



SONOMA VALLEY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 - 2014

April 2009



MANAGEMENT PARTNERS
INCORPORATED

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority (SVFRA) is a collaboration between the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District (District) and the City of Sonoma created in 2002. The firefighter unions of the District and City recognized the value that would come from merging resources into a single organization. They approached the management of both organizations to discuss the feasibility of becoming one organization by consolidating services to provide an enhanced level of service to all citizens within the operational area. The merger was immediately successful on an operational basis – with all fire and rescue operations being quickly integrated into one functional organization.

In 2008, SVFRA completed a Standards of Response Coverage (SORC) analysis as the first step in planning for the future and measuring the performance of the organization. Once the SORC was adopted by the Executive Board, the Authority initiated a strategic planning process to create a blueprint for the future. The result is this strategic plan document, which contains goals and strategies intended to strengthen SVFRA's ability to achieve its original key objectives – achieving economies of scale by combining the fire and EMS services of both agencies and developing an enhanced delivery system for fire and emergency medical services.

A collaborative process involving staff and governing body members was used to create this strategic plan for SVFRA. At the beginning of the process, interviews with all District Board members and City Council members were conducted, as well as with City and District management. The expectations expressed in these interviews were as follows:

- Articulate a clear mission, shared vision of the future, and set of values
- Establish goals along with strategies to achieve each of the goals
- Identify methods to assure fiscal sustainability in the future
- Define timeframes for implementation
- Explore governance options used by other jurisdictions

SVFRA staff and Management Partners conducted significant analysis to provide a base of information from which SVFRA could establish goals and strategies. The key points of information and analysis for this strategic plan included the following:

- Benchmarking SVFRA with seven other fire agencies to compare environmental data and budgetary information
- Providing an online employee survey to obtain input about strengths and opportunities for improvement in service delivery and organizational components
- Reviewing SVFRA budget, standards of response coverage and other related documents
- Comparing governance models used by other multi-jurisdiction fire agencies

The Working Group participated in two workshops to discuss data and to create goals and strategies for this strategic plan.

This strategic plan contains the following elements:

- Mission, Vision and Values of SVFRA
- Data analysis
- Goals
- Strategies for each goal
- Governance options
- Implementation action plan

Five goals were identified to guide SVFRA during the next five to ten years. Strategies for achieving these goals are provided in this report. Their implementation depends on available resources. The draft implementation action plan contains key steps for implementing each of the strategies, and the priority level for each, as determined by the working group (Attachment A).

Each of the goals state what SVFRA is seeking to attain. There are important steps that must be taken to fully achieve the goal, and those steps are represented in the specific strategies. The five goals are:

Goal 1: SVFRA seeks to retain financial sustainability with the necessary budgeting mechanisms and an equitable distribution of costs between agency partners.

Goal 2: SVFRA seeks to have an effective governance structure that supports excellence in service delivery and transitions the organization to a single employer for future employees.

Goal 3: SVFRA seeks to continue providing efficient and effective firefighting, rescue, medical, fire prevention and community emergency response services.

Goal 4: SVFRA strives to attract and retain skilled members and appropriate staffing levels in all positions.

Goal 5: SVFRA seeks to have well-maintained facilities, equipment, technology and apparatus that enable personnel to perform their jobs safely and efficiently.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

In this section, the mission, vision, and values of the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority are stated. Additionally, information is provided about the formation of the organization, geographic area covered, and the range of services.

Mission

A mission statement describes the purpose for the organization's existence. It defines the principles and objectives of the organization and is used to prioritize the services provided. It states what the organization stands for and the reason for its existence. The mission statement for SVFRA was created several years ago and was reviewed and reaffirmed during the strategic planning workshops. The mission of the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority is:

“To enhance the provision of fire and emergency medical services throughout the City and the Fire District, while taking advantage of shared resources and economies of scale.”

Vision

A vision statement articulates where the organization hopes to be in the future. A vision statement provides targets of excellence that the organization will strive towards and provides a basis for its goals and objectives. It does not predict the future, but provides an image of success. The words should conjure up a similar picture for each member of the group so that the desired destination is clear.

During the strategic planning workshops, participants suggested various forms of a vision statement. The Working Group did not reach a conclusion about a vision statement, and decided that it would do so at a later point. The following vision was developed by the Working Group as a starting point for future discussions. After the Working Group decides on a vision statement, it can be inserted into an updated version of this strategic plan.

SVFRA is recognized as a leader in providing exemplary fire and emergency medical services to the citizens of Sonoma Valley.

Values

The values of an organization are the underlying set of core beliefs we deem to be important. Our core values help to define our organization, guide our behavior, are the foundation of our operational activity, and set the standard by which all members will be measured.

As part of the strategic planning process, the Fire Captains and SVFRA staff identified the following values.

- Respectful
- Professional
- Accountable
- Trustworthy
- Adaptable
- Dedicated
- Honest

Formation of SVFRA

The Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority was established in 2002 through a collaboration between the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District and the City of Sonoma. The Authority was established to create a mechanism through which the City and District could develop an enhanced delivery system for fire and emergency medical services (EMS). The District and City believed the Authority would provide economies of scale by combining the fire and EMS services of both agencies.

SVFRA is governed by an Executive Board, comprised of the entire Sonoma City Council and the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District Board. A Working Group, which meets monthly, is comprised of the Fire District Board President, a City Council member, the City Manager, the Assistant City Manager (who also serves as SVFRA Treasurer), the Fire Chief, the Operations Division Chief, the Union President, and a representative of the part-time/volunteers group. From the inception of the strategic planning process the issue of governance was raised as a critical element of the plan. It is covered in a separate section in this report called “Governance Options for the Future.”

The collaboration of the two agencies has been successful in providing more efficient and effective service delivery and has resulted in some remarkable accomplishments that include:

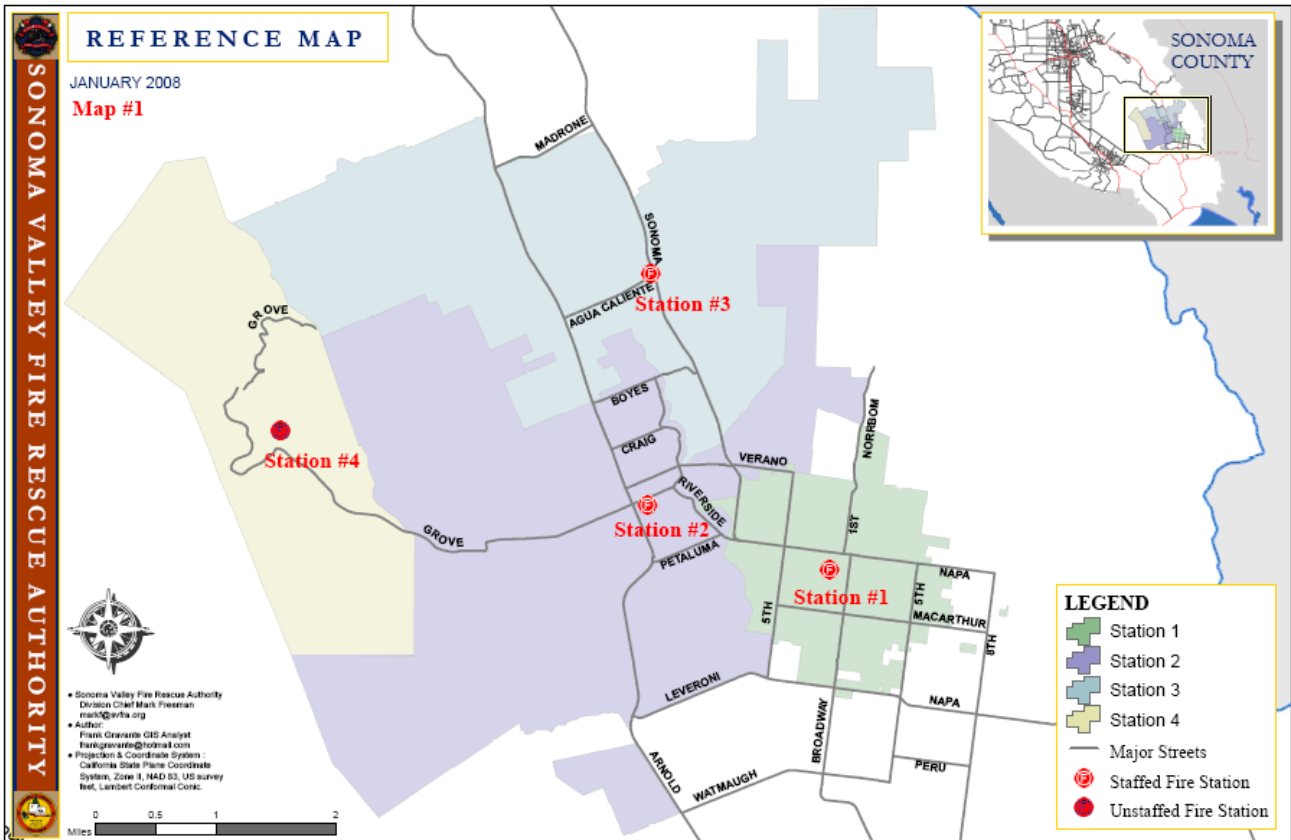
- Submitted successful grant applications by SVFRA staff, which resulted in the Authority receiving \$750,000 in grant funding. Factors that successfully influenced grant awards include the potential threat to the area, the size of the population protected by SVFRA, the cooperative arrangement represented by the JPA organization, and the geographical area. These grants have provided SVFRA the ability to purchase 12-lead EKG monitors, mobile data computers, self-contained breathing apparatus, voice amplifiers, and a medium-size rescue vehicle, which carries tools and equipment for a seismic or other natural or man-made significant event.
- Hired an equipment maintenance mechanic. This has and will continue to produce significant cost savings for SVFRA.
- Purchased Windows-based EMS billing software that will greatly enhance the billing and accounting procedures.
- Improved the ISO rating from a class 4 to a class 3. This is the way in which fire department efficiency in a community is measured by ISO ratings which can potentially reduce insurance premiums for both homeowners and businesses.
- Enhanced service delivery to the community and the safety of emergency responders by having a division chief on duty 24 hours to supervise daily operations.
- Enhanced all operations by having a full-time training officer on duty. This position coordinates all training for SVFRA (full- and part-time employees as well as volunteer members), and helps limit liability exposure for the agency.
- Completely rebuilt and revitalized the base IT infrastructure.
- Established paramedic engine companies for all response districts; this configuration is maintained 24/7.

Service Area

SVFRA provides seamless fire protection and advanced life support (ALS) ambulance transport services to 29,372 residents in a 31.5 square mile area of the Sonoma Valley. The service area includes the corporate limits of the City of Sonoma and the area within the boundaries of the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District. Ambulance transport services are also provided to people within the unincorporated communities of Glen Ellen, Schellville, Eldridge and Mayacamas.

The geographic area served by SVFRA is shown in the Reference Map reproduced from the SORC in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: SONOMA VALLEY FIRE AND RESCUE COVERAGE AREA



Services Provided

The SVFRA is an all-risk agency that provides the following services, as described in the Standards of Response Coverage:

- Fire Suppression Response
- Emergency Medical Response
- Vehicle Accident Response
- Agency Assist Response
- Natural Disaster Response
- Hazardous Materials Response
- Swift Water Rescue
- Confined Space Rescue
- Low/High Angle Rope Rescue
- Advanced Life Support Response
- Basic Life Support Response
- Ambulance Transport Services
- Public Education Services
- Life Safety Inspection Services
- Building Plan Check Services
- Fire Investigation Services
- Fire Prevention Services
- Ambulance Stand-by Services

SVFRA STRATEGIC PLAN

SVFRA used a systematic strategic planning process to evaluate the organization's strengths and weaknesses, identify external influences and opportunities, and establish priorities that will help foster a productive future. Using an environmental scan and considering data likely to affect SVFRA in the future, the Working Group translated the information into goals and strategies for the future.

In developing the Strategic Plan, the SVFRA considered a broad range of concerns that could potentially impact the operation of the organization, including:

- Problems or issues that arise on a daily basis that need long-range attention
- Budget objectives and limitations
- Data and trends
- Fire service best practices
- Regional issues

Goals and Strategies

During two workshops with members of the Working Group, five goals for the future were established. These goals are intended to serve SVFRA for five to ten years. For each goal, several strategies were created.

For this strategic plan, we have defined the following terms:

Goals are multi-year in nature, which set the framework for policies and decisions. They state the desired future in five categories:

- Financial sustainability
- Governance and organization
- Service delivery
- Staffing
- Facilities, equipment, technology, apparatus

Strategies are the means to achieve the goals. They are the projects and plans to achieve the goals. Strategies are measurable and are the specific projects for which the organization is accountable. Strategies provide a way for progress on the strategic plan to be tracked.

Priorities are established for the strategies so that resources can be allocated appropriately in each fiscal year. The Implementation Action

Plan (Attachment A) shows a priority designation for each of the strategies. At the second workshop, the Working Group identified the priorities for each of the strategies. The priorities should be reviewed each year and modified or re-established to meet needs and resource availability.

The Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority's goals and strategies are:

Goal 1: Financial Sustainability

SVFRA seeks to retain financial sustainability with the necessary budgeting mechanisms and an equitable distribution of costs between agency partners.

Strategies

Strategy 1: Establish a single operating budget for SVFRA for greater efficiency.

Strategy 2: Create a five-year financial forecast and update it as necessary to guide the Authority's annual budgetary decisions.

Strategy 3: Create a five-year capital budget (including facilities, equipment and apparatus replacement) and determine the sources of funding for each capital project.

Strategy 4: Explore funding sources to support services provided by SVFRA.

Strategy 5: Secure a multi-year contract with Infineon Raceway to provide emergency medical services.

Goal 2: Governance and Organization

SVFRA seeks to have an effective governance structure to support excellence in service delivery and transitions the organization to a single employer for future employees.

Strategies

Strategy 1: Research and consider various governance options.

Strategy 2: Create a unified set of written administrative policies and procedures.

Goal 3: Service Delivery

SVFRA seeks to continue providing efficient and effective firefighting, rescue, medical, fire prevention and community emergency response services.

Strategies

Strategy 1: Provide community emergency and disaster preparedness programs to support community self-sufficiency.

Strategy 2: Increase the level of fire prevention services in the community.

Strategy 3: Conduct communitywide disaster drills to keep emergency management protocols current and effective.

Strategy 4: Create and implement a public education outreach program to inform community members about SVFRA services, funding sources, cost of services, and the Authority's goals and accomplishments.

Goal 4: Staffing

SVFRA strives to attract and retain skilled members and appropriate staffing levels in all positions.

Strategies

Strategy 1: Evaluate the current administrative functions and structure to assure that they are adequate to support the organization's mission.

Strategy 2: Strive to achieve the goals in the staffing plan identified in the Standards of Response Coverage.

Strategy 3: Develop and implement a succession plan that ensures we have qualified and trained members who will be eligible for higher level positions.

Strategy 4: Ensure that all members meet all state, federal, local and other mandates.

Strategy 5: Identify and implement methods to improve the flow of communication between personnel.

Strategy 6: Recruit and retain more part-time (volunteer) firefighters to serve the needs of SVFRA.

Strategy 7: Develop and implement a plan to increase the number of bilingual employees to provide emergency services to non-English speakers.

Goal 5: Facilities, Equipment, Technology, Apparatus

SVFRA seeks to have well-maintained facilities, equipment, technology and apparatus that enable personnel to perform their jobs safely and efficiently.

Strategies

Strategy 1: Create a comprehensive facilities plan that identifies the maintenance and improvements necessary to meet the needs of the department over the next 10 years.

Strategy 2: Relocate and build Station 2 to better serve the needs of the community and the personnel who work for the SVFRA .

Strategy 3: Retrofit Station 3 to meet ADA requirements and accommodate gender equity needs.

Strategy 4: Create a capital equipment and apparatus replacement schedule.

Strategy 5: Create and implement a multi-year information technology strategic plan that will guide the SVFRA into the future.

Strategy 6: Assure a constant state of readiness for all mobile equipment.

Implementation Action Plan

An implementation action plan identifies, for each strategy in the plan, the following items:

- Key implementation tasks
- Other agencies or departments that will be involved
- Resources available or needed for implementation
- Priority designation of each item

The Implementation Action Plan is provided as Attachment A. It will be useful as a starting point for implementing this strategic plan. While the major actions needed to fulfill each strategy are provided, additional work will be needed to identify more specific steps, assignments and timetables for accomplishment. The action plan can serve as a mechanism to monitor progress and identify challenges or necessary changes to the strategic plan. Successful implementation also requires that each person in SVFRA understands his or her role in carrying out the goals and strategies.

Performance Measures: Performance measures are indicators that demonstrate an organization's efficiency and effectiveness in delivering a program or service, systematically collecting data and analyzing that data to assess program performance. They are a way to assess progress towards meeting organizational priorities. Performance measures are defined in the Standards of Response Coverage. Updating information in the Standards of Response Coverage annually will give the SVFRA performance information to better manage its resources and ensure accountability.

Setting Priorities and Updating the Plan

Priorities are choices between competing needs. SVFRA has many areas to focus on, and not everything can be done simultaneously. Priorities serve as the basis to determine how resources (e.g., staff effort, funding, etc.) will be allocated. When priorities are clear, all members of the team (District Board, City Council, Fire Chief, City Manager, staff) understand the focus of SVFRA. Given resource limitations, setting priorities ensures that the most critical items can be achieved.

Current Priorities

The strategies in this strategic plan have initial priority designations, as determined by the Working Group. Those priorities should be reviewed and modified or affirmed by the Executive Board. Then, each year, as part of the budget preparation, the goals and strategies should be reviewed to determine priorities for the next fiscal year, and whether there should be changes to timeline, content or assignments.

Factors to Use in Prioritization

The following is provided as an aid to SVFRA when priorities are discussed each year as the strategic plan is updated. Typical criteria for deciding priorities are:

- The work is mandated by the state (or other agency) and SVFRA could face consequences if the work is not done;
- The work would generate revenue, grants or other funding;
- The work would prevent higher costs from occurring later;
- The work would enhance the level of service to the community; or
- The work would create the foundation for operational efficiencies.

Future Strategic Plan Review and Prioritization

To keep the strategic plan relevant and useful to SVFRA, it is important that it be reviewed on a regular basis. Specifically, each quarter, the status of each of the strategies should be reviewed by SVFRA staff and reported to the Executive Board. At least annually, progress on the plan should be reported to the public and employees.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

In preparing this strategic plan, an environmental scan was conducted in order to provide a framework for creating the strategic plan. A variety of sources were used for this environmental scan, including an employee survey, benchmarking with other fire agencies, interviews with governing body members and staff, document reviews, workshops with the Working Group, and a financial analysis.

This section contains a summary of trends affecting the fire service, results of the employee survey, review of the benchmarking analysis, and an analysis of staffing, facilities, administrative, and fiscal issues.

Trends Affecting the Fire Service

The fire service has changed significantly over the years and SVFRA is affected by a variety of factors and trends. The key factors that are relevant to SVFRA are listed below.

- **Improvements to Building Codes.** Significant improvements have been made to building codes, including enhanced fire protection requirements. This has resulted in a decrease in the number of structure fires within the jurisdictional boundaries of SVFRA.
- **Increased Medical Service Calls.** Calls for medical service have increased over the years – throughout the state and with SVFRA. Such calls can be expected to increase in the future because of two important factors:
 - **Aging Population.** As the baby boomer generation ages, their need for emergency medical care and medical services increases, which causes an increase in EMS calls within the Sonoma Valley.
 - **Increased Cost of Medical Insurance.** As the cost of medical insurance continues to rise, individuals may not have access to or cannot afford many preventative medical treatments. Thus, individuals wait longer to seek treatment, resulting in the need for emergency medical services, which increases EMS calls in communities.
- **Legislative and Regulatory Changes.** New mandates are continually placed on the fire service, requiring changes in training programs and higher training costs. An example of these regulations is the National Incident Management System (NIMS) established in

2003 with new communications and training requirements that must be carried out by public safety agencies, including SVFRA.

- **Regional Service Delivery.** Maintaining a balanced budget becomes increasingly difficult each year for local governments. The cost of providing services continues to rise, and cities and counties are looking at regionalization of fire and emergency medical services to provide quality services at a price they can afford. The City of Sonoma and the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District have done this through the creation of SVFRA.
- **Technology.** Technology innovations have resulted in enhanced equipment and service delivery in the fire service over the years. Compatibility and interoperability between public safety agencies is of critical importance in planning future technology improvements for SVFRA.
- **Climate.** California has experienced an increase in wildfires during the last several years. These fires have burned thousands of acres across the state and destroyed numerous structures as well. The increase in wildfires is putting an increased burden on fire protection services, especially when multiple wildfires take place at the same time. This condition is the result of a widespread drought throughout the state and affects the operation of SVFRA.
- **Water Supply.** Droughts not only dry out vegetation, increasing vulnerability to fires, they impact the water supply needed to put out fires. The severe drought conditions make fires more dangerous, and it becomes more difficult for fire agencies to protect life and property. Given the physical conditions in the Sonoma Valley, these issues are important factors for SVFRA.
- **Community Disaster Preparedness.** In the event of a major disaster (earthquake, flooding, major fire, etc.), residents will have to help each other for an extended period of time until emergency personnel can arrive. Preparing the community to provide basic disaster response such as fire safety, first aid, and light search and rescue can save lives. SVFRA has an important role to play in preparing the community for disasters and continues to be a participant in planning for potential disasters.

Employee Survey Results

A confidential online survey was designed and administered to all SVFRA employees. The survey asked employees to give their opinions about organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A total of 40 employees responded to the survey, which is a 43% response rate. Such a response rate is considered quite good for this type of survey. Complete survey results are shown in Attachment C.

Information About Survey Respondents

- 64.1% of the respondents are City employees and 35.9% are District employees.
- Almost half of all survey respondents (46.2%) have more than 10 years' experience.

Highlights of Survey Responses

- **Mission Statement:** Almost 70% of survey respondents affirmed the mission statement as written.
- **Strengths:** Respondents noted a number of strengths of SVFRA, including:
 - Employee performance
 - Teamwork
 - Innovation
 - Joint powers authority
 - Response time
- **Opportunities for Improvement:** Several areas were identified as opportunities for improvement, such as:
 - Staffing issues
 - Recruitment of full-time firefighters and part-time paramedics (and retention of part-time paramedics)
 - The number of individuals available to work at Infineon Raceway could be enhanced
 - Salary levels viewed as too low to attract enough part-time medics
 - Promotional opportunities and recognition
 - Supervisory skills training and management of personnel
 - Post-incident review of disaster response
 - Station conditions

Items identified as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats by at least 50% of the respondents are listed in Table 1.

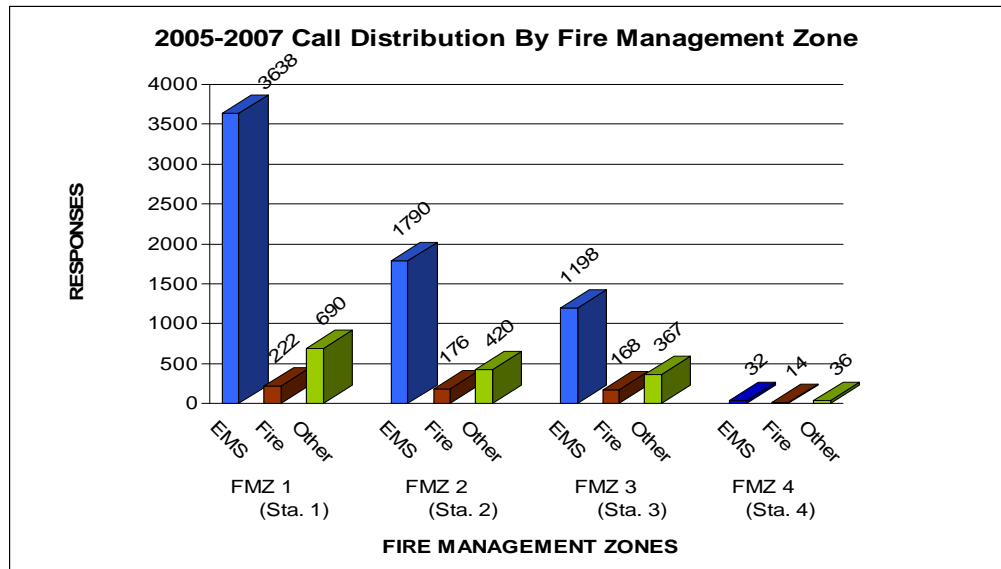
TABLE 1: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS IDENTIFIED BY EMPLOYEES IN SURVEY

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of full-time firefighters • Employee performance • Safety procedures and practices • Availability of personal safety equipment • Safety training • Management of personnel recovering from an on-duty injury • Technical expertise of employees, supervisors and managers • Frequency and quality of firefighter training • Condition of personal safety equipment • Availability of up-to-date firefighting, emergency medical and rescue technology • Administrative technology • Vehicles and other motorized equipment • Adequacy of communications systems • Innovation within SVFRA • Teamwork • Size/complexity of organization • JPA structure • Communications (on scene and off scene) • Mutual aid workload • Post-incident review of fire calls for service • Response time • Response planning • Few complaints from public about services • Overall customer service • Condition of vehicles and other motorized equipment
Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of part-time paramedics • Retention of part-time paramedics • Frequency of promotional opportunities • Adequacy of part-time racetrack staffing • Level of employee recognition • Condition of stations
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of full-time firefighters • Management of employee performance • Supervisory skills training • Post-incident review of disaster response • Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) • Community volunteers
Threats
<p><i>Management Partners note: Very few issues were perceived as threats and none were listed by more than 26% of respondents.</i></p>

Calls for Service

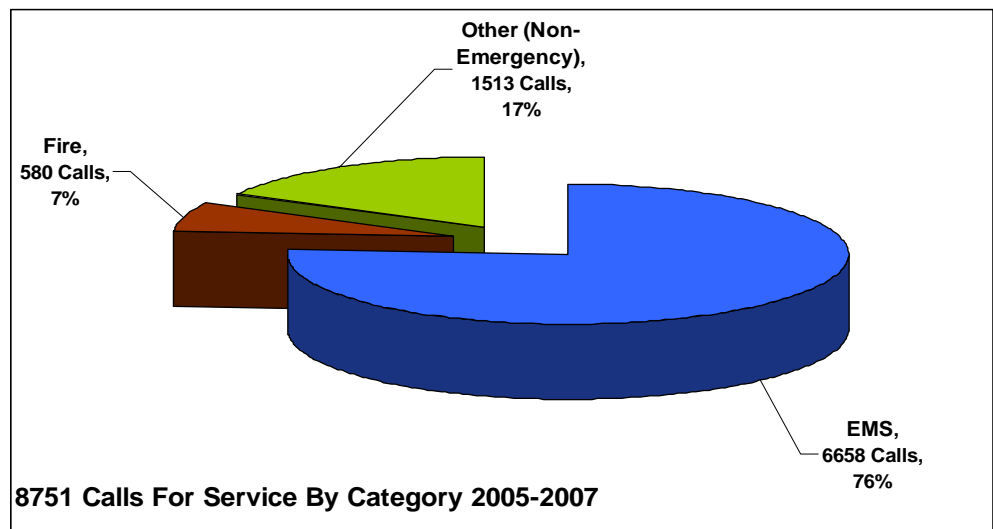
Understanding the calls for service and trends in types of calls are important when creating a strategic plan. Figure 2, from the SORC, shows call volume distribution by fire management zone between 2005 and 2007.

FIGURE 2: CALL DISTRIBUTION BY FIRE MANAGEMENT ZONE (2005-2007)



Emergency medical calls represented over 76% of SVFRA calls between 2005 and 2007, while fire calls represented only 17% of all calls during the same time period, as shown in Figure 3 below.

FIGURE 3: CALLS FOR SERVICE BY CATEGORY (2005-2007)



The SORC states that in 2005, there were a total of 3,504 emergency dispatches for the department. In 2006, 4,072 emergency dispatches were made, while in 2007, the total was 4,127. Based on the demographics of the community, there is a significant likelihood that the number of calls for service will grow.

SVFRA has identified its needs regarding calls for service in its SORC, as follows:

Calls for Service: Demographics and response history indicate that service demands will continue to increase for existing services. Additionally, new challenges that include natural and man-made disasters will increase call volume for the SVFRA.

Station 4 Responses: A concern of the agency is our ability to provide prompt fire protection and EMS services to the area protected by Station 4 (Diamond "A"), which is not staffed and has only four (4) part-time (volunteer) firefighters.

Concurrent Calls: When a call for service is received, the response to subsequent calls for service depends on the ability of the previously assigned units to complete their call and become available. If units are unable to clear from an assigned call, it will increase the response time for the incident. The situation can be improved by adopting the dispatch center's Street Network Protocol for all dispatches and securing automatic aid agreements with neighboring departments.

ISO Rating

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) is an independent organization that serves insurance companies, fire departments, insurance regulators, and others by providing information about risk. ISO collects information about municipal fire-protection efforts in communities throughout the United States, analyzes relevant data and assigns a Public Protection Classification (PPC) — a number from 1 to 10. Class 1 represents exemplary fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire-suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria.

A community's PPC depends on several factors:

- **Fire alarm and communications systems**, including telephone systems, telephone lines, staffing, and dispatching systems
- **The fire department**, including equipment, staffing, training, and geographic distribution of fire companies

- **The water supply system**, including condition and maintenance of hydrants, and a careful evaluation of the amount of available water compared with the amount needed to suppress fires

The PPC program recognizes the efforts of a community to provide fire protection services to their citizens and property owners. A community's investment in fire protection is a proven and reliable predictor of future fire losses. Insurance companies use PPC information to help establish fair premiums for fire insurance. Generally, the price of fire insurance in a community with a good PPC is substantially lower than in a community with a poor PPC, assuming all other factors are equal. Additionally, the economic benefits for communities that invest in their firefighting services provide real incentives for improving and maintaining public fire protection.

In February 2006, ISO conducted a PPC survey and analysis of the SVFRA's municipal fire protection system. As a result of combining the two entities in 2002, both the City and District realized an improved ISO rating. The City went from an ISO rating of Class 4 to a Class 3. The District had two ratings: the areas with hydrants realized no change in maintaining their ISO Class 3 rating, but the non-hydrant areas went from an ISO rating of Class 8 to a Class 3 rating. Of the 45,000 fire districts in the ISO rating system, only 352 have a rating higher than a Class 3, which means that SVFRA's Class 3 rating is quite good for a fire department that covers both city and rural areas.

Decisions made pertaining to fire alarm and communications systems, staffing, training, station locations, and water supply should all be made recognizing the possible impact and/or benefits of such on the community's ISO rating.

Service Level Performance Objectives

The SORC describes the Standards of Response Coverage benchmarks as defined by the Center for Public Safety Excellence and the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. The SORC describes the different response criteria based on population density in three zones: urban, suburban and rural. As part of the Standards of Response Coverage analysis, SVFRA determined its service level objectives for categories of services. The objectives provide the basis for staffing, equipment and other support mechanisms needed to provide effective service delivery.

The SORC contains the following service level objectives:

- **Urban Response** – in 90 percent of emergency incidents
“Urban” is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as an area with at least 1000 people per square mile.
 - The 1st due Unit will arrive within 6 minutes
 - The 2nd due Unit will arrive within 10 minutes

- The balance of the assignment will arrive within 10 minutes
- **Suburban Response** – in 90 percent of emergency incidents
“Suburban” is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as an area between 500 and 1000 people per square mile.
 - The 1st due Unit will arrive within 7 minutes
 - The 2nd due Unit will arrive within 10 minutes
 - The balance of the assignment will arrive within 12 minutes
- **Rural Response** - in 90 percent of emergency incidents
“Rural” is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as an area with fewer than 500 people per square mile.
 - The 1st due Unit will arrive within 12 minutes
 - The 2nd due Unit will arrive within 16 minutes
 - The balance of the assignment will arrive within 16 minutes

Table 2 below shows the service level performance objectives established and described in detail in the SORC. These service level performance objectives have been adopted by the Executive Board.

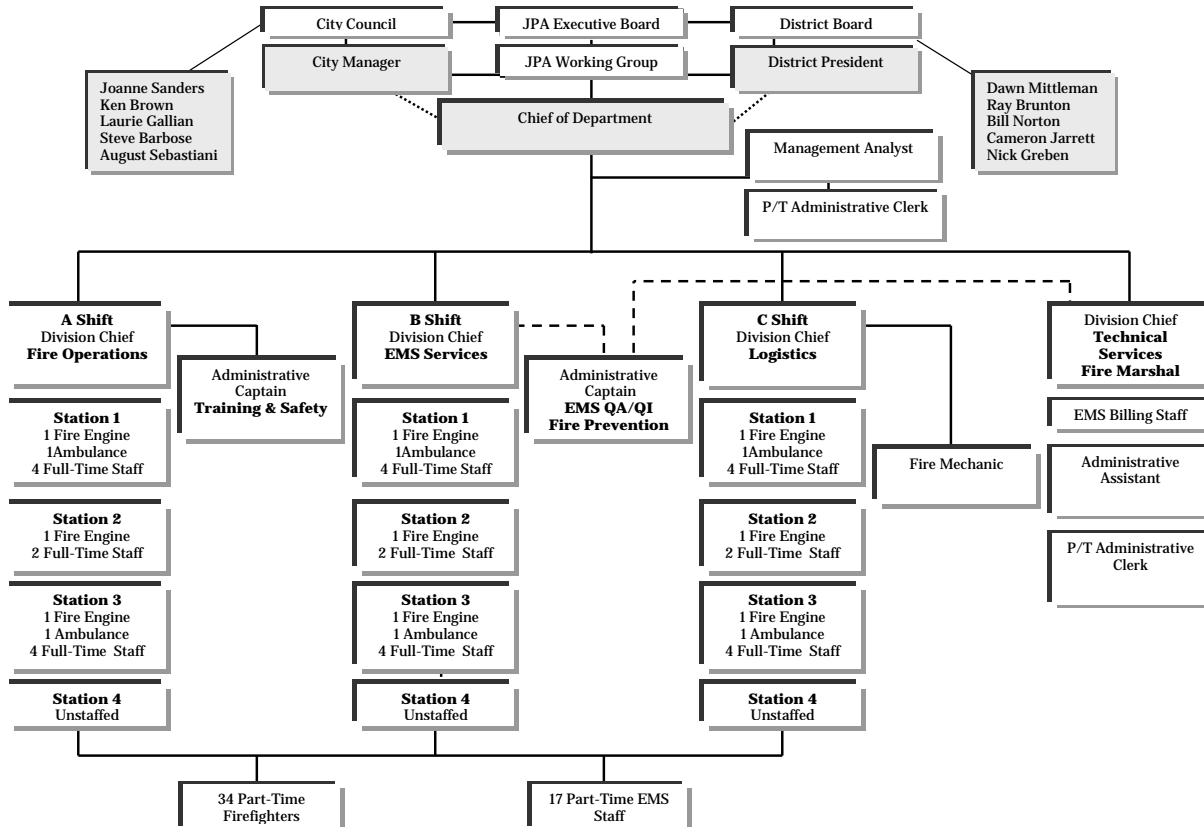
TABLE 2: SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Service Level Performance Objectives (1 st Due // 2 nd Due // Balance of Assignment)					
Incident Type	Urban (min.)	Suburban (min.)	Rural (min.)	Number of Personnel	Performance %
Emergency Medical	6 // 10 // 10	7 // 10 // 10	12 // 16 // 16	5	90%
Traffic Collision	6 // 10 // 10	7 // 10 // 12	12 // 16 // 16	9	90%
Structure Fire					
Moderate	6 // 10 // 10	7 // 10 // 12	12 // 16 // 16	14	90%
Significant	6 // 10 // 10	7 // 10 // 12	12 // 16 // 16	18	90%
Maximum	6 // 10 // 10	7 // 10 // 12	12 // 16 // 16	24	90%
Wildland/ Grass Fire	6 // 10 // 10	7 // 10 // 12	12 // 16 // 16	12	90%

Organization and Staffing

The Standards of Response Coverage prepared and adopted by SVFRA in 2008 describes the current organization and daily staffing. Figure 4 shows the SVFRA organization.

FIGURE 4: SVFRA FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION CHART



Overall Staffing

During fiscal year 2008/2009, SVFRA had a total of 92 employees in the following positions:

Fire Chief	1
Division Chief	4
Administrative Captains	2
Administrative staff	2
Administrative staff (part-time)	2
Station staff	30
Firefighters (part-time)	34
EMS (part-time)	17

Current Daily Staffing

Daily staffing consists of 13 personnel for emergency response 24 hours a day. Of the 13 positions, 11 provide both fire services and EMS and 2 serve in an EMS capacity only. The 13 positions, as noted in the SORC are listed below:

Division Chief (shift supervisor)	1
Fire Captains (station officers)	3
Engineer/Paramedics (apparatus operators)	5
Part-Time Firefighters	2
Paramedic (limited to EMS service delivery on Medic 303)	1
Emergency Medical Technician (limited to EMS service delivery on Medic 303)	1

On a daily basis, SVFRA has three engines and two ambulances in service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as shown in Table 3 below from the SORC. The agency can add part-time staff to engines 3381 and 3382 in 12- or 24-hour increments.

TABLE 3: DAILY STAFFING

Current Daily Staffing			
Location	Unit Identifier	Description	Staffing
Station 1	3381	Type 1 Fire Engine	2 (plus one part-time)
	Medic 301	ALS Ambulance	2
Station 2	Battalion 33	Command Vehicle	1
	3382	Type 1 Fire Engine	2 (plus one part-time)
Station 3	3383	Type 1 Fire Engine	2
	Medic 303	ALS Ambulance	2
Total			11-13

Staffing and Training Needs

As identified by the SORC, daily staffing ranges between 11 and 13, with the variable being the availability of part-time firefighters. Until SVFRA can staff its engines with three full time fire/EMS positions and staff both the rescue ambulances with fire-trained EMS positions, the significant challenge will be to ensure a full complement of part-time members so that the agency can have a higher state of reliability for meeting its daily staffing goal. Part-time firefighters are identified as a key component for the consistent delivery of fire and EMS services to the community at an affordable cost.

SVFRA has two types of part-time members: “community members” and “career-oriented members.” Community members are typically working professionals who serve as part-time firefighters for several years. The career-oriented members are typically college students attending fire technology or emergency medical classes who serve until they are hired as full-time firefighters in a fire agency. Since part-time firefighters are integral to SVFRA’s ability to provide fire and EMS services, it is important that the Authority find ways to recruit and retain career-oriented part-time individuals. The strategic plan includes a strategy to recruit and retain more part-time firefighters.

Recruitment of Part-Time Employees

SVFRA has a relationship with Santa Rosa Junior College through which student interns who have completed Firefighter 1 Academy and Emergency Medical Technician courses are hosted by SVFRA. Interns work five 24-hour shifts per month. SVFRA has three interns and has a goal of employing six interns on an ongoing basis so that the third position on Engine 3383 can be staffed on a full-time basis.

Attracting and retaining reliable and well-trained part-time staff is a challenge for any agency. The relationship with the community college as a source of interns is an excellent program and beneficial for all parties; however, SVFRA needs to retain as many of these individuals as possible.

Competitive compensation is closely linked to successfully recruiting and retaining part-time employees, and sound personnel practices call for agencies to conduct periodic salary surveys. In order to ensure that SVFRA is paying competitively, it should conduct periodic compensation surveys for part-time employees and make adjustments as needed to increase the ability to recruit and retain.

Bilingual Needs

An issue identified by SVFRA staff is the need to increase the number of bilingual personnel providing emergency services to non-English speakers. Options for doing this include providing language training to existing personnel, recruiting bilingual employees, and offering bilingual pay incentives. The strategic plan contains a strategy to address this gap.

Cross-Trained Personnel

The pool of available firefighting personnel should be expanded and the utility of the existing EMS staff materially enhanced if they were cross-trained as firefighters. Fire agencies have learned that the utility of cross-trained firefighter-paramedics is an enhancement to service delivery. The increased utility of otherwise limited EMS personnel, cross-trained as firefighters, allows the fire agency to more quickly assemble a sufficient number of firefighters at the fire ground to meet the challenges presented. This increases firefighter safety and allows the fire ground commander to more quickly implement evolutions that can reduce the effects of fire and hazardous conditions.

Training and Succession Planning

SVFRA currently has a comprehensive training program that will continue in the future. During the strategic planning discussions, staff identified a strategy aimed at ensuring that all members meet state, federal, local and other mandates. Staff also discussed the future and the public expectations for health care delivery which may change, resulting in greater demands on fire and rescue agencies. The EMS training program must keep pace with new demands placed on SVFRA personnel, including changes in technology and new skills required.

Preparing employees for command positions needs to focus on professional development and supervisory skills. The issue of succession planning has also been identified by staff as essential to continuity in management. This is an issue that the fire service in general is facing. Line staff officers typically are not interested in promoting, largely because they do not view the monetary benefits of promotion as being commensurate with the duties and responsibilities required of senior staff officers. It is a complicated issue throughout the fire service as well as within the SVFRA. The strategic plan takes a preliminary step to address this issue.

Fire Stations

SVFRA currently operates from four fire stations. Stations 1, 2 and 3 are staffed on a full-time basis. Fire Station 4 is staffed with part-time (volunteer) firefighters when a call is received. The locations are listed below:

- Fire Station 1: 630 Second Street West in Sonoma
- Fire Station 2: 877 Center Street in El Verano
- Fire Station 3: 1 West Agua Caliente Road in Agua Caliente
- Fire Station 4: 18798 Prospect Drive in the Diamond A subdivision

The SORC identifies the need to relocate Station 2. The SORC states that “with the exception of Station 2, our Stations (1, 3 and 4) are in good locations to serve the community in the four minute travel time stipulated in this document. It is an important priority to move Station 2 south on Arnold Drive to also meet the four minute travel time in the high-call-volume retirement communities of Temelec and Seven Flags.”

As of the preparation of this document, property is in escrow for a new Station 2. The SVFRA is in the process of doing the preliminary design of the building and property. The plan is to have a set of basic drawings depicting the footprint of the structure on the property as well as elevation drawings completed by mid-2009. SVFRA is currently preparing for the Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program application process that is anticipated to open in the summer of 2009. The grant is part of the Federal Stimulus Package and is new to the fire service. It allows funds to be used for the construction of fire stations and matching funds are not required.

The relocation of Station 2 will assist SVFRA in meeting the gaps identified in response times and the disproportionate workloads identified in the “Calls for Service” graph of the Fire Management Zones (on page 14 of the SORC). If these results are achieved, they will enable the SVFRA to ensure an enhanced level of service to the community.

SVFRA has not had the resources to develop a comprehensive facilities plan that identifies the maintenance and capital improvements necessary to meet its needs during the next 10 years. The strategic plan has identified the need to develop a facility plan and it is included as a strategy in goal 5.

Technology

SVFRA conducted an evaluation of the existing information systems and technology used by the City and District. The findings indicated that the IT components (hardware and software) would not be able to sustain the technology needed to support the ever-expanding fire service mission. A consultant was asked to evaluate the current system hardware, software and new organizational structure in order to design a system capable of supporting current needs and future expansion. The recommendations included:

- Network and e-mail
- Firehouse/CAD integration
- Integration with the City’s information technology plan
- Compatibility and interoperability with the County information technology ongoing maintenance and support
- Ongoing technology evaluation, maintenance and support

These recommendations have been implemented and the resulting SVFRA information system will be capable of:

- Tracking performance measures in meeting standards of operations benchmarks. These measures in turn will assist SVFRA in determining appropriate staffing, equipment and facility needs
- Resource tracking
- Identifying site-specific exposures
- Creating real time situational awareness for improved safety

SVFRA does not have a comprehensive, multi-year information technology plan. Such plans are best practices since they provide a basis for making decisions about specific technology to purchase. Since technology is an expensive investment – for the hardware, software, training and ongoing support – ensuring that decisions are made that will result in appropriate technology for the agency requires a comprehensive approach. The strategic plan addresses this need.

Budget, Personnel Administration and Accounting

Although the SVFRA was created as a joint powers authority, SVFRA finances and personnel administration are not combined as in a typical JPA. The three issues of budget, personnel and accounting are each discussed below.

Budget

Typically, joint powers authorities create one budget document which includes contributions from its participating members calculated in a percentage amount based on participation or some other formula approved by the Executive Board. In the case of the SVFRA, a comprehensive budget is not prepared. Three separate budgets are created for SVFRA: one by the District and two by the City (one for Fire and one for EMS) which are acted upon by the individual Board and Council. The process of creating three budgets not only lacks efficiency, but stalls communications between agencies as to how the SVFRA can work cooperatively and more cost-effectively. Because of this individual budget approval process, revenues and expenditures, as well as assets and liabilities, must be accounted for separately. This process causes a significant duplication of efforts as well as loss of tracking and accountability.

Personnel Administration

Maintaining two separate employing agencies causes personnel administration complications due to the designation of City employees and District employees. The absence of a combined personnel structure leads to inconsistencies in agreements and internal salary and benefit compression. Union negotiations and Memoranda of Understanding between the employer (City or District) and the employees require two separate negotiations and two separate actions of the approving

authorities. Both agencies have different employment policies, salary and benefit resolutions, disciplinary and termination policies, and separate policy-making bodies to which changes must be submitted and approved. In some cases, this has led to confusion for employees who work in a “seamless department structure” but must account and report to different benefit providers (particularly in cases of workers’ compensation injuries). For administrative purposes, different processes are undertaken by different administrators for purposes of personnel tracking and monitoring, which continues to create inefficiencies.

Accounting

Each agency relies on separate sources of funding for department operations. The District receives property tax revenues and a special tax to fund their portion of SVFRA operations. Direct expenditures are charged to the District for personnel, capital and equipment, and indirect costs are allocated to the District. The City funds City Fire and City EMS through General Fund revenues and EMS billings for ambulance services (including a contract with Infineon Raceway). Like the District, direct City costs are charged to City Fire or City EMS accordingly and indirect costs are allocated to the City Fire and EMS.

Accounting functions are provided to SVFRA using two methodologies. City Fire and EMS receive in-kind services from the Finance Department for accounting and payroll duties. No indirect charges are levied and therefore the budget and operational expenses do not reflect costs for payroll and accounting. Conversely, the District contracts with the City under a separate Financial Services Agreement for clerical, accounting and financial duties.

The City’s Finance Department handles the day-to-day accounting and payables functions; the Assistant City Manager handles the higher financial responsibilities and investments and is appointed as the District’s Treasurer under the contract. In consideration for providing the accounting and financial services, the District pays a monthly contract fee. This contract fee is accounted for in the budget of the District.

This type of inconsistency in cost distribution is also applicable to other professional services such as legal and auditing. The in-kind services that the City departments receive are not accounted for when comparing individual budgets to determine total SVFRA costs. Without creating a direct combined operating budget addressing all the issues and needs of providing fire protection and medical services to the SVFRA boundaries, no logical evaluation or conclusion can be made. Establishing a single budget system should be the first step in the SVFRA process. Absent the single budget and funding formula, no methodology for future operations and growth can be truly vetted in a meaningful scenario.

Contracting for service is a typical arrangement for joint powers authorities and can be an efficient use of staff. Alternatives could include having SVFRA hire its own staff (and purchase financial software), engaging private contract staff, or contracting with the County for these

services. This would be the second evaluation that would need to be accomplished after the single budget system is implemented.

Conclusion About Current Arrangement

Maintaining separate budgets and other administrative functions (e.g., personnel) is inefficient and takes significantly more time than a combined budget for SVFRA. Simplifying budgeting and accounting with a single budget for the SVFRA and other governance changes could reduce existing redundancies, apply efficiencies, and achieve greater economies of scale. This issue was addressed in the past and a draft budget layout has been designed. That draft should be reviewed and finalized for use in the future.

Financial Perspective

Financial considerations are paramount to assure sustainability of SVFRA operations. Creating economies of scale and making use of limited resources was one of the guiding factors in creating the SVFRA by the City and the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District. This section provides a review of SVFRA's current financial picture.

City of Sonoma and District Revenues and Expenditures

In a January 2009 budget report, the City Council was advised "While the City is solvent in all major funds although most revenue sources are flat....expenditures are holding under the approved budget level." This position is a result of stringent budget strategies and close monitoring of revenues and expenditures. This position does not account for any future growth or needs of the City.

In a separate mid-year financial report for the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District, a similar financial condition was presented to the Board. The report concluded that revenues and expenditures are in line with the adopted budget, which is a very positive situation for the District. Since SVFRA's formation in 2002, budgets of each agency have been balanced and no new taxes have been required. However, this stability could be threatened in the future due to external economic factors affecting public safety agencies throughout the state.

With flat revenues forecast for the near future for both agencies of the JPA, implementation of the elements of the strategic plan that require new resources may need to wait until the economy improves. There are, however, many other elements in the strategic plan that can be implemented with currently available resources. As the draft Implementation Action Plan (Attachment A) is completed in more detail, the resources available and needed for each of the strategies should be added, which will provide information about what strategies can be accomplished without new resources. In the short term, basic research should be initiated about potential available revenue options and a

timeline necessary to accomplish an established revenue goal. A longer term forecast should follow, spanning a five to ten-year outlook.

On the expenditure side, costs should be contained to the extent possible without inhibiting service levels. A short-term and longer term operational plan should be initiated. Provisions for vehicle replacement, capital projects and reserve accounts should be an added component to the SVFRA plan.

Given the flat revenues and likelihood of increasing costs, continually identifying efficiencies will be important. As noted above, one such efficiency would be to consolidate budgeting and accounting so that there is one budget for SVFRA rather than three. This first step of combining budgets will create greater efficiency and a better view of a long-range outlook. The need to prepare for increasing costs is inevitable due to rising costs of living, growth patterns, demographics of an aging population and continuing safety mandates from state and federal agencies.

Five-Year Forecasting and Beyond

As SVFRA consolidates its budget and evolves as a joint powers authority (see next section of this report on Governance), it will be feasible to create five-year and ten-year financial forecasts. While economic volatility makes it difficult to forecast revenue with any certainty, providing regular updates of a five-year forecast is a way to keep the needs of the agency, over time, clearly in view for the members of the governing body, staff and the community. Input from the community is essential during this process to determine support, community needs and maintaining existing service levels. Through five-year forecasting, issues can be surfaced for attention earlier than may be the case when a one- or two-year timeframe is used. This approach, however, will only be feasible once there is a consolidated budget.

Fire Fees

The City collects fees for plan reviews and other fire related activities, although they are a relatively small source of revenues (approximately \$15,000 per year). The County, through an agreement with the District, handles all plan checks, hazmat inspections, and residential care home inspections.

City fire fee levels are relatively similar to other fire departments, but other departments have more fee categories than those of City Fire. The City's Second Quarter Financial and Investment Report for 2008/09 (February 2009) states that building-related revenues are expected to be about half the budgeted amount. This reduction will also affect the fire plan review revenues.

The City annually reviews and updates its fees. It is a best practice to conduct such reviews to assure that all costs are being fully recovered, including such indirect and overhead costs as equipment and facility

maintenance. Ensuring that the fees are set at a level to fully recover all costs positions the City to realize appropriate revenues once the economy improves and development returns to a normal level. (Note: the City includes percentages for overhead, fixed assets and operational costs. Personnel costs are based on direct charge calculations by position and estimated hours.)

At the present time, the District does not maintain a fee schedule. The law requires that fire impact fees be adopted by the County Board of Supervisors. The District has been working with other fire districts in the county through the Sonoma County Fire Districts Association to urge adoption of these fees by the Supervisors. The District should review operations to ascertain whether services are being provided without benefit of fee recovery.

The City is able to charge for responses to incidents involving an impaired driver. These fees should also be reviewed to assure that all costs are fully recovered. The District should pursue this type of fee. The impaired driver response should be reviewed and expanded if warranted.

EMS fees are charged for response and transport but are limited by what insurance companies will pay and the ability to collect the difference from clients. In approximately 65% of the billings, the City cannot recover the costs from the clients due to federal and state regulations (Medicare, medical, etc). Although increasing EMS fees would not affect revenues, it is important to know the full cost of services, including the amount of the actual losses. Thus, it is important to review these fees as well to determine recovery rates and market comparability.

A longer term view of EMS services should be included in the SVFRA financial forecast model. In recognition of the prediction that insurance rates and legislation will not likely pay full costs in the future, some level of taxing measure may be necessary to sustain the level of service required of the Valley. In the short term, rate schedules may be revised to reflect specific rates for specific zonal response areas.

City EMS has an EMS membership program that collects about \$85,000 per year. A membership covers the gap between the insurance payments and what the City bills for EMS. Membership fees should be included as part of a fee review. Efforts should be made to expand outreach to sell memberships, including individual and corporate/business classifications.

Reviewing all fees and updating them on a regular basis (typically every other year or at some other regular interval) is important. When the City conducts a comprehensive fee study, fire fees should also be included. The District may participate in the comprehensive fee study along with the City. This would enable the fees to be set at cost-covering levels.

New Revenue

The SVFRA needs to commit the resources necessary to explore opportunities to enhance its income in order to meet the anticipated expenses associated with running an organization. The current model will not sustain the organization into the future with the anticipated capital projects that need to be completed and the ongoing costs associated with personnel.

Relationship between EMS and Overall Fire Services Budget

Emergency medical services (EMS) and fire-based services have evolved over time to become a fully integrated fire and EMS delivery system. Although the City purchased the ambulance service as a stand-alone operation in 1990, it has since become an integral part of City services. The EMS maintains an exclusive contract to provide services throughout the Sonoma Valley.

During a transitional period of Fire and EMS becoming a single provider service, a methodology for costing out services was established. Administrators recognized that the ability to maintain a cross-trained paramedic service allowed for department-wide shift coverage. In addition, through the allocation of staffing, the City found the ability to cover some first responder costs through EMS billings that would otherwise be paid from the General Fund revenues.

Based on these allocations, the emergency medical services program has a significant, positive impact on the overall fire services budget. Absent the EMS service provision, no first responder costs from fire-based personnel would be eligible to be billed to customers receiving the benefit. If the City were to stop providing EMS services, the net effect would be an increase in the City's fire expenses.

To illustrate and validate this allocation formula, a report was completed and presented to the City Council and the District Board on the percentage of cost recovery from EMS revenues. Based on actual employee and operational costs related to first responder services that the City is obligated to provide, the report concluded that although the method of accounting for personnel and operational costs were allocated on a 50/50 split basis between the General Fund and the EMS Fund, the greater extent of costs were recovered through EMS fees. Removing the EMS system from the equation would delete any direct source of revenue to cover some fire-based costs. To illustrate this calculation, the FY 2007/2008 City budget included \$1.7 million for direct fire services and a reimbursement from the General Fund to the EMS fund of \$0.6 million for Fire/Paramedic Engineer services allocated to EMS for a total of \$2.3 million value of Fire Services.

When calculating the actual benefit to the General Fund of capturing reimbursement amounts for first responder services through the EMS fund, the report reflected that absent the EMS system, the City would

have actually paid an additional \$109,000. This \$109,000 was the amount allowed to be recaptured through EMS billings. In simple terms, the established costs for operations (such as maintenance, utilities, property services) would have been borne 100% by the General Fund and not allocated on a direct percentage to the EMS Fund. If the City stopped providing EMS, the City's net costs would increase by about \$109,000 per year as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4: GENERAL FUND IMPACT OF EMS SERVICES

City Fire First Responder charged to EMS	\$709,000
Less savings from General Fund reimbursement to the EMS Fund	-\$600,000
Net General Fund Savings	\$109,000

A more extensive analysis would be needed to determine what the cost allocations (City and District) would be if SVFRA took over the EMS operations, as these may shift indirect charges from EMS to other City programs.

Infineon Raceway Contract

Another factor for consideration is the EMS contract with Infineon Raceway. All EMS services provided to the raceway are paid for in full by the raceway through a contract for services. The contract is an important revenue source for EMS services, providing almost \$500,000 in revenue. For most EMS responses, neither Medicare nor health insurance covers the full cost of the service provided and, therefore, this outside service contract is an important revenue component for SVFRA. The strategic plan includes an action of securing a multi-year contract with the raceway for EMS services.

Vehicle and Equipment Replacement

Vehicles and equipment costs include the purchase and outfitting of equipment, annual operating and maintenance costs, and an amortization amount to save for replacement. The amortization amount is held in reserve until a unit is replaced. The annual rate is also used in the calculation of various fees and charges through an overhead charge for equipment and fixed assets. Equipment amortization rates will increase SVFRA expenditures in the short-run, but will smooth out the burden of making an equipment purchase by spreading purchase costs over the life of the equipment and negating the need to purchase equipment using an outside financing source.

A comprehensive vehicle and equipment replacement plan is needed by SVFRA to assure that funding is available when equipment and vehicles must be replaced. This best practice includes annual amortization amounts for fully equipped vehicles and equipment based on the projected life of the vehicle. This method provides a reserve mechanism

to fully fund the cost of replacement and assures that the SVFRA has safe and reliable infrastructure.

Currently, each entity handles vehicle replacement differently. The City has a vehicle replacement program specific to Fire and EMS equipment. Annual contributions are made based on an amortization schedule specific to each fire apparatus that is fully funded. The District initiated a vehicle reserve fund in 2006. This fund is not based on amortization of equipment. Rather it is a year-end contribution following the end of the fiscal year, as determined by the District Board.

Capital Improvement Program

Similar to an equipment replacement fund, the City's major maintenance costs (e.g., roof replacements, painting, etc.) are budgeted in a reserve fund paid through annual facility charges. Long-term maintenance is planned and cost estimates are prepared. Annual rates are set based on estimated future costs and the number of years until a maintenance project is needed. The District has a similar reserve fund for long-term maintenance resulting from an annual lump sum contribution.

For the District, new capital improvements, such as relocating Station 2, may be funded in a variety of ways, including bonds, certificates of participation, parcel taxes, federal and state grants, or other funding resources available to municipalities. Other than grant revenues, all other sources of funding will require a voter-approved ballot measure. The first step towards this end is to prepare cost estimates, design and specification of the relocation and construction plans. This will give a basis for ballot information and campaign information should this be necessary.

Currently, SVFRA does not have a five-year capital improvement budget. Planning for improvements and how they will be paid is a sound budgeting practice and is included in the strategic plan. This should be accomplished as a subsequent process following the establishment of the single budget process for SVFRA.

Comparisons with Other Fire Agencies

Seven fire departments were selected for comparison with SVFRA:

- Belmont-San Carlos
- Benicia
- Burlingame
- Healdsburg
- Monterey
- Petaluma
- Ross Valley JPA

The points of comparison were:

- Population served
- Square miles
- Full-time staff
- Part-time staff
- Calls for service during 2007
- Number of stations staffed

Key Findings

The key findings of the benchmarking analysis were that SVFRA:

- Has lower costs per capita
- Is spread over a larger area of coverage compared with peer agencies
- Has more calls for service per one thousand population

Basic data collected by SVFRA for the comparison departments are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5: BASIC DATA FOR BENCHMARKED DEPARTMENTS

Jurisdiction	Population served	Square miles	Full-time staff	Part-time staff	Calls for service 2007	Number of staffed stations
Petaluma	54,548	13.80	58	0	5,200	3
Belmont-San Carlos	53,353	8.86	48	0	5,848	4
Benicia	27,916	14.00	35		1,912	2
Burlingame	40,000	12.40	71		4,255	5
Healdsburg	11,711	3.56	12	26	1,319	1
Monterey	30,000	8.62	53		5,033	3
Ross Valley JPA	22,500	7.30	27	17	2,000	3
Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue	29,372	31.00	36	53	4,127*	3

*The 4,127 calls for service include calls to Infineon Raceway.

Table 6 shows that SVFRA ranks eighth in square miles covered per staffed station.

TABLE 6: SQUARE MILES PER STAFFED STATION

	Jurisdiction	Square miles	Number of staffed stations	Square Miles per Station
1	Belmont-San Carlos	8.86	4	2.22
2	Ross Valley JPA	7.30	3	2.43
3	Burlingame	12.40	5	2.48
4	Monterey	8.62	3	2.87
5	Healdsburg	3.56	1	3.56
6	Petaluma	13.80	3	4.60
7	Benicia	14.00	2	7.00
8	Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue	31.00	3	10.33

If the unstaffed SVFRA station 4 is included, the SVFRA square miles per station is 7.75, which is still more than the other seven departments; however, this ratio does not take into consideration other factors such as population density or how the population is geographically arrayed. Thus, the more important measure is whether SVFRA is meeting its service level performance objectives in the SORC.

SVFRA has the second highest number of calls per 1,000 population as shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7: CALLS (2007) PER 1,000 POPULATION

	Jurisdiction	Population served	Calls for service 2007	Calls per 1,000 population
1	Benicia	27,916	1,912	68.49
2	Ross Valley JPA	22,500	2,000	88.89
3	Petaluma	54,548	5,200	95.33
4	Burlingame	40,000	4,255	106.38
5	Belmont-San Carlos	53,353	5,848	109.61
6	Healdsburg	11,711	1,319	112.63
7	Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue	29,372	4,127	140.51
8	Monterey	30,000	5,033	167.77

SVFRA's calls for service include contract calls at Infineon Raceway. Excluding those calls, SVFRA's calls per 1,000 population would drop to about 120, which is still higher than six of the seven other departments. Data was not available to show the tourist population of the various

cities, which is a factor in call volume for SVFRA, as the Sonoma Valley is a popular tourist destination.

Table 8 shows that SVFRA has a low cost per capita compared to the other benchmarked departments, but is close to the state average.

TABLE 8: COST PER CAPITA AMONG BENCHMARKED DEPARTMENTS

	Jurisdiction	Population Served	Budget* 2007/08	Cost per capita
1	Petaluma*	54,548	\$8,663,700	\$158.28
2	Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue*	29,372	\$6,178,334	\$210.35
3	Belmont-San Carlos	53,353	\$11,238,502	\$210.64
4	Benicia	27,916	\$6,830,340	\$244.67
5	Healdsburg	11,711	\$2,887,600	\$246.57
6	Ross Valley JPA	22,500	\$5,910,000	\$262.67
7	Monterey	30,000	\$8,747,587	\$291.59
8	Burlingame	40,000	\$15,657,415	\$391.44
California average				\$206.00

*Budgets for Petaluma and SVFRA are adjusted to eliminate ambulance services; SVFRA budget includes Infineon contract.

The low cost per capita could mean that the SVFRA is more efficient or is underfunded compared with the other departments. A more comprehensive analysis is needed to determine the significance of these figures.

GOVERNANCE OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

During initial interviews, members of the SVFRA Executive Board expressed an interest in identifying options to the current governance model. To aid SVFRA, Management Partners prepared a matrix of various scenarios. The matrix shows six options, of which the first describes the current governance structure in order to provide a basis for comparison. A synopsis is provided of all six options, including some of the pros and cons. The description of each option is intended as a broad overview, and is not intended to definitively identify all issues.

Six Governance Options

The six options correspond to the following scenarios:

1. Current joint powers agreement and operations (describes the current structure and arrangement)
2. Fully integrated joint powers authority with similar board structure
3. City contracts with the Fire District for services
4. Fire District contracts with the City for services
5. Expanded Fire District (to encompass area within City of Sonoma)
6. Expanded City (to encompass Fire District area)

Several key issues identified through the initial interviews could be addressed to some extent by an alternate governance model. The descriptions of each of the options indicate how these issues could be handled.

- Dual reporting relationship of Fire Chief (currently reporting to both the City Manager and to the President of the District Board);
- A budget structure that currently requires three separate budgets, rather than one unified budget; this creates higher administrative costs in recordkeeping and handling transactions funded by one or another budget; and
- Having two employers for SVFRA employees, rather than having all employees under one employer, as is typical in other fire departments.

Option 1 describes the current SVFRA structure, provided for purposes of comparing alternative models.

OPTION 1: CURRENT STRUCTURE (JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT) AND OPERATIONS

1	Description	A Joint Powers Agreement between the City and the District for the operation of the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority
2	Governance	SVFRA Executive Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 City Council members • 5 District Board members Management Supervision Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of Board of Directors of District • City Manager SVFRA Working Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 City Council member appointed by the City Council • 1 District Board President • Fire Chief • City Manager • Treasurer • Union President • SVFRA Operations Chief • Part-time/volunteer employee representative
3	Financing	City General Fund and EMS District property taxes and special tax
4	Cost Allocations	Three separate budgets: District, City Fire, and City EMS. Each invoice is individually allocated
5	Capital Assets	Assets and equipment purchased and retained separately
6	Administrative Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Chief reports to City Manager and President of District • SVFRA contracts with City for accounting and personnel support • Separate pay, benefits and MOUs for Fire personnel • Separate insurance coverage • Separate budgets are prepared for District, City Fire and City EMS • Separate hiring processes
7	Implementation Issues	Not applicable (Note: as this is the current arrangement, there are no implementation issues to be discussed)
8	Pros	Combined agencies provide economies of scale with overlapping areas of coverage
9	Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split supervision of Fire Chief • Separate MOUs for Fire personnel • Separate insurance coverage • Separate budgets are prepared for the District, City Fire and City EMS • Separate hiring processes • Separate pay, benefits and MOUs for Fire personnel

Option 2 describes a new plan which would involve becoming a fully integrated joint powers authority. It could keep a similar board structure and, if desired, make changes in operations. Option 2 is a fully integrated JPA organization. The differences between the current

operational JPA and a stand-alone JPA with the powers and authority to hire and fire and to be an independent entity are significant. This is an initial outline of some of the issues involved in formulating a completely new organizational structure. A comprehensive study would be required to fully analyze this option.

OPTION 2: FULLY INTEGRATED JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY WITH OPERATING REVISIONS

1	Description	A joint powers authority between the City and the District for the operation of the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority, including EMS.
2	Governance	<p>SVFRA Board of any size could be created. Some JPAs have a designated number of members from each governing body that are part of the joint powers authority; some JPAs have at-large members appointed by the governing body members of the board. Therefore, there are many options for the size and composition of a board of a joint powers authority.</p> <p>One option would be to have 2 or 3 members from the Council and Board, plus an at-large member appointed by the governing body members. Another option would be to have all members of the Council and District Board serve as the JPA board.</p> <p>A Working Group would be identified by the Board</p>
3	Financing	<p>Financing allocations made according to formula to be developed based on “changes in personnel, relative population size, number of structures, assessed value, service calls, or other relevant factors.” An annual budget would be approved by the Board and then funding amounts would be approved separately by the City and District.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City General Fund • District property taxes and special tax
4	Cost Allocations	Allocations of operating costs are not required. Each entity provides funding on an annual basis according to the financing allocation plan.
5	Capital Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current assets and equipment retained separately • New assets purchased and owned by the JPA • JPA budget to include capital and equipment reserve funds

6	Administrative Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reporting relationship between the Fire Chief and the JPA could be handled in various ways. One structure would be for the Fire Chief to be hired by and report to the JPA Board. Another structure would be for the Fire Chief to report to the JPA Executive Officer, who would be either the City Manager or District President, serving for two years on a rotational basis. Other variations could be created to meet the needs of the organization. SVFRA could continue to contract with City for accounting and personnel support or chose to provide accounting and personnel support in another way One unified budget would be created for the JPA, with EMS tracked separately All employees would be employees of the JPA, with one MOU
7	Implementation Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires amending the current JPA Requires agreement about a cost allocation formula Negotiations to create a single fire MOU would be required (moving to a single fire MOU could be phased)
8	Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More efficient administrative functions
9	Cons	Time involved in implementation steps

Option 3 describes a plan through which the City of Sonoma would contract with the District for services.

OPTION 3: CITY OF SONOMA CONTRACTS WITH FIRE DISTRICT FOR SERVICES

1	Description	City would contract with the District for fire and EMS services and JPA would be dissolved
2	Governance	City Council decides level of service and authorizes a contract for services with the District; the District Board is responsible for overseeing policy and operations
3	Financing	District property taxes and special tax City pays District for services on a negotiated basis
4	Cost Allocations	None
5	Capital Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiate lease or purchase of City's fire equipment City could retain ownership until surplussed – District could buy and own all new equipment City buildings would remain as City property with responsibility for capital improvements Building maintenance by either District or City would be negotiated
6	Administrative Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District manages all administrative functions (It could contract with the City or County to provide accounting and personnel services or choose to provide accounting and personnel support in another way) Fire Chief would be hired by and report to District Board City Fire and EMS employees would transfer to the District

7	Implementation Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires dissolution of JPA and allocation of equipment and capital improvement assets (agreement may include City retention of capital improvements such as fire stations). Specific transition plan needed for employees; typical method would be for City to initiate meet and confer to discuss the impacts and process; formally lay off City employees and then those same individuals would be re-hired by the District.
8	Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplifies administrative functions and governance Service levels could be negotiated District is a single purpose agency which allows it to focus solely on fire and emergency medical services
9	Cons	City would lose governing authority but would maintain participation in budgetary process as a funding partner

Option 4 describes a plan through which the District would contract with the City of Sonoma for services.

OPTION 4: FIRE DISTRICT CONTRACTS WITH CITY OF SONOMA FOR SERVICES

1	Description	District would contract with the City to provide fire and EMS services and the JPA would be dissolved.
2	Governance	District would remain as a legal entity; Board members decide level of services and authorize a contract for services with the City; City is responsible for overseeing policy and operations.
3	Financing	City General Fund District pays City (from property tax and special tax revenues) on a negotiated basis
4	Cost Allocations	None
5	Capital Assets	Alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiate lease or purchase of District equipment District could retain ownership until surplussed – City could buy and own all new equipment District could retain ownership of buildings
6	Administrative Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Council would determine the budget, as with any City department Fire Chief is hired by and reports to City Manager, as with other department directors City provides all administrative functions
7	Implementation Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires dissolution of JPA and allocation of any JPA equipment and capital improvement assets Specific transition plan needed for employees; typical method would be for District to initiate, meet and confer to discuss the impacts and process; formally lay off District employees and then those same individuals would be re-hired by City.
8	Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplifies administrative functions and governance Service levels could be negotiated
9	Cons	District would lose governing authority

Option 5 describes a plan through which the District would be expanded to encompass the City of Sonoma for services.

OPTION 5: EXPAND FIRE DISTRICT TO ENCOMPASS CITY

1	Description	Dissolve JPA and expand District area to include the City; services would be provided by the District.
2	Governance	By District Board; Board would likely need to be increased in size for representation of city area.
3	Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property tax shift from City to District • District special tax expanded to City
4	Cost Allocations	None
5	Capital Assets	All assets transferred to District (City would retain ownership of buildings)
6	Administrative Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None – single entity to manage • District may provide own administrative functions or contract with City or County
7	Implementation Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires LAFCO approval. Outstanding issues include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reconfiguration of Board ○ Taxing/revenue generation ○ May require vote of electorate • Negotiations to create a single fire MOU would be required (moving to a single fire MOU could be phased) • Requires a determination of which entity will provide EMS
8	Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unified financing and administration
9	Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires significant work, including LAFCO applications, legal opinions on special taxes, property tax reallocation, and negotiations • This option could require a ballot measure • Property tax shift from City would need to be carefully weighed and analyzed • May require a vote of the people if there are objections by 25% of voters

Option 6 describes a plan through which the City of Sonoma would be expanded to encompass the District areas.

OPTION 6: EXPAND CITY TO ENCOMPASS FIRE DISTRICT AREAS

1	Description	JPA to remain; City annexes areas currently in the District. Not all of the area now served by SVFRA would be annexed to the City of Sonoma, so there would still need to be resolution about services to the non-annexed area, if that included some of the District area. Therefore, even if the City of Sonoma were to be expanded, one of the alternatives above (1, 2, 3, or 4) would still need to be employed.
2	Governance	This would be determined, based on which alternative was selected from above, once the annexed area is determined.
3	Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City General Fund • Annexed areas shift from paying District property taxes to City • District property taxes and special taxes for areas remaining within District
4	Cost Allocations	Cost allocations will shift according to which of the above alternatives is chosen.
5	Capital Assets	Specific determinations would be made depending on which alternative from above is selected.
6	Administrative Issues	Specific determinations would be made depending on which alternative from above is selected.
7	Implementation Issues	Requires a significant LAFCO process for annexation, including a reallocation of property taxes and other revenues, etc.
8	Pros	No significant impact on SVFRA service levels or costs. Thus, it should not be done solely for SVFRA reasons.
9	Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JPA Working Group determined that this option would not be feasible because the City would have to provide all services to the area, including Police, Public Works, Planning and other services, which is not feasible. • Fire would be one component of a much larger decision on annexation encompassing all City service areas.

CONCLUSION

The Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority has made important strides since its inception in 2002. Shortly after SVFRA was formed, through a strong partnership with the District Board, City Council and employees, the organization began operating as one fire and rescue team under a single fire command structure. SVFRA has achieved one of its key objectives for forming, which was to benefit by merging resources of City Fire and EMS with the District – and take advantage of economies of scale. Benchmarking shows that SVFRA compares favorably with other fire departments in cost and service delivery.

SVFRA is now preparing for the future through this strategic plan. The working group has identified the important goals to be achieved over the next several years. Specific strategies, each of which is measurable, have been created to move the organization forward. It will take strong collaboration of staff and elected officials, regular reporting, and integrating the components of this strategic plan into the budget process for the plan to be successfully implemented.

SVFRA is fortunate to have capable and committed staff and elected officials who are working diligently to ensure a stable and positive future for fire and rescue services to the community. This strategic planning process is an important mechanism for ensuring that community residents and visitors are provided critical fire and rescue services in an efficient and effective manner, with stability of staffing and finances, and the facilities and equipment needed to do the job.

ATTACHMENT A – DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

Priorities were identified by the Working Group at the second strategic planning workshop. They are provided as tentative, to be confirmed each year during the budget process. The significance of the priorities is that they show intent as to timeframe for accomplishment. The priorities align with fiscal years as shown below:

- Priority 1 strategies are to be accomplished in FY 2009/10 – 2010/11
- Priority 2 strategies are to be accomplished in FY 2011/12 – 2014/15
- Priority 3 strategies are to be accomplished in FY 2015/16 and beyond

Goal 1: Financial Sustainability

SVFRA seeks to retain financial sustainability with the necessary budgeting mechanisms and an equitable distribution of costs between agency partners.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Key Implementation Tasks</i>	<i>Other Agencies or City Departments Involved</i>	<i>Resources Available or Needed</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Priority 1, 2, 3</i>
1. Establish a single operating budget for SVFRA for greater efficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merge City Fire and EMS into one budget • Obtain approval for the merged authority line-item budget from VOM Board and City Council • Determine the level of cost-sharing by the parties 				1
2. Create a five-year financial forecast and update it as necessary to guide the Authority's annual budgetary decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a five-year financial forecast • Report the update to the governing body • Request authorization for mid-term adjustments when necessary • Update the forecast annually to reflect changes in revenue 				1

Strategy	Key Implementation Tasks	Other Agencies or City Departments Involved	Resources Available or Needed	Status	Priority 1, 2, 3
3. Create a five-year capital budget and determine the sources of funding for each capital project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine funding for the capital equipment and apparatus replacement schedule • Explore and obtain funding for priority needs • Establish internal service fund for future purchases • Update the capital budget annually to reflect changes in needs 				2
4. Explore funding sources to support services provided by SVFRA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine costs and benefits of various funding sources (including paramedic assessment district concept) 				2
5. Secure a multi-year contract with Infineon Raceway to provide emergency medical services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate contract • Review contingency plan to anticipate actions if the contract is not renewed 				1

Goal 2: Governance and Organization

SVFRA seeks to have an effective governance structure that supports excellence in service delivery and transitions the organization to a single employer for future employees.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Key Implementation Tasks</i>	<i>Other Agencies or City Departments Involved</i>	<i>Resources Available or Needed</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Priority 1, 2, 3</i>
1. Research and consider various governance options, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. One JPA organizational structure b. Contract between agency partners for fire, rescue and emergency services c. Expanding the Fire District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare report • Discuss with governing bodies • Make determination 				1
2. Create a unified set of written administrative policies and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify policies and procedures that are needed • Revise policies and procedures (as needed) • Adopt a standard set of policies and procedures • Create a single administrative manual • Review the manual on an annual basis to ensure that policies and procedures are up to date 				1

Goal 3: Service Delivery

SVFRA seeks to continue providing efficient and effective firefighting, rescue, medical, fire prevention and community emergency response services.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Key Implementation Tasks</i>	<i>Other Agencies or City Departments Involved</i>	<i>Resources Available or Needed</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Priority 1, 2, 3</i>
1. Provide community emergency and disaster preparedness programs to support community self-sufficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve SVFRA in community AED program • Implement SCOPE (Sonoma Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies) • Promote public education • Support Sonoma Citizens Disaster Council 				2
2. Increase the level of fire prevention services in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue school-based fire safety • Expand resources to support public outreach about wildland fires, home fire safety, and other issues • Develop a wildland fire protection plan 				1
3. Conduct communitywide disaster drills to keep emergency management protocols current and effective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve public safety, City employees and community members • Maintain grant eligibility and fulfill grant criteria • Practice Incident Command System (ICS) training • Engage the community in a disaster drill 				2
4. Create and implement a public education outreach program to inform community members about SFVRA services, funding sources, cost of services, and the Authority's goals and accomplishments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop public communication strategy • Develop materials for public distribution • Work with City to agree on information flow to external sources 				2

Goal 4: Staffing

SVFRA strives to attract and retain skilled members and appropriate staffing levels in all positions.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Key Implementation Tasks</i>	<i>Other Agencies or City Departments Involved</i>	<i>Resources Available or Needed</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Priority 1, 2, 3</i>
1. Evaluate the current administrative functions and structure to assure that they are adequate to support the organization's mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the functions that must be performed (e.g., budgeting, accounting, personnel, purchasing, etc.) • Create a job analysis form to be completed by administrative staff • Create flow charts of key administrative functions, including time required for each step • Identify tasks not being completed in a timely manner • Identify changes in processes that would save time • Identify staffing needs 	City Finance and HR			2
2. Strive to achieve the goals in the staffing plan identified in the Standards of Response Coverage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a funding mechanism for 3-0 staffing on all engines • Obtain grants (e.g., SAFER grants) to provide funding for staff salaries • Use more part-time firefighters on engine 3 to emulate engines 1 and 2 • Convert M-303 rescue unit to safety employees 				2

Strategy	Key Implementation Tasks	Other Agencies or City Departments Involved	Resources Available or Needed	Status	Priority 1, 2, 3
3. Develop and implement a succession plan that ensures we have qualified and trained members who will be eligible for higher level positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise career development guide Create educational opportunities through a partnership with employees Provide opportunities for training experience in administrative positions to build skill sets 				2
4. Ensure that all members meet all state, federal, local and other mandates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen existing training program Modify training program to meet changing requirements from the State of California, Federal government, OSHA, NFPA or other mandating agencies Annually evaluate the training program to ensure that it is compliant with state, federal, local and other mandates 				1
5. Identify and implement methods to improve the flow of communication between personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify internal communication methods to keep SVFRA personnel regularly informed Use the identified communication methods to provide information to personnel Twice annually evaluate the communication methods to determine effectiveness 				2

Strategy	Key Implementation Tasks	Other Agencies or City Departments Involved	Resources Available or Needed	Status	Priority 1, 2, 3
6. Recruit and retain more volunteer/part-time firefighters to serve the needs of SVFRA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for qualified part-time, cross-trained employees to fill open spots on engines • Maintain a market pay structure for part-time employees • Emphasize part-time recruitment for Station 4 response area • Annually evaluate recruitment strategies of part-time (volunteer) firefighters 				1
7. Develop and implement a plan to increase the number of bilingual employees to provide emergency services to non-English speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to employees in Spanish • Recruit bilingual employees • Explore bilingual pay incentives • Annually evaluate effectiveness of bilingual initiatives 				1

Goal 5: Facilities, Equipment, Technology and Apparatus

SVFRA seeks to have well-maintained facilities, equipment, technology and apparatus that enable personnel to perform their jobs safely and efficiently.

Strategy	Key Implementation Tasks	Other Agencies or City Departments Involved	Resources Available or Needed	Status	Priority 1, 2, 3
1. Create a comprehensive facilities plan that identifies the maintenance and improvements necessary to meet the needs of the department over the next 10 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather existing information on improvements needed in SVFRA facilities • Identify information gaps and determine how to obtain the information • Prepare a 10-year plan • Annually evaluate and update the 10-year plan to meet current conditions 				3
2. Relocate and build Station 2 to better serve the needs of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding to enable Station 2 to be rebuilt • Identify the new location • Obtain preliminary plans • Secure utilities • Initiate the bid process for construction of Station 2 • Construct Station 2 		Funding for land and construction		2
3. Retrofit Station 3 to meet ADA guidelines and accommodate gender equity needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding for the retrofitting of Station 3 • Obtain preliminary plans • Initiate bid process for the retrofit of Station 3 • Begin retrofit 		Funding for the retrofit		2

Strategy	Key Implementation Tasks	Other Agencies or City Departments Involved	Resources Available or Needed	Status	Priority 1, 2, 3
4. Create a capital equipment and apparatus replacement schedule.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an inventory of all equipment and determine remaining life of each • Create a schedule for replacing each piece • Integrate replacement schedule into the capital budgeting process • Annually evaluate replacement schedule to determine if any changes need to be made 				1
5. Create and implement a multi-year information technology strategic plan that will guide the SVFRA into the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways to collaborate with the City's IT Plan • Identify opportunities to increase interoperability as technology changes • Ensure SVFRA is working toward the same communication platform as the City 				3
6. Assure a constant state of readiness for all mobile equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain funding for a full-time mechanic 				1

ATTACHMENT B – PROJECT APPROACH

The methodology used to create this draft strategic plan is summarized below. Management Partners, consultants specializing in assisting local governments, collaborated with the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority management to lead the strategic planning process and develop this plan.

In early 2008, SVFRA identified the need for a long-range plan to guide decisions and operations. The Authority intended that the process would be collaborative, involving Authority members and employees in creating the strategic plan.

As a first step, Management Partners interviewed Valley of the Moon Fire District Board members, Sonoma City Council members, the City Manager, Fire Chief and other managers from the Authority and City. The purpose of the interviews was to identify issues they felt were important to the future and to learn about areas of concern.

Next, Management Partners created an online survey for all employees to complete. It provided a way that employees could participate in the strategic planning process by expressing their opinions about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing SVFRA. The complete survey results are provided in Attachment C.

Two workshops were facilitated with the JPA Working Group and other fire managers. The first was held on November 4, 2008 to review preliminary data analysis and identify potential goals for the strategic plan. The second workshop was held on November 20, 2008 with the same group of individuals. During that workshop, a draft vision, along with a set of goals and strategies were developed.

As part of the strategic planning process, Management Partners reviewed and analyzed a great deal of data, including financial, organizational, governance, staffing, workload, technology, equipment, and facilities information. Key documents reviewed were:

- Operating budgets
- Standards of Response Coverage
- Call statistics
- Current goals
- Infineon contract
- Information technology needs
- Joint powers agreement and related documents
- Memoranda of understanding for employees
- Policies and procedures

The figure below illustrates the elements involved in developing a strategic plan. Each of these steps has been carried out in creating a five-year plan for SVFRA.

DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN



ATTACHMENT C – EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS

This attachment provides a summary of results from an online employee survey asking about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to SVFRA.

Overview

Total number of respondents: 40

Mission Statement: 69.2% of survey respondents affirmed the mission statement

Employer:

- 64.1% of the respondents are employed by the City of Sonoma
- 35.9% of the respondents are employed by the Valley of the Moon District

Experience: 46.2% of the respondents have more than 10 years' experience

Survey Categories

Employees were asked their opinions about the following areas:

1. Staffing
2. Employee safety
3. Employee skills and training
4. Technology, facilities and equipment
5. Organization and technical response
6. Customer service and community involvement

The complete responses are shown in the following pages.

Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority
Strategic Plan

1. Staffing Issues					
	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Response Count
Recruitment of full-time firefighters	39.5% (15)	21.1% (8)	52.6% (20)	5.3% (2)	38
Retention of full-time firefighters	76.3% (29)	7.9% (3)	21.1% (8)	5.3% (2)	38
Recruitment of part-time paramedics	5.3% (2)	63.2% (24)	31.6% (12)	23.7% (9)	38
Retention of part-time paramedics	5.3% (2)	73.7% (28)	18.4% (7)	26.3% (10)	38
Recruitment of part-time firefighters	36.8% (14)	26.3% (10)	39.5% (15)	10.5% (4)	38
Retention of part-time firefighters	48.7% (19)	20.5% (8)	28.2% (11)	15.4% (6)	39
Recruitment of interns	35.1% (13)	24.3% (9)	43.2% (16)	5.4% (2)	37
Retention of interns	36.1% (13)	27.8% (10)	41.7% (15)	2.8% (1)	36
Frequency of promotional opportunities	20.0% (7)	51.4% (18)	37.1% (13)	8.6% (3)	35
Adequacy of part-time staffing for the race track	5.4% (2)	56.8% (21)	32.4% (12)	24.3% (9)	37
Level of employee recognition	5.1% (2)	66.7% (26)	30.8% (12)	12.8% (5)	39
Level of employee morale	28.2% (11)	30.8% (12)	46.2% (18)	15.4% (6)	39
Employee performance	64.1% (25)	17.9% (7)	30.8% (12)	7.7% (3)	39
Amount of overtime	48.6% (18)	18.9% (7)	29.7% (11)	21.6% (8)	37
Cross-training between fire and EMS	48.7% (19)	30.8% (12)	28.2% (11)	7.7% (3)	39
				<i>answered question</i>	40
				<i>skipped question</i>	0

2. Employee Safety					
	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Response Count
Safety procedures and practices	82.1% (32)	12.8% (5)	10.3% (4)	5.1% (2)	39
Availability of personal safety equipment	87.2% (34)	7.7% (3)	5.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	39
Condition of personal safety equipment	87.2% (34)	2.6% (1)	12.8% (5)	2.6% (1)	39
Safety training for employees	71.8% (28)	7.7% (3)	28.2% (11)	2.6% (1)	39
Management of personnel recovering from an on-duty injury	57.9% (22)	18.4% (7)	26.3% (10)	7.9% (3)	38
	<i>answered question</i>				39
	<i>skipped question</i>				1

Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority
Strategic Plan

3. Employee Skills and Training					
	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Response Count
Technical expertise of employees	56.4% (22)	17.9% (7)	38.5% (15)	10.3% (4)	39
Technical expertise of supervisors and managers	53.8% (21)	25.6% (10)	30.8% (12)	2.6% (1)	39
Employee performance	43.6% (17)	23.1% (9)	48.7% (19)	5.1% (2)	39
Management of employee performance	29.7% (11)	35.1% (13)	51.4% (19)	5.4% (2)	37
Frequency of firefighter training	73.7% (28)	10.5% (4)	21.1% (8)	2.6% (1)	38
Frequency of supervisory training	17.1% (6)	45.7% (16)	42.9% (15)	11.4% (4)	35
Firefighter training	68.4% (26)	10.5% (4)	28.9% (11)	5.3% (2)	38
Supervisory skills training	15.8% (6)	44.7% (17)	50.0% (19)	7.9% (3)	38
				<i>answered question</i>	39
				<i>skipped question</i>	1

4. Technology, Facilities and Equipment					
	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Response Count
Availability of up to date firefighting, emergency medical, and rescue technology	73.7% (28)	7.9% (3)	23.7% (9)	0.0% (0)	38
Availability of up to date administrative technology	51.3% (20)	12.8% (5)	33.3% (13)	10.3% (4)	39
Adequacy of communications systems	59.0% (23)	12.8% (5)	28.2% (11)	7.7% (3)	39
Condition of stations	12.5% (5)	62.5% (25)	37.5% (15)	20.0% (8)	40
Cleanliness of stations	47.4% (18)	31.6% (12)	34.2% (13)	5.3% (2)	38
Adequacy of stations for equipment and staff	48.7% (19)	30.8% (12)	33.3% (13)	7.7% (3)	39
Availability of vehicles and other motorized equipment	87.2% (34)	10.3% (4)	7.7% (3)	2.6% (1)	39
Condition of vehicles and other motorized equipment	51.3% (20)	25.6% (10)	35.9% (14)	5.1% (2)	39
				<i>answered question</i>	40
				<i>skipped question</i>	0

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5. Organization and Technical Response					
	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Response Count
Innovation within SVFRA	63.2% (24)	7.9% (3)	31.6% (12)	7.9% (3)	38
Empowerment to make decisions	38.5% (15)	30.8% (12)	41.0% (16)	2.6% (1)	39
Teamwork within SVFRA	71.1% (27)	10.5% (4)	31.6% (12)	5.3% (2)	38
Governance structure	36.8% (14)	18.4% (7)	44.7% (17)	13.2% (5)	38
Size/complexity of the organization	60.5% (23)	5.3% (2)	36.8% (14)	7.9% (3)	38
Joint Powers Authority(JPA) structure	62.2% (23)	24.3% (9)	29.7% (11)	10.8% (4)	37
General, department-wide communications	48.7% (19)	33.3% (13)	25.6% (10)	5.1% (2)	39
On-scene communication between fire companies	76.3% (29)	10.5% (4)	23.7% (9)	2.6% (1)	38
Communication between fire stations/companies (other than on-scene)	63.2% (24)	18.4% (7)	23.7% (9)	2.6% (1)	38
Mutual aid workload	63.9% (23)	8.3% (3)	33.3% (12)	5.6% (2)	36
Post-incident review of emergency medical calls for service	37.8% (14)	21.6% (8)	45.9% (17)	8.1% (3)	37
Post-incident review of fire calls for service	54.1% (20)	5.4% (2)	40.5% (15)	2.7% (1)	37
Post-incident review of disaster response	31.4% (11)	11.4% (4)	60.0% (21)	5.7% (2)	35
				<i>answered question</i>	39
				<i>skipped question</i>	1

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6. Customer Service and Community Involvement					
	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Response Count
Response time	83.8% (31)	0.0% (0)	16.2% (6)	0.0% (0)	37
Response planning	59.5% (22)	13.5% (5)	32.4% (12)	2.7% (1)	37
Complaints from the public about services	63.9% (23)	0.0% (0)	36.1% (13)	2.8% (1)	36
Fire prevention	36.8% (14)	23.7% (9)	44.7% (17)	7.9% (3)	38
Overall customer service	74.4% (29)	2.6% (1)	30.8% (12)	0.0% (0)	39
Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)	11.8% (4)	38.2% (13)	58.8% (20)	11.8% (4)	34
Community volunteers	13.9% (5)	38.9% (14)	52.8% (19)	5.6% (2)	36
	<i>answered question</i>				39
	<i>skipped question</i>				1