

Strategic Plan

Northbridge, MA Fire Department

June 2022



CPSM[®]

CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY MANAGEMENT, LLC
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Exclusive Provider of Public Safety Technical Services for
International City/County Management Association

THE ASSOCIATION & THE COMPANY

The International City/County Management Association is a 108-year-old, nonprofit professional association of local government administrators and managers, with approximately 13,000 members located in 32 countries.

Since its inception in 1914, ICMA has been dedicated to assisting local governments and their managers in providing services to their citizens in an efficient and effective manner.

ICMA advances the knowledge of local government best practices with its website (www.icma.org), publications, research, professional development, and membership. The ICMA Center for Public Safety Management (ICMA/CPSM) was launched by ICMA to provide support to local governments in the areas of police, fire, and emergency medical services.

ICMA also represents local governments at the federal level and has been involved in numerous projects with the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security.

In 2014, as part of a restructuring at ICMA, the Center for Public Safety Management (CPSM) was spun out as a separate company. It is now the exclusive provider of public safety technical assistance for ICMA. CPSM provides training and research for the Association's members and represents ICMA in its dealings with the federal government and other public safety professional associations such as CALEA, PERF, IACP, IFCA, IPMA-HR, DOJ, BJA, COPS, NFPA, and others.

The Center for Public Safety Management, LLC, maintains the same team of individuals performing the same level of service as when it was a component of ICMA. CPSM's local government technical assistance experience includes workload and deployment analysis using our unique methodology and subject matter experts to examine department organizational structure and culture, identify workload and staffing needs, and align department operations with industry best practices. We have conducted over 425 such studies in 46 states and provinces and over 300 communities ranging in population from 8,000 (Boone, IA) to 800,000 (Indianapolis, IN).

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SECTION 1. BACKGROUND

Northbridge is a town in Worcester County, MA. Relevant information about the town and fire department taken from the gap analysis CPSM performed for this strategic plan includes:

- Northbridge is a suburban Northeastern town made up of several villages, including Linwood, Northbridge, Riverdale, Rockdale and Whitinsville.
- The total town area is 18.1 square miles.
- The Blackstone and Mumford rivers traverse the town and became the focal points for the many industrial developments and textile mills along the riverbanks and in town. Today, the mills have been mostly renovated into housing and businesses. Two mills remain in service.
- The town operates under a Home Rule Charter. The executive powers of the town shall be vested in the Board of Selectmen which shall be deemed to be the chief executive office of the town (five selectmen members).¹
- The Town Manager shall be the Chief Administrative Officer of the town, directly responsible to the board of selectmen for the administration of all town affairs for which the office of town manager is given responsibility by or under this charter.²
- There shall be a Fire Department, headed by a Fire Chief.³
- The Fire Chief shall be responsible for the organization, training and direction of Fire Department personnel involving firefighting, fire prevention, fire safety inspection and investigation, and emergency medical services. The Fire Chief shall have full charge of extinguishing fires, shall be in immediate control of all town property used by the Department, and of the officers and firefighters, who shall obey his orders. ⁴

Northbridge Demographics

- 2020 population: 16,335⁵
- Population density: 909.8/square mile
- Children under the age of five represent 7.6 percent of the population.
- Persons under the age of 18 represent 22.8 percent of the population.
- Persons over the age of 65 represent 17.1 percent of the population.
- Female persons represent 52 percent of the population.
- There are 2.64 persons per household in the Town of Northbridge.
- The median household income in 2019 dollars is \$81,504.
- Persons living in poverty make up 5.9 percent of the population.

1. Northbridge Home Rule Charter, Section 3-2(b)

2. Northbridge Home Rule Charter, Section 4.

3. Town of Northbridge Code of By-Laws, Chapter 4-412(A)

4. Town of Northbridge Code of By-Laws, Chapter 4-412(C)

5. U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Northbridge town, Worcester County, Massachusetts

- Black or African-American alone represents 2.0 percent of the population. White alone at 91.0 percent, American Indian or Alaska Native alone at .3 percent, Asian alone at 1.1 percent, two or more races at 3.8 percent, and Hispanic or Latino at 6.2 percent.

Northbridge Fire Department Key Elements

- Fire protective services.
- Emergency Medical Services ground transport at the Advanced Life Support (ALS) level.
- Public fire education.
- Fire prevention and code enforcement.
- Staffed with career and call/volunteer members.
- NFPA 1720 department.
- Town Emergency Management and Community Preparedness.
- Public emergency preparedness and safety classes.

Fire Administrative component led by a Fire Chief (single manager):

- Current Deputy Chief position vacant.
- Fire Chief also fills role of Town Emergency Management Coordinator.
 - Has one volunteer assistant for this function.
- Fire Chief also manages overall training program, manages code enforcement, and oversees EMS.
- Fire Chief manages three separate budgets for Fire, EMS, and Emergency Management.
- Fire Chief serves as the chief procurement officer for the department.
- One civilian administrative assistant 28 hours/week.

Fire Operational component includes:

- Two stations-Headquarters (Station 1 and primary operation) and Station 2.
- Station 1 is staffed with career personnel.
- Station 2 is not staffed - houses response apparatus for call firefighters.
- Operational career staffing is 4 per group (shift).
- Four operational groups - 16 personnel.
- Operational groups work a 24 on-48 off, 24 on - 96 off schedule.
- Each group consists of a Company Officer and 3 firefighters.
 - Company Officer is assigned as follows: 1 Group has a Captain (currently vacant due to retirement); 3 Groups have a Lieutenant.
- Captain serves as the shift commander.
- One Fire Prevention Officer is on duty from 0700-1730 hours Monday-Thursday and is available to respond to calls for services as needed.
- 21 call firefighters.
 - 4 call officers.
 - 17 call firefighters.
- Provides fire protective services and EMS ground transport services.
- Considers itself a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1720 Department.

Figure 1: Town of Northbridge and Worcester County

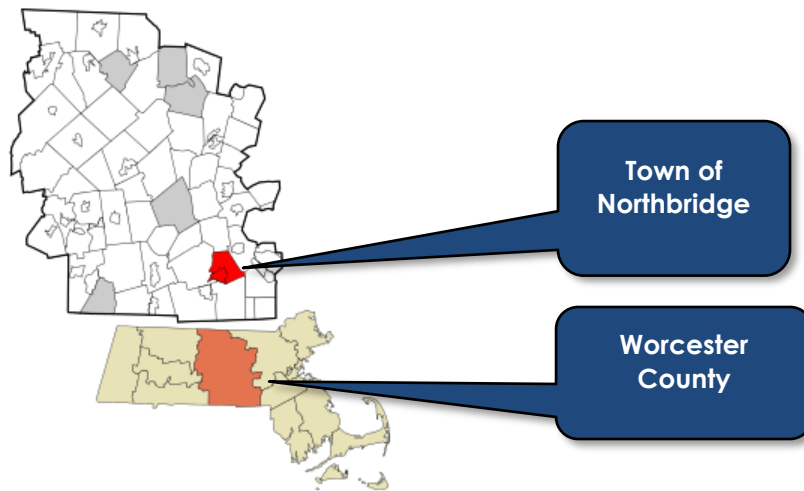
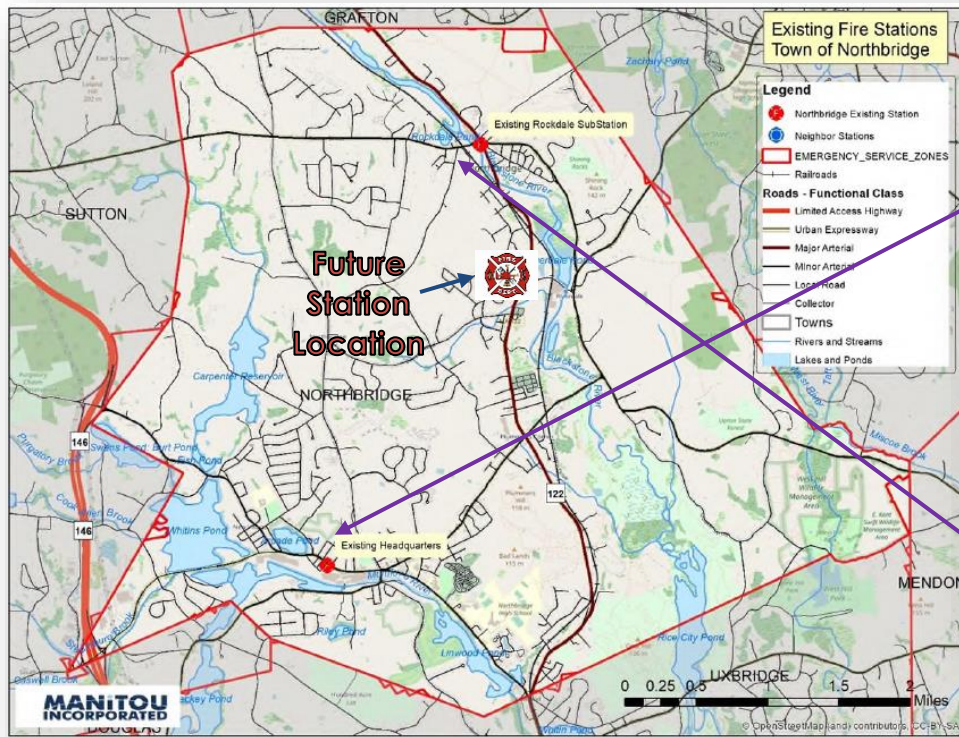


Figure 2: NFD Station Locations⁶



Station	Primary Apparatus/ Function
Headquarters	Engine 1 Engine 3 Ladder 1 Squad 1 Ambulance 1 Ambulance 2 Forestry 8 Shift Chief's Vehicle 4 Specialty Trailers
Rockdale	Engine 2 Forestry 5 (brush) Forestry 6 (brush)

6. 2020 Northbridge Fire Station Feasibility and Facilities Study, Manitou Inc.

SECTION 2. STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic planning is an important process for organizations, as it serves as a clear and concise roadmap for the future. This process can be challenging for agencies to undergo because strategic planning requires an honest assessment of the department's current state of performance, and a realistic understanding of ways to improve. The Northbridge Fire Department took the necessary steps to pursue this process as a means toward continuous improvement. Executive leadership and staff alike have recognized a desire to continue their efforts toward a high-performing, professional department and provided open and honest input in the entire strategic planning process.

The strategic planning process addresses the following:



As mentioned above, strategic planning requires an honest assessment of the department's current state of performance. Northbridge Fire Department accomplished this assessment through an analysis of the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (commonly referred to as a SWOT analysis). Then, a review of the department's current mission, vision, and values statements was conducted, and sessions were held to update those statements to align more clearly with current and anticipated future perspectives. Goals and objectives were then developed that align with the SWOT analysis, updated mission, vision, and values, as well as the gap analysis that was conducted concurrently by CPSM staff with the strategic planning process.

Virtual strategic planning sessions were held with personnel from NFD on the below dates to gather input from department stakeholders. An online survey was also distributed to staff; detailed results are presented in Appendix A.



- January 10, 2022: Initial Meeting with Chief White.
- February 9, 2022: Gap analysis and strategic planning meeting with Chief and Command Staff.
- March 8, 2022: Online survey distributed to officers.
- April 18, 2022: Strategic Planning Session with Command Staff and Officers.

February 9, 2022 Strategic Planning session with CPSM staff and Chief White

SECTION 3. MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

An organization's mission, vision, and values statements are crucial to convey the organization's primary purpose and ultimate goals to its members and the public alike. As part of the strategic planning process, Northbridge Fire Department sought to update their statements to more clearly reflect the current and anticipated future state of the department. Refreshed statements establish the foundational organizational purpose upon which goals and objectives moving forward are built.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Northbridge Fire Department is to protect life and property through effective emergency response and public education that adapts to future challenges in its pursuit toward excellence.

Vision Statement

To be a Class 1 fire department that provides high-quality fire rescue and emergency medical services to protect and preserve life and property, and enhance quality of life for residents of Northbridge.

Values



Values are presented as a word cloud to indicate the most commonly referenced organizational value; larger fonts reflect more frequent references and smaller fonts reflect values that were mentioned fewer times. The most common value reported was integrity.

SECTION 4. SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis was conducted over the course of four virtual meetings with Chief White, career officers, as well as a survey of career and call firefighters. The items listed below are those that were consistently noted across the variety of sessions and are used to develop the goals and objectives for this strategic plan. It should be noted that all organizations undertaking a SWOT analysis should identify potential weaknesses or threats. By identifying these areas, administrators can more readily focus efforts toward improving the organization.

Strengths

- Dedicated workforce
 - All participants noted the work ethic of current staff and their efforts to provide quality services to the community as commendable.
 - Staff have a solid understanding of the community they serve.
- Cooperation among the workforce.
 - Career and call staff work well together to accomplish their mission.
- Quality apparatus and equipment.
- Growing and motivated department.
 - Several participants noted the department has made several new hires lately that have reinvigorated the department overall.
- Motivated Fire Chief.
- Support for Fire Chief from staff.
- Staff pride in association with Northbridge Fire Department.
- Support of Northbridge Fire Department from residents.



September 11, 2020 Chief's Corner post on northbridgefiredepartment.com

100%

Staff responding to SWOT analysis survey
agreed with the statement

**"I am proud to be a member of
Northbridge Fire Department"**

Weaknesses

- Budgeting.
 - Concern was expressed regarding the level of funding provided to meet the staffing needs of the department.
- Staffing.
 - More career staff needed.
 - Reliance on call staff to mount effective response force.
- Heavy reliance on mutual aid.
- Communication systems.
 - Comments were received regarding the state of the radio technology in place.
 - Additional comments were made regarding the level of communication between administration and staff as an area in need of improvement.
- Ability to devote time to training.
- Inconsistencies with policy and procedure.
- Heavy operational and administrative load for Fire Chief.
 - Sparse administrative staffing leads to Fire Chief becoming more involved with day-to-day operations instead of long-term planning.
- Lack of apparatus and equipment replacement plans.
- Current fire stations.

"Budgeting for NFD is always an issue."

- Response to staff SWOT survey



Opportunities

- Currently working on plan to improve training.
- Working to improve communication between administration and staff.
- Working toward long-term planning.
- Community support.
- New Fire Chief.
 - New Fire Chief brings new insight and management style into the department.
- New Deputy Fire Chief.
 - The addition of a Deputy Fire Chief allows for this position to focus more on day-to-day management duties which allows the Fire Chief to focus on long-term planning and higher-level administrative tasks.
- New dispatching plan.
- New station.
 - The new Northbridge Fire Department construction is currently underway and expected to be completed by Summer 2023.



Rendering of new fire station

Threats

- Impact of demographic shifts on Fire Department.
 - Shifting demographics can add or move call volumes creating difficulties responding with the current level of service.
- Possibility of burn-out.
- Industry shifts away from Northbridge reduce the potential for nearby call officers during typical work hours, creating difficulty mounting an effective response force especially during the workday
- Budgeting
- Staffing



Former cotton mills that contributed to Northbridge's industry have closed and been repurposed for housing. Linwood Apartments, for instance, provides 55+ senior housing (architecturalteam.com), leading to increased call demand, but less opportunity to recruit readily available call firefighters.

SECTION 5. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives listed below were developed based on the current department SWOT analysis as well as the gap analysis that was conducted concurrently by CPSM. Goals are presented as overarching directions for the department whereas objectives are presented as actionable steps to achieve the stated goals. The objectives indicated are intended to provide steps to be accomplished to the extent possible, in the short term, over one (1) to five (5) years, and dependent on available funding to the Northbridge Fire Department. Some objectives are not as urgent and would be considered mid-term (within 3 to 5 years) objectives whereas others are considered long-term (5 to 10 years), as indicated.

Figure 3: Staff Survey Ranking of Characteristics for Strengths/Weaknesses

Strengths - Weaknesses	Condition of Equipment
	Ability to respond to calls within an acceptable time frame
	Ability of command staff to engage in long term planning
	Ability of call staff to respond to calls quickly
	Administrative capacity for fire prevention activities
	Outreach to community through public education activities
	Leadership of command staff
	Workplace culture
	Ability to mount an effective response force for fire incidents
	Ability to provide adequate training (career and call officers)
	Condition of facilities

Goal 1:
Adequate Staffing to Reliably Assemble Effective Response Force

- **Objective 1: (Short-term)** Increase number of career firefighters to ensure 5 firefighters per shift, around the clock to staff the following:
 - Engine - 3 staff (cross staff second out ambulance).
 - Ladder - 2 staff (cross staff first out ambulance).
- **Objective 2: (Short-term)** Consistently search and apply for grant assistance to fund additional staffing (e.g., SAFER Grant).
 - Sign up for alerts through grants.gov to maintain awareness of new grant opportunities.
 - Assign the task of grant research and management to a consistently staffed administrative position.

Northbridge Fire Department currently relies heavily on call firefighters or mutual aid in order to mount an effective response force that can safely and effectively respond to emergency incidents. While call staff respond to incidents quickly when they are available, due to shifting demographics and industry in Northbridge and the surrounding areas, many call officers work full-time outside of the Northbridge response area and are unavailable during the weekdays. Thus, amassing an effective response force has become more difficult in recent years particularly during peak call times. Hiring additional career staff will ensure consistent and dedicated staffing at all times of the day.

**Goal 1
(cont.):**

**Adequate
Staffing
to
Reliably
Assemble
Effective
Response
Force**

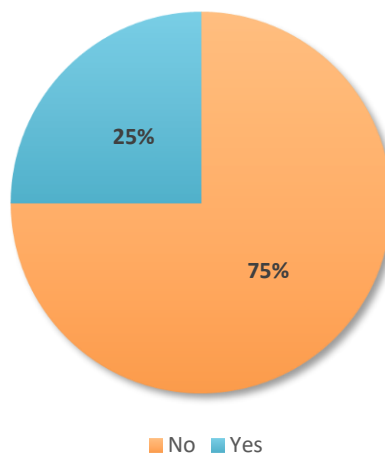
- **Objective 3: (Mid-term)** Develop long term funding model to sustain new and grant-funded positions.

- If FEMA-SAFER Grants are used to hire additional staff, the Town of Northbridge must consider the funding of the positions beyond the life of the grant.

- **Objective 4: (Long -term)** Increase number of career firefighters around the clock to ensure 10 firefighters per shift to staff the following utilizing grant and Town funding:

- Engine - 3 staff.
- Ladder - 3 staff.
- First-out ambulance - 2 staff.
- Second-out ambulance - 2 staff (cross-staff with a second Engine).

Figure 4: Staff Survey: Percent of Call Officers that have full-time employment within the Northbridge response area



While Goal 1 focuses on adding operational staff to the departmental staffing plan, Goal 2: Recruit and Retain Quality Staff can be accomplished without adding to the staffing count, but will take a dedicated effort of command staff officers to address and implement change. However, as call volumes increase and current staff continue to respond to such demand, the potential for burn-out, whether real or perceived, is a concern as it relates to turnover. Northbridge Fire Department should undertake the development of programs or strategies to continually recruit and retain both career and call officers. Achieving staffing and retention goals will ultimately allow for greater attention to be paid to other important department activities such as community risk reduction and training.

**Goal 2:
Recruit and
Retain
Quality
Staff**

- **Objective 1: (Short-term)** Assess extent of, and reasons for staff turnover.
 - Conduct exit interviews with staff who leave to determine reason(s) for departure.
 - Track and review hirings and separations regularly to identify patterns.
- **Objective 2: (Short-term)** Develop recruitment strategy for career and call firefighters that attracts a diverse pool of qualified applicants.
 - Focus recruitment efforts appropriately; engage local high schools and technical colleges to reach potential recruits
 - Develop a positive online presence via social media in order to highlight potential employment with Northbridge Fire Department.
 - Appropriately fund training for new hires; adequate training improves retention.
- **Objective 3: (Short-term to mid-term)** Develop strategies to address turnover in line with findings from Objective 2.
 - Address organizational reasons to the extent possible-seek assistance from human resources.
 - Communication has been noted as a weakness; increase frequency of communication with career and call staff. Include statements regarding why directives or changes are important.

**Goal 2
(cont.):
Recruit
and
Retain
Quality
Staff**

- **Objective 4: (Short-term)** Identify real and perceived sources of employee burn-out.
 - Hold frequent discussions with staff and evaluate data such as call volume, call types, overtime, and leave availability.
 - Regularly assess and meet with command staff to address burnout related to call volume and unit assignments.
- **Objective 5: (Short-term to mid-term)** Develop strategies to address staff wellness and burnout.
 - Promote Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and encourage staff to utilize them.
 - Develop a peer support team to address well-being of staff.
 - Implement training for Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM).
 - Rotate daily shift assignments from the first out ambulance to fire apparatus with no more than 2 consecutive ambulance shifts-as possible.
- **Objective 6: (Mid-term)** Develop promotional process to increase the capacity of command/administrative staff and backfill staff that are promoted. Promotional opportunities improve retention as staff are provided opportunity for upward mobility.
 - Provide clearly documented pathways to promotion for interested staff.
 - Engage in succession planning by assigning identified staff with greater responsibilities that will prepare them for their next promotion.
- **Objective 7: (Long-term)** Establish additional supervisory or specialty positions as staffing levels improve to provide staff additional opportunities for growth.
 - Ex: Dedicated Community Education Officer, additional staff officers to meet increased staffing, establish Training Officer as dedicated position.

**Goal 3:
Establish
Replacement
Plan for
Apparatus
and
Equipment**

- **Objective 1: (Short-term)** Continue current replacement plan for ambulance apparatus at current rate.
 - NFD currently allows for 5 years on an ambulance chassis; patient compartment may be remounted on a new chassis one time.
- **Objective 2: (Mid-term)** Develop fleet replacement plan in line with NFPA 1901 recommendations for replacement of heavy fire apparatus.
 - NFPA 1901 recommends fire apparatus be placed in reserve status after 15 years.
- **Objective 3: (Mid-term)** Develop process to ensure essential equipment is up-to-date and compliant with NFPA and industry standards.
 - Consistently maintained documentation will allow for adequate tracking of equipment lifecycle to include information on maintenance or inspection of apparatus and equipment.
- **Objective 4: (Long-term)** Continuously evaluate condition of fire apparatus and essential equipment; maintain budgeting process and funding to support the replacement plan.
 - Funding plans should also consider continued maintenance and an assessment of the cost to retain out-of-service apparatus.
- **Objective 5: (Long-term)** Ensure additional staffing plan includes consideration of additional essential equipment.
 - Ex: Structural gear ensemble, respiratory protection equipment, portable radios.

The current state of equipment and apparatus was noted as a particular strength by participants. In order to maintain this aspect of the department as a strength, Northbridge Fire Department should devise and implement a strategy to include financial capacity for replacing apparatus and essential equipment on a regular basis in order to maintain industry standards.

Goal 4:
Focus on
Community
Risk
Reduction
through
Improved
Interaction
with the
Community

- **Objective 1: (Short-term)** Focus Fire Prevention Officer's efforts toward fire prevention activities.

- Staffing levels described in Goal 1 will reduce the need for the Fire Prevention Officer to respond to calls, allowing for greater focus on tasks related to community risk reduction.

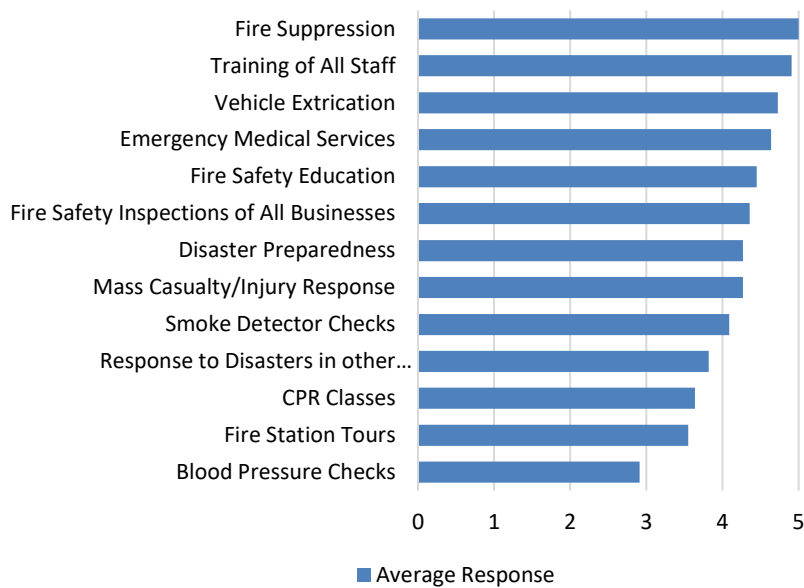
- **Objective 2: (Mid-term)** Consistently staff fire inspector position for each shift to allow greater focus on tasks related to community risk reduction and not of emergency deployment on calls for service.

- Additional staffing proposed in Goal 1 will also allow greater focus on fire inspector duties.

- **Objective 3: (Long-term)** Improve community life safety education and outreach efforts by staffing dedicated personnel to align activities with department mission.



Figure 5: Ranked importance of duties (1 = not important to 5 = very important)



With the staffing model currently in place, the Fire Prevention Officer and fire inspectors are frequently required to respond to calls for service which prevents them from providing undivided attention to the tasks necessary for a high-quality community risk reduction plan.

Once improved resource allocation is achieved in Goal 1, there should be less need for the Fire Prevention Officer or fire inspectors to respond to calls for service and efforts should be made to dedicate the Fire Prevention Officer and fire inspectors to tasks related to community risk reduction. Community life safety education is also critical to a successful community risk reduction strategy. For the sake of efficiency, fire inspectors could potentially take on the role of life safety education as well. Improved community education publicly highlights the work of the department and aligns with its mission.

Officers rate fire safety education and fire inspections second in importance only to emergency response and training.

Training is key to not only delivering safe and effective fire services, but also to improve the ISO-PPC community rating. Efforts to improve training opportunities should be undertaken in the near future; expanding training offerings or utilizing technology to provide easier access are longer-term objectives.

Goal 5:
Improve
Focus on
Training as a
Means to
Improve
ISO-PPC
Community
Rating

- **Objective 1: (Short-term)** Establish consistent training schedule to ensure all required and credentialing training is completed.
- **Objective 2: (Short-term)** Develop and fund meaningful hands-on training opportunities for all staff to improve knowledge, skills, and abilities.
 - Ex: Paramedic certification training, firefighter and EMS recertification training, CISM training, live structural firefighting training, technical rescue training.
- **Objective 3: (Short-term)** Develop and fund training strategy to ensure consistent training for call and career firefighters.
 - Fund outside training opportunities at Massachusetts Fire Academy for all staff.
 - Establish regular joint training opportunities for career and call firefighters.
- **Objective 4: (Mid-term)** Develop system for tracking credentials and alerting command staff to those that are set to expire.
 - Implementation of a training system such as Vector Solutions will assist with tracking.
- **Objective 5: (Mid-term)** Develop training benchmarks to focus efforts on necessary station training that align with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the ISO-PPC Grading schedule.
- **Objective 6: (Long-term)** Utilize available technology to create accessible training opportunities for call officers.
 - Programs like Vector Solutions would assist in broadening training delivery methods as well.

Goal 6:
Utilize
technology
more
effectively

- **Objective 1: (Short-term)** Maximize the use of currently available technologies and research potential new technology to streamline operations.

- Use reporting tools from Fire RMS to assess workload.
- Maximize community education and outreach through frequent online postings via the department's website and social media.
- Engage with staff through a variety of mediums including email, text, video messages, virtual meetings, or online message boards.

- **Objective 2: (Mid-term)** Allocate resources to improve radio communications.

- Budget and fund potential replacement system.

- **Objective 3: (Mid-term)** Prioritize purchase of new technologies or software that improve performance or administrative activities such as:

- Training software (e.g., Vector Solutions).
- Scheduling software (e.g., Telestaff).
- Advanced analytics software for calls for service.
- Targeted social media educational or recruiting strategies.

- **Objective 4: (Long-term)** Implement and maximize use of technology to improve above activities.

- Centralize didactic training (Fire and EMS) in one solution.
- Centralize personnel activities (leave, staffing, payroll, etc.) into one solution.
- Identify and adopt procedural and operational efficiencies that new technology brings.

Improved use of technology will help to address a number of perceived weaknesses or challenges that the department currently faces. Efforts should be made to identify new and emerging technologies in order to improve communications across a variety of groups. More frequent and more open lines of communication could help to address the issues that were noted with consistency in implementing or enforcing policies and procedures as well.

APPENDIX A: NORTHBRIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT SURVEY RESULTS

A SurveyMonkey online survey was developed by CPSM staff and distributed via email to both career and call firefighters. The survey received 11 responses (7 career and 4 call officers) over the two weeks that it was available to staff. Responses are presented below and content was incorporated into the strategic plan.

Figure 1: Average ranked importance of Fire Department duties (1 = not important to 5 = very important):

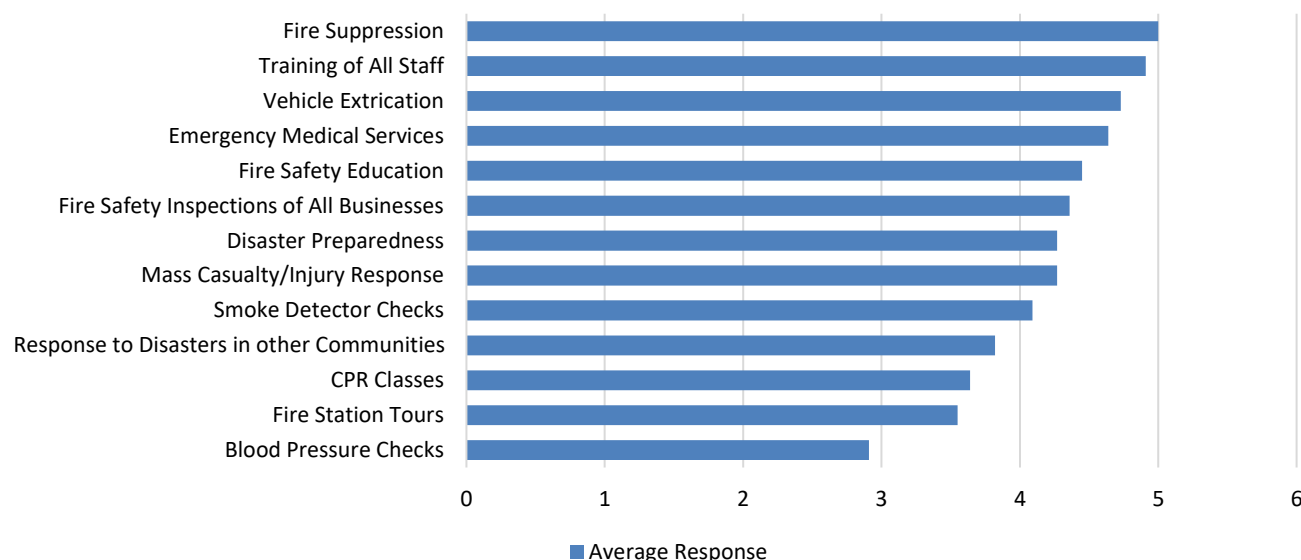


Figure 2: Ranking of Departmental Characteristics in terms of Strengths/Weaknesses

Condition of Equipment
Ability to respond to calls within an acceptable time frame
Ability of command staff to engage in long term planning
Ability of call staff to respond to calls quickly
Administrative capacity for fire prevention activities
Outreach to community through public education activities
Leadership of command staff
Workplace culture
Ability to mount an effective response force for fire incidents
Ability to provide adequate training (career and call officers)
Condition of facilities

* Factors at the top of the list highlighted in green were largely seen as strengths of the department; items highlighted in yellow received a neutral response, on average; those items highlighted in red at the bottom were perceived by respondents as weaknesses based on average responses.

Figure 3: Respondent Belief that Morale is High in the Department

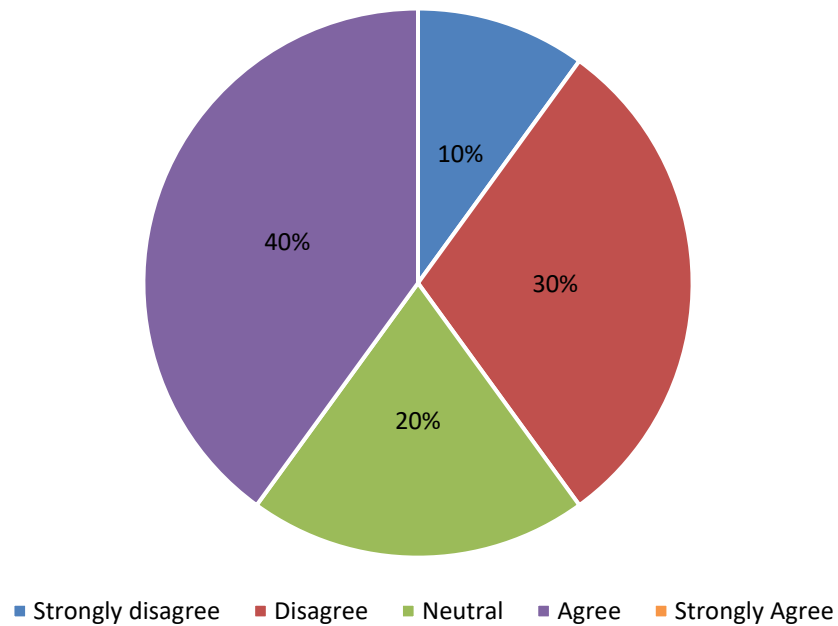


Figure 4: Responses to “I would recommend the department to anyone interested in a firefighting career.”

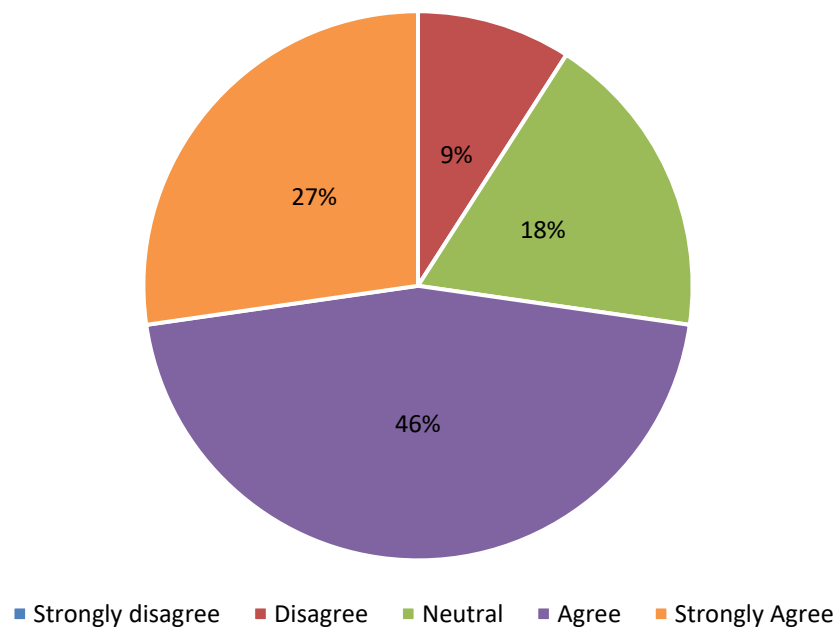


Figure 5: Responses to “I am proud to be a member of Northbridge Fire Department.”

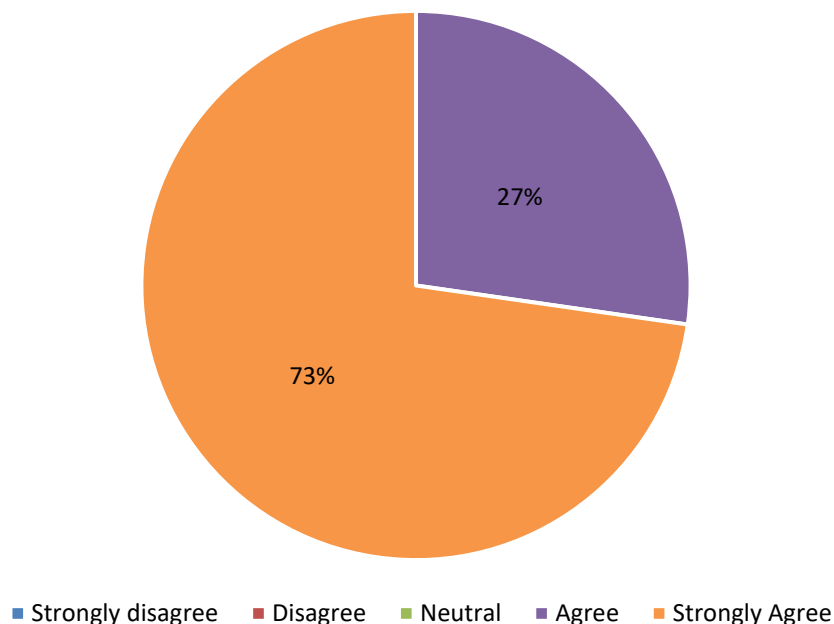


Table 1: Responses to “Are there any aspects of the Northbridge Fire Department that you see as a particular strength?”

New fire station, promotions
Team effort, good relationship between full-time and call members and officers
We are a growing department with an eager and young staff who wants to learn and develop in our department and the fire service. We have also added some youth to our officer core which helps bridge the generational gap. While there are still leadership challenges that exist and I believe the addition of youth to the ranks will develop into one of our greatest strengths. I would recommend the department undertake an officer training program from an outside organization that focuses on leadership skills and the challenges faced in leading a new generation of firefighters.
I’m extremely proud to be a member and officer of the NFD. Through years of adversity NFD has grown a strong culture of brotherhood. As a career member on another department I can honestly say the brotherhood and pride at the Northbridge is bar none the best around.
Every Career Officer has a solid foundation to understanding the community, response districts, Target areas of town. Also, Every career officer is well rounded within the modern day firefighting skills and Paramedicine.
We have many very decent hard working people.
I believe the Chief has done a good job communicating his vision for the department and is attempting to get us where we need to be in terms of training, staffing, and facilities and through increasing our technological abilities. Our younger members and new officers are eager and want to see change and I believe overall moral is high, though of course not all members will be happy.
The department has an outstanding group of men and women prepared to protect and serve the town.
New station, Updated apparatus and equipment and highly motivated personnel

Table 2: Responses to “Are there any other aspects of the Northbridge Fire Department that you see as a particular challenge?”

Communication between staff, lack of consistency in following guidelines and policies by personnel and management
Staffing levels
Radio communications,
The Fire Chief has done an exceptional job in moving the department forward since taking over five years ago. I do feel however that there is a lack of consistency and accountability within the organization. Standards must be upheld and individuals especially coordinators and officers must be accountable for their duties. My opinion is that the Chief tries to "wear too many hats" and assumes a role when someone falls short. This is based on his desire to see the organization succeed, however, it takes away from his other obligations and duties. I feel the addition of a Deputy Fire Chief will provide the needed relief for him and consistency throughout the department. I feel another area that presents a challenge is our yearly employee reviews. For example, we have begun 3-month reviews for our probationary firefighters however, the questions do not pertain to their current job functions which makes it very difficult to gauge their progression or level of success. In my opinion, a review should relate to the expectations of the job that is being performed and not a generic review form. Also, officers should be given at least a week to prepare a review for a member of their crew and members of the crew should play a part in an officer's review, otherwise, how can we accurately evaluate their performance.
Communication, long term planning, adjusting response models to meet changes in call volume and staffing and promoting professional development.
I often worry about the future for recruiting and retention. Being an old mill town with limited funding, the high call volume with the current on duty shift strength and no commitment to on duty shifts with the call staff. We often find ourselves very overworked and overtasked. There is nothing that makes Northbridge fire standout and say come work for us or once hired to stay and enjoy a long-term career being stressed and overtasked with being undermanned.
Radios are problematic at best. Some users need new gear. Communication is lacking at times. Accountability system is sometimes not used as designed. Budgeting for the NFD is always an issue.
Staffing, staffing, staffing. The Northbridge Fire Department has made a tradition of doing more more with less, just ask. “Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without.” I’m surprised that quote isn’t on our patch. There have been recent efforts to increase staffing but things are slow-going and I don’t have much confidence that the town (not the department) will get us the staffing needed. Anyone that looks at our emergency response numbers and the population of Northbridge would have to chuckle that we are “doing it” with 4 person groups. We aren’t a rich community, but the attitude of the town and sometimes the Chief is that we are at Detroit levels of poverty and nearby towns with proper staffing are Cambridge. We need full time staff, not more call staff. Our call members are great and many are very dedicated, but because the vast majority of our calls are handled by career staff the call members cannot gain experience and often can’t not handle basic fire or Ems calls on their own. Morale may be at a high right now, but guys are going to get burned out quick if this keeps up. The town has always gambled that nothing serious will happen, but the law of averages is always at play. Eventually when the four duty members are all on other

calls as we often are something very serious will happen and the station will be staffed by a call officer and two very junior members or ones that can't even enter a structure.
Staffing aside, I would like to see more training on the career and call side (though the training committee is working on a plan to get this done.) There is very little mandatory training though and a number of career members do not come back for off duty training and because of our call volume we rarely get adequate uninterrupted training on duty.
The monthly officer meetings are a great addition, but at times some officers have difficulty or do not want to disseminate information directed from the Chief. We need more buy in. I personally have ideas how to achieve it on the company level, but we need department wide buy in, not just one or two groups.
We have officers holding coordinators positions that should be their own full time admin. positions but they are expected to accomplish their tasks on duty. How can anyone lead from the office? We are also assigned menial tasks while on duty like hanging banners for local events and changing light pole signs depending on the holiday season. The mind set of older seems to be that we are still doing 1000 calls a year. So we run back to back to back calls, and instead of being allowed any downtime we have to go to stuff like this. These tasks are going to bite us hard some day and have come close numerous times. The banner is located about a mile away and every time we go there and a call comes in we are increasing response times for absolutely ZERO reason. At one of our more recent structure fires half of the duty crew was hanging a banner and had to drive back to the station for a truck in the complete opposite direction of the fire.
Town does not provide an adequate yearly budget to operate the department properly.
Manpower, current facility, training and maintaining the organizational structure of the department

Figure 6: Call Officers that live in Northbridge

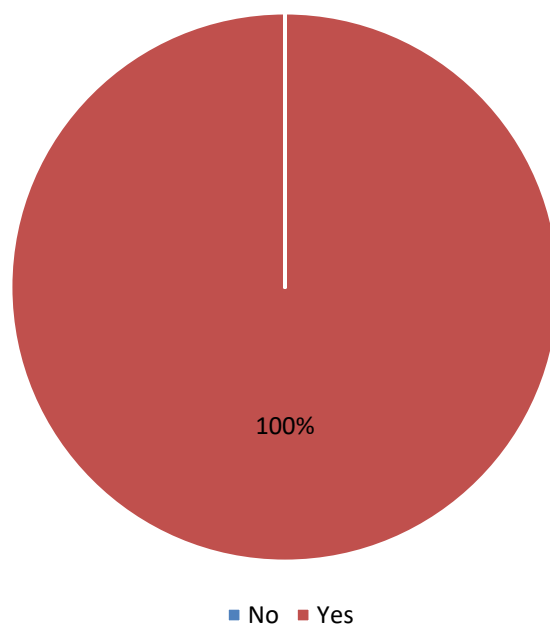
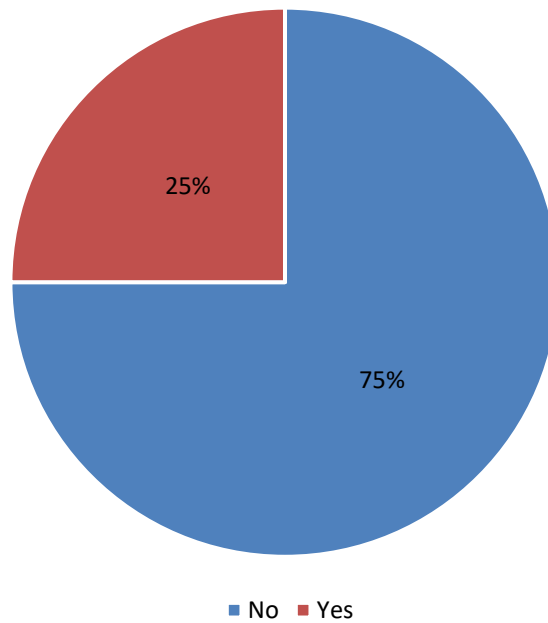


Figure 7: Call Officers that work in Northbridge



Call officers that worked outside of Northbridge worked an average of 22 miles away from the response area. Most availability for call officers was on the nights or weekends.

Table 3: Responses to “How would you describe the purpose of Northbridge Fire Department?”

To protect the people of Northbridge.
Provide EMS and firefighting/rescue services
Provide emergency response to the community and surrounding towns
To effectively provide a coordinated suite of services to the public in Northbridge in a safe and timely manner. This includes emergency services, Fire prevention, and community education
Our purpose is to provide our citizens with the highest level of public safety services which is done through fire suppression, emergency medical services, fire prevention, and, public education.
To provide fire and emergency services to the citizens, businesses and visitors to the town of Northbridge
Purpose of the Northbridge fire department is to prevent, protect and mitigate any emergency that arises in town.
To provide a quick and efficient emergency response to our citizens in order to properly mitigate their emergency through adequate staffing and training.
To protect and serve the town
To provide quality Fire, Rescue and EMS to the community through training, education and Public outreach

Table 4: Responses to “What would you say is the ultimate goal of the Northbridge Fire Department?”

To provide the best protection that we can with the resources given to us.
To be able to provide coverage for both ambulances and to be able to staff a first due engine at the same time with on duty personnel
Provide the most professional and dedicated emergency services
To save lives and property with smart and purposeful fire attack and emergency response
Our ultimate goal is to have a "highly trained and educated team of professionals that serve with dedication, pride, and compassion, twenty-four hours per day. We also endeavor to protect and preserve the health and safety of our members and return them safely to their families when the emergency is over". This is a direct quote for our mission statement but I fully believe in what it says.
To progress in its mission of providing a high level of fire and emergency services as well as adapting response models to changing call volume, manpower and missions asked by the department by the citizens we protect.
To Create a modern culture and bring the visions and values into 2022 times, All to often we find people holding onto the good old days and the 1980-1990 timeframe and try to recreate the operational plan based on what worked back then. Simply understanding what worked back then WILL NOT work today has to be imbedded into the culture for us to move forward and progress.
Provide outstanding EMS and Fire emergency services to all residents of Northbridge and our mutual aid partners.
Increase staffing
Continue to increase technology
Increase buy in
Hold people to higher standards
Being fully staffed, trained, and equipped, to respond to all emergency.
To provide the best service possible and be fiscally responsible

Table 5: Responses to “What values do you think are important to Northbridge Fire Department?”

Commitment to duty and respect of the community.
I’m not sure that our fire department values any particular value over any others. I don’t feel that there is any emphasis put on any specific values. The culture at the heart of this department from management is to get the job that’s needed at the moment regardless of the issues. Rules can be ignored or bent (i.e.) manpower, untrained personnel responding to calls etc. depending on what needs to get done.
Caring, well trained, compassionate members
Integrity, trust, teamwork, reliability, commitment
There are many values that come to mind that I think are important to the Northbridge Fire Department. Passion, dedication, integrity, knowledge, courage, compassion, trust, discipline, a desire to be the best, a desire to teach people, and learn every day. A passion to inspire those around me to not only match my enthusiasm but to exceed it. These values are how organizations especially a fire department become great. We should never settle, we need to continually strive to inspire, innovate, learn, and work harder.
Brotherhood, pride, integrity, respect. Failure is not an option.

We hold a very High degree of public image within the general public via professionalism when dealing with the taxpayers.
integrity, honesty, humility,
Pride, integrity, tradition.
Honor, Integrity, Respect, Compassion, Selflessness, Courage, Intelligence, Strength

APPENDIX B: NORTHBRIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT SURVEY

CPSM®

CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY MANAGEMENT, LLC

Northbridge Fire Department Survey

Northbridge Fire Department is working to develop a 5-year strategic plan, and wants your input. As an officer in the department, you provide valuable insight into the strengths and needs of the department. Please take a moment or two to complete the survey below. Responses are submitted anonymously.

1. Indicate how important you think each task is for Northbridge Fire Department to be a high performance department, with 1 indicating "Not Important At All", and 5 indicating "Very Important".

	Not Important At All	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Emergency Medical Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blood Pressure Checks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vehicle Extrication (Jaws of Life)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fire Suppression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mass Casualty/Injury Response	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disaster Preparedness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Response to Disasters in other Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fire Safety Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fire Station Tours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CPR Classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Smoke Detector Checks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fire Safety Inspections of all Businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training of all staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

As an officer, you provide a unique perspective to organizational strengths and challenges. Please rate the following items in terms of whether they demonstrate a strength or challenge for Northbridge Fire Department.

2. Ability to mount an effective response force for fire incidents

- ☐ Major Challenge ☐ Challenge ☐ Neutral ☐ Strength ☐ Major Strength
☐ No opinion

3. Ability to respond to calls within an acceptable time frame

- ☐ Major Challenge ☐ Challenge ☐ Neutral ☐ Strength ☐ Major Strength
☐ No opinion

4. Ability for command staff to engage in long term planning

- ☐ Major Challenge ☐ Challenge ☐ Neutral ☐ Strength ☐ Major Strength
☐ No opinion

5. Leadership of command staff

- ☐ Major Challenge ☐ Challenge ☐ Neutral ☐ Strength ☐ Major Strength
☐ No opinion

6. Administrative capacity for fire prevention activities

- ☐ Major Challenge ☐ Challenge ☐ Neutral ☐ Strength ☐ Major Strength
☐ No opinion

7. Outreach to community through public education activities

- ☐ Major Challenge ☐ Challenge ☐ Neutral ☐ Strength ☐ Major Strength
☐ No opinion

8. Workplace culture

- ☐ Major Challenge ☐ Challenge ☐ Neutral ☐ Strength ☐ Major Strength
☐ No opinion

9. Condition of facilities

- ☐ Major Challenge ☐ Challenge ☐ Neutral ☐ Strength ☐ Major Strength
☐ No opinion

10. Condition of equipment

- ☐ Major Challenge ☐ Challenge ☐ Neutral ☐ Strength ☐ Major Strength
☐ No opinion

11. Ability for call staff to respond to calls quickly

- ☐ Major Challenge ☐ Challenge ☐ Neutral ☐ Strength ☐ Major Strength
☐ No opinion

12. Ability to provide adequate training (career and call officers)

- ☐ Major Challenge ☐ Challenge ☐ Neutral ☐ Strength ☐ Major Strength
☐ No opinion

Please rate the next few questions based on your level of agreement.

13. Morale is high in the department.

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

14. I would recommend the department to anyone interested in a fire-fighting career.

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

15. I am proud to be a member of the department.

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

16. Are there any other aspects of the Northbridge Fire Department that you see as a particular strength?

17. Are there any other aspects of the Northbridge Fire Department that you see as a particular challenge?

18. Are you a career or call officer?

- ☐ Career Officer (skips questions related to call officers)
☐ Call Officer (move to next question)

19. Call officers: Do you live within the Northbridge Fire Department response area?

☐ Yes

☐ No

20. Call officers: How many miles away from the responding station do you live?

21. Call officers: Do you work within the Northbridge Fire Department response area?

☐ Yes

☐ No

22. Call officers: How many miles away from the responding station do you work?

23. Call officers: What days/times are you usually available to respond to calls?

	0000 - 0400	0400 - 0800	0800 - 1200	1200 - 1600	1600 - 2000	2000 - 2400
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Finally, part of the strategic planning process is to evaluate the current mission and vision statements for the department. The next few questions look for you to provide some input into this process.

24. How would you describe the purpose of the Northbridge Fire Department?

25. What would you say the ultimate goal of the Northbridge Fire Department should be?

26. What values do you think are important to Northbridge Fire Department (ex: integrity, respect, etc.)?

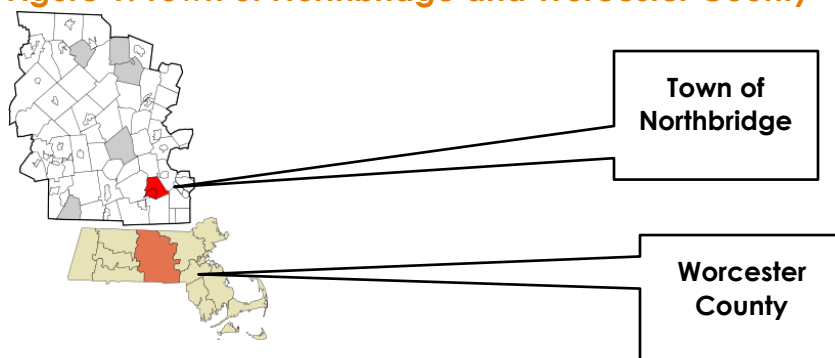
APPENDIX C: STRATEGIC PLAN GAP ANALYSIS

Section 1: Background

Northbridge is a town in Worcester County, MA. Relevant information about the town for this analysis includes:

- Northbridge is a suburban Northeastern town made up of several villages, including Linwood, Northbridge, Riverdale, Rockdale, and Whitinsville.
- The total town area is 18.1 square miles.
- The Blackstone and Mumford rivers traverse the town and became the focal points for the many industrial developments and mills along the riverbanks and in town. Today, the mills have been mostly renovated into housing and businesses. Two mills remain in service.
- The town operates under a Home Rule Charter. The executive powers of the town shall be vested in the Board of Selectmen which shall be deemed to be the chief executive office of the town (five selectmen members).⁷
- The Town Manager shall be the Chief Administrative Officer of the town, directly responsible to the board of selectmen for the administration of all town affairs for which the office of town manager is given responsibility by or under this charter.⁸
- There shall be a Fire Department, headed by a Fire Chief.⁹
- The Fire Chief shall be responsible for the organization, training and direction of Fire Department personnel involving firefighting, fire prevention, fire safety inspection and investigation, and emergency medical services. The Fire Chief shall have full charge of extinguishing fires, shall be in immediate control of all town property used by the Department, and of the officers and firefighters, who shall obey his orders.¹⁰

Figure 1: Town of Northbridge and Worcester County



7. Northbridge Home Rule Charter, Section 3-2(b)

8. Northbridge Home Rule Charter, Section 4.

9. Town of Northbridge Code of By-Laws, Chapter 4-412(A)

10. Town of Northbridge Code of By-Laws, Chapter 4-412(C)

Northbridge Fire Department (NFD) Mission Statement¹¹

The mission of the Northbridge Fire Department is to provide the citizens of the community with a high level of public safety services. We strive to safeguard lives and property and to enhance the quality of life of the citizens of Northbridge. This will be accomplished with an emphasis on public safety, customer service, public education, and a dedication to duty. We will accomplish this with a highly trained and educated team of professionals that serve with dedication, pride, and compassion, twenty-four hours per day. We also endeavor to protect and preserve the health and safety of our members and return them safely to their families when the emergency is over.

NFD Key Elements

- Fire protective services.
- Emergency Medical Services ground transport at the Advanced Life Support (ALS) level.
- Public fire education.
- Fire prevention and code enforcement.
- Staffed with career and call/volunteer members.
- NFPA 1720 department.
- Town Emergency Management and Community Preparedness.
- Public CPR and safety classes.
- Fire Cadet program.

Demographics

- 2020 population: 16,335¹²
- Population density-909.8/square mile
- Children under the age of five represent 7.6 percent of the population.
- Persons under the age of 18 represent 22.8 percent of the population.
- Persons over the age of 65 represent 17.1 percent of the population.
- Female persons represent 52 percent of the population.
- There are 2.64 persons per household in the Town of Northbridge.
- The median household income in 2019 dollars is \$81,504.
- Persons living in poverty make up 5.9 percent of the population.
- Black or African-American alone represents 2.0 percent of the population. White alone at 91.0 percent, American Indian or Alaska Native alone at .3 percent, Asian alone at 1.1 percent, two or more races at 3.8 percent, and Hispanic or Latino at 6.2 percent.

11. Northbridge Fire Department Web Site: [Fire Department | Northbridge MA \(northbridgemass.org\)](https://www.firedepartment-northbridge.org/)

12. [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Northbridge town, Worcester County, Massachusetts](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/northbridgetown-worcester-county-massachusetts)

Section 2: NFD Administrative and Operational Considerations

Fire Administrative component led by a Fire Chief (single manager).

- Current Deputy Chief position vacant.
- Fire Chief also fills role of Town Emergency Management Coordinator.
 - Has one volunteer assistant for this function.
- Fire Chief also manages overall training program.
- One civilian administrative assistant 28 hours/week.

Fire Operational component includes:

- Two stations-Headquarters (Station 1 and primary operation) and Station 2.
- Station 1 is staffed with career personnel.
- Station 2 is not staffed-houses response apparatus for call firefighters.
- Operational career staffing is 4 per group (shift).
- Four operational groups-16 personnel.
- Operational groups work a 24 on-48 off, 24 on-96 off schedule.
- Each group consists of a Company Officer and 3 firefighters.
 - Company Officer is assigned as follows: 1 Group has a Captain; 3 Groups have a Lieutenant.
- Captain serves as the shift commander.
- One Fire Prevention Officer is on duty from 0700-1730 hours Monday-Thursday and is available to respond to calls for services as needed.
- NFD has 18 call firefighters.
 - 4 call officers.
 - 14 call firefighters.
- NFD provides fire protective services and EMS ground transport services.
- NFD considers itself a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1720 Department.

The next tables outline the NFD incident responses. The source for this data comes from the 2020 *Northbridge Fire Station Feasibility and Facilities Study* conducted by Manitou Inc.

Table 1: NFD Fire and EMS Responses by General Type, 2019, 2020, 2021

Call Type	2019	2020	2021
Fire Related	39	57	51
Fire Response to Rescue/Medical	334	234	94
Other Responses	590	454	674
Total Fire Related Calls	963	755	819
Ambulance 1-EMS Calls	1361	1362	1405
Ambulance 2-EMS Calls	1021	825	838
Total Ambulance/EMS Calls	2382	2187	2243

Table 2: Fire and EMS Incidents by Time of Day, 2019, 2020, 2021

Alarm Time	2019	2020	2021
Day: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm	1461	577	608
Evening: 4:00 pm-12:00 am	1222	1354	1484
Night: 12:00 am - 8:00 am	662	1011	970
Total Calls	3345	2924	3062

NFPA 1720

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards are consensus standards and not the law. Many cities and counties strive to achieve these standards to the extent possible without placing an undue financial burden on the community. A local jurisdiction must decide on the level of service it can deliver based on several factors as discussed herein to include budgetary considerations. Questions of legal responsibilities are often discussed in terms of compliance with NFPA standards. Again, these are national consensus standards, representing best practices and applied science and research.

NFPA 1720, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*, 2020 edition (National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, Mass.), outlines organization and deployment of operations by volunteer and combination (a fire department having emergency service personnel comprising less than 85 percent majority of either volunteer or career membership) fire and rescue organizations.¹³ It serves as a benchmark to measure staffing and deployment of resources to certain fire incidents and emergencies.

Fire departments should base their specific role on a formal community risk management plan, as discussed in this analysis, and taking into consideration.¹⁴

- Life hazard to the population protected. The number and type of units assigned to respond to a reported incident shall be determined by risk analysis and/or pre-fire planning.
- Fire suppression operations shall be organized to ensure that the fire department's fire suppression capability includes personnel, equipment, and other resources to deploy fire suppression resources in such a manner that the needs of the organization are met.
- The Authority Having Jurisdiction shall promulgate the fire department's organizational, operational, and deployment procedures by issuing written administrative regulations, standard operating procedures, and departmental orders.
- The number of members that are available to operate on an incident is sufficient and able to meet the needs of the department.
- Provisions for safe and effective firefighting performance conditions for the firefighters.

13. NFPA 1720 is a nationally recognized standard, but it has not been adopted as a mandatory regulation by the federal government or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is a valuable resource for establishing and measuring performance objectives for the Town of Northbridge but should not be the only determining factor when making local decisions about the county's fire and EMS services.

14. NFPA 1720, Chapter 4.2

- Personnel responding to fires and other emergencies shall be organized into company units or response teams and have the required apparatus and equipment to respond.
- Initial firefighting operations shall be organized to ensure that at least four members are assembled before interior fire suppression operations are initiated in a hazardous area.
- The capability to sustain operations shall include the personnel, equipment, and resources to conduct incident specific operations.

It is understood that call/volunteer members in a combination department typically respond to incidents from home or work. For a minimum-level Effective Response Force to begin fire suppression efforts, NFPA 1720 establishes the minimum response staffing for a predominately call/volunteer department for low-hazard structural firefighting incidents (to include out buildings and up to a 2000 square-foot, one- to two-story, single-family dwelling without a basement and no exposures) for specific demand zone. Staffing standards are shown below in Table 5.

Each demand zone takes into consideration certain risk elements such as population density, exposed occupied buildings (more predominate in urban and suburban demand zones), water supply, and proximity to responding apparatus and members (incident and fire station).

TABLE 3: NFPA 1720 Staffing for ERF, Residential Structure

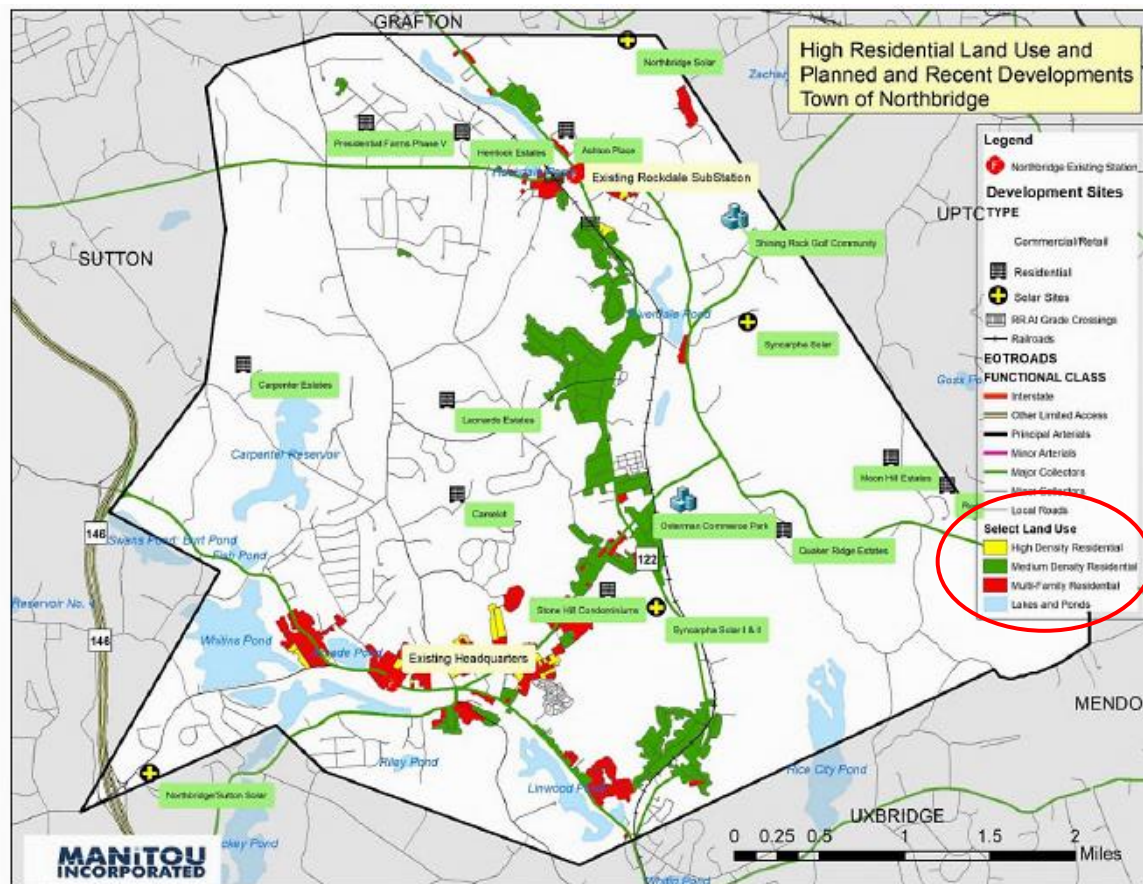
Demand Zone	Demographics	Minimum Staff to Respond to Scene*	Response Time Standard
Urban Area	>1000 people/mi ²	15	Within 9 Minutes 90-percent of the time
Suburban Area	500-1000 people/mi ²	10	Within 10 Minutes 80-percent of the time
Rural Area	<500 people/mi ²	6	Within 14 Minutes 80-percent of the time
Remote Area	Travel Distance ≥ 8 miles	4	Directly dependent on travel distance determined by AHJ 90-percent of the time

*Minimum staff responding includes automatic and mutual aid.

*Minimum staff responding to scene by apparatus and personal owned vehicle.

The next figure illustrates high and medium density residential land use which indicates urban and suburban density as benchmarked against NFPA 1720.

Figure 2: Northbridge Existing and Planned Development Use¹⁵



The variables of how and where personnel and companies are located, and how quickly they can arrive on scene, play major roles in controlling and mitigating emergencies. ***The reality is that NFD relies heavily on call/volunteer response from home or work and mutual aid from nearby towns who themselves utilize call/volunteers to make up the teams and crews of the Effective Response Force.*** NFD's volunteer availability at any time of the day may have an impact on assembling enough personnel and resources on the scene. This factor has to be considered at all times by those responding to the scene, those responding to the station to pick up apparatus, and command officers responding who must manage and coordinate available responding and on scene resources.

The next three tables provide examples of operational critical tasking utilizing the NFPA 1720 minimum staffing criteria. As discussed above, the urban demand zone stipulates the largest minimum staffing and more closely aligns with the NFPA 1710 Effective Response Force. In the urban demand zone, when the minimum staffing assembles, critical tasks are completed simultaneously. ***NFD has urban demand zones in its response district as defined by NFPA 1720.***

In the suburban, rural, and remote demand zones, critical tasks are combined more frequently than in the urban demand zone, creating circumstances where these critical tasks are completed in sequence, rather than simultaneously. ***NFD has suburban demand zones in its response district as defined in NFPA 1720.***

15. 2020 Northbridge Fire Station Feasibility and Facilities Study conducted by Manitou Inc.

The rural and remote demand zone minimum staffing can place one attack line in service, and then combine two-person crews (two for rural; one for remote) to handle one or two other critical tasks until additional crew members arrive on scene. Achieving completion of the basic fireground critical tasks as outlined in the suburban demand zone is less than optimal in the rural and remote demand zones. ***The NFD has some rural demand zones in its response district as defined in NFPA 1720.***

TABLE 4: Critical Tasking in an Urban Demand Zone, Single-Family Dwelling

Critical Task	# of Responders Assigned to Task
Attack Line (2-In)	2
Backup/Second Line	2
Ventilation	2
Search and Rescue	2
Rapid Intervention (2-out)	2
Attack Engine Pump Operator	1
Water Source Engine Pump Operator	1
Outside Crew for: utility control, hose management, potential exposure line or additional fire suppression line	2
Incident Commander	1
Total Minimum Response for Urban Demand Zone	15

TABLE 5: Critical Tasking in a Suburban Demand Zone, Single-Family Dwelling

Critical Task	# of Responders Assigned to Task
Attack Line/Search and Rescue (2-In)	2
Backup/Second Line	2
Attack Engine Pump Operator	1
Water Source Engine Pump Operator	1
Outside crew for: rapid intervention crew ventilation, utility control, hose management, potential exposure line or additional fire suppression line	3
Incident Commander	1
Total Minimum Response for Suburban Demand Zone	10

TABLE 6: Critical Tasking in a Rural Demand Zone, Single-Family Dwelling

Critical Task	# of Responders Assigned to Task
Attack Line/Search and Rescue (2-In)	2
Backup/Second Line	2
Outside crew for: initial engine pump operator (sets pump then assists with outside tasks), ventilation, utility control, hose management, potential exposure line or additional fire suppression line. One member may take on incident command function coordinating with interior crew(s) until additional crew members/command officers arrive on scene.	2
Total Minimum Response for Rural Demand Zone	6

NFPA 1500, and Two-In/Two-Out

Another consideration, and one that links to critical tasking and assembling an Effective Response Force, is that of two-in/two-out. Prior to initiating any fire attack in an immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) environment (and with no confirmed rescue in progress), the initial two-person entry team shall ensure that there are sufficient resources on-scene to establish a two-person initial rapid intervention team (IRIT) located outside of the building.

One standard that addresses this is NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Health, Safety, and Wellness*, 2018 Edition. NFPA 1500 addresses the issue of two-in/two-out by stating during the initial stages of the incident where only one crew is operating in the hazardous area of a working structural fire. By this standard, a minimum of four individuals shall be required consisting of two members working as a crew in the hazardous area and two standby members present outside this hazard area available for assistance or rescue at emergency operations where entry into the danger area is required.¹⁶

NFPA 1500 also speaks to the utilization of the two-out personnel in the context of the health and safety of the firefighters working at the incident. *The assignment of any personnel including the incident commander, the safety officer, or operations of fire apparatus, shall not be permitted as standby personnel if by abandoning their critical task(s) to assist, or if necessary, perform rescue, the clearly jeopardize the safety and health of any firefighter working at the incident.*¹⁷

As is common with many volunteer/combination fire departments, NFD does not respond to structural fires with a pre-determined staffing regimen or a guaranteed command officer on the initial alarm dispatch. Under this response model, NFD may or may not have the minimum number of firefighters on the initial response in order to comply with CFR 1910.134(g)(4), regarding two-in/two-out rules and initial rapid intervention team (IRIT). Responding members must be mindful of who and what apparatus is on scene and the Two In/Two Out concept.

In order to meet the intent of NFPA 1500, NFD must utilize two personnel to commit to interior fire attack while two firefighters remain out of the hazardous area or immediately dangerous to life

16. NFPA 1500, 2018, 8.8.2.

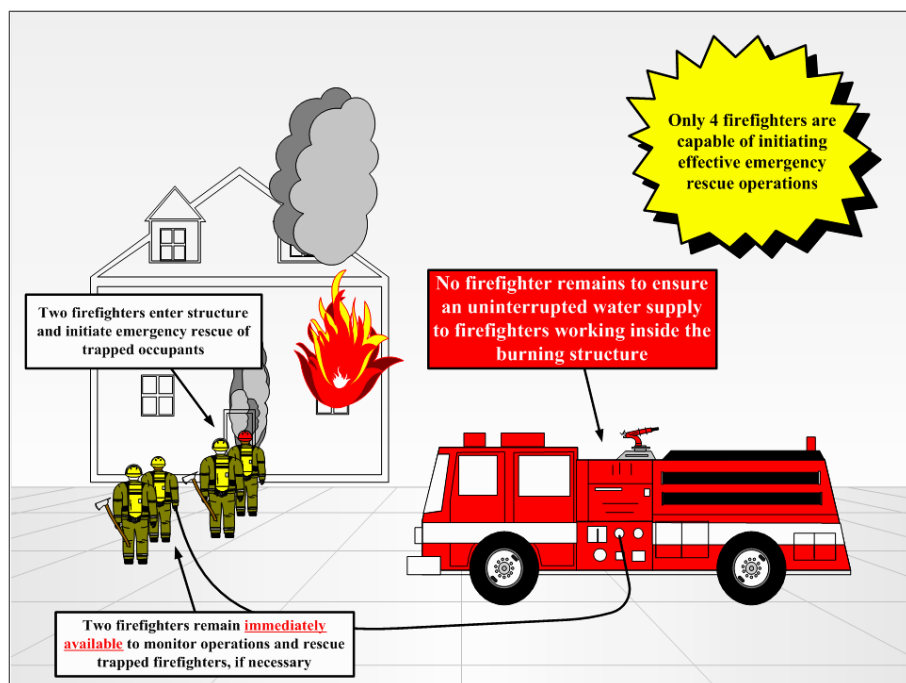
17. NFPA 1500, 2018, 8.8.2.5.

and health (IDLH) area to form the IRIT, while attack lines are charged, and a continuous water supply is established.

NFPA 1500 does allow for fewer than four personnel under specific circumstances. It states, *Initial attack operations shall be organized to ensure that if on arrival at the emergency scene, initial attack personnel find an imminent life-threatening situation where immediate action could prevent the loss of life or serious injury, such action shall be permitted with fewer than four personnel.*¹⁸

In the end, the ability to assemble adequate personnel, along with appropriate apparatus to the scene of a structure fire, is critical to operational success and firefighter safety. NFPA 1720 addresses this through the minimum staff to respond matrix this standard promulgates.

FIGURE 3: Two-In/Two-Out Interior Firefighting Model



ISO Analysis

The ISO is a national, not-for-profit organization that collects and evaluates information from communities across the United States regarding their capabilities to combat building fires. The data collected from a community is analyzed and applied to ISO's Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) from which a Public Protection Classification (PPC™) grade is assigned to a community (1 to 10).

A Class 1 represents an exemplary community fire suppression program that includes all of the components outlined below. A Class 10 indicates that the community's fire suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria. It is important to understand the PPC is not just a fire department classification, but a compilation of community services that include the fire

18. NFPA 1500, 2018 8.8.2.10.

department, the emergency communications center, and the community's potable water supply system operator.¹⁹

A community's PPC grade depends on:

- **Needed Fire Flows** (building locations used to determine the theoretical amount of water necessary for fire suppression purposes).
- **Emergency Communications** (10 percent of the evaluation).
- **Fire Department** (50 percent of the evaluation).
- **Water Supply** (40 percent of the evaluation).

The Town was graded as a Class 4/4X, reflecting 63.27 out of a total of 105 points.

The Town was recently evaluated and received an ISO-PPC rating of 4/4X (68.53 total points). The NFD is currently addressing deficiencies with a goal of reaching a Class 3 rating.

Training

Training is, without question, one of the most essential functions that a fire department should be performing on a regular basis. One could even make a credible argument that training is, in some ways, more important than emergency responses because a department that is not well trained, prepared, and operationally ready will be unable to fulfill its emergency response obligations and mission. Education and training are vital at all levels of fire service operations to ensure that necessary functions are completed correctly, safely, and effectively. A comprehensive, diverse, and ongoing training program is critical to the fire department's level of success.

The level of training or education required given a set of tasks varies with the jobs to be performed. The program must include an appropriate combination of technical/didactic training, manipulative or hands-on/practical evolutions, and training assessment to gauge the effectiveness of these efforts. Most of the training, but particularly the practical, standardized, hands-on training evolutions should be developed based upon the department's own operating procedures and operations while remaining cognizant of widely accepted practices and standards that could be used as a benchmark to judge the department's operations for any number of reasons.

Relevant training information from the NFD gap analysis is:

- Training is coordinated by a Training Officer (shift officer). The Training Officer chairs a training committee of three career members and one call firefighter who plan department training.
- Training is conducted at the NFD central station by certified state instructors.
- Most state certifications received through Massachusetts Fire Academy (state certifying agency).
- Required NFD member training:
 - Firefighters are required to get Firefighter I/II, Hazmat and First responder.

19. TCFD ISO PPC report; November 2019.

- Officers are required to get Fire Officer I and Fire Instructor I.
- Chief Officers required to get Fire Officer II, ICS300.
- Other requirements: 30 hours of Fire Training, 20 hours of all hazard training.
- NFD prefers to hire certified firefighters with EMT or Paramedic certifications due to loss of service time when employee is away receiving training to gain certification.

Community Risk Reduction

Community Risk Reduction activities are important undertakings of a contemporary fire department. A comprehensive fire protection system in every jurisdiction should include, at a minimum, the key functions of fire prevention, code enforcement, inspections, and public education.

Preventing fires before they occur, and limiting the impact of those that do, should be priority objectives of every fire department. Fire investigation is a mission-important function of fire departments, as this function serves to determine how a fire started and why the fire behaved the way it did, providing information that plays a significant role in fire prevention efforts. Educating the public about fire safety and teaching them appropriate behaviors on how to react should they be confronted with a fire is also an important life safety responsibility of the fire department.

Relevant training information from the NFD gap analysis is:

- The fire prevention function in the town is managed by a Fire Prevention Officer who works Monday-Thursday 7:30 am – 5:00 pm.
- Each work group (shift) has an assigned fire inspector who assists with fire inspections when available to do so.
- In 2021, 696 fire code inspections were completed.
- Plan review assistance was provided to the Building Inspector and the State Fire Marshal's Office as requested.
- Fire Investigations are completed by the State Fire Marshal's Office.
- Public fire education is coordinated and conducted by a career firefighter assigned to a group (shift). This includes public education events at public and private schools, smoke detector assessment and installation, community training and at-risk groups training.

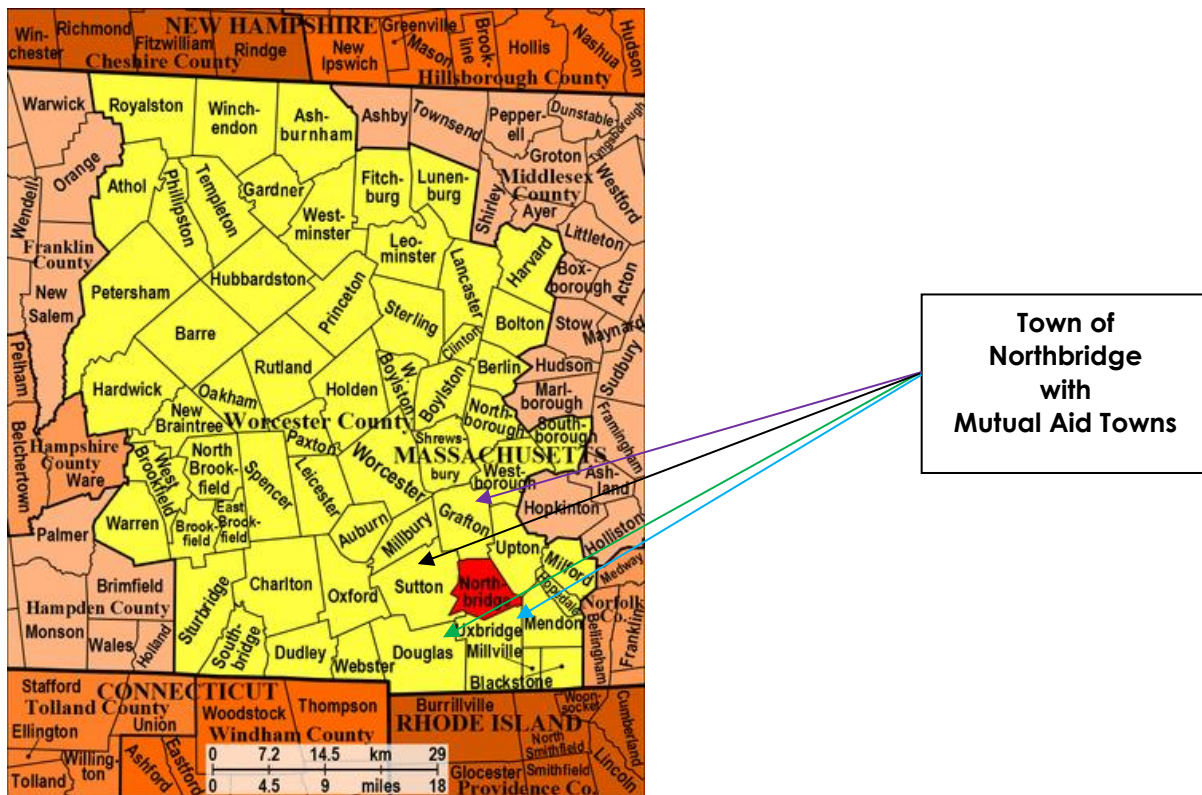
Administrative and Operational Challenges

- Inconsistent staffing: NFD is unable to assemble an effective response force in urban, suburban, and rural response zones.
 - EMS is the primary call demand. NFD has been doing EMS transport since 1974.
 - NFD primarily staffs two ambulances and one engine with available personnel; staffing is not continuous).

- Because EMS calls require 2 career staff per transport unit, with 4 career staff on duty all career staff are often out on EMS calls throughout the day.
- If 2 career staff are out on an incident, only 2 are remaining in station to deploy fire apparatus for a fire call for service (M-Th the Fire Prevention Officer is on duty from 0700-1730 hours and is available to respond).
- Call firefighters are mostly available in the evening hours.
- Recruitment, retention, and training pose challenges for call personnel.
- There is no surge capacity for fire and/or EMS incidents in the daytime.
- Staffing model makes it difficult to ensure staff with necessary qualification at all times.
- Paramedic burnout: NFD faces morale issues due to a high volume of EMS incidents.
- Vacant Deputy Chief position needs to be filled to take on overall management of day-to-day activities.
- Company officers cannot be officers as often they are responding on ambulances (majority of time spent as a practitioner).
- Call response varies by staff that are left in the station when a call comes in.
- Fire calls are handled with 1 engine (initial response) by either 2 career staff (if 2 career staff are out on an EMS call), or if 4 career staff are in the station, a combination of career staff on 1 engine and 1 ladder, or 1 engine and 1 ambulance. This is dependent on the call type.
- Mutual aid for fire incidents typically 10-12 minutes (drive time) away. Mutual aid towns include Uxbridge, Grafton, Upton, Douglas, Sutton.
 - These towns have similar staffing and may not be able to respond.

The next figure illustrates the proximity of the mutual aid jurisdictions.

Figure 4: Town of Northbridge With Surrounding Mutual Aid Towns



Stakeholder Meetings and Survey

Through an organizationally driven strategic planning process, opportunities exist for CPSM to bring together internal stakeholders to discuss what the strengths of the organization are, what challenges the organization may be facing, where the organization is going or should go, and how everyone involved can work towards satisfying the mission and vision of the organization.

As a component of this gap analysis, CPSM conducted stakeholder meetings and an officer survey to gain insight on these and other discussion points. These included:

- Virtual meeting with the Fire Chief David White on January 10, 2022.
- Virtual stakeholder meetings with NFD officer on February 9, 2022.
 - Fire Chief David White
 - District Chief Robert Lachapelle
 - Lieutenant Thomas Valdiva
 - Lieutenant Anthony Genga
 - Lieutenant Nicholas Shelburne
 - Interim Lieutenant Ethan White
- Discussion with Chief White on March 21, 2022, regarding turnover and the cause and effect of same. Chief White provided a spreadsheet outlining retirements, resignations and separations since his promotion to NFD Fire Chief in 2017.
- Stakeholder Survey conducted electronically: March 2022
 - The survey questions, survey response data, and survey comments are enclosed as appendix A.
- Virtual meeting on April 18, 2022 with Command Staff and Officers (career and call) to review gap analysis, discuss mission, vision, and values, and review SWOT analysis.

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Section 3: NFD Infrastructure

Facilities

- The 2020 feasibility and facility report rates both stations as poor with multiple structural and environmental issues.
- Station 1 is a former mill and was renovated to serve as a fire station.
- Station 2 was built in the 1950s.

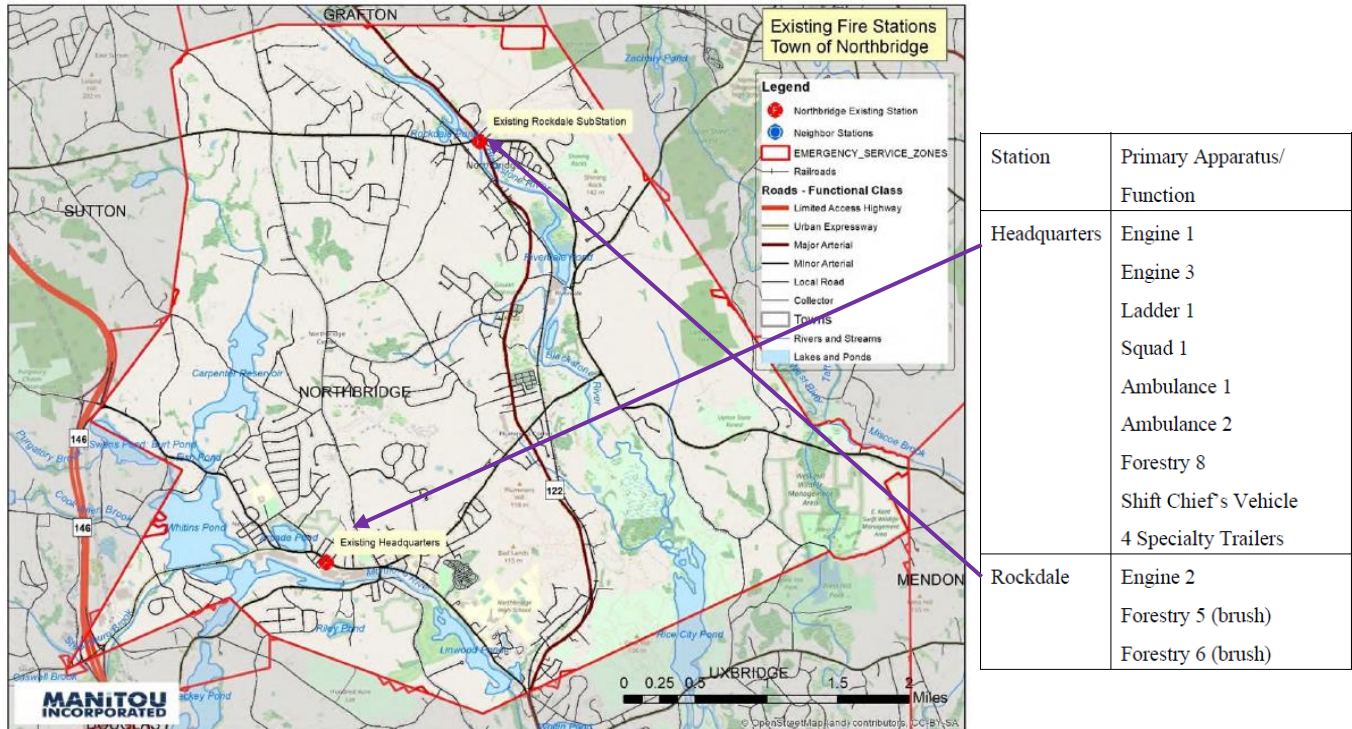
Figure 5: NFD Fire Stations



*Stations photo source: 2020 Northbridge Fire Station Feasibility and Facilities Study, Manitou Inc.

The next figure illustrates geographically where the two stations are located.

Figure 6: NFD Station Locations²⁰



The 2020 feasibility and facility report recommended a new fire station, which the town acted on and approved. Town approval included funding for the project.

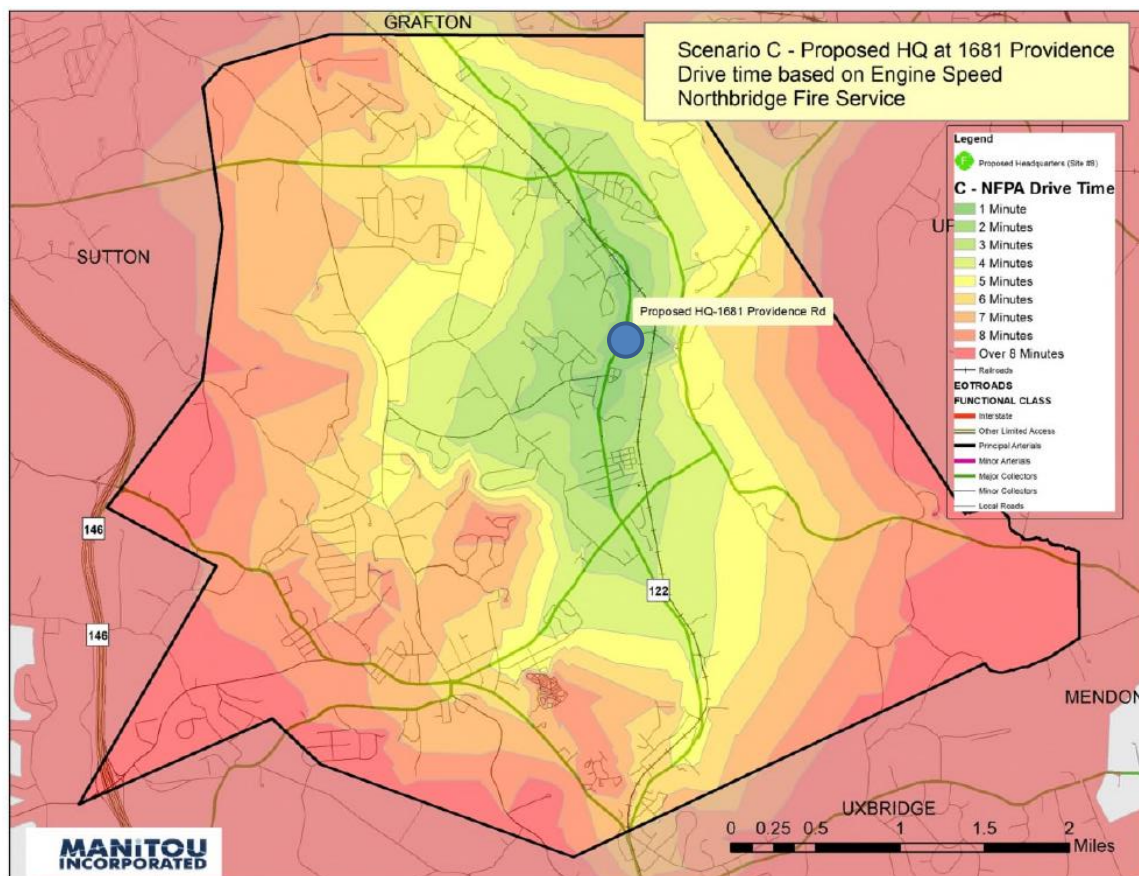
The new fire station will house the entire fire department, closing both current fire stations. According to the consultant who completed the feasibility and facilities study the new station will provide more equitable coverage Town-wide for the current deployment of staff and stations, which provide shorter response times in the Whitinsville area at the expense of overall coverage in the Town. The site can also accommodate the functional and operational needs identified in the architectural programming and have room for future growth.

- The new station is scheduled to be completed in July 2023.
- The new station will also house the Building Inspector and Board of Health Planning Board.

20. 2020 Northbridge Fire Station Feasibility and Facilities Study, Manitou Inc.

Figure 7 illustrates the location of the new station.

Figure 7: New NFD Station Location²¹



Fleet

The provision of an operationally ready and strategically located fleet of mission-essential fire-rescue vehicles is fundamental to the ability of a fire-rescue department to deliver reliable and efficient public safety within a community.

The NFD currently operates a fleet of fire and EMS apparatus that includes:

- Three engine apparatus.
 - 2009, 1500 Gallons per Minute (GPM).
 - 2013, 1500 GPM.
 - 2017, 1500 GPM.
- One ladder apparatus.
 - 2016, 103-foot ladder.

21. 2020 Northbridge Fire Station Feasibility and Facilities Study, Manitou Inc.

- One squad apparatus.
 - 1995, non-walk-through that carries heavy/tactical rescue equipment.
- Two ambulance apparatus.
 - 2019, F-550 with Osage body.
 - 2021, E450 with Osage body (patient compartment remount on new chassis).
- Three Brush Units.
 - 1990 Chevrolet 3500 with portable skid unit (pump and water tank).
 - 1997 International 4700 with 1963 Barton American 500 GPM pump.
 - 1997 International 4700 with 1250 GPM pump.

The NFD also has an assortment of command and service vehicles.

The procurement, maintenance, and eventual replacement of response vehicles is one of the largest expenses incurred in sustaining a community's fire-rescue department. While it is the personnel of the NFD who provide emergency services within the community, the department's fleet of response vehicles is essential to operational success. Reliable vehicles are needed to deliver responders and the equipment/materials they employ to the scene of dispatched emergencies within the town.

Replacement of fire-rescue response vehicles is a necessary, albeit expensive, element of fire department budgeting that should reflect careful planning. A well-planned and documented emergency vehicle replacement plan ensures ongoing preservation of a safe, reliable, and operationally capable response fleet. A plan must also schedule future capital outlay in a manner that is affordable to the community.

NFPA 1901, *Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus*, serves as a guide to the manufacturers that build fire apparatus and the fire departments that purchase them. The document is updated every five years, using input from the public/stakeholders through a formal review process. The committee membership is made up of representatives from the fire service, manufacturers, consultants, and special interest groups. The committee monitors various issues and problems that occur with fire apparatus and attempts to develop standards that address those issues. A primary interest of the committee over the past years has been improving firefighter safety and reducing fire apparatus crashes.

The Annex Material in NFPA 1901 (2016) contains recommendations and work sheets to assist in decision making in vehicle purchasing. With respect to recommended vehicle service life, the following excerpt is noteworthy:

"It is recommended that apparatus greater than 15 years old that have been properly maintained and that are still in serviceable condition be placed in reserve status and upgraded in accordance with NFPA 1912, Standard for Fire Apparatus Refurbishing (2016), to incorporate as many features as possible of the current fire apparatus standard. This will ensure that, while the apparatus might not totally comply with the current edition of the automotive fire apparatus standards, many improvements and upgrades required by the recent versions of the standards are available to the firefighters who use the apparatus."

The impetus for these recommended service life thresholds is continual advances in occupant safety. Despite good stewardship and maintenance of emergency vehicles in sound operating

condition, there are many advances in occupant safety, such as fully enclosed cabs, enhanced rollover protection and air bags, three-point restraints, antilock brakes, higher visibility, cab noise abatement/hearing protection, and a host of other improvements as reflected in each revision of NFPA 1901. These improvements provide safer response vehicles for those providing emergency services within the community, as well those "sharing the road" with these responders.

Given that NFPA 1901 targets specifications for only fire suppression vehicles, NFPA 1917, *Standard for Automotive Ambulances*, was published in 2013 (updated in 2019) to provide similar recommendations governing the design and construction of ambulances. The U.S. General Services Administration also promulgates ambulance standards under KKK-A-1822. Additionally, the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS) has established a Ground Vehicle Standard (2016). While NFPA 1917, KKK, and CAAS standards do not include recommended service-life replacement standards for EMS vehicles, common industry practice suggests typical replacement intervals of four to eight years. This schedule depends on a number of variables, most notably vehicle mileage, escalation of annualized repair expenses, and frequency with which the subject vehicle is out of service. After replacement, serviceable vehicles may be retained in ready-reserve status for an additional two to four years. In light of the inherently shorter service life of ambulances, owing to a higher frequency of emergency responses handled than corresponding suppression vehicles, there are fewer legitimate concerns regarding "missing" essential improvements in occupant/operator safety standards.

The current replacement schedule for NFD first response fire and EMS apparatus is as follows:

- Fire apparatus: 15-20 years.
- EMS apparatus: 5 years on first chassis. Patient compartment remounted on new chassis once to reduce costs.

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Section 4: Community Risk Assessment

Building Risks

A community risk and vulnerability evaluates the community as a whole. Part of this process assigns a level of risk to buildings which can be either high, medium, or low-hazard. Risk level can depend on factors such as the life and building content hazard, and the potential fire flow and staffing required to mitigate an emergency in the specific property. According to the NFPA *Fire Protection Handbook*, these hazards are defined as:

High-hazard occupancies: Schools, hospitals, nursing homes, explosives plants, refineries, high-rise buildings, and other high life-hazard or large fire-potential occupancies.

Medium-hazard occupancies: Apartments, offices, and mercantile and industrial occupancies not normally requiring extensive rescue by firefighting forces.

Low-hazard occupancies: One-, two-, or three-family dwellings and scattered small business and industrial occupancies.²²

The construction type for residential structures in Northbridge is predominately wood frame. The majority of the commercial/industrial structure building inventory is ordinary (block/brick) construction.

Northbridge has the following building types and inventory:

- Single-family homes: 3,566 predominately wood frame.
- Apartment Buildings:
 - 366 2-family predominately wood frame.
 - 61 3-family predominately wood frame.
 - 143 complexes of 4-6 units and predominately wood frame.
 - 6 complexes more than 10 units predominately wood frame.
- Condominiums: 852 2-3 story wood frame. 104 units currently under construction.
- Taxpayer (public) buildings: 12 buildings wood frame and ordinary construction.
- Commercial/industrial structures: 169 buildings wood frame and ordinary construction.
- Strip malls: 10 buildings ordinary construction.
- Northbridge also has two animal hospitals and two medical buildings.
- Public schools: 4 of ordinary construction.
- Nursing homes: 2 of ordinary construction.
- Senior apartments: 7 of ordinary construction.

High-rise buildings: None.

Based on the Northbridge building types identified above, the town has a predominantly low-hazard building risk (single-family dwellings).

22. Cote, Grant, Hall & Solomon, eds., *Fire Protection Handbook* (Quincy, MA: National Fire Protection Association, 2008), 12.

Community Fire Loss

Fire loss is an estimation of the total loss from a fire to the structure and contents in terms of replacement. Fire loss includes contents damaged by fire, smoke, water, and overhaul. Fire loss does not include indirect loss, such as business interruption.

In a 2019 report published by the National Fire Protection Association on trends and patterns of U.S. fire losses, it was determined that home fires still cause the majority of all civilian fire deaths, civilian injuries, and property loss due to fire. Key findings from this report include:²³

- Public fire departments responded to 1,318,500 fires in 2018, virtually the same as the previous year.
- Every 24 seconds, a fire department in the United States responds to a fire somewhere in the nation. A fire occurs in a structure at the rate of one every 63 seconds, and a home fire occurs every 87 seconds.
- Seventy-four percent of all fire deaths occurred in the home.
- Home fires were responsible for 11,200 civilian injuries, or 74 percent of all civilian injuries, in 2018.
- An estimated \$25.6 billion in property damage occurred as a result of fire in 2018, a significant increase, as this number includes a \$12 billion loss in wildfires in Northern California.
- An estimated 25,500 structure fires were intentionally set in 2018, an increase of 13 percent over the year before.

Reported community loss by the NFD for the years 2017-2021 is:

- 2017: \$997,225
- 2018: \$443,615
- 2019: \$587,250
- 2020: \$1,230,950
- 2021: \$234,500

Transportation Risks

The road network in Northbridge is typical of towns and cities across the country and includes arterial streets, collector streets, and local street networks. The road network poses a vehicular accident and vehicular versus pedestrian risk in Northbridge. There are additional transportation risks as tractor-trailer and other commercial vehicles traverse the roadways of Northbridge to deliver mixed commodities to businesses and residential locations. Fires involving these products can produce smoke and other products of combustion risks that may be hazardous to health.

Northbridge has main-line rail that travels through the city. The line is primarily freight, is operated by the Providence and Worcester Railroad, and handles the movement of construction debris, aggregates, construction materials, lumber, steel, plastics, and chemicals to include ethanol and anhydrous ammonia. Fires involving these products can produce smoke

23. <https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/US-Fire-Problem/Fire-loss-in-the-United-States>

and other products of combustion risks that may be hazardous to health. The town has at-grade crossings, which creates transportation risks.

Environmental Risks

The most common natural and environmental hazards prevalent to the town include:

- Flooding: Flooding occurs in Northbridge. Flood hazards in Northbridge include:
 - 100-year floodplain events.
 - Rapid snowpack melt.
 - Dam breach and failure.
 - Severe rainstorms / heavy rain.
- Hurricane-High Wind Events: (Hurricane remnants, tornadoes, Nor'easters). Storm-Related Events (downbursts, lightning, and hailstorms).
 - Hurricane.
 - Tornadoes.
 - Severe thunderstorm with high winds, lightning, and hail.
- Severe Winter Weather.
 - Heavy Snowstorms.
 - Ice Storms.
 - Nor'easter.
- Wildfire.
- Earthquake.
 - New England as a whole has the potential for earthquakes due to its geology.
- Drought.
- Extreme Temperatures.

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Section 5: Recommended Planning Strategies

- Review NFD Mission statement.
- Develop NFD Vision statement.
- Develop NFD Values statements.
- Develop a promotional process in accordance with town and department policies for the vacant Deputy Chief position and fill this vacancy in the near term.
- Develop promotional process in accordance with town and department policies to backfill Company Officer position vacated by Deputy Chief promotion.
- Develop recruitment and retention strategies for career and call staff with a goal of increasing active and certified call personnel.
 - Develop strategies to address department turnover.
 - Develop strategies to avoid burn-out of personnel.
 - Align recruitment, hiring, and retention to support department services.
- Develop strategies to maintain equipment and apparatus that are needed to support department programs and services.
 - Develop a strategy where the NFD consistently follows NFPA 1901 recommendations for replacement of heavy fire apparatus.
 - Develop a strategy where the NFD continues to follow current replacement of ambulance apparatus.
 - Develop a strategy where the NFD ensures essential equipment such as self-contained breathing apparatus, accountability systems, turn-out gear etc. are up to date and compliant with NFPA standards.
- Develop staffing strategies for the near, mid, and long term to increase staffing that better meets the initial response of career personnel and the ability to begin to assemble an effective response force to daily fire and EMS calls for service that led to an eventual staffing of 10 per shift as follows:
 - Engine-3 staff
 - Ladder-3 staff
 - First-Out Ambulance-2
 - Second-Out Ambulance-cross staff with Engine-2
- Develop strategies where the NFD is consistently looking for grant assistance to assist in funding additional operational and administrative staffing.
 - Consistently secure sufficient resources to assure growth and sustainability.
- Develop a staffing strategy where the Fire Prevention Officer can focus on Community Risk Reduction on more of a full-time basis.

- Develop training and education strategies focused on enhancing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of personnel to support department programs and services.
- Develop strategies to maintain and improve the ISO-PPC community rating.
- Develop strategies that develop the use of technology for administrative, emergency operational, and support function needs.
- Develop strategies that continue to improve outreach and visibility in the community to extend the department's mission.

End