountability and resourcefulness from these organizations.
- There will be increased use of multi-agency teams for emergency response at community, county and state levels.
- Use of standardized incident management systems (IMS) on all District incidents, and will increase beyond the fire service into law enforcement and public works during major emergency incidents.
- Changes in industry-wide service characteristics (e.g. aging of citizens, old versus new construction techniques, materials chemistry, infectious diseases) will produce changes in requirements for emergency operations, equipment and apparatus: more protection for the responder, ease of use, disposability, cost.

Social:

- Citizens’ mandates for public sector performance (often through “reform” measures) will determine which services should be provided and of what quality and at what level.
- District members will become more active in other local community groups and functions, with both formal and informal interaction regarding District business.

External (Continued)

- Better customer-input processes (citizen involvement) will drive demand for new or expanded levels of service; some existing services may be adjusted or terminated accordingly. This will require that the District provide meaningful customer education on fire district law, financing, operations and capabilities.
- Being an “age of the dissatisfied customer”, the District will need to identify and focus on true customer *needs* versus *wants* to determine its levels of service.

“Limited revenue expansion and increased costs will cause evaluation of the type and levels of service provided by the fire service.”

Fiscal:

- Growth of assessed valuation and population will level off in the first two decades of the 21st Century; revenue growth based on property tax will be flat (3% or less).
- Citizens will continue to seek tax reform measures that will effect property tax. This attitude could effect revenues.
- Industry (fire & EMS) will venture into other forms of revenue (fee for services, special levies, collaboration with insurance industry, etc.) as a result of tax measures and decreased community growth.
- Limited revenue expansion and increased costs will cause evaluation of the type and levels of services provided by the fire service (especially in the EMS field).

Political:

- Economic and political influences will provide incentives and pressure to seek economies of scale (joint ventures, consolidation of efforts).
- Local (NET, county) joint-venture efforts will continue and increase; District participation will be based upon sound business decision making (concerning cost, efficiency, and effectiveness).
- Board members and the Fire Chief will become more involved in county, state and national fire service industry affairs.

Technological:

“Standardization by community or region will become more prevalent due to economies of scale and for operational advantages.”

- Fire & EMS equipment and apparatus will become more user-friendly (low training investment) and more expensive.
- Standardization by community or region will become more prevalent due to economies of scale (for purchase & maintenance) and for operational advantages (training, mutual-aid compatibility).
- Due to infectious disease exposure control and maintenance costs, EMS equipment will become more and more disposable.