

# Fire Department Evaluation

St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana

February 2024



ST. BERNARD  

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FIRE DEPARTMENT





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# Acknowledgments

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## St. Bernard Parish

Dynamix Consulting Group would like to thank the elected and appointed officials of St. Bernard Parish, the members of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department, and, specifically, Fire Chief Earl Borden for their assistance with this project. The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department Evaluation would not have been possible without their cooperation and support.

## Dynamix Consulting Group

The Dynamix Consulting Group Project Team for the St. Bernard Fire Department Evaluation included:

Mary-Ellen Harper  
Stuart McCutcheon  
Heather Burford  
Brian Rhodes

# Introduction

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## Evaluation Process

Using organizational, operational, staffing, and geographic information system (GIS) models, this evaluation comprehensively appraises the fire and emergency medical services provided in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, upon Dynamix Consulting Group's completion of fieldwork and data collection in September 2023.

Dynamix Consulting Group based this evaluation on data provided by the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department as well as data collected during the consultants' fieldwork. The information was then compared to a combination of Louisiana Laws, Property Insurance Association of Louisiana (PIAL) requirements, National Fire Protection Association standards, accepted best practices within the emergency services community, and the experience of the Dynamix Consulting Group Consultants.

## Referenced Laws and Industry Standards

### Louisiana Health and Safety Laws

Louisiana does not have an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) approved State Plan specific to worker safety for government employees; thus, state and local government workers are not governed by OSHA or OSHA-promulgated rules. Instead, the health and safety of public employees is governed by Louisiana Revised Statutes (RS).

### Property Insurance Association of Louisiana

The Property Insurance Association of Louisiana (PIAL) is a private, non-profit association composed of all insurance companies licensed to write fire and certain coverages within the State of Louisiana. Founded by its member companies in 1888, PIAL has been in continuous operation for more than 130 years.

The Municipal Division of PIAL evaluates the fire protection capabilities of municipalities and fire districts to determine a Protection Classification for that graded area. The Municipal Division also evaluates the effectiveness of the Building Code Enforcement of municipalities and parishes to determine the Building Code Effectiveness Grading (BCEG) classification. PIAL provides municipal officials, such as fire, water, and building departments, with information and advice concerning factors that can affect property insurance ratings.

### National Fire Protection Association Standards

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is an industry trade association that develops and provides standards and codes for fire departments and emergency medical services for local governments.

# Community Overview

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## Community History

St. Bernard Parish is located southeast of the city of New Orleans and includes the mainland, the Chandeleur Islands, and Chandeleur Sound. The Parish, named for the Patron Saint of Bernardo de Galvez, is one of Louisiana's most historic areas. Before it was ever St. Bernard Parish, the coastal community was known as San Bernardo to those inhabitants who first called it home. The area was originally settled in 1778 by Spanish colonists from the Canary Islands known as Isleños, or Islanders. Isleños were recruited by the Spanish Empire, who had control of New Orleans, to increase food production, populate the area, and ultimately defend it against the British invasion. These settlers brought their culture, history, cuisine, language, and customs from the Canary Islands. They were people of the land, successfully farming, hunting, and fishing. They eventually provided New Orleans with most of the seafood, garlic, onions, beans, potatoes, and poultry consumed in the city.



St. Bernard Parish was created on March 31, 1807, when the territorial legislature divided the state into 19 parishes. Historically Roman Catholic under France's and Spain's rule, the boundaries within Louisiana dividing the territories generally coincided with church parishes. In 1807, the territorial legislature officially adopted the term 'parish' and eventually removed the term 'county' altogether. Today, St. Bernard Parish is one of 64 parishes in the State of Louisiana.

Over the years, St. Bernard Parish has experienced its share of manmade and natural disasters, but few would argue that Hurricane Katrina was amongst the most devastating. On August 29, 2005, St. Bernard Parish was devastated by Hurricane Katrina, which damaged virtually every structure in the Parish. The eye of Katrina passed over the eastern portion of the Parish, pushing a 30-foot storm surge into the mouth of the Mississippi River. This surge destroyed the Parish levees, and the entire Parish was flooded, with most areas left with between 1 and 15 feet of standing water. For more than two months after the storm, much of the Parish remained without critical services, including electricity, water, and sewage. Many of the estimated 67,229 residents living in St. Bernard Parish before the storm left and never returned.

## Characteristics

St. Bernard Parish is the second largest Parish in Louisiana by total area but has the largest percentage of area in water of any parish in the state. The Parish has a total area of 2,158 square miles, of which 378 square miles is land and 1,780 square miles is water. The Parish is bordered to the north by Lake Borgne, to the northwest by Orleans Parish, to the south by Plaquemines Parish, and the southeast by the Gulf of Mexico. The Parish encompasses numerous small islands and is classed among the alluvial lands of the state, a flat landform created by the deposit of river sediment over long periods.



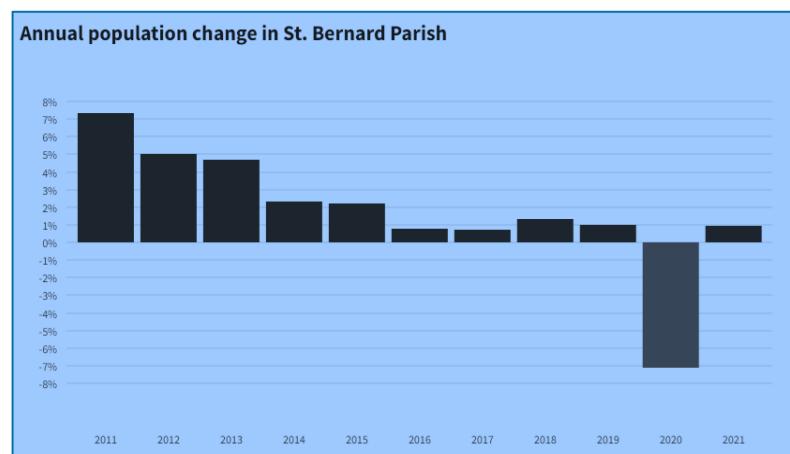
The Parish seat and largest community within St. Bernard Parish is Chalmette, home to an estimated 23,000 residents. There are no incorporated communities within St. Bernard Parish, and areas such as Chalmette, Violet, and Arabi are all known as 'census-designate' areas. Notable attractions in St. Bernard Parish include the Los Isleños Museum, Chalmette Battlefield, and the Biloxi State Wildlife Management Area.

## Demographics

### Population

Unless otherwise noted, the demographic information in this report is sourced from the *Environmental Systems Research Institute* (ESRI).

The population of St. Bernard Parish increased 10 out of the 11 years between 2010 and 2021. The population today is 45,333. Although the current population is only two-thirds of the pre-Hurricane Katrina population, St. Bernard Parish grew by 20.2% from the 36,821 people who lived there in 2010. For comparison, the population in the State of Louisiana grew by 1.7% during the same period, while the population in the United States grew by 7.3%. Between 2019 and 2020, the population in St. Bernard Parish dropped by 7.1%, and the decline might be attributed to the onset of the global pandemic.



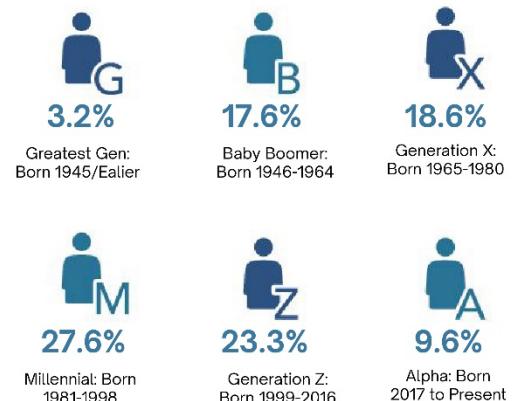


Women account for 50.7% of the population, and 67.7% identify as white, 26% as Black or African American, and 11% as Hispanic or Latino. The Diversity Index is a continuum that ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity), and St. Bernard's Diversity Index is 71. Within the Parish are 16,864 households, with an average family size of 2.7 individuals, smaller than the national average of 3.13 individuals. St. Bernard Parish currently has a population density of 120 people per square mile; in comparison, the State of Louisiana has a population density of 87.6 people per square mile.

## Age

The median age in St. Bernard Parish is 35.4 years, 4.9% lower than the State of Louisiana median age of 37.2 and 7.1% lower than the United States median age of 38.1 years. The number of residents over 65 years in St. Bernard Parish is 6,009, representing just 13.3% of the total population. This compares to 17% in the State of Louisiana and 17.3% in the United States. Millennials, born between 1981 and 1998, comprise St. Bernard Parish's most significant percentage of residents, and 60.5% of the community is 42 or younger.

### Population By Generation



## Disabilities, Physical Fitness, & Insurance



Disabilities can relate to physical mobility, sensory, intellectual, developmental, cognitive, or mental challenges. Five thousand six hundred and fifty-eight households in St. Bernard Parish identify as having at least one member with a disability. This represents 33.6% of households within the Parish compared to 34% in the State of Louisiana.

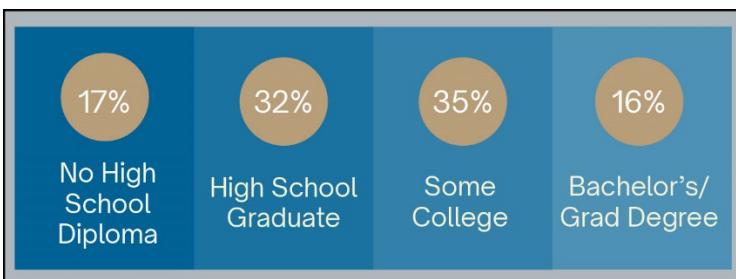
Forty-four percent of adults within the Parish say they exercise at home two or more times per week, and 10.8% say they exercise at a club two or more times per week. These numbers are higher than the national average of just one in five Americans who exercise.

Nearly 9% of St. Bernard Parish residents report having no insurance, and the largest percentage of people without insurance are between the ages of 35 and 64. This is slightly lower than the national rate of 10.2%. Most individuals within the Parish report receiving health insurance through their employer.

### Exercise (Percent of Adults)



## Education



Sixteen percent of the adult population of St. Bernard Parish reports having earned a bachelor's degree or higher, while an additional 35% report having attended some college. Seventeen percent report having not received a high school diploma. This is similar to the percentage of 16.2% for the State of Louisiana and higher than the 8.9% for the United States.

## Employment & Commute

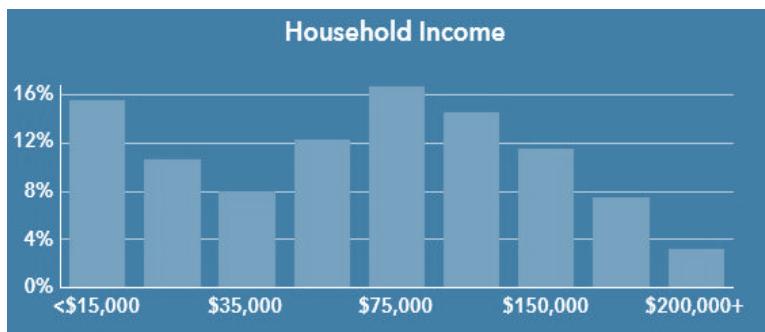
In July 2023, the unemployment rate for St. Bernard Parish was 3.7%, slightly higher than the State of Louisiana unemployment rate of 3.3%. The unemployment rate for the same period across the United States was 3.5%. These unemployment rates are not seasonally adjusted. Among those employed in St. Bernard Parish, 49.6% report working "white collar jobs." White-collar jobs are salaried employees whose duties do not require wearing work clothes or protective clothing. Comparatively, 28.3% of St. Bernard Parish's population report working "blue-collar" jobs. Blue-collar jobs usually include hourly employees wearing work clothes or protective clothing. An additional 22.1% of the working population of the Parish identifies as being employed in the service industry.



There are 1,437 businesses in St. Bernard Parish employing 13,641 employees, and the daytime population of the Parish drops to 39,909. With its extensive water access, St. Bernard Parish offers a proud and prosperous home for the flourishing petrochemical, energy, seafood processing, and commercial fishing industries. St. Bernard Parish is now home to diverse industries such as film, healthcare, and innovation, and it is predicted to be a future hub of the greater New Orleans region's international port system.

St. Bernard Parish commuters drive alone to and from work 84.4% of the time, while only 8.5% carpool, 0.7% use public transportation, and 1% walk. Most Parish residents commute less than 34 minutes to work, but 16% report commuting between 45 and 59 minutes. A total of 1,102 households in St. Bernard Parish report that they do not have transportation.

## Income & Housing



The median household income in St. Bernard Parish is \$53,660. This is similar to the median household income for the State of Louisiana and lower than that of the United States. The Parish has a per capita income of \$26,678 and a median net worth of \$79,389. Households earning between \$50,000 - \$75,000 annually and \$15,000 or less represent the largest groups within the Parish. There are 3,333 households living below the poverty line, representing 20% of the total households in the community.

Sixty-nine percent of St. Bernard Parish residents own their homes, while 30.6% rent. The median home value in the Parish is \$175,565, which is 19% lower than the State of Louisiana median home value of \$209,238. An average of \$8,386 is spent on mortgages and basics annually, and the average percent of income paid on mortgages is 19.7%. The Housing Affordability Index measures a person's ability to purchase a particular item, such as a house in a specific region. Values over 100 indicate that a home is more likely to be affordable. The Housing Affordability Index in St. Bernard Parish is 132.



## Governance

### Overview

Under the State of Louisiana Revised Statutes 33:1395 through 33:1395.6, St. Bernard Parish is recognized as a local governmental subdivision operating under a home rule charter. The Parish is authorized to exercise powers and perform any function necessary to manage its local affairs. In accordance with the home rule charter, St. Bernard Parish uses a 'President-Council' form of government. The St. Bernard Parish Council is a seven-member elected body forming the legislative branch of the government, and the St. Bernard Parish President is elected and forms the executive branch of the government.

All seven Councilmen serve four-year terms; five of the seven Councilmen are elected by district, while two are elected at-large. The President serves four-year terms and maintains general executive and administrative authority over all departments, offices, and agencies of the Parish government.

### Vision & Mission

#### *OUR VISION*

St. Bernard Parish Government shall be a model of excellence in local government.  
a safe, well-planned community with equal opportunity for all.

#### *OUR MISSION*

In partnership with our community, the mission of the St. Bernard Parish Government is to protect and enhance the quality of life by providing a high level of service efficiently and responsively for all citizens.

# Fire Department Overview

## Department History

Historically, the need to protect residents from the ravages of fire was the responsibility of neighbors helping neighbors in times of crisis. St. Bernard Parish was originally home to many immigrants who farmed and fished the land, and as the community grew, the need for more formalized fire protection and emergency rescue services was recognized by the governing body. In 1948 Chalmette Volunteer Fire Department was created to provide protection for the Chalmette area. In 1952, two fire districts were created within the community, and staffed with full-time paid firefighters.

In 1977, the two fire districts were consolidated into one organization as rapid industrial growth continued. The area was home to oil refineries, sugar refineries, vehicle manufacturers, and numerous other manufacturing plants, which all placed a growing demand on emergency services. Coupled with the area's vulnerability to natural disasters, the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department continued to grow throughout the years.



## Service Area

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department serves a population of approximately 45,333 citizens residing within a 44-square-mile area of inhabited land. Approximately 55% of the area protected is considered suburban, and 45% is considered rural. Approximately 23,000 residential units are within the fire department's response area and about 2,200 businesses.

St. Bernard Parish Fire Department Districts 1 and 2 maintain a public fire protection classification (PPC) rating of "2" as evaluated by the Property Insurance Association of Louisiana (PIAL). PIAL is a private, non-profit association that evaluates the fire protection capabilities of municipalities and fire districts to determine the protection classification for given response areas. The PIAL rating, which mimics the Verisk (ISO) Public Protection Classification system, provides information and advice concerning factors affecting property insurance ratings for residential and commercial properties. During the 2019 PPC evaluation, Fire District 1's rating improved from a rating of Class 3 to a rating of Class 2, while Fire District 2's rating improved from a rating of Class 4 to a rating of Class 2 (Ratings range from Class 10 lowest to Class 1 highest).



The Department provides a comprehensive range of essential services, including fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, technical rescue, including water rescue, and life safety services, including public education and code enforcement. The Department collaborates with neighboring and regional emergency service agencies and private industry emergency services entities to ensure a coordinated response to major incidents and disasters.

## Governing Authority

### Home Rule Charter

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department exists in accordance with the Parish's home rule charter, which authorizes the local governing body to manage its affairs, including providing for the safety of its residents. Article IV Administration, Section 4.07 Department of Fire, specifies:

- (a) The head of the Department of Fire shall be the St. Bernard Parish Fire Chief.
- (b) The fire chief shall meet all the current requirements as set forth by the State of Louisiana for that position.
- (c) The fire chief shall direct and be responsible for the following activities:
  - Fire prevention
  - Fire extinguishment and salvage operations
  - Inspection and recommendations concerning the fire code
  - Investigations of fire and causes
  - Other duties within the scope of this office as may be directed by the President



### Civil Service System

The State of Louisiana's constitution dictates that the state operates under a civil service system for firefighters and police officers. Civil service state laws help assure that firefighters and law enforcement officers are recruited through open competition, hired, and promoted based on merit, and are demoted, suspended, removed from office, or discharged only for cause. Oversight of the system is provided through the Office of State Examiner. The duties and responsibilities of the agency are set out in Louisiana Revised Statutes 33:2471 et seq. and 33:2531 et seq. Among these responsibilities are advising the local fire and police civil service boards in the discharge of their duties; assisting in an advisory capacity the various appointing authorities, departmental officers, and classified employees regarding duties and obligations imposed on them by civil service laws; maintaining rosters of employees; encouraging employee training; preparing classification plans; and developing, preparing, and administering competitive and promotional tests. The Parish does maintain a three-member Fire Civil Service Board to oversee activities.

### Code of Ordinances

The Code of Ordinances establishes the rules for the operation of the local government or provides rules and regulations governing public activity in the community. The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department operates in accordance with the Council Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10, Fire Protection and Prevention. Chapter 10 provides rules concerning general fire safety, fire prevention code, and public assembly. Of note is Chapter 10, Section 10-8:

- Operation and staffing of Parish fire stations.
- (a) Definition. "Professional firefighter": Any person employed by the St. Bernard Parish fire department under the civil service classification of firefighter or higher, and this shall also include those employees working to meet within one (1) year the level of Firefighter 11 requirements as set forth in the current edition of the National Fire Protection Association 1001, Qualifications for Professional Firefighters.
- (b) Hours of operation. Fire stations Nos. 1 through 12 plus Squad One, including Engines 1 through 12 and Squads 1 and 2, shall be opened as needed.
- (c) Staffing of Fire Department. A minimum of one hundred and ten (110) employees shall be maintained to staff and operate the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department.

- ☒ (d) Exceptions. Engine training out of its district, but still in service. Major emergencies, natural disasters, hazardous material incidents, and refinery fires.
- ☒ (e) Fire stations Nos. 4 and 9 do not exist at present.

# Finance

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Fire protection services revenues for St. Bernard Parish are collected from two distinct taxing districts. Revenues are derived from ad valorem taxes, a contractual agreement to provide fire protection services to the NASA Michoud Assembly Facility, state revenue sharing, and 2% of the State of Louisiana distribution of fire insurance premium taxes. Prior to the 2024 fiscal year, the revenues collected from both Fire Consolidation Districts 1 and 2 were comingled to provide fire protection parish-wide; however, a ruling from the state on this practice determined that as each district was a separate entity for taxing purposes, this practice could no longer continue. Since that ruling, the allocation of fire protection resources and the funding of those resources has strained the department's ability to fund the provision of services to Fire Consolidation District 2, as revenues collected are extremely low due to the sparse population and property values.

St. Bernard Parish Fire Department Parishwide Millage Overview FY 2024		
<b>Total Revenues</b>	\$	12,451,500
Personnel Expenditures	\$	8,984,000
Operating Expenditures	\$	3,744,788
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	\$	12,728,788
<b>Total Financing Sources</b>	\$	782,000
<b>Total Financing Uses</b>	\$	2,124,712
<b>Net Effect on Fund Balance</b>	\$	(1,620,000)

When evaluating the parishwide millage as a whole, the net effect results in a \$1.6 million reduction to the fund balance to support day-to-day operations.

Comparison of Fire Consolidation District 1 and 2 Revenues 2024			
	Fire Protection District 1	Fire Protection District 2	
<b>Total Revenues</b>	\$ 2,890,000	\$ 430,000	
Personnel Expenditures	\$ 2,812,000	\$ 416,500	
Operating Expenditures	\$ 78,000	\$ 13,500	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	\$ 2,890,000	\$ 430,000	

As shown above, should the two independent districts remain intact, insufficient funds are available to support fire protection services for District 2 at a level equivalent to District 1. This shortfall will ultimately impact the fund balance and the parish's ability to provide services to District 2.

St. Bernard Parish received the following letter from the State of Louisiana Department of Justice on September 6, 2023.



Jeff Landry  
Attorney General

**State of Louisiana**

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
CIVIL DIVISION  
P.O. BOX 94005  
BATON ROUGE  
70804-9005

September 6, 2023

Ms. Roxanne Adams  
Clerk of Council  
St. Bernard Parish Council  
8201 West Judge Perez Drive  
Chalmette, LA 70043

Dear Ms. Adams:

Our office received your opinion request on behalf of the St. Bernard Parish Council, dated May 2, 2023. In the process of researching the issues presented, we were able to verify with the Town Attorney that Fire Districts 1 and 2 were created by an ordinance of the governing authority in 1953, pursuant to La. R.S. 40:1492. It is important to note that fire districts created by a parish governing authority under La. R.S. 40:1492 are special districts and political subdivisions of the state.

In 1988, St. Bernard Parish adopted a Home Rule Charter. The Charter addresses special districts in Section 9-02, and explicitly states, "[e]xcept as established or provided herein, any special district heretofore established and existing in St. Bernard Parish shall continue to exist. . ."

The governing authority of a local governmental subdivision has general power over any agency created by it, including the power to abolish the agency. La. Const. art. VI, § 15. However, we have not obtained any concrete evidence suggesting that Fire Districts 1 and 2 were ever formally abolished or merged into a local public agency, as outlined in La. Const. art. VII, Section 16.

Additional information was requested from the Town Attorney, but unfortunately, this did not provide the needed clarity on the nature of the Parish Fire Department/Districts. It appears that the fire districts still operate as special districts in some respects, such as receiving ad valorem taxes, but operate as a parish fire department in other respects, such as having one fire chief.

If Fire Districts 1 and 2 have not been abolished, they continue to function as separate political subdivisions, and the governing body of the Fire Districts is set forth in La. R.S. 40:1495. In such a case, La. Const. art. VII, § 14 applies when addressing the transfer of equipment and personnel between political subdivisions. However, if the fire districts were indeed abolished, and there exists a Parish Fire Department, the Charter states that all departments fall under the direction and supervision of the Parish President. Charter, Section 4-01 and 4-07.

Ms. Roxanne Adams  
September 6, 2023  
Page 2

In light of these observations, we recommend that the St. Bernard Parish governing authority take proactive measures to clarify the nature of the fire service within the parish. Based on the conflicting information above, office declines to issue an opinion on your inquiry.

Please let us know if there is any other matter in which the Attorney General's office may assist you in the future.

Very truly yours,

JEFF LANDRY  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

BY:   
EMILY ANDREWS  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, CIVIL DIVISION

EGA/arg

cc: President Guy McInnis  
Chief Earl Borden, Jr.  
Justin Stephens

## Finance Future Considerations

The Scope of Work for this Fire Department Evaluation is focused on Fire and EMS Service Delivery.

1. The Parish should establish a single service delivery tax district.

As will be detailed in the Service Delivery section of this report, it is the opinion of Dynamix Consulting Group that funding two independent fire districts would likely create redundancies that will increase costs and could reduce the overall level of service to the community.

# Stakeholder Input

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Service, quality, reliability, and efficiency are the main focal points of a meaningful customer satisfaction survey. Understanding and adapting to customer needs helps private sector providers remain competitive and more likely to succeed. In the public sector, where little to no competition exists, customer feedback is equally important in understanding perceptions, opportunities, and challenges involved in the delivery of vital public services.

Dynamix Consulting Group created and distributed customer surveys designed to gain direct feedback from two essential stakeholder groups: those who receive services from the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department (community members or external customers) and those who provide services for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department (fire department personnel or internal customers). The electronic surveys were individually tailored to collect relevant data to assist in developing recommendations for this assessment.

## Community Member Survey Overview

The community member survey was made available to residents and property owners, business representatives, faith-based organization representatives, and non-profit provider representatives. The survey aimed to gain insight into respondent expectations, experiences, and service impact, and to provide a situational assessment of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department.

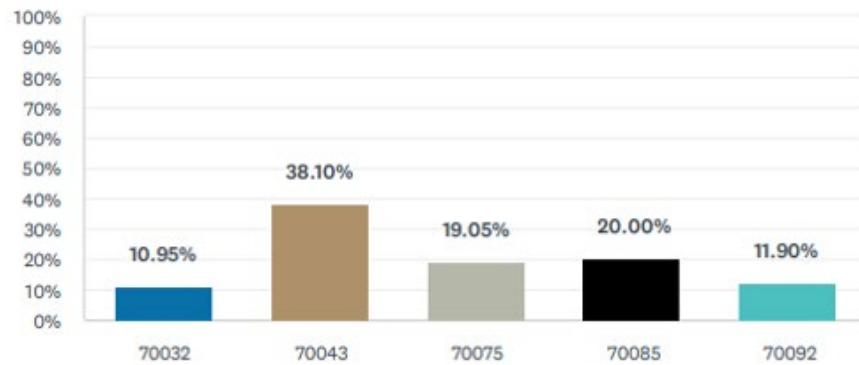
The 19-question online survey was made available to participants between August 7, 2023, and August 28, 2023, and the survey was made available through the Department's social media platforms. A total of 214 respondents across five zip codes completed the survey, of which 97% identified themselves as residents or property owners, and three percent identified themselves as business representatives. No survey respondents identified themselves as representing faith-based or non-profit organizations. The number of respondents does not represent a significant percentage of the 45,333 residents currently residing in the Parish.

## Expectations

Expectations are essential beliefs individuals hold about how things should be or what should happen in situations. When surveyed about expected fire department services, St. Bernard Parish community respondents have high expectations (70% or greater) that the Department provides typical fire department responses and services. The most expected services include fire suppression, hazardous materials incident response, motor vehicle extrication, EMS, and community risk reduction. Lesser expected services include technical rescue, emergency management, code enforcement, and water rescue.

### Q2 My zip code is:

Answered: 210 Skipped: 4



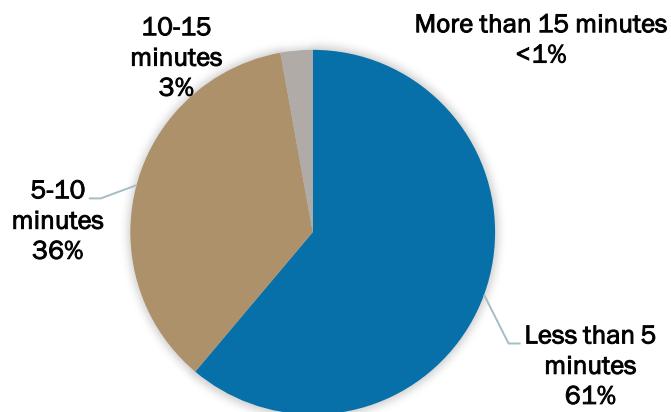
Most respondents expect a rapid response to their emergency incident, and over 61% of respondents expect that response to occur within five minutes or less. Per NFPA 1710: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Department*, the first due response is established at an 80-second "turnout time" and 240-second "travel time" (together, 320 seconds or 5 minutes and 20 seconds "response time"), not less than 90% of dispatched incidents. Nearly 78% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department responds to emergency calls in a "timely manner." In comparison, 22.2% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that the Department responds to emergency calls in a timely manner.

Approximately 62% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the taxes they pay to support the Department are appropriate for the services they receive. In comparison, 38.4% disagree or strongly disagree that the taxes they pay are appropriate. A majority (87.7%) of all respondents indicate their home or work proximity to a fire station meets their needs.

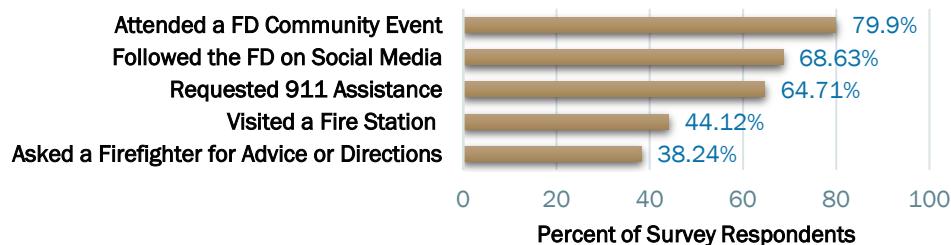
### Experience

Personal experience with an organization's services is essential in forming opinions about the quality of that service. Over 64% of respondents indicated that they had requested emergency assistance in the past, and almost 80% stated that they had attended a fire department event at some point. Many respondents (44%) reported visiting a fire station, and nearly 70% said they follow the Department on social media. Seventy-three percent of those respondents who had personally experienced or witnessed an emergency response from the Department within the last three years reported that the quality of service delivered was "excellent" or "good."

### RESPONSE TIME EXPECTATIONS



### Connection with the Fire Department



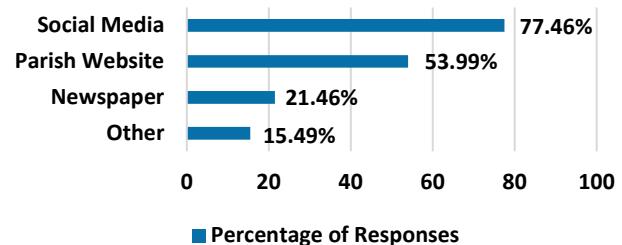
Forty-eight percent who received or witnessed a non-emergency service (such as code enforcement or life safety education) from the Department within the last three years report that the quality of service delivered was "excellent" or "good." These numbers indicate that the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department connects with its constituents through planned community events, direct emergency service delivery, and social media platforms. Those who participated in the survey overwhelmingly (97.13%) "agree" or "strongly agree" that the firefighters and staff of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department are "kind, courteous, and professional." This expectation is met by the members of the Department who compassionately provide quality services throughout the community every day.

## Services

Services beyond emergency response include community safety education, code enforcement, and disaster preparedness. Over 80% of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department provides appropriate education and outreach programs to the community. Code enforcement activities apply primarily to commercial, retail, and multi-family structures, so, unsurprisingly, 30% of respondents indicated they have not interacted with the Fire Marshal's Office for these services. For those who had received code enforcement services, most reported a favorable experience.

Respondents turn to social media and the St. Bernard Parish website when seeking information about the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department. Messaging is essential, and the community has learned that trusted sources will have valuable and helpful resources. It is vital that websites are updated frequently to reflect the constant changes in the Department and that social media platforms are updated promptly and contain information residents need or desire.

## Information Sources



## Situational Assessment

A situational assessment of an organization includes evaluating strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. The survey was designed to allow respondents to write their answers freely, and the more frequently seen responses are identified below.

- **Strengths** - When asked to identify the greatest strengths of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department, community respondents most frequently identified the Department's firefighters as the greatest asset. Respondents consistently described staff as professional, dedicated, and knowledgeable, and there is a recognized sense of community within the Department. St. Bernard Parish firefighters are also depicted as willing to help, friendly, and viewed as well-trained.
- **Weaknesses** – Respondents identified the Parish, administration, and management as weaknesses in addition to salaries and pay. Fire stations and station closings were identified as weaknesses, as were the lower part of the Parish and the issues surrounding back roads. On a lesser scale, communications, politics, and equipment were also identified as weaknesses.
- **Opportunities** - Respondents identified leadership and administration as opportunities for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department. Opening fire stations and fire stations, in general, were seen as areas of opportunity, as were expanding services provided. Some respondents indicated that enhancing EMS service delivery, including providing transport services, is an opportunity for the organization.
- **Challenges** - When asked to identify future challenges facing the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department, many community respondents identified the challenges of pay, funding, and budget. Respondents identified other challenges, including retaining staff, hiring new personnel, and population growth.

## Fire Department Member Survey Overview

Dynamix Consulting Group created a survey designed to gain direct feedback from firefighters, fire officers, and civilians employed by the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department. The 23-question electronic survey gathered data regarding access to resources, work conditions, community interaction, prioritizing needs, and situational assessment of the Department. On-duty department members were invited to the Government Complex to complete the survey between August 11, 2023, and August 15, 2023, as arranged by the fire department. Eighty department members completed the survey, representing approximately 70.8% of the organization. Respondents identified themselves as follows:

### Respondent Rank/Position

Firefighter/Engineer	43.59%
Captain	38.46%
Chief Officer	16.67%
Civilian Member	1.28%

### Years of Service with Department

0-5 Years	23.75%
6-10 Years	11.25%
11-20 Years	46.25%
21 Years or More	18.75%

## Resources – Tools, Training, Staffing

Over 50% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department fire stations are well maintained. In the category of apparatus and vehicles, 59.5% of respondents agree or strongly agree they have the vehicles to do their job safely and efficiently. Almost 95% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they have appropriate personal protective equipment to do their job, and 77% believe they have the appropriate equipment and tools. When surveyed regarding training, nearly 95% of the respondents indicated that they believe they receive the appropriate training or number of training hours needed to conduct their work safely and efficiently. Over 64% of department respondents do not believe the Department staffs its frontline apparatus with the appropriate number of personnel.

## Conditions – Work Environment and Health & Safety

Just over half of St. Bernard Parish Fire Department survey respondents have a positive outlook on their work environment. Nearly 52% indicated the environment is good, and approximately eight percent stated the work environment is excellent. Eighty-one percent of respondents report that communications within the Department are fair or poor, while 94% of respondents indicated that the morale within the organization is fair or poor. Despite indications of low morale within the Department, over 90% of department members would tell others they are proud to work for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department.

The health and safety of firefighters is a critical area of concern for all department members. Just under 50% of respondents believe the Department is providing the most up-to-date measures to address cancer reduction amongst its personnel. Forty percent of respondents believe the Department provides the most up-to-date measures to provide mental wellness training and access to resources.

## Community Interaction

Emergency services personnel understand the importance of timely response to emergencies, and not unexpectedly, nearly 56% of respondents indicated that the Department should respond to 911 calls within five minutes, while an additional 29% believe an acceptable response is between five and ten minutes. Most respondents believe they have adequate time and resources to engage with the community they serve, and over 77% of respondents believe the community respects them.

## Prioritizing Needs

St. Bernard Parish Fire Department respondents were asked to rank ten focus areas from most important to least important. Firefighter health and safety was chosen as the most important priority by the greatest number of respondents, while staffing and apparatus were statistically close in line. The remainder of the focus areas fell in importance, as listed below.

*Priorities*

Priority	Area of Focus
1 <sup>st</sup>	Firefighter Health & Safety
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Staffing
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Apparatus
4 <sup>th</sup>	Personal Protective Equipment
5 <sup>th</sup>	Training
6 <sup>th</sup>	Equipment & Tools
7 <sup>th</sup>	Station Condition
8 <sup>th</sup>	Dispatch
9 <sup>th</sup>	Public Education
10 <sup>th</sup>	Community Risk Reduction

## Situational Assessment

Situational assessment of an organization includes evaluating strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. The survey was designed to allow respondents to write their answers freely, and the more frequently perceived responses are shown below:

- **Strengths** - When asked to identify the strengths of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department, department respondents most commonly identified the Department's work product, including its suppression capabilities, as its greatest strength. The Department's personnel were also identified as a strength, as were community support and decision-making ability.
- **Weaknesses** - Overwhelmingly, communication was identified as the greatest weakness within the Department, while leadership was also mentioned frequently as a weakness. Pay or lack of pay were listed by respondents to a lesser degree, as were morale, politics, and stations.
- **Opportunities** - Respondents identified several future opportunities for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department, including the opening of fire stations and staffing of apparatus. Firefighter pay was identified as an opportunity, as was EMS service delivery, training, and working with the Parish community.
- **Challenges** - When asked to identify future challenges facing the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department, many responses pertained to staffing issues, including recruiting candidates, retaining candidates, the quality of candidates, and staffing levels. Firefighters' pay and apparatus were identified as challenges, and some respondents expressed concern about members coming together as one cohesive organization. Financial Resources

# Staffing

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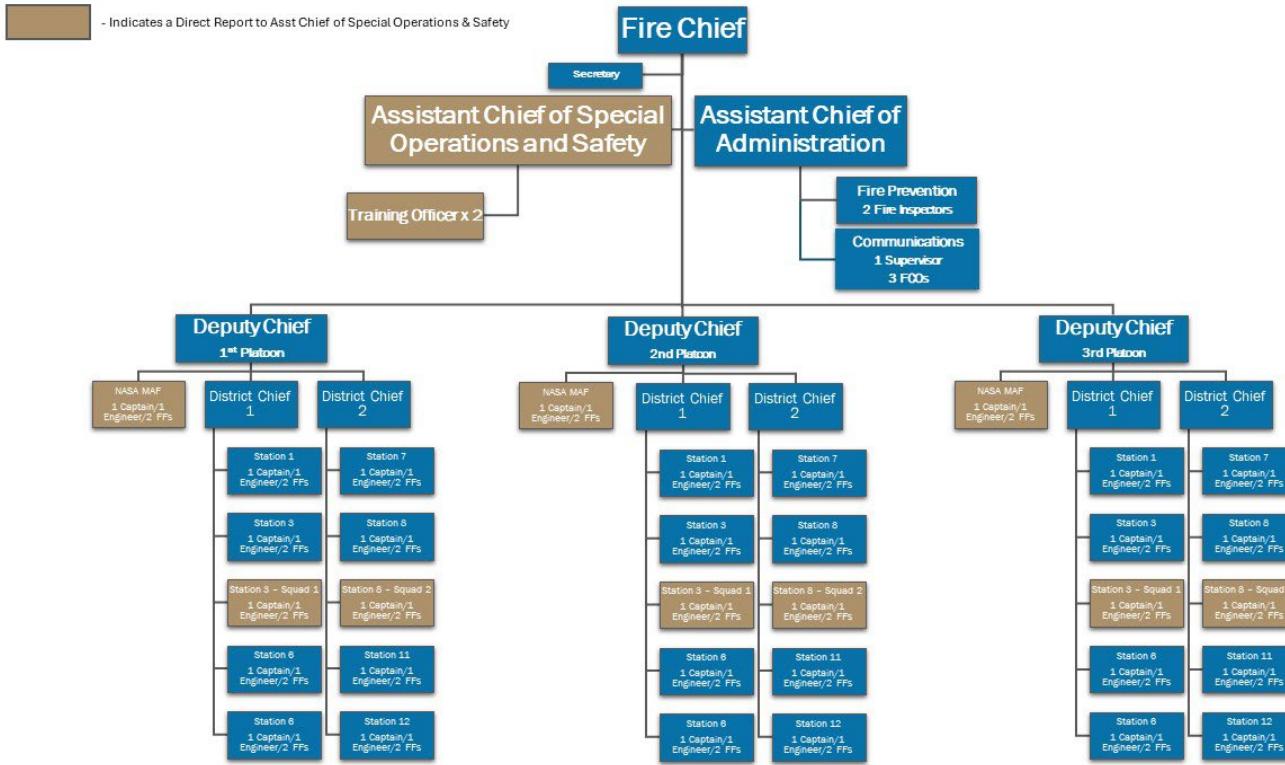
## Organizational Structure

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department is a full-time, paid, all-hazards response agency providing fire, rescue, and emergency medical services throughout the Parish and to the NASA Michoud Assembly Facility (MAF). The Department's organizational structure is typical for a fire rescue agency, and emphasis is placed on the appropriate span of control and chain of command for all department members.

The organizational structure is the method by which work should flow through the organization. The chain of command refers to the line of authority within that organizational structure. When appropriately deployed, an effective organizational structure combined with a well-defined chain of command establishes accountability, lines of authority, and decision-making power.

An effective chain of command ensures that every task, job position, and division have one person responsible for performance. According to the 2017 National Incident Management System, the optimal span of control for incident management is one supervisor to five subordinates. This guideline varies considerably based on incident severity, level of risk, and incident command best judgment.

### Organizational Structure



Note: Fire Station 11 and Fire Station 12 are closed due to storm damage, and the units have been reassigned to Fire Station 10.

The Fire Chief is directly or indirectly responsible for the supervision of the following roles within the organization:

#### St. Bernard Parish Fire Department Divisions

Area of Responsibility	
1.	Administration Division
2.	Communications Division
3.	Training Division
4.	Suppression Division
5.	Fire Prevention Division
6.	Special Operations Division

## Administration Division

The Administration Division is headed by the Assistant Chief of Administration, who works closely with the Fire Chief and all division heads within the Department. This Division is responsible for the oversight of all business operations and human resource functions of the fire department, including budgeting, payroll, policies, procedures, recruitment, retention, departmental investigations, and employee accountability.

The Administration Division also provides guidance and support to the other divisions through planning, record keeping, program development, oversees and coordinates the Prevention and Communications Divisions and all personnel with administrative duties, acts as the liaison between the fire department and other Parish government departments, public and private outside agencies to facilitate activities, and services associated with the organization.

### Administration Division Future Considerations

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department's administrative functions are led by the Fire Chief and two Assistant Chiefs who are supported by a secretary. This represents 2.63% of the department's total staffing of 114 full-time positions. It is Dynamix Consulting Group's experience that effective administrative staffing totals for municipal fire department operations typically range from **12 to 15% of agency totals**. After reviewing the functions and responsibilities assigned to the workgroup, Dynamix Consulting Group concluded that the number of full-time employees assigned to these functions resides in the extremely lower range of the normally experienced administrative levels to support the responsibilities of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department's administration appropriately.

For example, from recently completed studies, Chesterfield County, VA has an administrative to operational ratio of approximately 13%, while Davie Fire Rescue, FL also has approximately the same ratio of 13%. Loudoun County, VA has a ratio of nearly 10%, and while that is slightly below the stated range, it is much greater than the 2.6% found in St. Bernard Parish.

#### 2. Create a Health and Safety Chief position.

The creation of a Health and Safety Chief position or similar will establish a single point of coordination for all firefighter health and safety initiatives, assist in establishing a more manageable span of control, remove the Fire Chief from some of the current direct supervisor roles to provide the capacity to be the visionary leader of the organization, and ideally make the positions of Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chiefs more sustainable, thus reducing turnover within the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department.

#### 3. Create an Administrative Assistant position.

The department should consider the addition of an Administrative Assistant position. Although the department is currently completing the required objectives, the use of top-level administrators to perform entry level administrative functions is not a productive use of staff. If the department wishes to grow and improve in the future, administrators must have the time and resources available to complete executive functions, as opposed to normal administrative work.

## Communications Division

The Communications Division Communications Officers operate as the Fire Department's secondary 911 center, referred to as "Fire Alarm," 24 hours a day utilizing 12-hour shifts. The Division manages more than 5,000 emergency calls annually and helps coordinate the daily events of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department, ensuring that emergency services and resources remain readily available.

The St. Bernard Sheriff's Office 911 dispatch center functions as the primary emergency communications center and assists outside agencies when needed to ensure the proper public safety resources are dispatched when needed. Communication Officers are responsible for the initial training of relief operators and ensure they remain properly trained in the latest emergency dispatch standards.

## Communications Division Future Considerations

4. Investigate the potential opportunities in creating a unified communications center.

The parish should consider working with the Sheriff's Office to form a consolidated dispatch center. The advantages of a consolidated dispatch center are typically identical if not compatible equipment, the ability to conduct face to face conversations during an emergency or incident management team deployment, and a consolidated Emergency Operations Center with all assets onsite for rapid dissemination of information and decisions making.

### 5. Implement a priority dispatching system.

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department should take steps to implement a priority dispatching system as soon as possible. Implementing such a system will allow the fire department to deploy personnel and equipment appropriate to the type of call for service.

6. Work toward compliance with NFPA 1221 for staffing the Communications Division with at least two telecommunicators at all times.

Appropriate staffing of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department Communications Division would avoid having one telecommunicator working alone and would also reduce the use of suppression division firefighters to backfill into the Communications Division on overtime, neither of which are best practices.

NFPA 1221 7.3 specifies that:

7.3.1 There shall be a minimum of two telecommunicators on duty and present in the communications center at all times.

7.3.1.1\* The AHJ shall ensure that there are sufficient telecommunicators available to effect the prompt receipt and processing of alarms and events needed to meet the requirements of Section 7.4.

7.3.1.2\* When communications systems, computer systems, staff, or facilities are used for both emergency and nonemergency functions, the nonemergency use shall not degrade or delay emergency use of those resources.

7.3.1.3 A communications center shall handle emergency calls for service and dispatching in preference to non-emergency activities.

7.3.2 When requested by the incident commander, a telecommunicator shall be dedicated to the incident and relieved of other duties within the communications center.

7.3.4\* Supervision shall be provided when more than two telecommunicators are on duty.

7.3.4.1 Supervision shall be provided by personnel located within the communications center who are familiar with the operations and procedures of the communications center.

7.3.4.2 The supervisor shall be allowed to provide short-term relief coverage for a telecommunicator, provided that the telecommunicator does not leave the communications center and is available for immediate recall as defined in the policies and procedures of the AHJ.

7. Investigate the benefits of implementing the use of an automated dispatch system.

Automated dispatching includes the use of a computer that is programmed to efficiently deliver pre-alert information to fire-rescue personnel, freeing the dispatcher to perform other functions simultaneously. The use of an automated dispatching system can help to lower dispatcher stress and better prepare first responders. There are multiple automated dispatching systems on the market. St. Bernard Parish should investigate the available options to identify a system that best meets its needs.

## Training Division

The Training Division Ensures that all members of the St. Bernard Fire Department and its public safety partners receive cutting-edge training on the latest fire and emergency topics, including incident management, firefighter safety and survival, fire suppression, hazardous materials, emergency medical services, apparatus operations, technical rescue, and resource management. The Division is responsible for on-going refresher and continuing education, including training for recruits and promotional classes for the ranks of Engineer/Operator, Captain, and Chief Officers; annual EMS, CPR, Hazardous Materials, Emergency Driving, Human Resources, and Technical Rescue refresher training. It is also the responsibility of the Training Division to ensure that daily required training is coordinated and completed to maintain state and national standards and compliance with the PIAL requirements.

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department's annual training program includes:

- ▣ 192 hours of company training
- ▣ 18 hours of drill at a facility
- ▣ 6 hours of hazardous materials training
- ▣ 8 hours of investigator training
- ▣ 10 hours of safety educator training
- ▣ 12 hours driving training (Engineer and Fire fighters)
- ▣ 12 hours of officer training (Company and Chief officers)
- ▣ First-year employees receive 240 hours of recruit training and 60 hours of new driver training
- ▣ Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) training
- ▣ EMT refresher
- ▣ Continuing education
- ▣ Medical in-service training
- ▣ Suppression proficiency in-service training
- ▣ Special Operations

### Training Division Future Considerations

#### 8. Create an additional Training Officer position.

The addition of another training officer will assist dramatically with items such as recruitment, retention, professional development, new recruit training, ongoing in-service training, as well as multiple other functions related to training. As a 114 member department operating from seven stations within the second largest parish in Louisiana at 378 square miles, it is simply not feasible for two personnel to effectively accomplish the minimum objects of a healthy training program proficiently.

#### 9. Establish a formal feedback/input mechanism to receive necessary end-user feedback about the training program.

The St. Benard Parish Fire Department should evaluate the use of a survey tool to collect performance feedback from firefighters about the training program. Examples of online survey tools that could be used for this purpose include SurveyMonkey, SurveyLegend, and Typeform. Gathering information directly from firefighters on an annual basis will allow department leadership to keep a focus on those aspects of the training program that firefighters indicate as being of high value. This type of feedback also enables leadership to key in on specific performance issues that may exist. The annual survey would be an excellent opportunity to encourage firefighters to share new ideas or other suggestions they may have about the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department Training Program.

#### 10. Encourage all uniformed members to avail themselves of the opportunity to attend the National Fire Academy on a paid stipend once each year.

Active members of fire or emergency management organizations are eligible for a stipend reimbursement to attend the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. All tuition, instruction, and course materials for National Fire Academy courses are provided at no cost. All active members of fire and emergency management organizations are eligible for stipend reimbursement once every fiscal year.

## Suppression Division

Fire Suppression personnel provide fire suppression and other services to St. Bernard Parish, including emergency medical responders, hazardous materials mitigation, and auto extrication. Thousands of hours are logged annually to maintain proficiency in all of these disciplines. Full-time deployment capabilities include six standard Engine Companies, two Squad Companies, and two 75-foot Quint Aerial apparatus. Additional reserve apparatus includes two fully equipped engines, two Foam engines, and one Tanker (Water Tender) ready for deployment during large-scale emergencies. Reserve apparatus are staffed by callback off-duty personnel.

The Fire Suppression Division includes 96 personnel who operate around the clock, working three shifts on a 24/48-hour rotation. Operational staff are the individuals who provide fire, rescue, and EMS services directly to the community. The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department staffs its active fire stations 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, by utilizing a three-platoon system of staffing. A minimum of 23 operational personnel staff seven fire stations as follows. Additionally, the fire department staffs four fighters per day at the NASA Fire Station; however, these crews are committed to that facility located outside of the parish.

*Shift Minimum Staffing*

Fire Station	Apparatus & Vehicles	Personnel Assigned	Personnel Type/Rank
Fire Station 1	Engine 1	Minimum 2	1 Captain 1 Engineer
Fire Station 3	Engine 3 (Quint)	Minimum 2	1 Captain 1 Engineer
	Squad 1	Minimum 2	1 Captain 1 Engineer
	Car 201	Minimum 1	District Chief
Fire Station 5	Engine 5	Minimum 2	1 Captain 1 Engineer
Fire Station 6	Engine 6	Minimum 2	1 Captain 1 Engineer
	Car 200	Minimum 1	Deputy Chief
Fire Station 7	Engine 7 (Quint)	Minimum 2	1 Captain 1 Engineer
	Car 202	Minimum 1	District Chief
Fire Station 8	Engine 8	Minimum 2	1 Captain 1 Engineer
	Squad 2	Minimum 2	1 Captain 1 Engineer
Fire Station 10	Engine 11	Minimum 2	1 Captain 1 Engineer
	Engine 12	Minimum 2	1 Captain 1 Engineer
NASA Fire Station	NASA Engine 4	Minimum 4	1 Captain 1 Engineer 2 Firefighters

Extra firefighters are assigned to apparatus as available. A platoon is staffed as follows:

### PLATOON STAFFING

Each platoon consists of:

1 – Deputy Chief

2 – District Chiefs

8 – Engine Companies (1 Captain, 1 Engineer)

2 – Squads (1 Captain, 1 Engineer)

\*Extra firefighters are assigned to Companies as available

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\*\*NASA MAF Fire Station Engine Company (1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 2 Firefighters)

### NFPA 1710

The minimum requirements for the provision of emergency services by career fire departments are established in the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 Standard, *"Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments."* NFPA 1710 addresses apparatus staffing, response time, and the effective firefighting force. The effective response force is the minimum number of firefighters needed to complete essential fire ground tasks. NFPA 1710 defines a "Career Fire Department" as "A fire department that utilizes full-time or full-time-equivalent (FTE) station-based personnel immediately available to comprise at least 50 percent of an initial first alarm assignment."

The number and types of tasks needing simultaneous action dictate the minimum number of firefighters required to combat distinct types of fires. Without adequate personnel to perform concurrent action, the commanding officer must prioritize the tasks and complete them in chronological order rather than concurrently. These tasks include:

☒ Command	☒ Water Supply
☒ Scene safety	☒ Pump Operations
☒ Search & Rescue	☒ Ventilation
☒ Fire Attack	☒ Back-Up/Rapid Intervention

While the individual community must establish the level of fire and rescue services provided, considerable debate surrounds the matter of firefighter staffing. Frequently, this discussion is set in the context of firefighter safety. Whereas NFPA 1710 specifies the number of firefighters assigned to a particular response apparatus (minimum of four personnel per engine company), Dynamix Consulting Group notes that the more critical issue is the number of firefighters assembled at the scene of an incident. The scope and magnitude of the incident and the expected job tasks dictate the number of firefighters needed, regardless of the type or number of vehicles that arrive.

The following figure describes initial full alarm assignments for a residential structure fire, an open-air shopping center fire, and an apartment fire. All three types of occupancies are common throughout St. Bernard Parish. These are generalizations representative of different structures and risks.

*NFPA 1710 Initial Full Alarm Assignments*

2,000 SF Residential Structure Fire		Open-Air Shopping Center (13,000 SF to 196,000 SF)		1,200 SF Apartment (3-story garden apartment)	
Incident Commander	1	Incident Commander	2	Incident Commander	2
Water Supply Operator	1	Water Supply Operators	2	Water Supply Operators	2
2 Application Hose Lines	4	3 Application Hose Lines	6	3 Application Hose Lines	6
1 Support Member per line	2	1 Support Member per line	3	1 Support Member per line	3
Victim Search and Rescue Team	2	Victim Search and Rescue Team	4	Victim Search and Rescue Team	4
Ground Ladder Deployment	2	Ground Ladder Deployment	4	Ground Ladder Deployment	4
Aerial Device Operator	1	Aerial Device Operator	1	Aerial Device Operator	1
Rapid Intervention Crew	4	Rapid Intervention Crew	4	Rapid Intervention Crew	4
		EMS Care	2	EMS Care Crew	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

The minimum response to the benchmark structures is 17 firefighters for a residential structure, 28 for an open-air shopping center, and 28 for an apartment. The combined staffing of eight Parish fire stations is 23 when at minimum staffing, which meets the requirement for a residential fire but does not meet the requirements for larger, more complex fire incidents. Additionally, there are times when multiple emergency calls occur simultaneously, thus dividing the available number of personnel. For this reason, the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department must continue to rely on mutual aid companies to respond to structure fires to assemble sufficient personnel to mitigate the situation when needed.

## Suppression Division Future Considerations

11. Work toward compliance with NFPA 1710 compliance for staffing of engines and ladder trucks.

NFPA 1710 recommends that all engines and ladder trucks should be staffed with a minimum of four personnel. Should the parish choose to comply with NFPA 1710, additional firefighters should be added to companies as funding permits, with the busiest units being the priority. The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department should work toward staffing four Firefighters on every engine and ladder truck in the long term. A reasonable initial goal would be to **increase staffing to four firefighters for 50 percent of the companies**. Once a goal is established, the Fire Department should consider pursuing Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to initially fund the new positions.

NFPA 1710 5.2.3.1. Engine Companies. Fire Companies whose primary functions are to pump and deliver water and perform basic firefighting at fires, including search and rescue, shall be engine companies.

5.2.3.1.1 These companies shall be staffed with a minimum of four on-duty members.

5.2.3.1.2 In first-due response zones with a high number of incidents, geographical restrictions, geographical isolation, or urban areas, as identified by the AHJ, these companies shall be staffed with a minimum of five on-duty members.

5.2.3.1.2.1 In first-due response zones with tactical hazards, high-hazard occupancies, or dense urban areas as identified by the AHJ, these fire companies shall be staffed with six on-duty members.

NFPA 1710 5.2.3.2 Ladder/Truck Companies. Fire companies whose primary functions are to perform the variety of services associated with truck work, such as forcible entry, ventilation, search and rescue, aerial operations for water delivery and rescue, utility control, illumination, overhaul, and salvage work, shall be known as ladder or truck companies.

5.2.3.2.1 These fire companies shall be staffed with a minimum of four on-duty members.

5.2.3.2.2 In first-due response zones with a high number of incidents, geographical restrictions, geographical isolation, or urban areas, as identified by the AHJ, these companies shall be staffed with a minimum of five on-duty members.

5.2.3.2.2.1 In first-due response zones with tactical hazards, high-hazard occupancies, or dense urban areas, as identified by the AHJ, these fire companies shall be staffed with six on-duty members.

## Special Operations Division

The Special Operations Division is led by the Assistant Chief of Special Operations and Safety. The Special Operations Response Team (SORT) consists of on-duty staff who have completed one or more of the specialty training modules. Using specialized equipment and techniques outside of the normal capabilities of firefighters who have not completed this training, the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department provides the following specialties:

 High-Angle Rescue  Confined Space Rescue  Trench Rescue  Vehicle and Machinery Rescue  Collapse Rescue Technician	 Incident Management Team (IMT)  Water Rescue  All Regional Safety Programs  Water Rescue
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Given the terrain of St. Bernard Parish, its proximity to New Orleans, and the high possibility of hurricanes and flooding, these special operations teams are a critical component of public safety for the parish. SORT members are preferably trained to a technician level and receive regular training for each competency every year based on their individual levels of certification.

## Special Operations Division Future Considerations

### 12. Continue to invest in Special Operations training.

Special Operations is a critical response component during a disaster or major incident. By maintaining funding, equipment, and training for these teams, St. Bernard Parish will ensure that it is as prepared as it can be if another disaster occurs.

### 13. Establish and maintain a Hazardous Materials Team.

Hazardous Materials (Haz-Mat) teams are another critical component of special operations. Using specialized equipment, these operators have the ability to properly establish a safety zone around the incident. To the best of their abilities, they seek to identify the substance and likely result of contamination. Once identified, the team may evacuate and decontaminate any victims to reduce further harm to citizens, enter the area in specialized gear and equipment, and neutralize the substance whether it is on fire, leaking, spilled, or reacting with the environment in a variety of hazardous industrial and commercial materials.

### 14. Continue to seek regional and federal grant funding for special operations.

Regional, state, and federal grants are available for special operations. The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department should actively seek and pursue this funding to reduce costs to the community while enhancing the department's capabilities and level of protection provided to the parish.

## Fire Prevention Division

The Fire Prevention Division provides the highest level of fire prevention services to the citizens who live and work in the community through public education, life safety inspections, plans review, code enforcement, and investigations. The Division works closely with local, state, and federal partners, including the St. Bernard Sheriff's Office, Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, as well as all other departments within the St. Bernard Parish Government.

Fire Prevention Inspectors are responsible for enforcing local and national (NFPA) fire codes by performing life safety inspections in commercial structures, which help mitigate existing and potential hazards. They partner with the robust film industry within St. Bernard Parish to ensure safety standards are maintained while on set and during those times when special effects are present. It is also the responsibility of the Fire Prevention Division to maintain open communications with Assembly venues in the Parish to ensure large gatherings and events are conducted in a thoughtful manner in regard to crowd management. Fire Prevention Division staff regularly conduct public speaking engagements regarding fire prevention within the community.

## Fire Prevention Future Considerations

### 15. Increase the number of Fire Inspectors to bring inspection frequency into compliance with NFPA 1730.

The present staffing level only allows for the completion of required inspections; it does not allow regular inspections to be completed at all target hazard occupancies, such as apartment complexes and multi-family dwellings.

NFPA 1730: Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations, 2019 Edition, specifies:

6.6\* Required Personnel. The AHJ shall determine the minimum resources, personnel, and equipment levels necessary to perform code enforcement and inspection activities.

6.7 Minimum Inspection Frequency. Existing occupancy fire prevention inspection and code enforcement inspection frequencies shall not be less than those specified in Table 6.7.

Minimum Inspection Frequency

Occupancy Risk Classification	Frequency
High	Annually
Moderate	Biennially
Low	Triennially
Critical Infrastructure	Per AHJ

16. Create a Fire Data Analyst or similar position.

There is significant room for improvement in the areas of prevention and risk reduction education within the St. Bernard Parish. The addition of a Fire Data Analyst or similar will drastically improve the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department's ability to develop programs to respond to the needs of the community, set performance standards, plan to add resources to the fire department response system as the demand for service grows and to have the data that is required to consistently to win grant funding.

17. Create a Public Educator and Information Officer or similar position.

The primary function of a Fire Department Public Educator and Information Officer or similar position is to connect the Fire Department to the community. The ability of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department to effectively receive and communicate information to the public is essential, particularly during significant events that affect public safety. NFPA 1035, *Standard on Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist, and Youth Firesetter Program Manager Professional Qualifications*, provides the job performance requirements (JPRs) for these roles.

The Public Educator and Information Officer performs a critical role within fire and emergency service organizations. The exchange of information between the department and the public is essential for both emergency and nonemergency functions. Dynamix Consulting Group suggests that to be truly able to respond to the changing needs of the community, the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department must put more of a focus on community outreach by staffing a Public Educator and Information Officer position.

18. Regularly review parish demographic information for “at risk” populations and implement targeted Community Risk Reduction Programs as population changes occur.

Broadly, “populations at risk” include citizens with lower socioeconomic status, those with housing and transportation challenges, those of minority status or with English-speaking challenges, and households containing citizens with disabilities, over 65 and under 17 years of age. More specifically, citizens most at risk include the impoverished, disabled, homeless, racial, and ethnic minorities, as well as people with low literacy. Also, groups suffering from poor health or who are uninsured/underinsured may be at greater risk during emergency or disaster situations.

Coupling two or more risk factors contributes to significantly higher levels of risk than those who only experience one risk category. Those with compounded risk factors should be a priority in prevention programs and strategies.

Fires in the home can be potentially dangerous and deadly for everyone, but persons with disabilities and impairments face additional challenges. Persons with disabilities often have a difficult time identifying or escaping a fire. There are 5,658 households in St. Bernard Parish that have identified as having one member with a disability.<sup>1</sup> These citizens in the community would benefit from programs to assist in their needs during times of emergency and for emergency planning efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> Environmental Systems Research Institute.

# Personnel Management

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## Internal Communications

Multiple stakeholders repeatedly identified communications as an area where there was an opportunity for improvement within the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department. It was one of the very first concerns identified in every one of the in-person meetings conducted by Dynamix Consulting Group for this project. Additionally, almost half of the internal survey participants (48.1%) rated communication within the fire department as Poor. More than one-third of the survey participants rated it as Fair (32.91%), and only 17.72 % rated it as Good and 1.27% as Excellent. The survey's complete results appear in the Stakeholder Input section of this report.

### Internal Communications Future Considerations

19. Design and implement a departmentwide communication plan.

It is in the best interest of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department to develop and implement a fire department communication plan. The plan must identify the information to be shared with various and specific ranks of personnel within the department and by what means.

The communication plan must then be implemented and consistently followed. Implementing a communications plan manages the expectations of the membership within the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department regarding the type and quantity of information personnel will receive. This allows personnel to know where to direct any questions related to programs, policies, or other events within the fire department.

## Policies, Rules, and Regulations

The use of Rules, Regulations, Policies, and Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines are industry best practices and are defined by NFPA 1710 as *“A written organizational directive that establishes or prescribes specific operational or administrative methods to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or actions”* and is to be used for managing emergency and non-emergency incidents or functions.

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department uses Rules and Regulations, Fire Department Policy and Directives, and Guidelines of Operation to govern the activities of the fire department. Dynamix Consulting Group's review of these documents revealed that while some volumes have been recently updated, there are a number of policies that have not been updated since 2006 and other policies that do not include any dates for when they were issued or last updated.

### Policies and Procedures Future Considerations

20. Update all fire department policies and procedures.

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department should set a review schedule that provides for every policy to be reviewed and updated no less than every three years. This review should also include an annual gap analysis to identify the need for new rules and regulations.

## Compensation

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department's ability to attract, hire, and retain employees directly impacts its ability to provide the desired services.

### Compensation Future Considerations

21. The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department should conduct periodic reviews of current compensation structures, market competitiveness, and parish compensation philosophies.

These internal and external comparisons of equitable positions and workloads will assist the fire department in attracting and maintaining an effective workforce.

## Safety Committee

*NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program* is the industry standard for developing and administering a fire department safety program. The safety committee should meet monthly and include in its mission raising awareness and modifying member behaviors that will result in a safe work environment. Additionally, the committee should review all accidents, injuries, near-miss incidents, and workplace safety suggestions. The committee should analyze the information and report its findings to the Fire Chief.

### Safety Committee Future Considerations

22. Ensure that the St. Bernard Parish has an active Safety Committee in place and that the activities of the committee align with Chapter 4 of NFPA 1500.

Dynamix Consulting Group strongly encourages the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department to ensure all safety committee activities align with Chapter 4 of NFPA 1500. To be effective, safety committees must be diverse in their representation from across the department, ensuring representation by shift, rank, function, and interest, and including representation from non-uniformed staff members as well.

In contrast to being reactionary through the development of additional rules, Dynamix Consulting Group recommends the committee should work to implement member safety education programs and encourage members' safety self-awareness. The committee should maintain regular and open meeting times and locations and record minutes of the meetings for posting for all members of the department to review.

## Medical Evaluations

NFPA 1582 is the *Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Programs for Fire Departments*. Currently, the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department provides NFPA 1582-compliant medical evaluations when a firefighter is hired.

### Medical Examinations Future Considerations

23. Establish a comprehensive occupational medical program that includes medical evaluations for candidates and members.

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department should establish a comprehensive medical program that includes regular medical evaluations for all firefighters. NFPA 1582 provides guidance on such programs. The industry's best practice for medical and physical examinations is to provide annual physicals.

## Professional Development

The population within the parish is growing, and with that, so is the demand for emergency services. As this trend continues, the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department must plan to develop its members to take on increasing levels of supervisory responsibility.

## Professional Development Future Considerations

### 24. Develop a Fire Department Professional Development Program.

There should be a formal collaborative effort between the Parish Human Resources Department and the Fire Department Training Division to establish a Professional Development Program that starts at the recruit level. Each recruit graduate should receive written instructions on what they need to accomplish to prepare for their first promotion as permitted by the contractually required years of service.

During the employee's second year of service, Human Resources and the Training Division should collaborate with the employee to create a Personalized Professional Development Program. The Personalized Professional Development Program should highlight available classes and explain the parish's tuition reimbursement program. As part of the employee's annual performance evaluations, this Personalized Professional Development Program should be revisited and modified accordingly as the employee's interests and the fire department's needs evolve.

Dynamix Consulting Group suggests the fire department focus on developing employee's "soft skills" in its Professional Development Program. While it is essential for a fire officer to have "hard skills" that are measurable, such as raising a ladder in a specified period of time, these activities comprise only a tiny part of an officer's job. A much more significant part of an officer's job includes tasks such as motivating employees to do something they may not want to do – whether it is a patient who does not want to go to a hospital or a crew that does not want to complete a specific training evolution because it is hot outside. These tasks require "soft skills" such as personality traits and characteristics rooted in behavior, attitude, and values.

## Succession Planning

A succession plan identifies future staffing needs and the people with the skills and potential to perform in these future roles. Before the annual review of Personalized Professional Development Programs with each employee, the Fire Department should evaluate the critical positions within the department and develop action plans for individuals to assume those positions. Taking a holistic view of current and future goals, this type of preparation will ensure that the fire-rescue department has the right people in the right jobs today and in the years to come.

### Succession Planning Future Considerations

#### 25. Develop a Fire Department Succession Plan.

Annual Succession Planning will strengthen the overall capability of the fire department by:

- Identifying critical positions and highlighting potential vacancies
- Identifying key competencies and skills that are necessary for these positions
- Focusing the development of individuals to meet future fire department needs

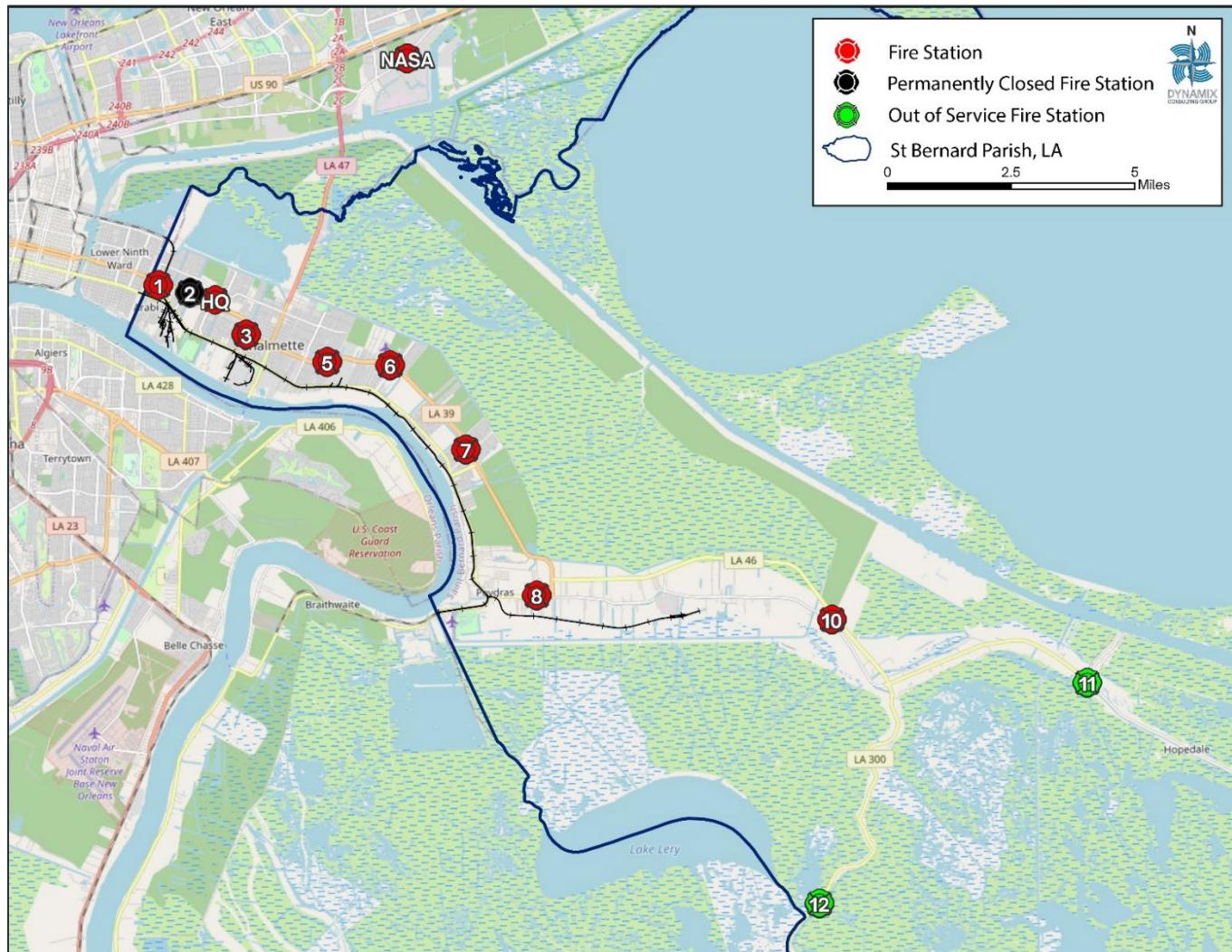
Succession Planning should work in tandem with the Professional Development Program. The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department should formally adopt both programs and communicate the importance of both to all members of the fire department.

# Capital Assets and Capital Improvement Programs

## Stations & Facilities

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department deploys its resources from seven staffed fire stations within the Parish borders (as of October 2022) in addition to one fire station located on the grounds of the NASA Michoud Assembly Facility, New Orleans, LA. Fire stations 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 are staffed with certified firefighters and EMS providers. Fire Station 2 is permanently closed but used for storage. Fire Stations 11 and 12 are temporarily closed and uninhabitable due to storm damage. Crews and apparatus from Fire Stations 11 and 12 are currently deployed from Station 10\*, which was permanently closed a few years ago but temporarily re-opened to house Engine 11 and Engine 12. Fire Stations 4 and 9 do not exist. Several changes have occurred since the time of the site visit. To address these changes, Station 2 is reflected as permanently closed; however, could potentially reopen in the future. Stations 11 and 12 are set to reinitiate deploying units at the beginning of 2023 and are displayed in light green.

*Area Overview*



Dynamix Consulting Group provided St. Bernard Parish Fire Department staff with fire station evaluation templates, which were completed to document building conditions and space needs. Dynamix Consulting Group then visited the fire stations in August of 2023.

A gap analysis was then conducted using industry best practices and recommendations from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the United States Fire Administration (USFA), and the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF). The fire stations are categorized according to the following criteria:

***Fire Station Condition Classifications***

Excellent	Like new conditions. No visible structural defects. The facility is clean and well-maintained. The interior layout is conducive to function with no unnecessary impediments to the apparatus bays or offices. No significant defect history. Building design and construction match the building's purposes. Age is typically less than ten years.
Good	The exterior has a good appearance with minor or no defects. Clean lines, good workflow design, and only minor wear on the building interior. The roof and apparatus apron are in good working order, absent any significant full-thickness cracks, crumbling of the apron surface, or visible roof patches or leaks. Building design and construction match the building's purposes. Age is typically less than 20 years.
Fair	The building appears structurally sound with a weathered appearance and minor to moderate non-structural defects. The interior condition shows normal wear and tear but flows effectively to the apparatus bay or offices. Mechanical systems are in working order. Building design and construction may not match the building's purposes well. Shows increasing age-related maintenance but with no critical defects. Age is typically 30 years or more.
Poor	The building appears cosmetically weathered and worn with potential structural defects, although not imminently dangerous or unsafe. Large, multiple full-thickness cracks and crumbling concrete on the apron may exist. The roof has evidence of leaking and/or multiple repairs. The interior is poorly maintained or shows signs of advanced deterioration with moderate to significant non-structural defects. Problematic age-related maintenance and/or major defects are evident. It may not be well suited to its intended purpose. Age is typically greater than 40 years.

### Fire Station Evaluation

Station	Image	Condition	Notes
<b>FIRE STATION #1</b> Arabi		OPEN Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Built 1990</li> <li>■ Metal construction</li> <li>■ E-Generator</li> <li>■ Back-in bays only (2)</li> <li>■ 1 Bedroom/2 Dormitory Beds</li> <li>■ Maximum Station Staffing 3</li> <li>■ Exercise/Workout Area</li> <li>■ Shower Facilities</li> <li>■ No Meeting/Training Room</li> <li>■ No Building Sprinklers</li> <li>■ No Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal</li> <li>■ Security – Cameras &amp; Swipe Card Reader</li> <li>■ No Functioning Vehicle Exhaust System</li> <li>■ Houses Engine 1 &amp; Car 801</li> </ul>
<b>FIRE STATION #2</b> Arabi		Closed* Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>*Permanently Closed, Storage Use Only</i></li> <li>■ Built 2007</li> <li>■ Metal construction</li> <li>■ E-Generator</li> <li>■ Drive-through Bays (2)</li> <li>■ 1 Bedroom/3 Dormitory Beds</li> <li>■ Maximum Station Staffing 4</li> <li>■ No Exercise/Workout Area</li> <li>■ Shower Facilities</li> <li>■ No Meeting/Training Room</li> <li>■ Building Sprinklers</li> <li>■ No Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal</li> <li>■ No Security</li> <li>■ No Functioning Vehicle Exhaust System</li> <li>■ Houses Reserve Pumper Engine 10</li> </ul>
<b>FIRE STATION #3</b> CENTRAL STATION Chalmette		OPEN Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Built 2007</li> <li>■ Metal construction</li> <li>■ E-Generator</li> <li>■ Drive-through Bays (2)</li> <li>■ 3 Bedroom/4 Dormitory Beds</li> <li>■ Maximum Station Staffing 8</li> <li>■ No Exercise/Workout Area</li> <li>■ Shower Facilities</li> <li>■ No Meeting/Training Room</li> <li>■ Building Sprinklers</li> <li>■ No Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal</li> <li>■ Security – Cameras &amp; Swipe Card Reader</li> <li>■ Vehicle Exhaust System – Filter Scrubber</li> <li>■ Houses Engine 3, Squad 1, Car 201, &amp; Car 601</li> </ul>

Station	Image	Condition	Notes
<b>FIRE STATION #5</b>  Chalmette		OPEN  Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Built 2007</li> <li>■ Metal construction</li> <li>■ E-Generator</li> <li>■ Drive-through Bays (2)</li> <li>■ 1 Bedroom/3 Dormitory Beds</li> <li>■ Maximum Station Staffing 4</li> <li>■ No Exercise/Workout Area</li> <li>■ Shower Facilities</li> <li>■ No Meeting/Training Room</li> <li>■ Building Sprinklers</li> <li>■ No Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal</li> <li>■ Security – Cameras &amp; Swipe Card Reader</li> <li>■ No Functioning Vehicle Exhaust System</li> <li>■ Houses Engine 5 &amp; Foam Unit 1</li> </ul>
<b>FIRE STATION #6</b>  Meraux		OPEN  Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Built 2007</li> <li>■ Metal construction</li> <li>■ E-Generator</li> <li>■ Drive-through Bays (2)</li> <li>■ 2 Bedroom/3 Dormitory Beds</li> <li>■ Maximum Station Staffing 5</li> <li>■ No Exercise/Workout Area</li> <li>■ Shower Facilities</li> <li>■ No Meeting/Training Room</li> <li>■ Building Sprinklers</li> <li>■ No Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal</li> <li>■ Security – Cameras &amp; Swipe Card Reader</li> <li>■ No Functioning Vehicle Exhaust System</li> <li>■ Houses Engine 6, Car 200, and Reserve Car 602</li> </ul>
<b>FIRE STATION #7</b>  Violet		OPEN  Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Built 2007</li> <li>■ Metal construction</li> <li>■ E-Generator</li> <li>■ Drive-through Bays (3)</li> <li>■ 1 Bedroom/3 Dormitory Beds</li> <li>■ Maximum Station Staffing 4</li> <li>■ No Exercise/Workout Area</li> <li>■ Shower Facilities</li> <li>■ No Meeting/Training Room</li> <li>■ Building Sprinklers</li> <li>■ No Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal</li> <li>■ Security – Cameras &amp; Swipe Card Reader</li> <li>■ No Functioning Vehicle Exhaust System</li> <li>■ Houses Engine 7, Car 202, Reserve Pumper/Foam Unit 2, Reserve Engine 9, Reserve Car 603</li> </ul>

Station	Image	Condition	Notes
<b>FIRE STATION #8</b> Poydras		OPEN Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Built 2007</li> <li>■ Metal construction</li> <li>■ E-Generator</li> <li>■ Drive-through Bays (2)</li> <li>■ 2 Bedroom/4 Dormitory Beds</li> <li>■ Maximum Station Staffing 6</li> <li>■ Exercise/Workout Area</li> <li>■ Shower Facilities</li> <li>■ Meeting/Training Room</li> <li>■ Building Sprinklers</li> <li>■ No Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal</li> <li>■ Security – Cameras &amp; Swipe Card Reader</li> <li>■ No Functioning Vehicle Exhaust System</li> <li>■ Houses Engine 8, Squad 2</li> </ul>
<b>FIRE STATION #10</b> Verret		OPEN* Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>*Closed, Temporarily Open &amp; Occupied by Engine 11 &amp; Engine 12</i></li> <li>■ Built 1991</li> <li>■ Metal construction</li> <li>■ E-Generator</li> <li>■ Back-In Bays (2)</li> <li>■ 2 Bedroom/2 Dormitory Beds</li> <li>■ Maximum Station Staffing 4</li> <li>■ No Exercise/Workout Area</li> <li>■ Shower Facilities</li> <li>■ No Meeting/Training Room</li> <li>■ No Building Sprinklers</li> <li>■ No Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal</li> <li>■ Security – Cameras &amp; Swipe Card Reader</li> <li>■ No Functioning Vehicle Exhaust System</li> <li>■ Houses Engine 11, Engine 12, and Tanker 1 (Not Staffed)</li> </ul>
<b>FIRE STATION #11</b> Hopedale		CLOSED* Fair/ Damaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>*Temporarily Closed due to Storm Damage</i></li> <li>■ Built 2007</li> <li>■ Metal construction</li> <li>■ E-Generator</li> <li>■ Back-In Bay (1)</li> <li>■ 1 Bedroom/2 Dormitory Beds</li> <li>■ Maximum Station Staffing 3</li> <li>■ No Exercise/Workout Area</li> <li>■ Shower Facilities</li> <li>■ No Meeting/Training Room</li> <li>■ Building Sprinklers</li> <li>■ No Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal</li> <li>■ No Security</li> <li>■ No Functioning Vehicle Exhaust System</li> <li>■ Units Relocated to Fire Station #10</li> </ul>

Station	Image	Condition	Notes
<b>FIRE STATION #12</b>  <b>Delacroix</b>		CLOSED*  Fail/  Damaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ *Temporarily Closed due to Storm Damage</li> <li>▪ Built 2007</li> <li>▪ Metal construction</li> <li>▪ E-Generator</li> <li>▪ Back-In Bay (1)</li> <li>▪ 1 Bedroom/2 Dormitory Beds</li> <li>▪ Maximum Station Staffing 3</li> <li>▪ No Exercise/Workout Area</li> <li>▪ Shower Facilities</li> <li>▪ No Meeting/Training Room</li> <li>▪ Building Sprinklers</li> <li>▪ No Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal</li> <li>▪ No Security</li> <li>▪ No Functioning Vehicle Exhaust System</li> <li>▪ Units Relocated to Fire Station #10</li> </ul>
<b>NASA MAF FIRE STATION</b>  <b>New Orleans</b>	No Image Available	OPEN*  Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ *Owned by NASA, contracted staffing for Fire Protection through agreement.</li> <li>▪ Unknown Built Date</li> <li>▪ Metal construction</li> <li>▪ E-Generator</li> <li>▪ Back-In Bays (2)</li> <li>▪ 1 Bedroom/3 Dormitory Beds</li> <li>▪ Maximum Station Staffing 4</li> <li>▪ Exercise/Workout Area</li> <li>▪ Shower Facilities</li> <li>▪ No Meeting/Training Room</li> <li>▪ Building Sprinklers</li> <li>▪ No Decontamination/Biohazard Disposal</li> <li>▪ Security - NASA Facilities-Based</li> <li>▪ No Vehicle Exhaust System</li> <li>▪ Engine 4 &amp; Reserve Pumper/Engine 2</li> </ul>

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department Headquarters and administration offices are housed in the St. Bernard Parish Government Complex located at 8201 W Judge Perez Drive, Chalmette, LA. The Fire Chief, Assistant Chief of Administration, and Fire Chief Secretary maintain offices in the complex. Additionally, the Assistant Chief of Special Operations and safety, Fire Prevention personnel, and Training personnel maintain offices in the government complex. Personnel at the St. Bernard Parish Central Maintenance Garage provide limited repairs and maintenance to the Department's apparatus and vehicles but do not manage the fleet.

The Assistant Chief of Special Operations manages the preventive management and testing of equipment, repairs, and replacements. Additionally, facility repairs, replacements, and maintenance also fall within this position's purview.

## Facilities Future Considerations

Consideration should be given to including the following elements in the design of new or renovated fire stations for those buildings currently lacking these features.

**26. Automatic fire sprinkler systems should protect all fire stations.**

As noted above, not all of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department stations are entirely sprinkled. NFPA 1: Fire Code requires that “New buildings housing emergency fire, rescue, or ambulance services shall be protected throughout by approved supervised automatic sprinkler systems.” The requirement for sprinkler protection protects the emergency services personnel occupying the facility. It reduces the risk of disrupting emergency services to the community because of a fire. While not required by the code for existing buildings, Dynamix Consulting Group recommends that the parish consider installing fire sprinkler systems in all existing fire stations – beyond just the sleeping quarters - for the safety of the firefighters who occupy the stations, as well as to demonstrate to the community the importance of automatic fire sprinkler systems.

**27. All fire stations should be designed with cancer prevention engineering measures.**

Firefighting is an occupation with higher rates and varieties of cancer than many other occupations. Regrettably, exposure to cancer-causing agents (carcinogens) does not end with fire extinguishment. Exposure for firefighters continues when returning to the fire station until gear, equipment, and the firefighters themselves become “clean” of the carcinogens from the smoke and other products of the fire through decontamination efforts. Until this time, the risk of continued cross-contamination remains for the firefighters.

Within the parish, there are cancer prevention policies in place. Firefighters have received training protocols for both cancer prevention and decontamination. To limit or reduce firefighter exposure to toxic products of combustion that occur after the fire, firefighters must store turnout gear in well-ventilated rooms to prevent additional firefighter exposure to off-gassing chemicals absorbed into turnout gear during a fire. To that end, the parish should protect firefighters from cancer, including pressurizing corridors to help keep contaminates out of designated clean areas, private showers, and a second set of turnout gear or access to a second set for all firefighters.

**28. All fire stations should include drive-through bays.**

Generally speaking, all fire stations should have “drive-through bays.” The lack of drive-throughs at these facilities constitutes a safety concern, as many firefighter injuries and accidents occur when backing emergency vehicles into the bays. Dynamix Consulting Group notes that all stations use “back in” procedures; however, drive-through bays are the recommended configuration. For all future buildings that will house apparatus, the department should consider a design that allows for drive-through bays that are large enough to accommodate all frontline and reserve apparatus. Currently, stations 1, 10, 11, and 12 only have back-in bays.

**29. Create a Fleet Manager position.**

Given the size and complexity of St. Bernard Parish and its fire department, the addition of a fleet manager will allow the Operations Division time to focus on their primary responsibilities, such as response, suppression, and training, as opposed to ancillary duties that could be more efficiently and effectively managed by this position. While parish-wide fleet management is important, the ability to select the correct equipment, vehicles, and apparatus should fall to those with the expertise and understanding of the strategies and tactics employed by the department to safely and effectively respond to and mitigate emergency incidents.

## Apparatus & Equipment

### Emergency Response Vehicles

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department relies on dependable fire apparatus and emergency equipment to carry out its mission successfully. These tools are essential for emergency personnel to provide suppression and emergency services to the Parish's residents. The Department's apparatus has an age range of six (6) to 19 years, with an average age of 13.4 years.

The following chart provides an overview of the Department's response apparatus by vehicle types, year, manufacturer, status (front line or reserve) mileage, and other features.

*Department Apparatus*

Vehicle	Year	Type & Manufacturer	Status	Mileage	Other
Engine 1	2017	Engine KME/Spartan	Frontline	27,332	1500 GPM, 1000 gallons of water
Engine 2	2006	Engine Ferrara/Spartan	Reserve	58,226	1500 GPM, 1000 gallons of water
Engine 3	2005	Quint KME/Spartan	Frontline	101,834	75 Foot Quint/Ladder, 500 gallons of water
Engine 5	2016	Engine KME/Spartan	Frontline	40,795	1500 GPM, 1000 gallons of water
Engine 6	2016	Engine KME/Spartan	Frontline	36,711	1500 GPM, 1000 gallons of water
Engine 7	2006	Quint KME/Spartan	Frontline	91,390	75 Foot Quint/Lader, 500 gallons water
Engine 8	2016	Engine KME/Spartan	Frontline	43,387	1500 GPM, 1000 gallons of water
Engine 9	2006	Engine Ferrara/Spartan	Reserve	55,726	1500 GPM, 1000 gallons of water
Engine 10	2007	Engine KME/Spartan	Reserve	96,857	1500 GPM, 1000 gallons of water
Engine 11	2006	Engine Ferrara/Spartan	Frontline	118,488	1500 GPM, 1000 gallons of water
Engine 12	2006	Engine Ferrara/Spartan	Frontline	96,495	1500 GPM, 1000 gallons of water
Squad 1	2014	Support/Rescue Hackney	Frontline	47,840	Rescue, Extrication, Hazmat, Cascade
Squad 2	2014	Support/Rescue Hackney	Frontline	51,851	Rescue, Extrication, Hazmat, Cascade
Tanker 1	2004	Support Elite/Freightliner	Reserve	30,723	250 GPM, 3500 gallons of water
Foam Unit 1	2007	Engine KME/Spartan	Reserve	54,100	1500 GPM, 750 water, 250 of foam
Foam Unit 2	2007	Engine KME/Spartan	Reserve	29,637	1500 GPM, 750 water, 250 of foam

In addition to fire apparatus (engines, quints/ladders), the Department maintains several passenger vehicles used by various staff members for routine fire department business and response to incidents. The list below outlines the current fleet of staff vehicles.

## Supervisor and Command Vehicles

### *Staff Vehicles*

Unit	Assigned	Manufacturer	Year/Age	Condition	Status	Mileage
Car 100	Fire Chief	Ford	2022 1 Year	Good	Frontline	7,600
Car 101	AC Admin	Ford	2023 1 Year	Good	Frontline	0
Car 102	AC Ops and Safety	Ford	2023 >1 Years	Good	Frontline	0
Car 200	Deputy Chief	Chevrolet	2020 3 Years	Good	Frontline	21,629
Car 201	District Chief	Chevrolet	2015 8 Years	Good	Frontline	122,849
Car 202	District Chief	Chevrolet	2015 8 Years	Good	Frontline	89,813
Car 300	Prevention Inspector	Chevrolet	2020 3 Years	Good	Frontline	70,605
Car 301	Prevention Inspector	Ford	2022 1 Year	Good	Frontline	7,200
Car 500	Training Officer	Chevrolet	2020 3 Years	Good	Frontline	41,225
Car 501	Training Officer	Chevrolet	2014 9 Years	Fair	Frontline	100,000
Car 601	Reserve Staff Unit	Chevrolet	2014 9 Years	Fair	Reserve	118,176
Car 602	Reserve Staff Unit	Chevrolet	2014 9 Years	Fair	Reserve	80,277
Car 603	Reserve Staff Unit	Chevrolet	2014 9 Years	Fair	Reserve	185,982
Car 605	Reserve Staff Unit	Chevrolet	2014 9 Years	Fair	Reserve	84,232
Car 800	Reserve Special Operations	Ford	2020 3 Years	Good	Reserve	8,900
Car 801	Reserve Utility	Chevrolet	2015 8 Years	Good	Reserve	25,000
Car 802	Reserve Utility Unit	Ford	2007 16 Years	Poor	Reserve	141,980
<b>Total Averages</b>			<b>Avg. 5.82 Years</b>			<b>Avg. 65,027</b>

## Apparatus and Equipment Future Considerations

### 30. Evaluate the Vehicle Replacement Plan at regular intervals.

As the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department's call volume increases, the Vehicle Replacement Plan should be evaluated at regular intervals to adjust replacement schedules accordingly. This is especially important as the front-line vehicles respond to increasing emergency incidents, the vehicles placed in reserve status will have increasingly more wear and tear and decreased reliability. It is imperative to fund this replacement plan to ensure the Fire Department Fleet remains reliable as demand increases.

To help leadership decide on when to downgrade front-line apparatus to reserve status, NFPA 1901, Standard for Automotive Apparatus (2016) Annex D, suggests:

It is recommended that apparatus more than 15 years old that have been properly maintained and that are still in serviceable condition be placed in reserve status, be upgraded in accordance with NFPA 1912, and incorporate as many features as possible of the current fire apparatus Standard (see Section D.3). This will ensure that, while the apparatus might not comply with the current editions of the automotive fire apparatus standards, many of the improvements and upgrades required by the current editions of the standards are available to the firefighters who use their apparatus.

Apparatus not manufactured to the applicable NFPA fire apparatus standards or that are over 25 years old should be replaced.

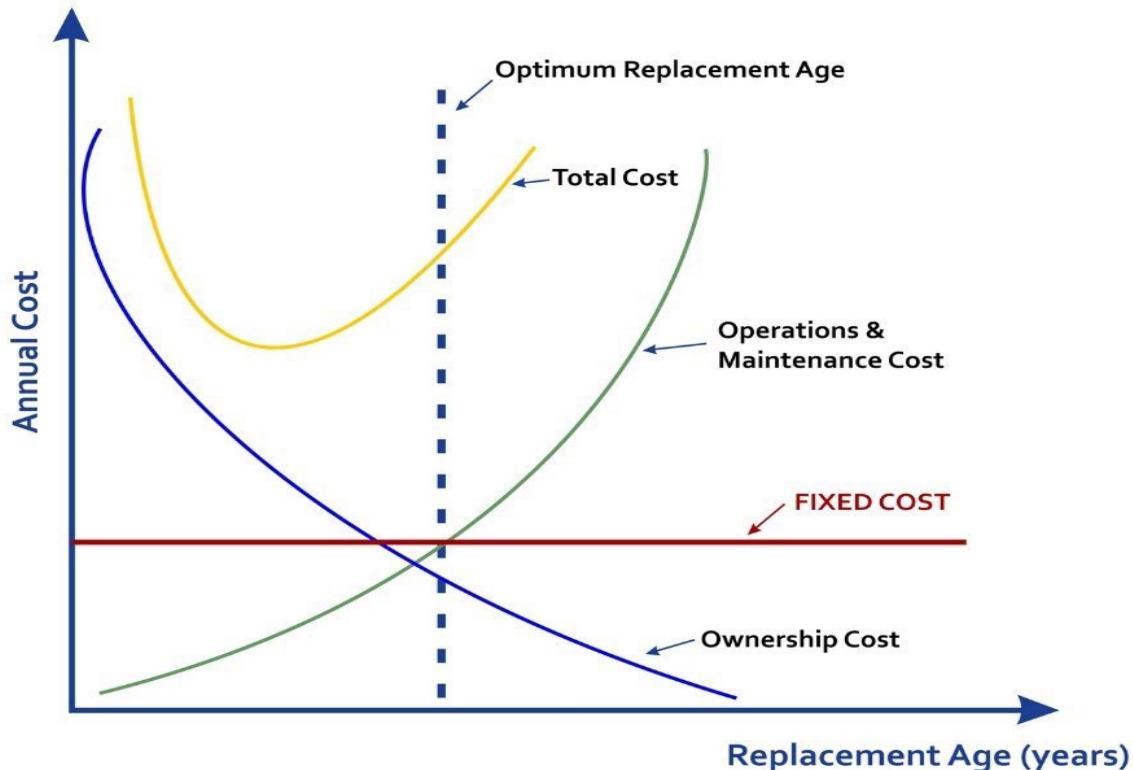
This recommendation from NFPA is general in nature and offers more objective criteria when evaluating the service life of fire apparatus. The following consideration recommendations are from NFPA 1901:

- Vehicle road milage.
- Engine operating hours.
- Replacement parts availability and supply chain reliability.
- The quality of the artistry from the original manufacturer.
- The design and reliability of a preventive maintenance program.
- The value of components used during the production of the apparatus.

## Economic Theory of Vehicle Replacement

Dynamix Consulting Group advises the leadership of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department to utilize the information above to align their vehicle replacement strategy with the Economic Theory of Vehicle Replacement. This approach will enable them to plan effectively and achieve financial savings for the taxpayers of St. Bernard Parish. It is essential to replace emergency apparatus in a controlled and timely manner to avoid a sudden rise in unforeseen maintenance and repair expenses. When financial decisions are made based on the assumption that delaying apparatus replacement is a prudent approach for budget balancing or cost savings, two outcomes are likely to occur. First, costs may shift from parish capital budgets to operating budgets, and second, deferring replacements is highly expected to increase the overall costs of apparatus and fleet maintenance.

### Economic Theory of Vehicle Replacement



As the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department leadership plans for vehicle replacements, it is crucial to consider the factors of build times and cost escalations. Currently, fire departments across the United States are facing significant delays in the construction process, with estimated build times ranging from 24 to 48 months, depending on apparatus specifications and specific requests from municipalities. This unforeseen surge in build times has compelled many departments to reconsider their replacement plans. The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department can use this nationwide delay in construction as an excellent opportunity to evaluate its fleet and analyze the organization's future requirements for vehicle replacement.

Irrespective of the immediate impact on current apparatus costs and construction timelines, postponing replacement purchases undoubtedly leads to increased future expenditure requirements. Dynamix Consulting Group advises its clients to set aside funds for apparatus replacement as soon as a new apparatus is put into service. Every fire apparatus and supporting equipment has a predictable lifespan determined by finding a practical balance between usage and repair costs. The St. Bernard Parish can establish a reliable replacement schedule by tracking and analyzing factors such as age, projected service life, and replacement costs while factoring in an inflation estimate. For forecasting, the inflation rate was 6.5% in 2022, which is estimated to be 6% in 2023. By implementing this replacement process, the leadership of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department can proactively prepare for future financial demands and operational needs.

Dynamix Consulting Group recommends the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department update its apparatus replacement plan annually. The following figure is one example of criteria for determining apparatus replacement based on a points system. The method examines not only the age of the apparatus but also apparatus mileage or hours, service, condition, and general reliability. Consider these factors when developing an apparatus replacement plan for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department.

***Criteria & Method for Determining Apparatus Replacement***

Points Assignment Criteria		
Evaluation Components	Points Assignment Criteria	
<b>Age:</b>	One point for every year of chronological age, based on in-service date.	
<b>Miles/Hours:</b>	One point for every 10,000 miles or 1,000 hours	
<b>Service:</b>	1, 3, or 5 points are assigned based on the service type received (e.g., a pumper would receive a 5 since it is classified as severe duty service).	
<b>Condition:</b>	This category takes into consideration body condition, rust interior condition, accident history, and anticipated repairs. The better the condition, the lower the assignment of points.	
<b>Reliability:</b>	Points are assigned as 1, 3, or 5, depending on the frequency a vehicle is in for repair (e.g., a vehicle in the shop two or more times per month on average would receive a 5, while a vehicle in the shop an average of once every three months or less would receive a 1).	
Point Ranges	Condition Rating	Condition Description
<b>Under 18 points</b>	Condition I	Excellent
<b>18–22 points</b>	Condition II	Good
<b>23–27 points</b>	Condition III	Consider Replacement
<b>28 points or higher</b>	Condition IV	Immediate Replacement

# Planning for Fire and EMS Delivery

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## Mission, Vision, and Core Values



**ST. BERNARD**  
 FIRE DEPARTMENT

An organization's mission creates focus, the vision provides direction, and the values define the expected behavior of the organization's members.

### Mission

A mission statement is an explanation of the organization's reason for existence. The mission statement supports the vision and communicates purpose and direction to employees, customers, and other stakeholders. The mission statement should answer "What is our organization's purpose?" and "Why does our organization exist?"

According to the Lucas Group<sup>2</sup>, there are three key areas where mission statements really help to transform the employee experience and ultimately drive productivity<sup>3</sup>:

**1. Clarity in organizational values helps employees prioritize better.**

When the entire organization aligns to a clear set of written objectives visible to everyone, employees make the right decisions about allocating their time and effort. A clearly articulated mission statement also helps employees to know what *not* to do because all potential activities can be evaluated based on whether they support the mission.

**2. Mission statements help employees find meaning in their work.**

A good mission statement shows employees how their work will improve the lives of their customers, their community, and even the world. An example of this is the clothing manufacturer Patagonia's mission statement: *"Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environment."* Basic human nature is to want to be part of something bigger than oneself. When employees understand how their work contributes toward a larger goal, they find meaning in their work. This creates a sense of ownership, leading to a more substantial commitment to the work and improved productivity.

**3. A strong mission statement helps employees to become ambassadors.**

A great mission statement defines a company's existence and what makes it different from every competitor. When employees can articulate why the company is the best, they become more passionate about being part of the organization. This makes them effective brand ambassadors.

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<sup>2</sup> The Lucas Group is rated in the top 10 by Forbes as both one of America's Best Professional Recruiting Firms and one of America's Best Executive Recruiting Firms

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lucasgroup.com/your-career-intel/mission-statements-matter/>

The mission of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department is as follows:

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department is dedicated to protecting the life, property, and environment of our citizens through our training and education in emergency medical care, fire prevention, fire suppression, and rescue.

## Mission Future Considerations

### **31. Review and update the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department mission statement as necessary.**

When done correctly, reevaluating a fire department mission statement will create buy-in by bringing together a cross-section of the fire department members to discuss the mission and potentially how it has or needs to change, which shows that the department values input from its members. Adopting an updated mission statement based on this input further reaffirms that the Department values the members' input.

## Vision

A vision statement establishes the ideal image that the organization wishes to achieve. The vision statement should answer "Where are we headed?" and "If we achieved all strategic goals, what would we look like ten years from now?"

The vision of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department is:

To be a progressive Class 1, nationally accredited, all-hazard Fire Department committed to excellence and professionalism. Be a leader in fire and life safety providing the highest quality of services to our community in a fiscally responsive manner.

## Vision Future Considerations

### **32. Review and update the St. Bernard Fire Department vision statement as necessary.**

The vision statement should be reviewed and updated for all of the same reasons that were identified in the previous recommendation.

## Core Values

An organizational values statement includes the core principles that guide the organization and its culture. In a values-led organization, values guide decision-making and establish a standard against which one can assess actions. The values statement should answer "What values should guide our organization?" and "What conduct should our employees uphold?"

The St. Bernard Parish Core Fire Department Core Values are:

**• Professionalism**

We are committed to excellence in all aspects of conduct and performance while honoring the firefighter's oath.

**• Service**

We are committed to providing the highest level of customer service to our community.

**• Integrity**

We will uphold public trust and conduct ourselves responsibly by always maintaining moral and ethical standards.

**• Teamwork**

We achieve organizational effectiveness and efficiency by supporting a common goal of "Excellence through Service".

**• Respect**

We will recognize individual worth.

**• Compassion**

Caring and showing concern for those who experience loss, suffering, or misfortunes during their darkest hours.

## Organizational Values Future Considerations

33. Review and update the organizational core values statement for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department as necessary. Just as the operations of a fire department are dynamic, so are the guiding principles of the organization. These components can change as the Department and community change.

Julie Chakraverty recently wrote an article for Forbes.com titled *Company Vision and Values: Do They Still Matter?*<sup>4</sup> In this article, she cited a recent report from the World Economic Forum that found that a "sense of purpose" in work is the second most important criterion for millennials considering a job after salary. Ms. Chakraverty concluded that given that this generation will make up the majority of the workforce in the coming years, it is not difficult to predict that if candidates for employment do not believe in or support an organization's mission, vision, and values, they will not accept a job offer. This can lead to recruitment challenges. Ms. Chakraverty's research further suggested that employees aged between 45 and 54 years old and 55 to 64 years old—not uncommon age groups for management—were the least likely age groups to be able to recite their organization's mission, vision, and values.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/voicesfromeurope/2018/03/28/company-vision-and-values-do-they-still-matter/#7755b77b217f>

## Organizational Planning Process

Now, more than any other time in the history of the United States, the fire service is operating in a rapidly changing environment. Along with improved tools and technologies used to provide services, increased regulation of activities, new risks to protect, and other challenges that can quickly catch the unwary off guard. An organization can stay on the leading edge only through continuous internal and external environmental awareness and periodic course corrections.

The Department can establish a vision for the future through planning, creating a framework to produce quality decisions, and charting its course to the future. The quality and accuracy of the planning function determine the organization's success.

Without adequate planning, no organization can know when it is reaching milestones or providing exceptional services to its constituency. The National Fire Protection Association established NFPA 1600: *Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity/Continuity of Operations Programs* and NFPA 1201: *Standard for Providing Fire and Emergency Services to the Public* as standards to assist fire and EMS departments in establishing and maintaining planning documents and conducting planning activities.

### Master Planning in the Organization

Master or long-range planning is preparation for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department's future service delivery effectiveness based on future service delivery environment projections. This long-range Master Plan focuses on the big-picture perspective and distant future needs of the fire department and community. Fire service organizations that engage in a long-range Master Planning process will be able to utilize this valuable information to answer the following three questions:

- Where is the organization today?
- Where will the organization need to be in the future?
- How will this organization get there?



The St. Bernard Parish contracted Dynamix Consulting Group to conduct a Fire Department Evaluation. This evaluation will provide the Parish with a clear picture of the current conditions of the fire department based on an in-depth evaluation. The Fire Department Evaluation will also project some of the future fire services needs of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department.

### Master Planning Future Considerations

34. The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department should consider developing a long-range Master Plan.

Dynamix Consulting Group notes the scope of work for a Master Plan is more comprehensive than that of a Fire Department Evaluation. The Master Plan traditionally includes a full community risk assessment of the emergency service's environment and provides a deeper analysis of an organization's details than exists within a fire department evaluation. The evaluation provided by Dynamix Consulting Group will provide a strong foundation for a Master Plan should the St. Bernard Parish choose to engage in the Master Planning process either internally or with outside assistance. Master Plans typically include a 10-15-year planning period.

35. Create an EMS officer position.

Given the size of complexity of St. Bernard Parish, an EMS officer will be required to ensure compliance with essential elements of EMS provision. Without consistent monitoring of performance, it is impossible to improve and the parish will leave itself open to liability should protocols not be followed, the reports generated are poorly written, or subpar performance occurs during a critical emergency. This position works with frontline staff, management, and the medical director to ensure that the highest levels of performance are provided given the resources available.

## Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning supports the organization's mission and sets and prioritizes short-term internal goals. A Strategic Plan typically involves a three-to-five-year planning window. Community involvement in the process is critical, as the Strategic Plan should be customer-oriented while accomplishing the following:

- ☒ The development of a mission statement carefully addresses the services currently provided and potentially provided in the future
- ☒ Development of a vision statement for the agency moving forward
- ☒ Establish the values of the members of the agency
- ☒ Identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the agency
- ☒ Determination of the community's service priorities
- ☒ Understanding the community's expectations of the agency
- ☒ Establishment of realistic goals and objectives for the future
- ☒ Identification of implementation tasks for each objective
- ☒ Definition of service outcomes in the form of measurable performance objectives and targets
- ☒ Identification of personnel in charge of each objective and associated work timelines

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department has contracted Dynamix Consulting Group to facilitate a Strategic Plan following the completion of this Fire Department Evaluation.

## Strategic Planning in the Organization

Strategic planning supports the organization's mission and sets and prioritizes short-term internal goals. A Strategic Plan typically involves a three-to-five-year planning window. Community involvement in the process is critical as the strategic plan should be customer-oriented while accomplishing the following:

- ☒ Review of the mission statement, giving careful attention to the services currently provided and which the Department logically can provide in the future.
- ☒ Review of the vision statement of the fire department moving forward.
- ☒ Reaffirm the values of the members of the fire department.
- ☒ Identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the fire department
- ☒ Determination of the community's service priorities.
- ☒ Understanding the community's expectations of the fire department.
- ☒ Establishment of realistic goals and objectives for the future.
- ☒ Identifications of implementation tasks for each objective.
- ☒ Definition of service outcomes in the form of measurable performance objectives and targets.

# Response Standards and Targets

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## Development of Performance Objectives

Three main factors lead to the successful mitigation of emergencies: sufficient numbers of well-trained personnel, arriving on reliable and well-equipped apparatus appropriate to the task at hand and arriving *quickly enough* to make a positive difference in property preserved or lives saved.

The previous sections of this report laid out the current staffing levels, facilities and equipment, and response to fire and EMS calls within the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department. The following describes the consequences of failing to deliver sufficient personnel and equipment early enough to mitigate the emergency addressed.

## Dynamics of Fire in Buildings

Most fires within buildings develop predictably unless influenced by highly flammable material. Ignition, or the beginning of a fire, starts the sequence of events. It may take several minutes or even hours from ignition until a flame is visible. This smoldering stage is perilous, especially when people are asleep, since large amounts of highly toxic smoke may be generated during this phase.

Once flames do appear, the sequence continues rapidly. Combustible materials adjacent to the flame heat and ignite, which heats and ignites adjacent materials if sufficient oxygen is present. As the objects burn, heated gases accumulate at the room's ceiling. Some of the gases are flammable and highly toxic.

The spread of the fire from this point continues quickly. Soon, the flammable gases at the ceiling and other combustible material in the room of origin reach ignition temperature. At that point, an event termed "flashover" occurs where the gases and other materials ignite, igniting everything in the room. Once a flashover occurs, damage caused by the fire is significant, and the environment within the room can no longer support human life. Flashover usually occurs about five to eight minutes from the appearance of flames in typically furnished and ventilated buildings. Since flashovers dramatically influence a fire event's outcome, any fire agency's goal is to apply water to a fire before a flashover occurs.

Although modern codes tend to make fires in newer structures more infrequent, today's energy-efficient construction (designed to hold heat during the winter) also tends to confine the heat of a hostile fire. In addition, research has shown that modern furnishings generally ignite more quickly and burn hotter (due to synthetics). In the 1970s, scientists at the National Institute of Standards and Technology found that building occupants had about 17 minutes to escape after a fire broke out before being overcome by heat and smoke. Today, that estimate is as short as three minutes.<sup>5</sup> The necessity of adequate early warning (smoke alarms), early suppression (fire sprinklers), and firefighters arriving on the scene of a fire in the shortest time is more critical now than ever.

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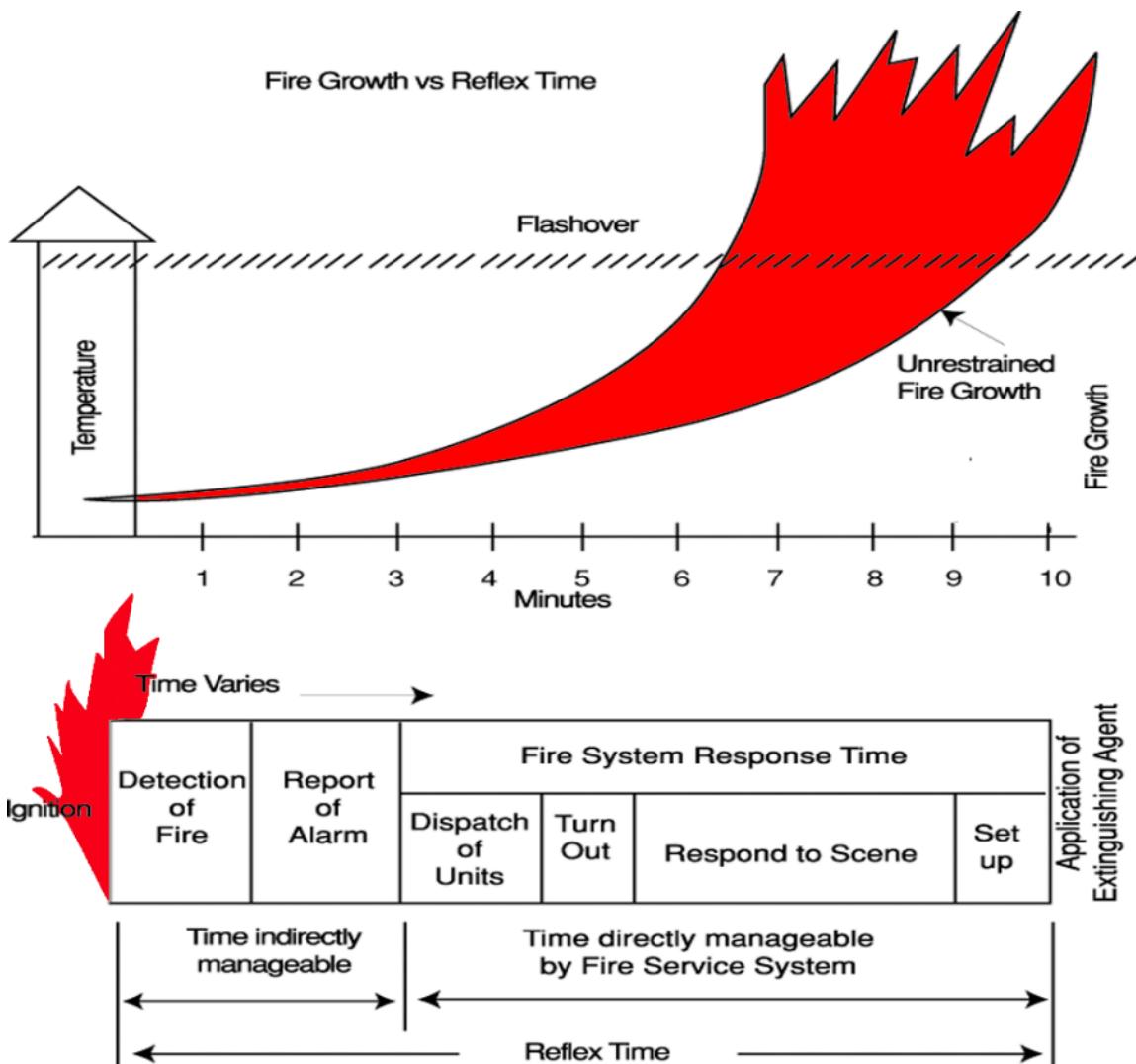
<sup>5</sup> National Institute of Standards and Technology, *Performance of Home Smoke Alarms, Analysis of the Response of Several Available Technologies in Residential Fire Settings*, Bukowski, Richard, et al.

The prompt arrival of at least four personnel is critical for structure fires. Federal regulations (CFR 1910.134) require personnel entering a building involved in a fire to operate in teams of two. Further, before personnel can enter a building to extinguish a fire, at least two personnel must be on the scene and assigned to conduct search and rescue in case the fire attack crew becomes trapped. This is referred to as the two-in, two-out rule. However, if it is known that victims are trapped inside the building, a rescue attempt can be performed without additional personnel ready to intervene outside the structure. Further, all four are not required to arrive in the same response vehicle. Many fire departments rely on more than one unit arriving to initiate an interior fire attack.

Perhaps as critical as preventing flashovers is the need to control a fire before it damages the structural framing of a building. Materials used to construct buildings today are often less fire-resistive than the heavy structural skeletons of older frame buildings. Roof trusses and floor joists are commonly made with lighter materials that are more easily weakened by the effects of fire. “Lightweight” roof trusses fail after five to seven minutes of direct flame impingement. Plywood I-beam joists can fail after as little as three minutes of flame contact. This creates a dangerous environment for firefighters.

In addition, the contents of buildings today have a much greater potential for heat production than in the past. The widespread use of plastics in furnishings and other building contents rapidly accelerates fire spread, which also increases the amount of water needed to control a fire effectively. These factors make early water application essential to a successful fire outcome.

The following figure illustrates the sequence of events during the growth of a structure fire over time.



As is apparent by this description of the sequence of events, applying water in time to prevent flashover is a severe challenge for any fire department. It is critical, though, as studies of historical fire losses can demonstrate.

The NFPA found that fires contained to the room of origin (typically extinguished before or immediately following flashover) had significantly lower rates of death, injury, and property loss when compared to fires that had an opportunity to spread beyond the room of origin (typically extinguished post-flashover). As evidenced in the following figure, fire losses, casualties, and deaths rise significantly as the extent of fire damage increases.

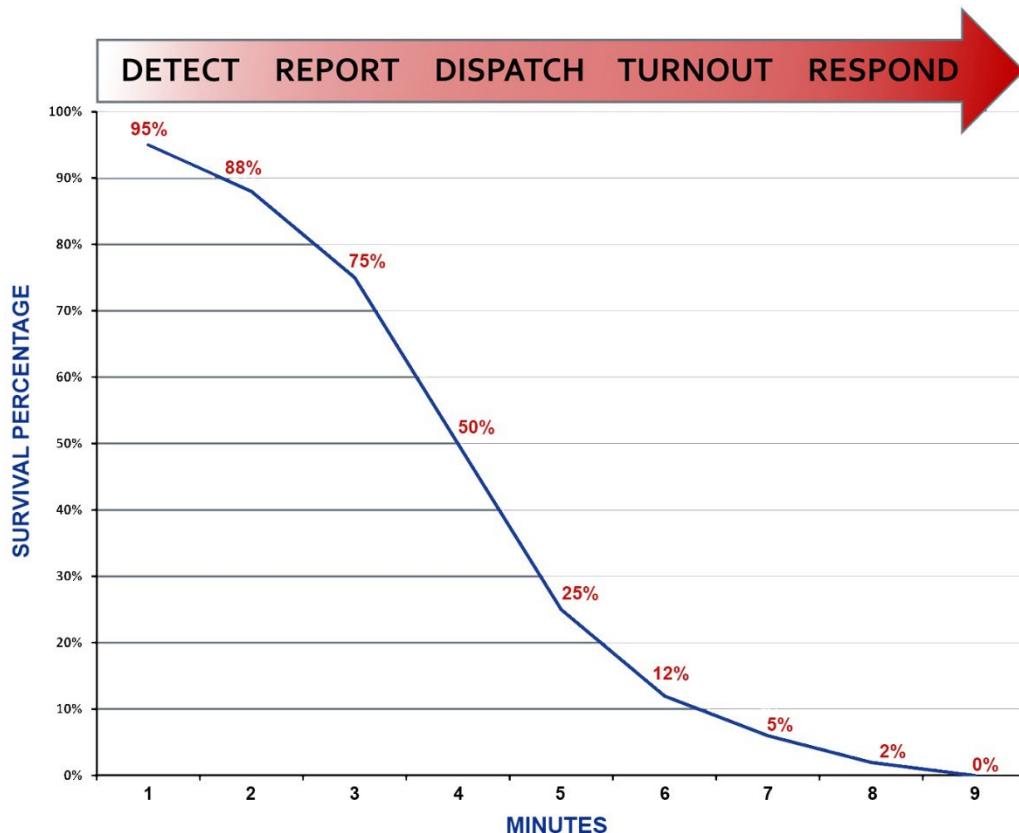
*Fire Extension in Residential Structures*

Fire Extension	Rates per 1,000 Fires		
	Civilian Deaths	Civilian Injuries	Average Dollar Loss Per Fire
Confined to the room of origin or smaller	1.8	24.8	\$4,200
Confined to the floor of origin	15.8	81.4	\$36,300
Confined to the building of origin or larger	24.0	57.6	\$67,600

## Emergency Medical Event Sequence

Cardiac arrest is one of the most significant life-threatening medical events in emergency medicine today. A cardiac arrest victim has mere minutes to receive lifesaving care if there is to be any hope for resuscitation. The American Heart Association (AHA) issued a set of cardiopulmonary resuscitation guidelines designed to streamline emergency procedures for heart attack victims and to increase the likelihood of survival. The AHA guidelines include goals for applying cardiac defibrillation to cardiac arrest victims. Cardiac arrest survival chances fall by 7 to 10% for every minute between collapse and defibrillation. Consequently, the AHA recommends cardiac defibrillation within five minutes of cardiac arrest. As with fires, the sequence of events that lead to emergency cardiac care can be graphically illustrated, as in the following figure.

### Cardiac Arrest Event Sequence



The percentage of opportunity for recovery from cardiac arrest drops quickly as time progresses. The stages of medical response are very similar to the components described for fire response. Recent research stresses the importance of rapid cardiac defibrillation and administering certain medications to improve the opportunity for successful resuscitation and survival.

## People, Tools, and Time

Time matters significantly in achieving an effective outcome in an emergency event. Time, however, is not the only factor. Delivering sufficient numbers of adequately trained and appropriately equipped personnel within the critical time period completes the equation.

For medical emergencies, this can vary based on the nature of the emergency. Many medical emergencies are not time critical. However, a rapid response is essential for severe trauma, cardiac arrest, or conditions that may lead to cardiac arrest. Equally critical is delivering enough personnel to the scene to perform all concurrent tasks required to deliver quality emergency care. For a cardiac arrest, this can be up to six personnel: two to perform CPR, two to set up and operate advanced medical equipment, one to record the actions taken by emergency care workers, and one to direct patient care. Thus, for a medical emergency, the actual performance test is the time it takes to provide the personnel and equipment needed to deal effectively with the patient's condition, not necessarily the time it takes for the first person to arrive.

## Critical Tasks, Risk, and Staffing Performance

The goal of any fire service organization is to provide adequate resources within a period of time to mitigate an emergency event reasonably. However, all emergency events inherently carry their unique circumstances and will require varying levels of staffing based on factors surrounding the incident. High-risk properties often require more personnel and apparatus to mitigate fire emergencies effectively. Staffing and deployment decisions should be made considering the level of risk involved. Common risk categories used in the fire service are:

- ☒ **Low Risk:** Areas and properties used for agricultural purposes, open space, low-density residential, and other low intensity uses.
- ☒ **Moderate Risk:** Areas and properties used for medium-density single-family residences, small commercial and office use, low-intensity retail sales, and equivalently sized business activities.
- ☒ **High Risk:** Higher-density businesses and structures, mixed-use areas, high-density residential, industrial, warehousing, and large mercantile structures.

Fire emergencies are even more resource critical. Again, the actual test of performance is the time it takes to deliver sufficient personnel to initiate water application to a fire. This is the only practical method to reverse internal temperature increases and prevent flashover. The arrival of one person with a portable radio does not provide fire intervention capability, so this scenario should not be counted as an “arrival” by the fire department. This report’s Management and Staffing section detailed the NFPA 1710 critical tasks expected to be performed by firefighters concurrently, referred to as the “effective response force” (ERF), and compared that to the number of firefighters initially deployed for structure fires.

## Response Time Performance Objectives

Several items must be considered to initiate the process of developing performance objectives. Although the specific information needed to complete this process will vary with each organization, the following items will generally need to be addressed during this process. Historical call data must be collected and analyzed to determine current performance baselines and identify any gaps in data required; response zones must be established based on agreed-upon criteria (i.e., population zones, geographic boundaries, etc.); and benchmarks established as goals for these demand zones.

## Response Goals

Dynamix Consulting Group emphasizes the importance of establishing and regularly monitoring performance metrics for the deployment of resources. These metrics serve as the foundation for determining whether or not the organization is meeting the expectations of the community it serves. Without regular and consistent performance evaluation, setting and achieving goals established to meet community expectations is impossible.

Response standards established by the department must originate from the community served to create a balance between what is desired and what can be afforded. Because of this, Dynamix Consulting Group cannot establish baselines and benchmark performance metrics for a given organization. However, recommendations based upon the analysis conducted throughout this report may help serve as a starting point for these discussions with the community served or may serve as a re-evaluation tool for the organization’s current standards.

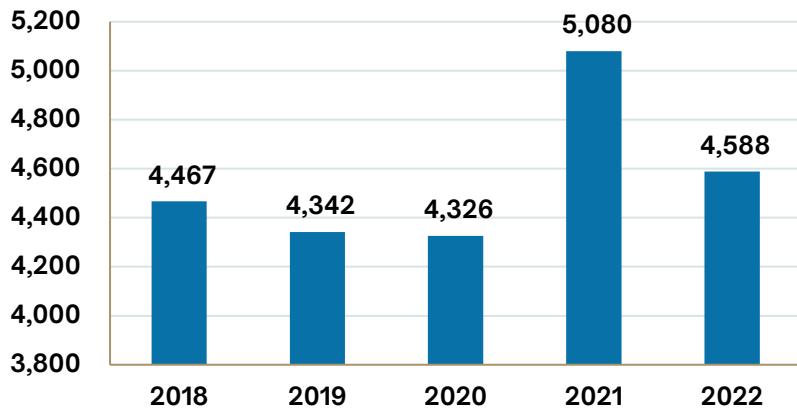
Response standards are individual to each organization. Multiple factors such as staffing, financial constraints, size of the service area, and politics will influence each department’s ability to set achievable goals and objectives for response.

# Service Delivery and Performance

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Demand for services is what drives the need for public safety organizations. As service demands and demographics of the community change over time, so too should the fire and rescue companies. This section provides an overview of the total demand for the parish, as well as call volume by incident type.

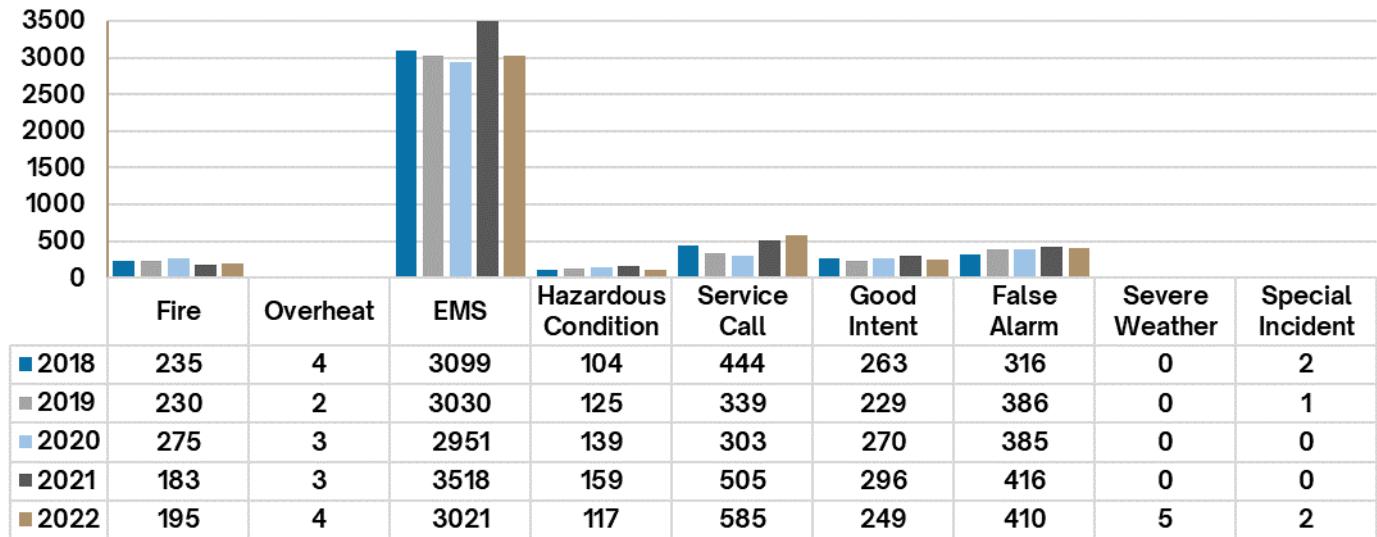
## Change in Demand by Year



While call volume slowly declined from 2018 through 2020, demand spiked by 17.4 percent in 2021 but then declined 10.7% in 2022. Overall, EMS represented 68.5 percent of total demand.

## Current Service Demand by Incident Type

### Change in Demand by Incident Type

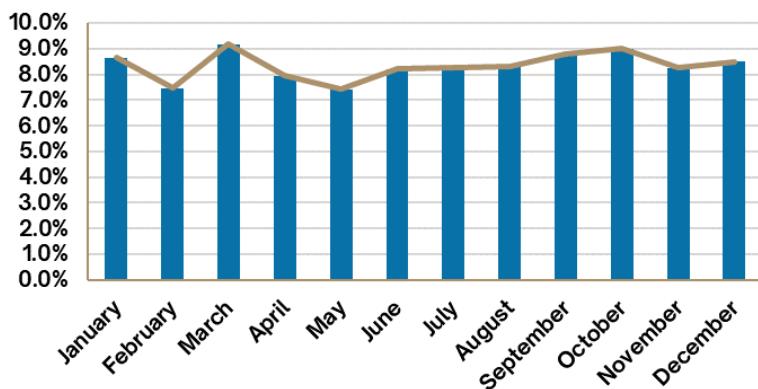


Overall, EMS represented 68.5 percent of total demand. Incident types that are typically considered non-emergency, Good Intent, Service Calls, and False Alarms together accounted for 23.7% of incidents, while Fires were at 4.9%.

## Temporal Variation

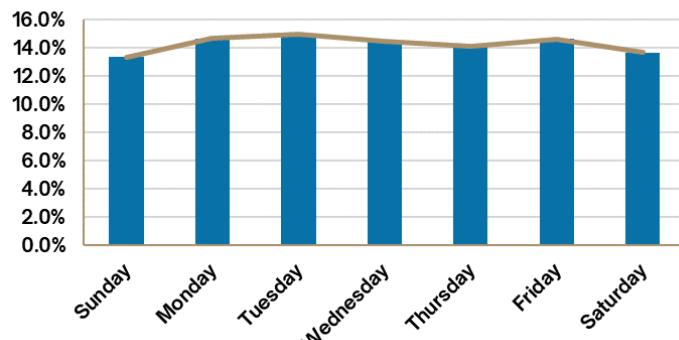
Temporal variation describes the patterns that occur over time. When analyzed and tracked over time, these patterns provide valuable insight as to when demands for services are greatest and when they are lowest.

### Demand by Month 2018-2022

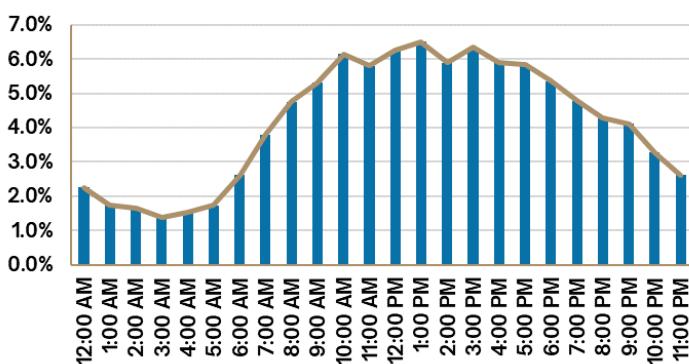


Service demand by month indicates the greatest levels of demand will occur during the late summer through the fall months when people tend to become more active outdoors. A significant drop appears in February; however, this is most likely due to data for February containing fewer days within the month.

### Demand by Day 2018-2022



### Demand by Hour 2018-2022

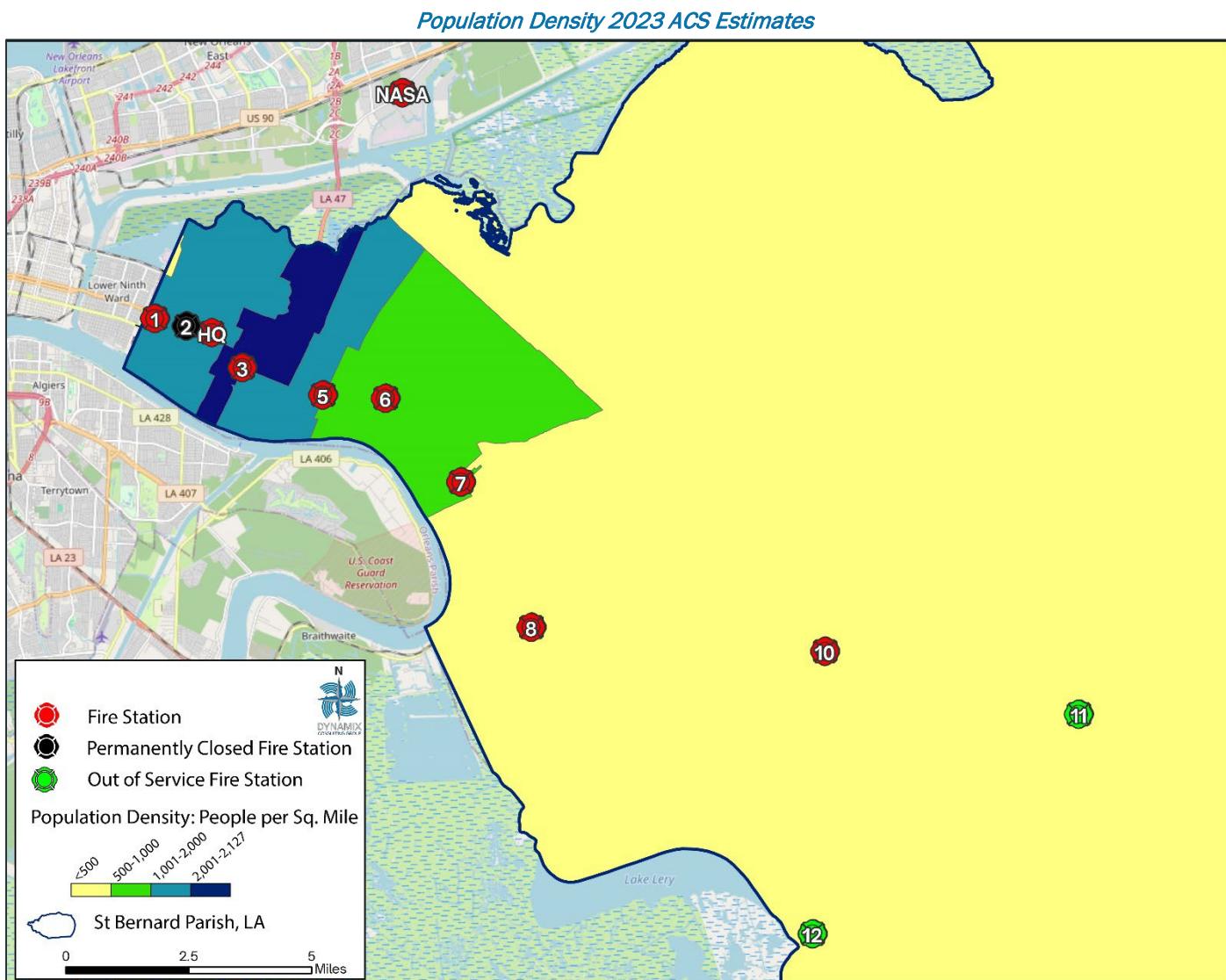


Finally, demand by the hour of the day also presents the expected pattern of activity when most people are awake and active. These patterns illustrate the majority of service demand occurs near or during normal workweek hours. In St Bernard Parish, the highest levels of activity occurred from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Resource Distribution Analysis

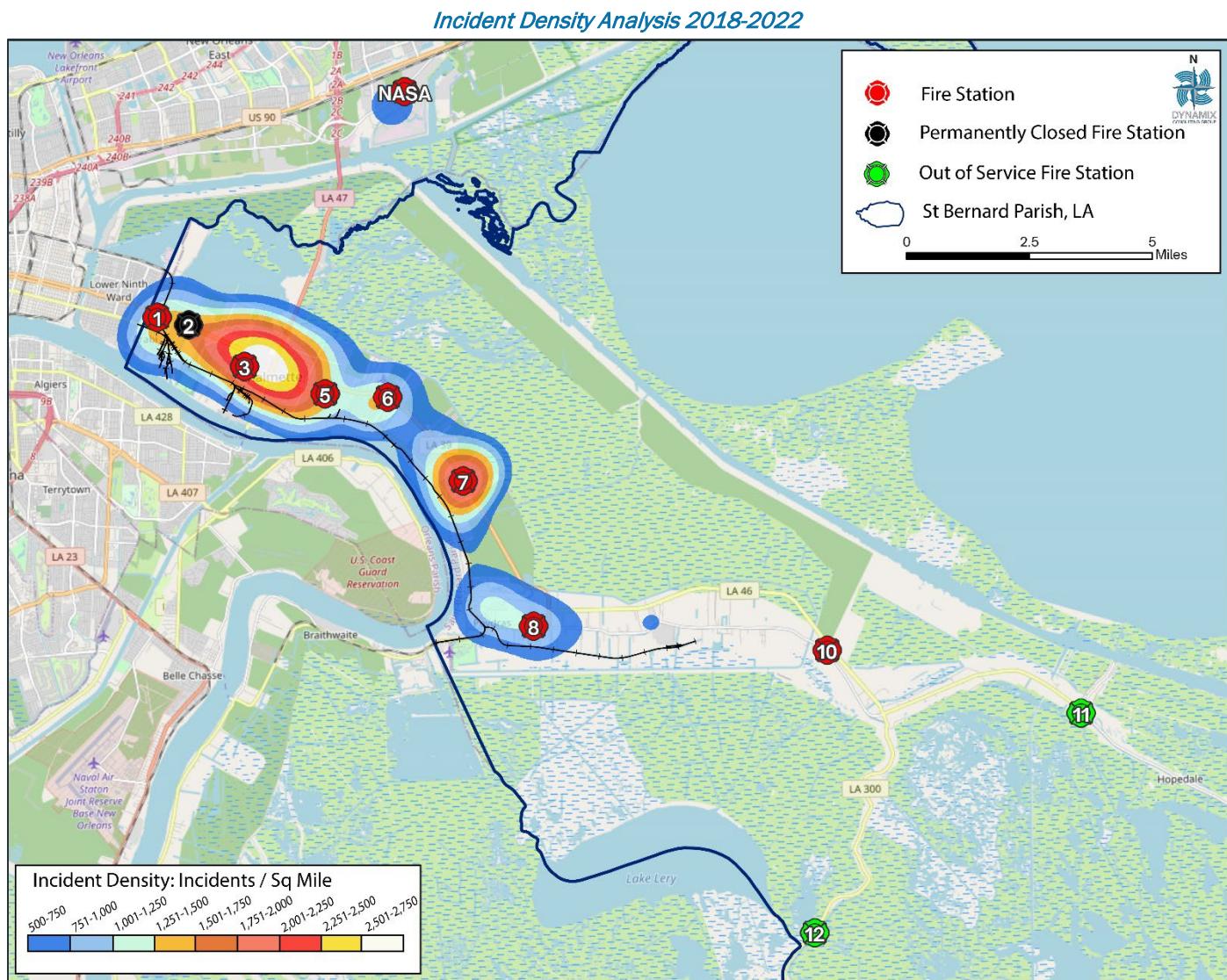
### Population Density and Geographical Demand

One of the best predictors of service demand is population density. It stands to reason that more people concentrated in a given area will result in higher demand in that area. While the specific demographics of a population can also affect the frequency of service requests, an understanding of the distribution of population densities is a fundamental element of developing an optimized deployment strategy. For incidents such as fires or major medical events such as cardiac arrest or severe traumatic injuries, the speed at which first-due resources can reach the incident scene will have a dramatic effect on the responder's ability to resolve the event with a positive outcome. First depicted is the population density of the parish by US Census Blocks using 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates.



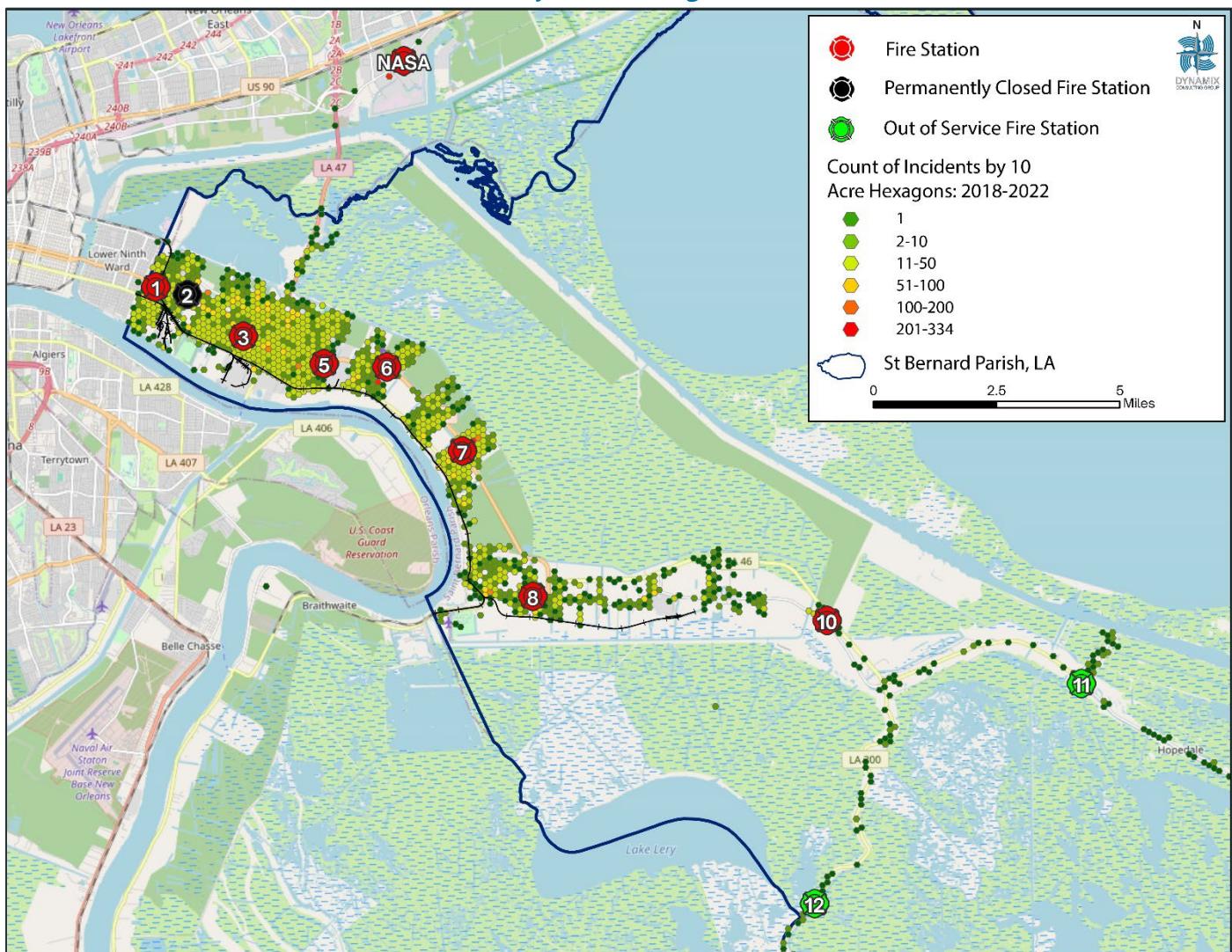
The majority of the parish is rural in nature; however, denser areas exist to the immediate south of the City of New Orleans. Having a large and diverse population densities make it difficult for a fire rescue department to provide equal coverage across all areas as this would be extremely expensive and resources are limited.

Next, using GIS software to conduct an incident density analysis, or Hot Spot analysis, determines how commercial areas impact service demand within the parish. Law enforcement uses this type of analysis to identify areas of densest activity relative to other areas. While other areas may have a greater overall call volume, hot spots appear when multiple incidents occur near each other. This analysis does not suggest that a certain number of calls occurred in each area, but instead provides a way to compare incident density in different areas across the parish. Depicted below is a Hot Spot analysis using incident data for St Bernard Parish Fire Department responses from 2018 through 2022.



Areas of densest demand occur immediately adjacent to New Orleans along LA 46, with fire stations generally located where the most activity occurs until the rural areas east of Station 8.

Another important consideration when evaluating performance data is the number of incidents that occurred within a given area. Over the five-year period from 2018 through 2022, many areas in the eastern side of the parish received only one call for service. While all emergencies are important, the fiscally responsible distribution of resources is equally important for tax-paying residents.

*Incident Count by 10 Acre Hexagons 2018-2022*


While incidents occur to the south and east of Station 10, very few occur relative to the service demand in the more densely populated areas of the parish.

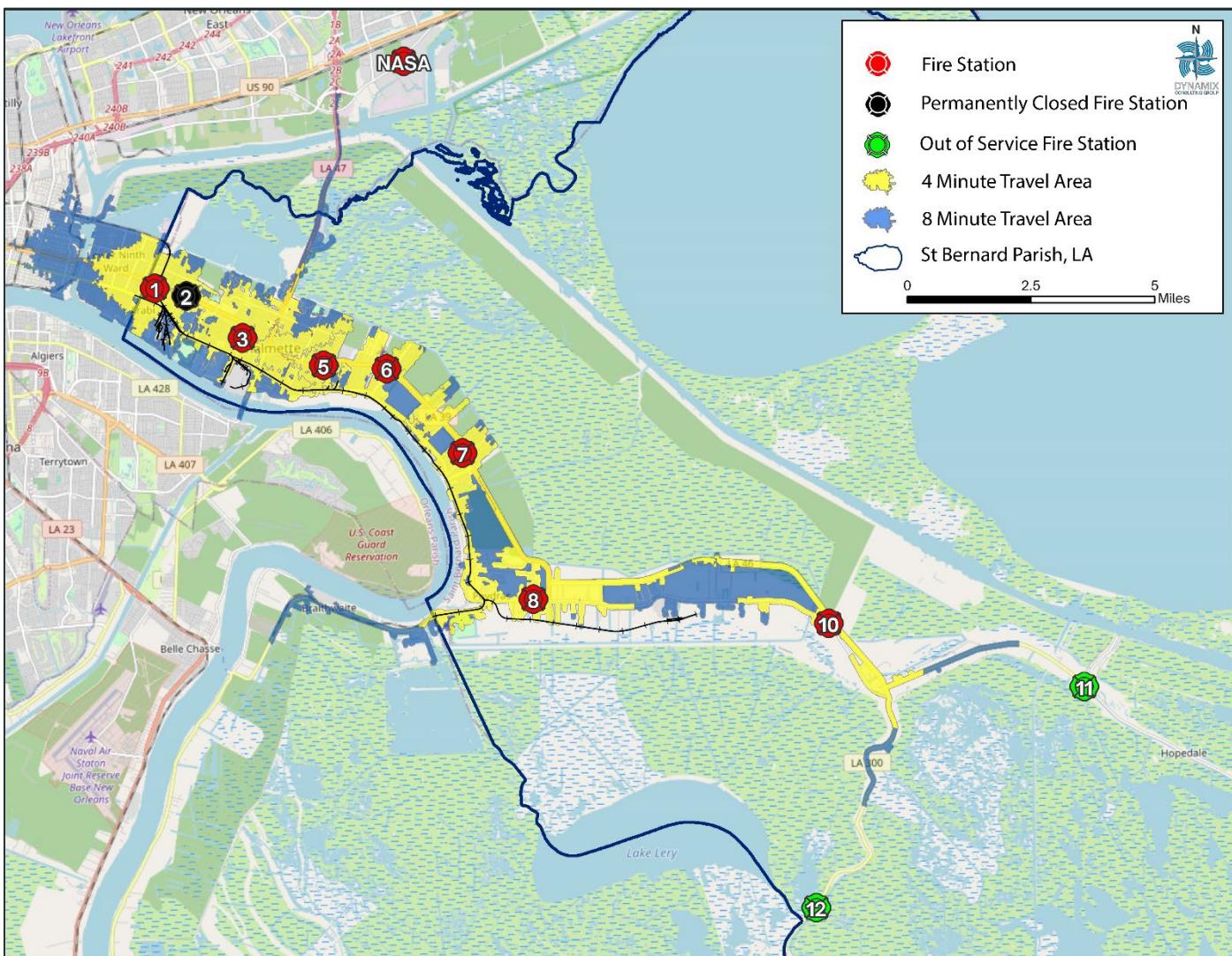
## Resource Distribution Study

The distribution of available resources is one of the key methods to providing higher levels of service to the greatest number of residents possible. This section contains an evaluation of the parish using industry standards with a gap analysis performed. The primary industry standard for evaluating and benchmarking fire department performance is NFPA 1710. While some other entities exist that also provide fire department performance evaluations, such as the Property Insurance Association of Louisiana (PIAL) and the Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau (WSRB), also use NFPA 1710, although rules of thumb are often provided for agencies that lack the ability to complete performance evaluations.

### NFPA 1710 Criteria

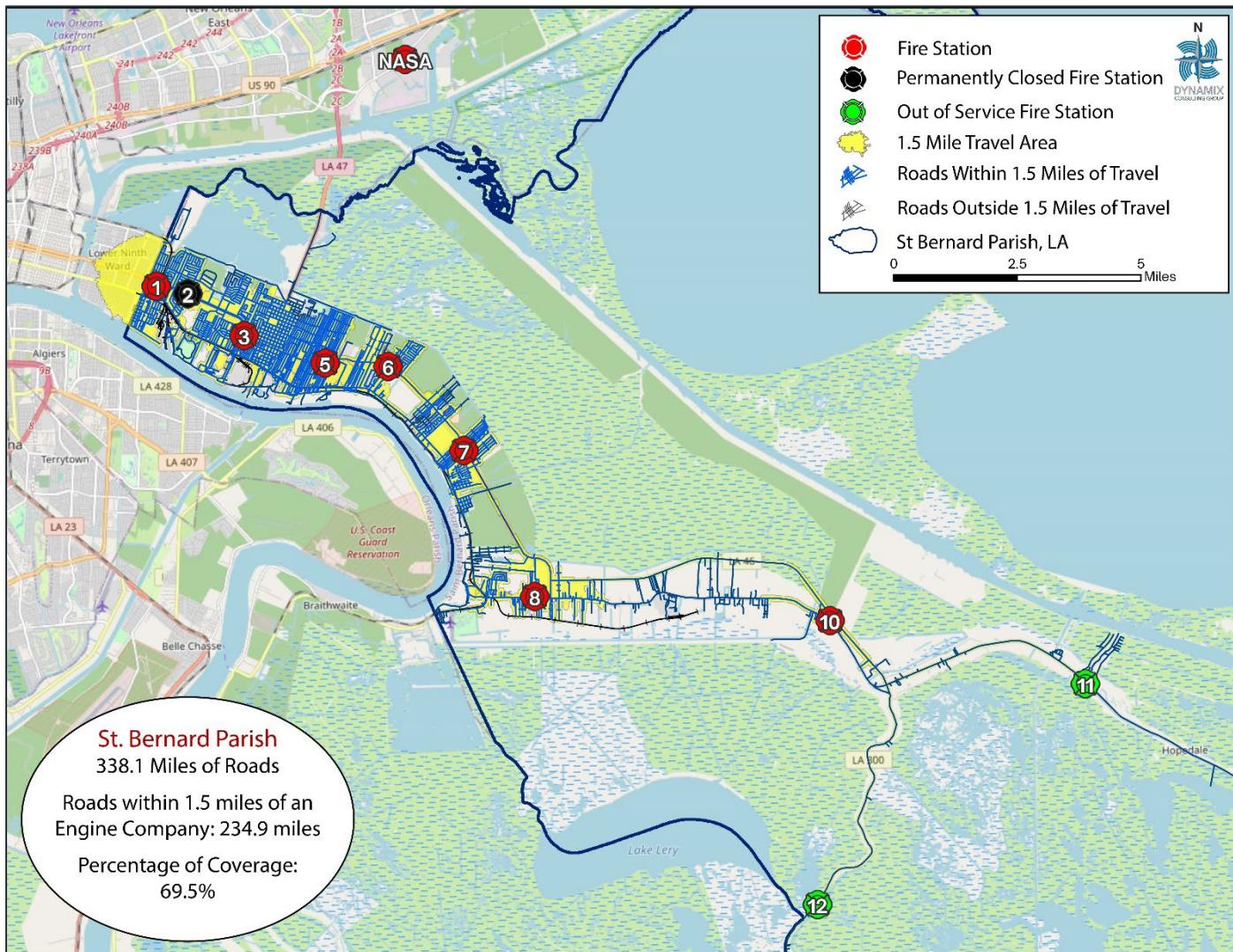
The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is an industry trade association that develops and provides standards and codes for fire departments and emergency medical services for local governments. One of these standards, NFPA 1710: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, serves as a national consensus standard for career fire department performance, operations, and safety. The standard identifies a travel time of 240 seconds, or 4 minutes, as the benchmark for career departments to reach emergency calls within their jurisdiction with the first arriving unit. Additionally, the standard requires the balance of the response (called the effective response force) to arrive at the incident within 480 seconds, or 8 minutes.

The following map provides a synopsis of the parish's ability to meet these standards based on predicted travel times using historical traffic data from Esri for traffic patterns at 8 a.m. on Monday mornings. Unshaded pockets indicate that the area falls outside of the model's maximum extension from the road network.

*Estimated 4 and 8 Minute Travel Times*


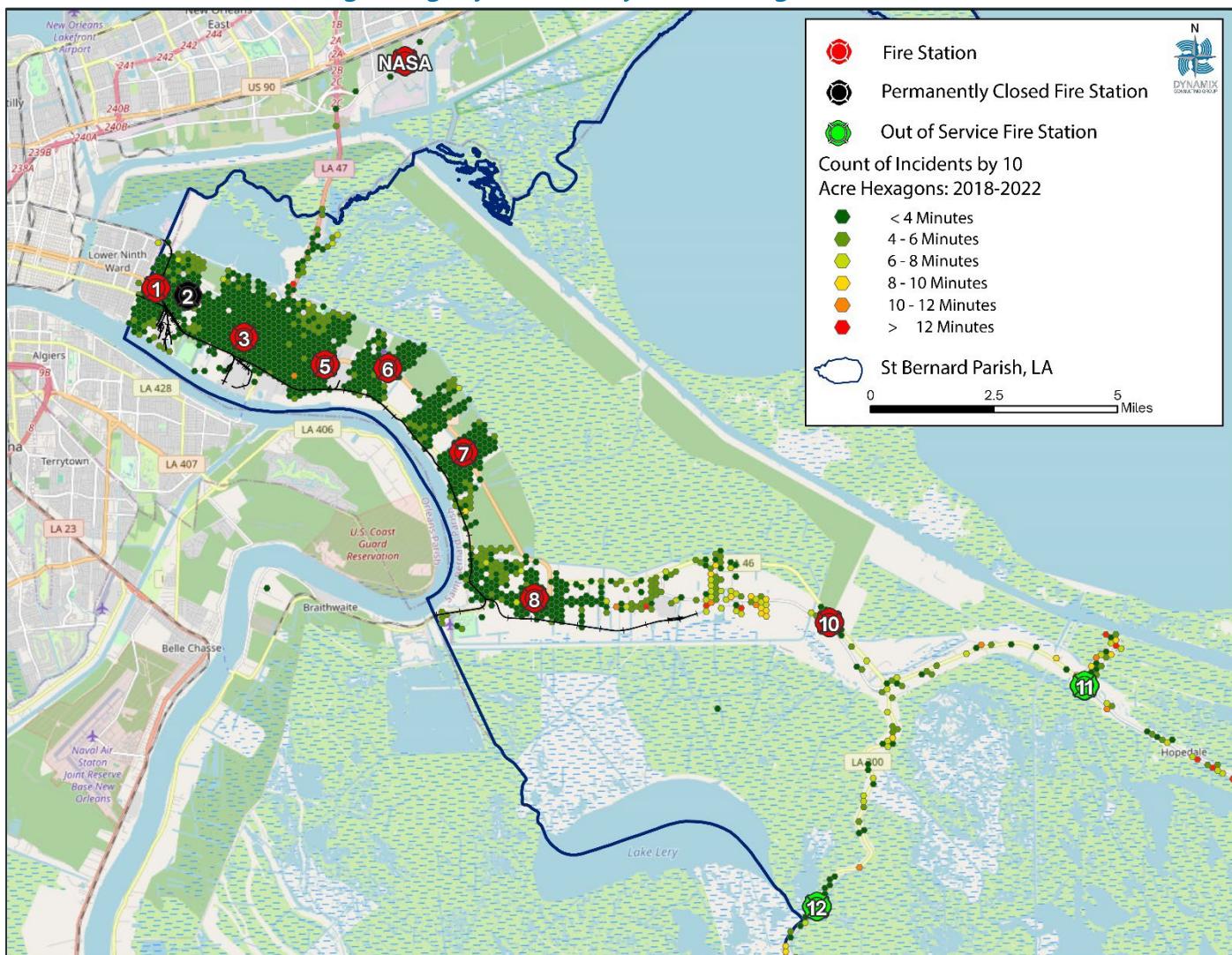
For most roadways within the parish, fire rescue is available within a four or eight-minute travel time. Although there are other populations within the parish, the ability of the fire department to remain on paved and overhead accessible roadways is critical as the cost of these apparatus can exceed \$750,000 and may take more than two years to replace at the present time.

The next map displays an estimated 1.5 mile travel distance from each active fire station. This is used to simulate a four minute travel time used by NFPA 1710. Based on the percentage of road base covered within this area, points are awarded towards the overall scoring of the fire department.

**Property Insurance Association of Louisiana (PIAL) 1.5 Mile Engine Company Travel**


Based on the 1.5 mile estimate, approximately 69.5% of the parish lies within a four minute travel time of an active fire station.

Actual performance activity provides a greater illustration of fire department performance. Using GIS software and incident data occurring from 2018 through 2022, the average travel time performance is displayed by 10-acre hexagons. While this type of analysis is not NFPA 1710 compliant, it is instructive on the typical performance of the fire department.

*Average Emergency Travel Time by 10 Acre Hexagons 2018-2022*


Although travel time performance begins to degrade east of Station 8, the majority of incidents experience travel times meeting or near NFPA 1710 standards.

## Response Reliability Review

No matter how many fire stations or apparatus protect a community, if crews are committed to other tasks, incidents, or otherwise unavailable to respond to emergency incidents, delays occur during a time-sensitive issue. Determining resource reliability involves using several metrics to establish a global perspective on the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department's ability to provide sufficient responding resources to meet service demand within the parish. When all units are available and in quarters, supplying sufficient resources is typically not a problem; however, when multiple calls occur simultaneously, units are committed to incidents for extended periods, or when insufficient resources exist to mitigate an emergency, commanders must ensure further preparation and planning to safely and effectively mitigate all incidents.

### Call Concurrency

The first evaluation is call concurrency. Call concurrency is a comparison of how often multiple calls occur and place additional demand on resources. In the following figure, a concurrent call is when a second unit is dispatched to a separate incident prior to the first unit clearing the scene and becoming available. When two incidents occur simultaneously, and a third separate incident emerges, three concurrent calls are present, and so on.

Call Concurrency 2018-2022	
Single Incident	79.1%
2	18.0%
3	2.5%
4 or more	0.4%

While the majority of incidents occur as single incidents, approximately 20% of the remaining incidents occur while resources are committed to another call. This increases travel times, response performance, and the ability of the fire department to muster sufficient resources to safely and effectively mitigate resource-intensive call types such as structure fires or significant motor vehicle collisions. This metric should be tracked over time to identify trends in concurrent calls to ensure that sufficient resources exist to manage service demand.

### Unit Hour Utilization

Another component considered when evaluating resource reliability is Unit Hour Utilization (UHU). UHU provides an expression of the workload placed on the crew assigned to that unit and describes the amount of time a unit is not available for response because it is already committed to another incident. The larger the percentage, the greater its utilization, and the less available it is for assignment to subsequent calls for service, training, and ancillary duties. Expressed as a percentage, UHU rates represent the percentage of the total hours of use in a year.

An important factor regarding UHU and response performance is the relationship between how often a unit is available to respond to calls versus the performance metric used to evaluate performance. The following section assesses St. Bernard Parish's performance using NFPA 1710 criteria at the 90th percentile. If a unit is unavailable greater than 10% of the time, some portion of the 90th percentile fractile performance will be negatively affected as units from other stations must leave their respective response district and travel into that zone where the unit is unavailable. This degrades response performance, increases wait times on scene, and results in another zone where the first due unit is available and out of position.

Displayed below is the fire department's UHU rate for front-line units. It is essential to understand that UHU is seeking to measure how busy a crew is and not how many hours a particular apparatus accrues over the course of the year. When too few crews are available for response and UHU levels exceed performance thresholds, the ability of that crew to complete required training, additional duties, and have time for meals or recovery diminishes. Because the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department routinely cross-staffs multiple units using the same crews, crew UHU rates are likely higher than expressed.

Unit	Count	Sum	UHU
100	40	52:03:56	0.1%
101	40	52:03:56	0.10%
102	80	104:07:52	0.2%
200	1757	680:37:45	1.6%
201	12263	3023:16:46	6.9%
202	9993	2792:30:18	6.4%
203	1025	315:37:17	0.7%
205	1	0:11:21	0.0%
300	1068	469:13:36	1.1%
301	1068	469:13:36	1.1%
500	396	160:12:32	0.4%
501	23	6:25:52	0.0%
E1	2980	974:08:17	2.2%
E2	152	51:47:17	0.1%
E3	6611	1993:12:37	4.5%
E4	377	167:54:19	0.4%
E5	4654	1453:19:31	3.3%
E6	2862	993:38:35	2.3%
E7	3883	1382:39:11	3.2%
E8	2910	1248:00:44	2.8%
E10	36	38:38:18	0.1%
E11	474	351:20:03	0.8%
E12	306	249:56:38	0.6%
FU2	2	0:28:30	0.0%
SP4	1	0:02:22	0.0%
SQ1	3115	1198:06:26	2.7%
SQ2	1438	712:07:58	1.6%
TK1	2	0:21:37	0.0%

Unit Hour Utilization rates fell within acceptable standards when compared to the 90th percentile. Like call concurrency, this metric should be monitored regularly to identify trends and proactively respond to changes in service demand.

## Response Performance Summary

Analyzing response performance will allow the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department to establish a baseline, communicate its capabilities, and create goals for continuous improvement. To evaluate St. Bernard Parish's system performance, NFPA 1710 is the applicable standard for career fire departments.

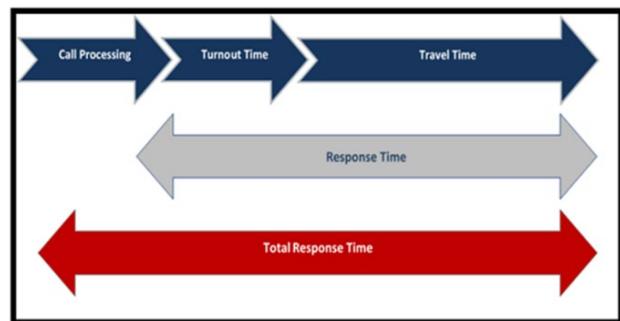
Response time performance is comprised of the following components:

- **Call-Processing Time:** The amount of time between answering a call by the 911 Primary Public Safety Answering Point, or dispatch center, and dispatching of resources.
- **Turnout Time:** The time interval between response unit notification of the incident and apparatus response.
- **Travel Time:** The amount of time the responding unit actually spends on the road traveling to the incident until arrival at the scene. This is a function of speed and distance.
- **Response Time:** This time calculation is from the time of dispatching the fire department to the arrival of the first apparatus. Response Time equals the sum of "Turnout Time" and "Travel Time."
- **Total Response Time:** This is the most apparent time to the caller requesting emergency services. Total response time is the amount of time that occurs from the time they place the emergency call until the units arrive. This time often includes factors both within and outside the control of the fire department, particularly when another agency provides dispatch services.

Tracking the individual components of response time will enable the parish to identify deficiencies and areas for improvement. Once understood, the current performance for Call Processing, Turnout Time, and Travel Time, develop response goals and standards that are both relevant and achievable. Fire service best practices recommend that fire service organizations monitor and report the components of Total Response Time.

The Time Continuum consists of the three elements described above—Call Processing, Turnout Time, and Travel Time. Response Time is a combination of Turnout and Travel Time, and Total Response Time is the sum of all the times starting with the Call-Processing Time, Turnout Time, and Travel Time. The following section includes a more detailed discussion of the components of the Response Time Continuum, including the results of analyses where possible.

Historically, fire rescue service providers have used the performance measurement of average response time to describe the levels of performance. The average is a commonly used descriptive statistic, also called the mean of a data set. Averages may not accurately reflect the performance of the entire data set because data outliers can significantly skew averages, especially in small data sets. One extremely good or bad value can skew the "average" for the entire data set. Percentile measurements are a better measure of performance since they show that most of the data set has achieved a particular level of performance. The 90th percentile means that 90% of responses were equal to or better than the performance identified, and the other 10% are data outliers, inaccurate data, or situations outside of normal operations that delayed performance. This compares to the desired performance objective to determine the degree of success in achieving the goal.



An important consideration when evaluating fractile performance is that the results of each category are not additive, meaning that the sum of two or more constituent metrics cannot be simply added together to find the sum. This is because each dataset is discrete and, as such, requires individual evaluation, particularly when data quality is an issue. If a metric, such as response time, possesses most of its data points, while turnout time is not accurately documented, a significant difference can exist between the response time calculated using the fractile descriptive and the sum of turnout time and travel.

Evaluating the various response time components using the fractile analysis method requires that each component requires individual evaluation separately, as the available data and the quality of the data may vary significantly.

Providing an analysis of performance for emergency calls within St Bernard Parish required removing the following incidents:

- Cells containing zeros or no value
- Incidents with values greater than the cutoff point (assumed as inaccurate data)

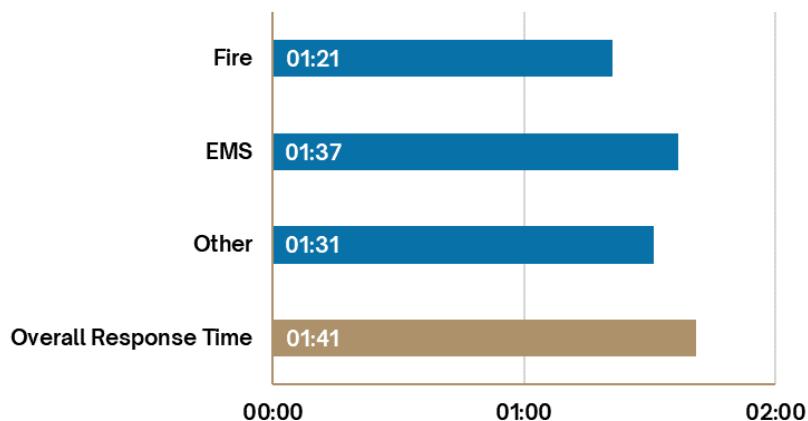
## Call Processing

The industry standard for call processing (or alarm handling) is NFPA 1221: Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems. This standard provides for communication centers to have processing times of not more than 60 seconds, 90% of the time. For special operations, calls requiring translation, or other factors described in the standard, times should not exceed 90 seconds at the 90th percentile. Dynamix Consulting Group recommends the fire department actively work with the communications center to ensure compliance with NFPA 1221. At the time of the study, call received data was not available, and therefore, call processing times could not be processed.

## Turnout Time

The second component of the response continuum, and one directly affected by response personnel, is turnout performance. Turnout is the time it takes personnel to receive the dispatch information, move to the appropriate apparatus, and begin responding to the incident. Whether this information is being recorded is unclear based on the data provided; however, the St Bernard Parish Fire Department should monitor this information and report on performance regularly.

### Turnout Performance 2018 - 2022



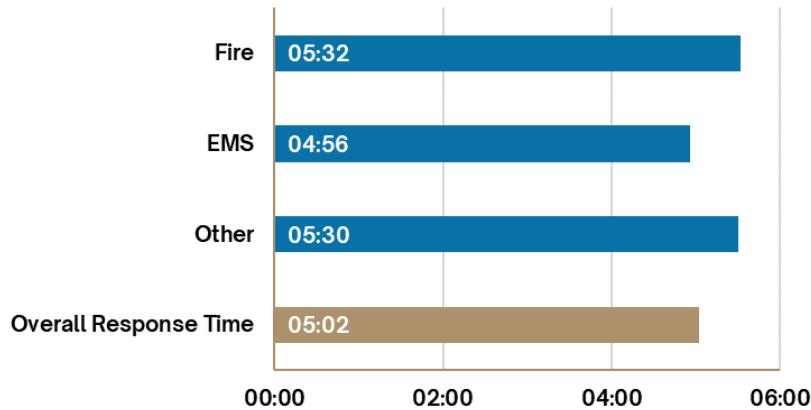
Turnout performance within the fire department nearly meets NFPA 1710 standards for fire responses, and when compared to other fire departments, performed well. Turnout time performance is not always a function of compliance by firefighters but is instead affected by multiple factors. Station design, distance to the apparatus, cross staffing units, and the way that calls are initially received by responders are all examples of additional factors affecting turnout time performance.

## Travel Time

The third component of the response continuum is travel time. It is important to understand that travel time is not specifically a factor of speed as much as it is the result of the proper placement of fire stations from which emergency responses begin. Travel time is the amount of time between when the apparatus departs for the call and when it arrives on the scene.

Travel time is a function of distance, roadway, and traffic conditions. Typically, the only way to improve travel time is to locate additional resources throughout the service area.

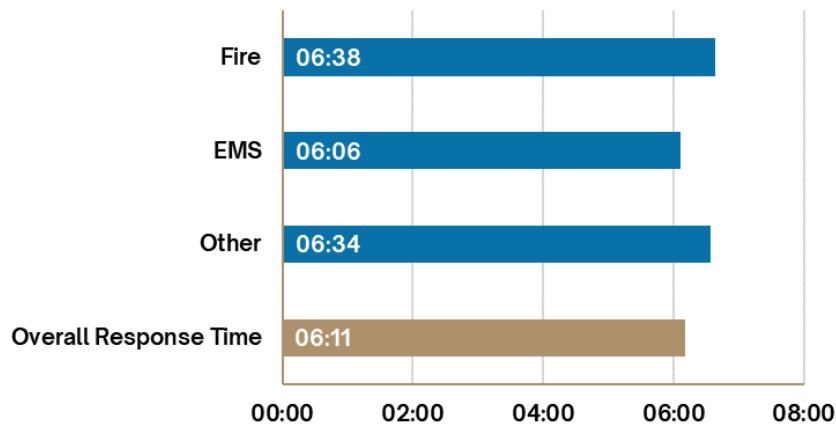
### Travel Performance 2018 - 2022



### Response Time

Response time is the amount of time from initial notification to the fire department until the first unit arrives on the scene. Response time performance is the calculation of the difference between the initial notification time and the arrival time.

### Response Performance 2018 - 2022



Overall, although response performance exceeds NFPA 1710 by approximately one minute, St. Bernard Parish Fire Department consistently arrived onscene to emergency incidents within just over six minutes 90% of the time or better.

## Total Response Time

The culmination of the Response Time Continuum is total response time. When citizens call for emergency assistance, this metric represents what they experience as they place the call and wait for help to arrive. Total response time is the amount of time that elapsed from when the call was initiated at the communications center until the first emergency unit arrived on the scene. At the time of the study, call received data was not available, and therefore, total response times could not be processed as this measures the time from when dispatch received an emergency call until the first unit arrived onscene.

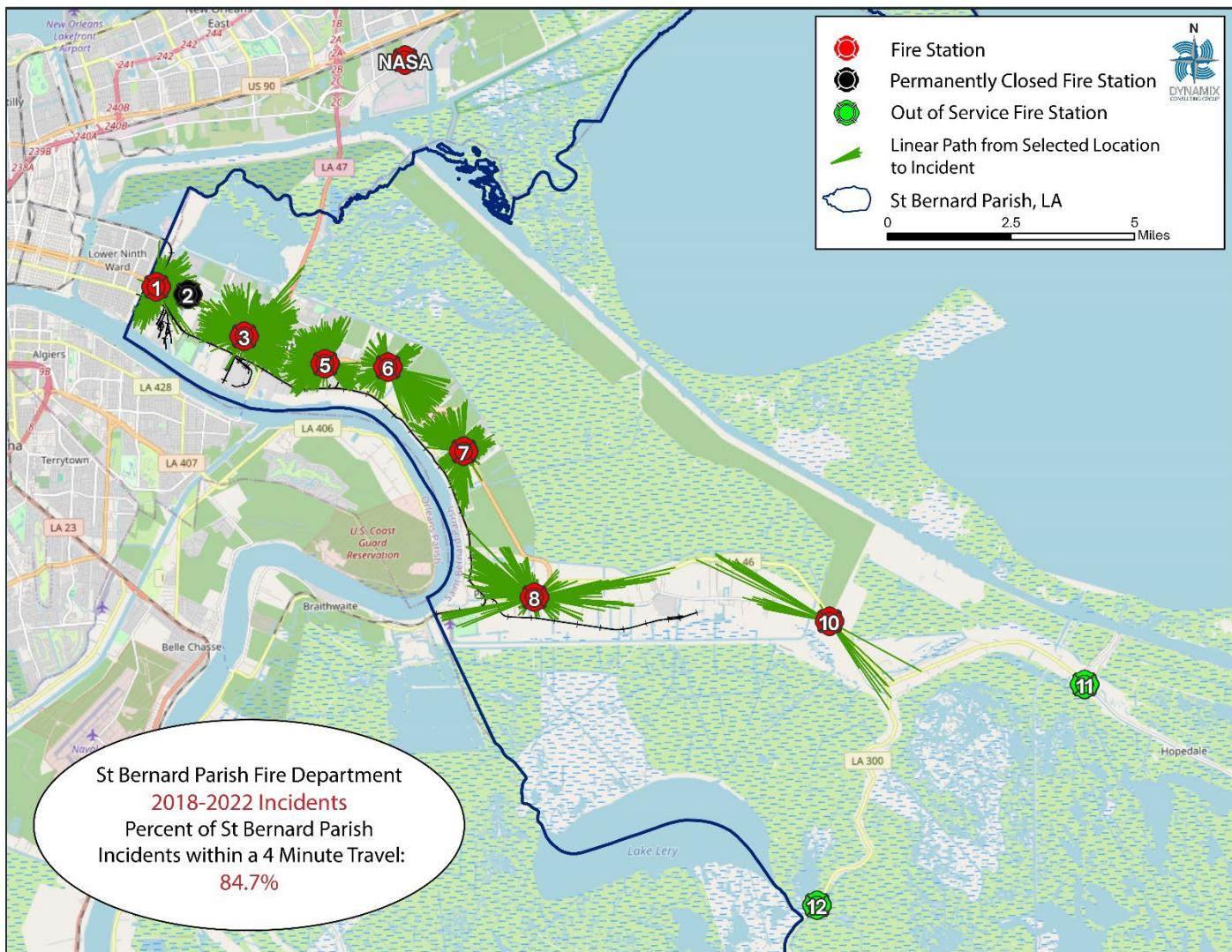
## Summary

While the performance of initial responders in St. Bernard Parish is to be commended, staffing levels of units must also be considered. While having any resource arrive in a timely manner is a blessing, if there are not enough firefighters onscene to conduct a mitigation effort to alleviate the emergency in progress, the speed at which insufficient resources arrive can be misleading.

# Station Location

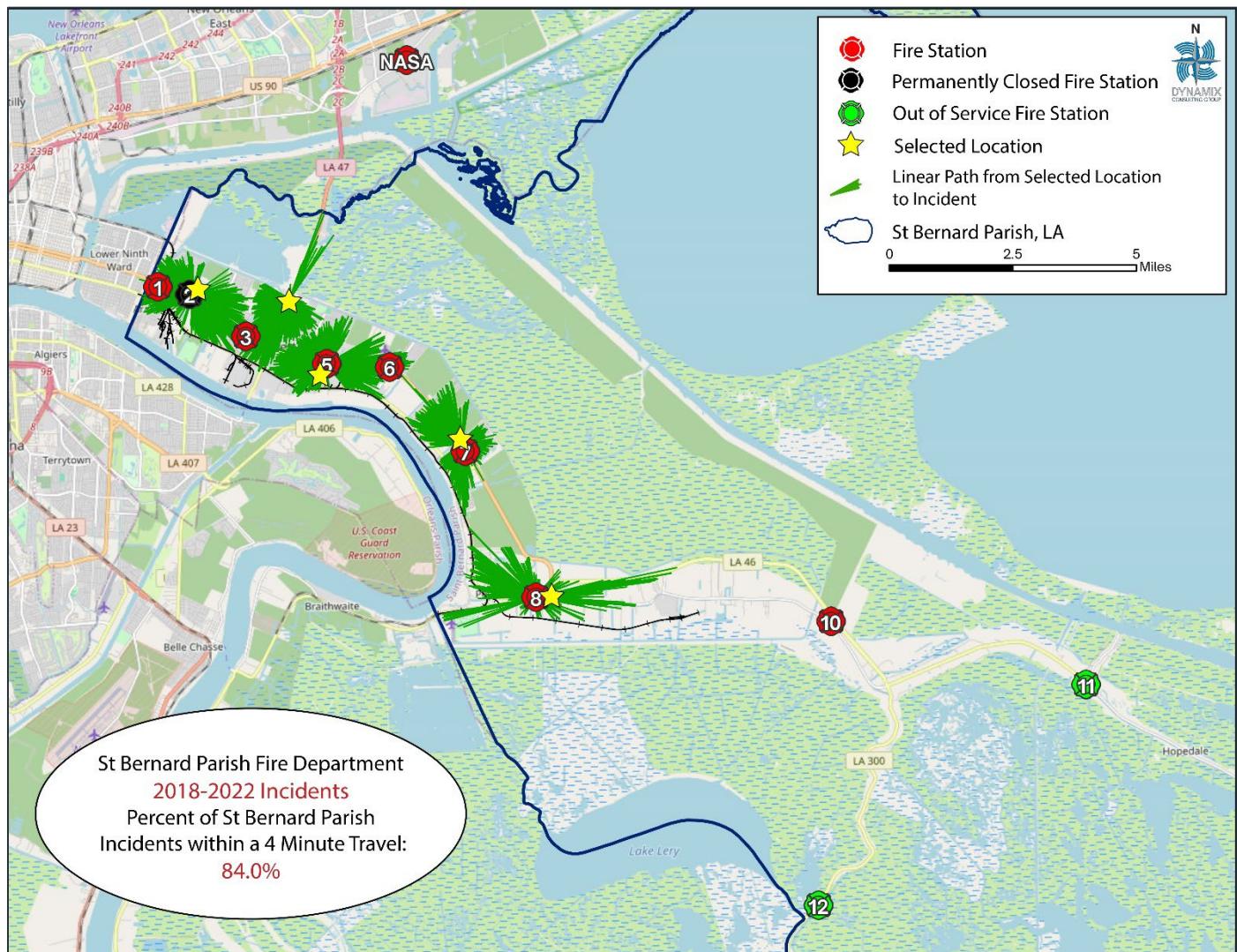
To provide an understanding of baseline performance provided to St. Bernard Parish and options for improvement, GIS software was used to model NFPA 1710 first due company performance criteria of a four-minute or less travel time to actual incident locations occurring from 2018 to 2022 using the parish's current deployment model. The results of this model indicate that, based on predicted travel times on a Monday morning at 8:00 a.m., the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department can respond to 84.7% of the parish's calls for service within a four-minute travel time using seven fire stations.

## Baseline Assessment



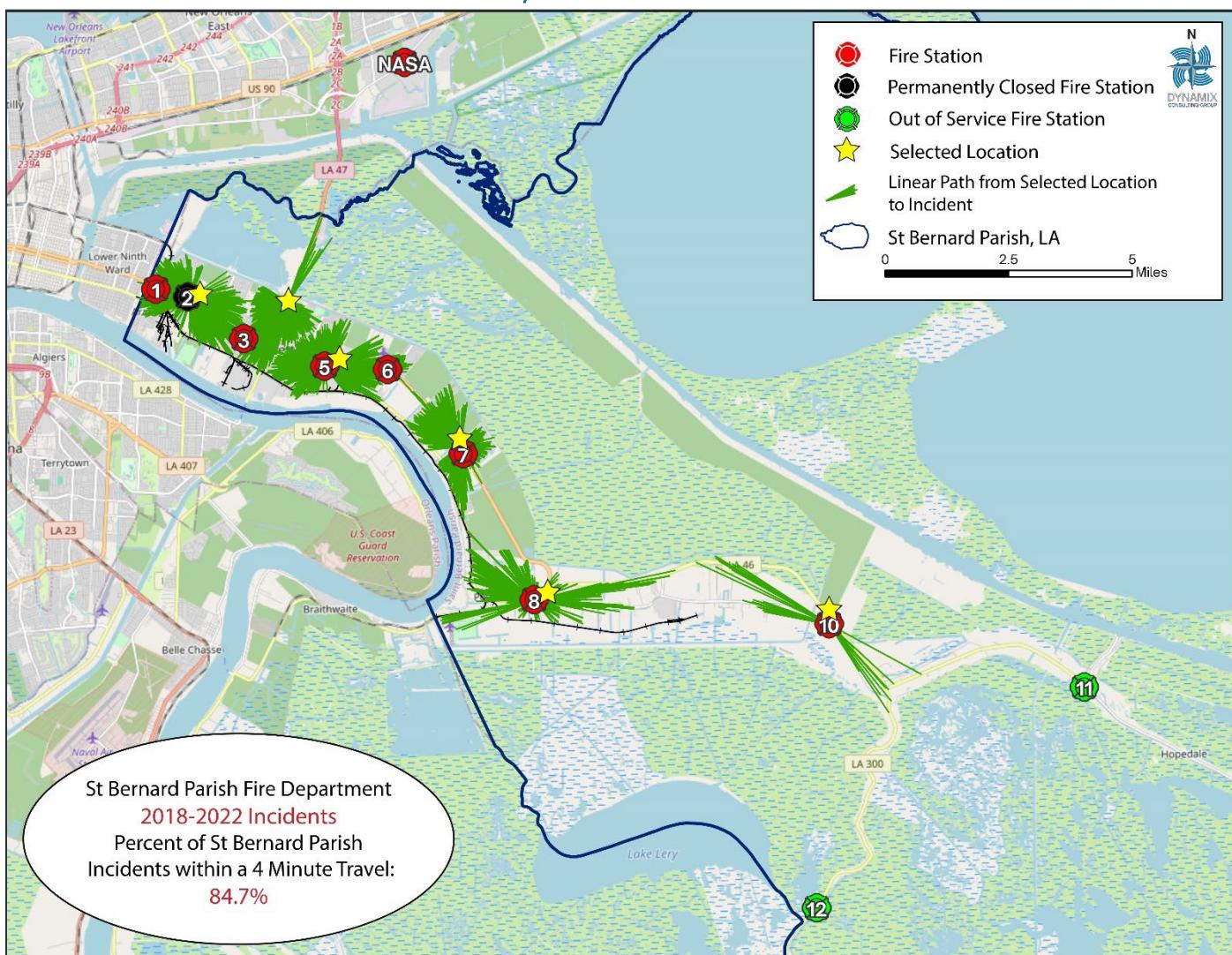
In its current configuration, 84.7% of emergency calls lie within a four-minute travel time of a fire station. Next, a station optimization analysis was performed to compare how changes to the current deployment model could match current performance and assess the viability of current fire station locations.

### Station Optimization – 5 Fire Stations



In a five-station optimization model, stations 5, 7, and 8 are positioned in an optimized location. Station 2 is also in an optimal location; however, the model places Station 3 to the northeast of its current location. Overall, performance decreased by 0.7%. However, when compared with the ability to increase individual station crew numbers and reduce operating costs, a slight decrease in performance may be a viable option. It should be noted that the majority of the parish's current fire stations are located very near to the optimized model.

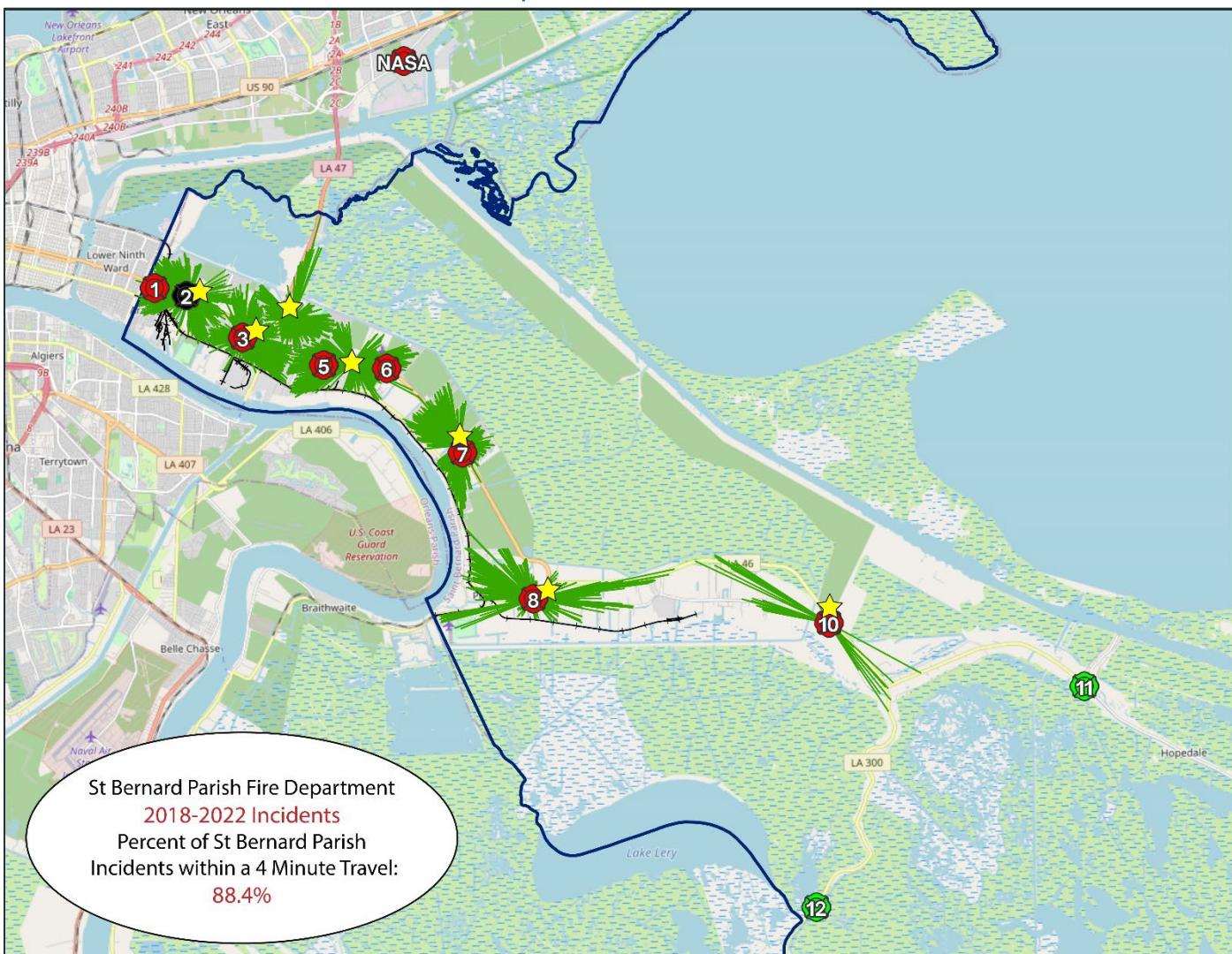
Next, a six station model was completed to compare predicted performance.

*Station Optimization – 6 Fire Stations*


In this six station optimized model, Station 10 was added manually as, although that location may not significantly impact overall performance, residents in outlying areas also require emergency services. This brought performance back to baseline levels.

Finally, a seven station model was completed with Station 10 remaining a required location.

### Station Optimization – 7 Fire Stations



When a seven station optimization model was run using identical parameters as the previous models, Station 3's current location reemerged as an optimal location while the original site located northeast of Station 3 remained.

While this information is helpful in reaching a data driven decision as to how best for the parish to proceed, this represents only one piece of information within the data. Road networks, flooding potential, and the political atmosphere all affect the final decision.

### Deployment and Performance Considerations

#### 36. Establish Fire Department Performance Standards.

Dynamix Consulting Group recommends that the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department establish and adopt performance standards and set trigger points for when to add additional resources to achieve the desired fire department performance. Through the adoption of performance standards, the fire department can provide a consistent level of performance, justify future additions as required by demand for services, and plan to fund the necessary resources to achieve the desired performance.

37. Submit an annual report to the AHJ in accordance with NFPA 1710 4.1.2.5.1.

4.1.2.5.1 The fire department shall evaluate its level of service and deployment delivery of alarm handling time, turnout time, and travel time performance objectives annually.

4.1.2.5.2\* The evaluations shall be based on emergency incident data relating to the level of service, deployment, and the achievement of each travel time performance objectives in each geographic area within the jurisdiction of the fire department.

4.1.2.6 The fire department shall provide the AHJ with a written report annually.

4.1.2.6.1 The annual report shall define the geographic areas and circumstances in which the requirements of this standard are not being met.

4.1.2.6.2 The annual report shall explain the predictable consequences of these deficiencies and address the steps necessary to achieve compliance.

4.1.2.6.3 The annual report shall identify any deficiencies that are anticipated to develop in the next three years and address the steps necessary to continue to achieve compliance with this standard.

The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department should include a concise report to the AHJ that includes only the abovementioned information. This document should serve as an ongoing source of evaluation and discussion between the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department and Parish Officials about the resources required to meet the established performance criteria.

38. Station Optimization Recommendation.

Consider the consolidation of fire stations to meet optimal performance. While these analyses represent only one piece of information for consideration, this information was derived using a data driven methodology to assist the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department in determining priorities such as deployment or if needed, remodeling or relocation.

39. Regularly request and track performance data via CAD to measure call processing and total response performance.

While there are many accredited communication centers across the nation, fire rescue is one of the few disciplines that base accreditation on continuous performance improvement, as opposed to administrative and operational policies and procedures. Through the regular measurement of the metrics contained within this report, trends can be established, and data driven decisions made as to when, where, and how best to invest public resources.

40. Involve performance measurement, analysis, and interpretation at all levels of the organization.

When people understand the “why” behind the tasks they are performing, it is easier for them to understand why it is important. Data analysis begins with report writing, review, quality assurance, measurement, and interpretation. Regular review and comparison of performance, when used in a positive context, will assist St. Bernard Parish in achieving a continuous performance cycle.

41. Review RMS software at regular intervals to ensure that it meets departmental needs.

While it is not prudent to change RMS software at rapid intervals, it should be evaluated at least every contract period so that the department gets the most from its software. Engaging employees at multiple levels of the organization to develop a knowledge base will assist in receiving the feedback required to select the right software for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department's needs.

42. Send firefighters to the National Fire Academy courses regarding subjects such as NFIRS, data collection and management, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Enriching the base knowledge within the organization will allow the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department to build internal resources for areas often lacking in other organizations, as well as the development of administrative skill sets that prepare our future leaders.

43. Continuously evaluate the system's performance versus the outcomes of incidents.

As mentioned in the report, the speed at which a resource arrives onscene is of little value if positive outcomes cannot be achieved. Monitor dollar loss, property saved, EMS outcomes, and public education and community risk reduction programs to develop new methods of the effective delivery of services and improvement upon current programs.

# Master List of Recommendations

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The following recommendations are listed in the order they appear in this report.

<b>St. Bernard Parish Fire Department Recommendations</b>
1. The Parish should establish a single service delivery tax district.
2. Create a Health and Safety Chief position.
3. Create an Administrative Assistant position.
4. Investigate the potential opportunities in creating a unified communications center.
5. Implement a priority dispatching system.
6. Work toward compliance with NFPA 1221 for staffing the Communications Division with at least two telecommunicators at all times.
7. Investigate the benefits of implementing the use of an automated dispatch system.
8. Create an additional Training Officer position.
9. Establish a formal feedback/input mechanism to receive necessary end-user feedback about the training program.
10. Encourage all uniformed members to avail themselves of the opportunity to attend the National Fire Academy on a paid stipend once each year.
11. Work toward compliance with NFPA 1710 compliance for staffing of engines and ladder trucks.
12. Continue to invest in Special Operations training.
13. Establish and maintain a Hazardous Materials Team.
14. Continue to seek regional and federal grant funding for special operations.
15. Increase the number of Fire Inspectors to bring inspection frequency into compliance with NFPA 1730.
16. Create a Fire Data Analyst position.
17. Create a Public Educator and Information Officer position.
18. Regularly review parish demographic information for “at risk” populations and implement targeted Community Risk Reduction Programs as population changes occur.
19. Design and implement a departmentwide communication plan.
20. Update all fire department policies and procedures.
21. The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department should conduct periodic reviews of current compensation structures, market competitiveness, and parish compensation philosophies.
22. Ensure that the St. Bernard Parish has an active Safety Committee in place and that the activities of the committee align with Chapter 4 of NFPA 1500.
23. Establish a comprehensive occupational medical program that includes medical evaluations for candidates and members.
24. Develop a Fire Department Professional Development Program.
25. Develop a Fire Department Succession Plan.
26. Automatic fire sprinkler systems should protect all fire stations.
27. All fire stations should be designed with cancer prevention engineering measures.
28. All fire stations should include drive-through bays.
29. Create a Fleet Manager position.
30. Evaluate the Vehicle Replacement Plan at regular intervals.
31. Review and update the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department mission statement as necessary.

### St. Bernard Parish Fire Department Recommendations

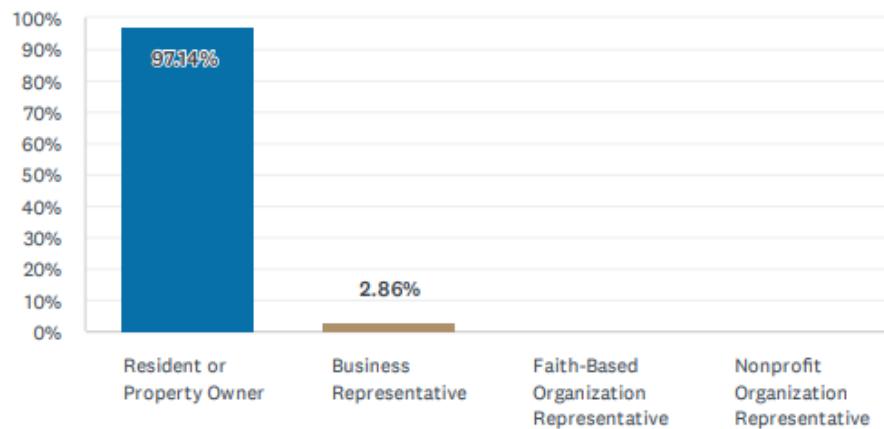
32. Review and update the St. Bernard Fire Department vision statement as necessary.
33. Review and update the organizational core values statement for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department as necessary.
34. The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department should consider developing a long-range Master Plan.
35. Create an EMS officer position.
36. Establish Fire Department Performance Standards.
37. Submit an annual report to the AHJ in accordance with NFPA 1710 4.1.2.5.1.
38. Station Optimization Recommendation.
39. Regularly request and track performance data via CAD to measure call processing and total response performance.
40. Involve performance measurement, analysis, and interpretation at all levels of the organization.
41. Review RMS software at regular intervals to ensure that it meets departmental needs.
42. Send firefighters to the National Fire Academy courses regarding subjects such as NFIRS, data collection and management, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
43. Continuously evaluate the system's performance versus the outcomes of incidents.

## Appendix A: Community Survey

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**Q1 I am a \_\_\_\_\_ in St. Bernard Parish:**

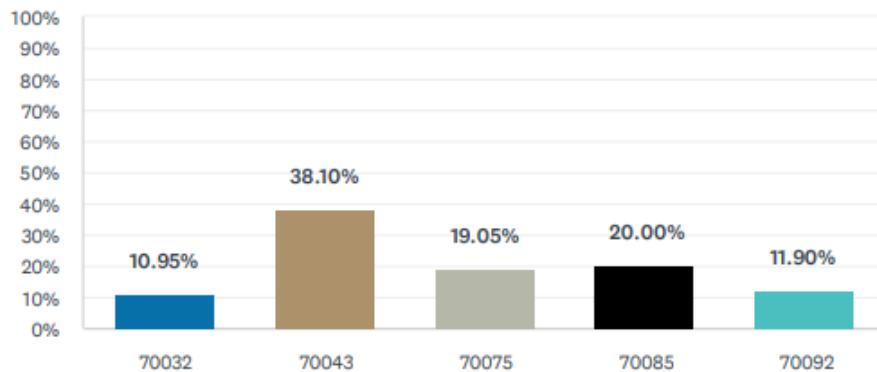
Answered: 210    Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Resident or Property Owner	97.14%	204
Business Representative	2.86%	6
Faith-Based Organization Representative	0.00%	0
Nonprofit Organization Representative	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>210</b>

## Q2 My zip code is:

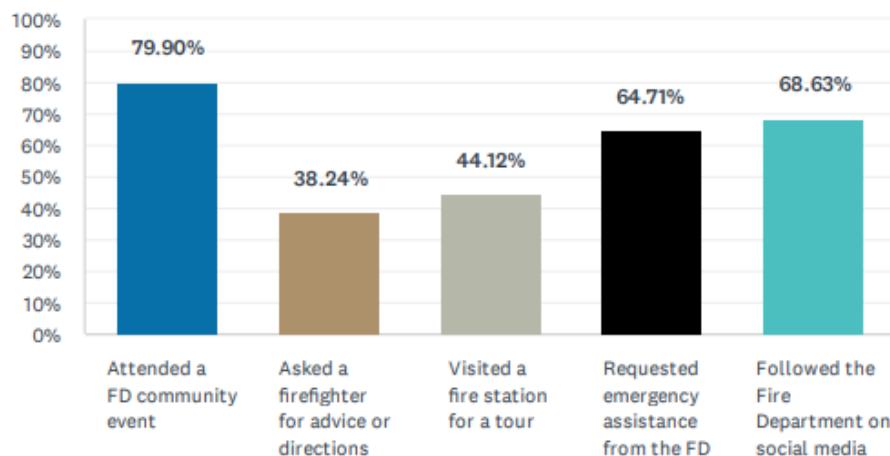
Answered: 210 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
70032	10.95% 23
70043	38.10% 80
70075	19.05% 40
70085	20.00% 42
70092	11.90% 25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>210</b>

### Q3 Have you ever: (check all that apply)

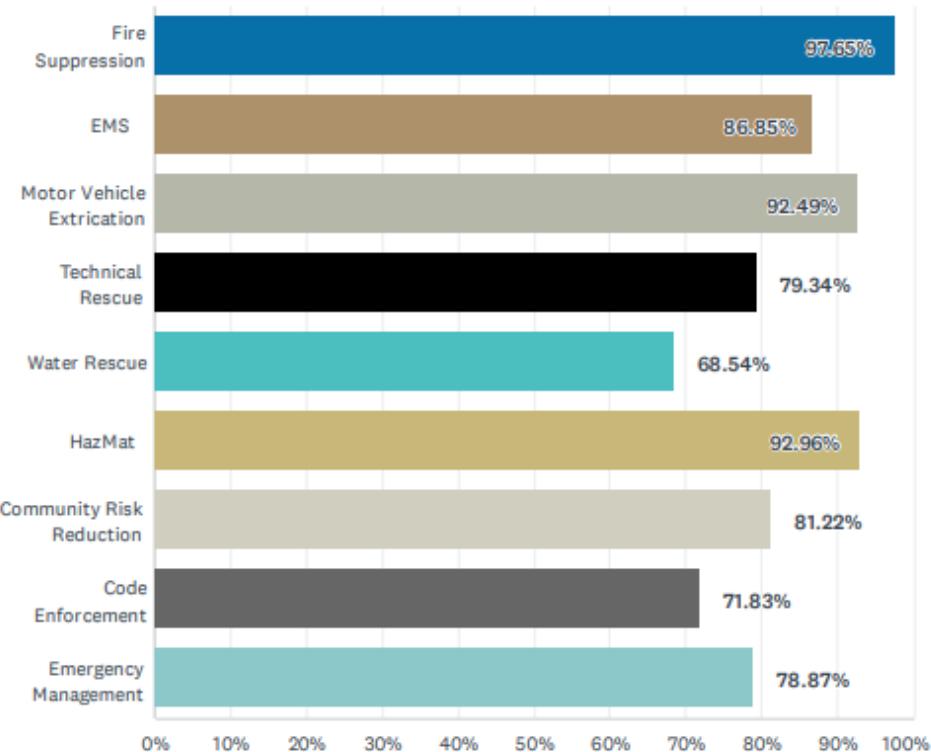
Answered: 204 Skipped: 10



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Attended a FD community event	79.90%	163
Asked a firefighter for advice or directions	38.24%	78
Visited a fire station for a tour	44.12%	90
Requested emergency assistance from the FD	64.71%	132
Followed the Fire Department on social media	68.63%	140
Total Respondents: 204		

## Q4 I expect the following services to be provided by the Fire Department:

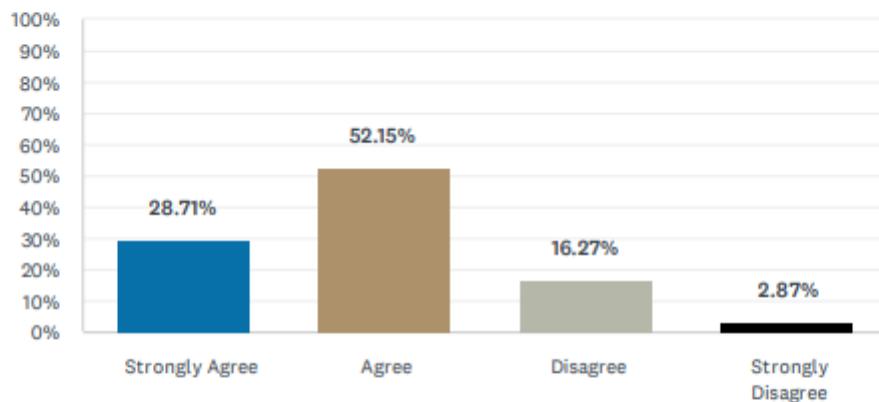
Answered: 213 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Fire Suppression	97.65% 208
EMS	86.85% 185
Motor Vehicle Extrication	92.49% 197
Technical Rescue	79.34% 169
Water Rescue	68.54% 146
HazMat	92.96% 198
Community Risk Reduction	81.22% 173
Code Enforcement	71.83% 153
Emergency Management	78.87% 168
Total Respondents: 213	

**Q5 The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department provides appropriate community education and outreach programs.**

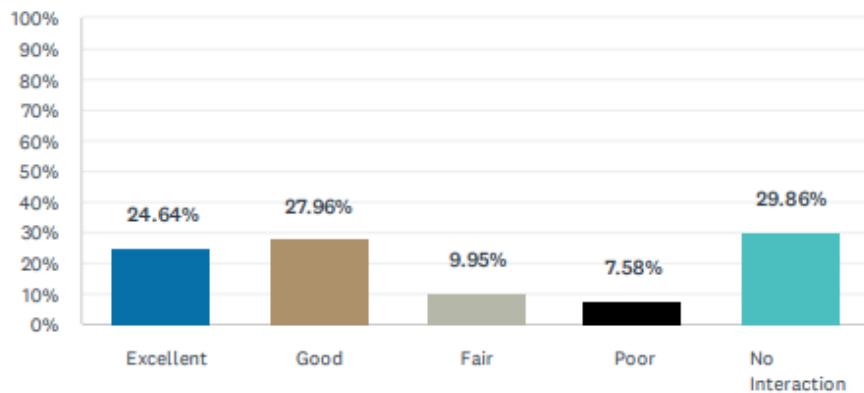
Answered: 209    Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	28.71%	60
Agree	52.15%	109
Disagree	16.27%	34
Strongly Disagree	2.87%	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>209</b>

**Q6** The St. Bernard Parish Fire Prevention Division promotes public safety by administering fire codes and standards, conducting regular building inspections, and providing prompt detection and compliance of code violations. Please rate and describe your experience with the Fire Prevention Division.

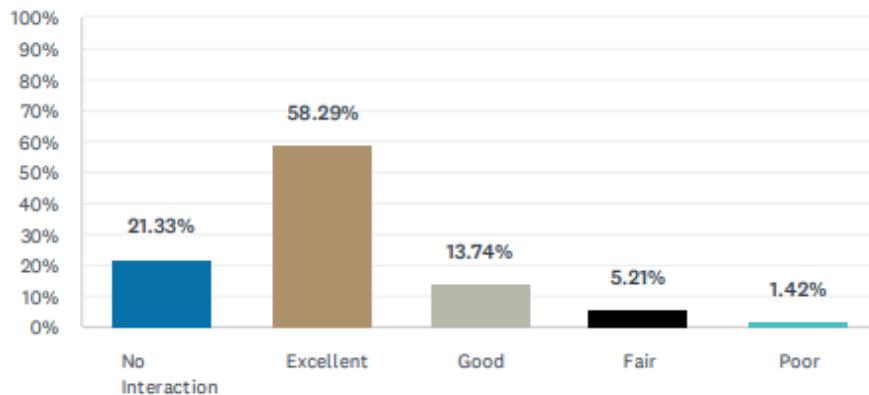
Answered: 211    Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	24.64%	52
Good	27.96%	59
Fair	9.95%	21
Poor	7.58%	16
No Interaction	29.86%	63
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>211</b>

**Q7 In the last three years, have you personally received or witnessed an emergency response from the Fire Department? If so, how would you rate the quality of the service?**

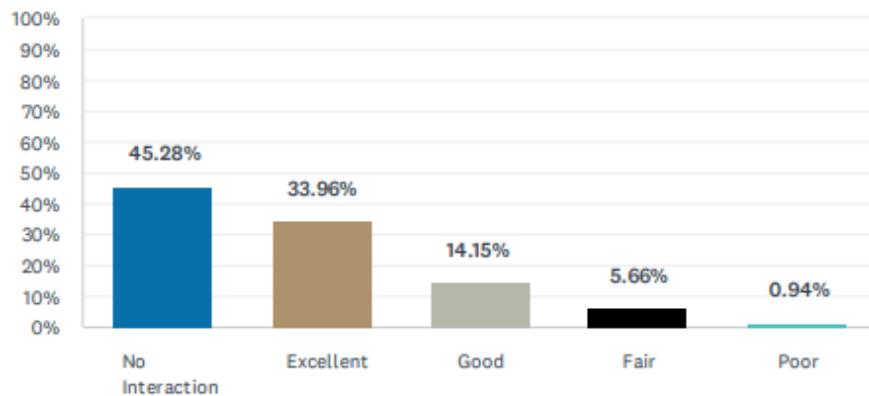
Answered: 211 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No Interaction	21.33%	45
Excellent	58.29%	123
Good	13.74%	29
Fair	5.21%	11
Poor	1.42%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>211</b>

**Q8** In the last three years, have you personally received or witnessed any non-emergency services (such as Code Enforcement, Life Safety Education, etc.) provided by the Fire Department? If so, how would you rate the quality of the non-emergency service?

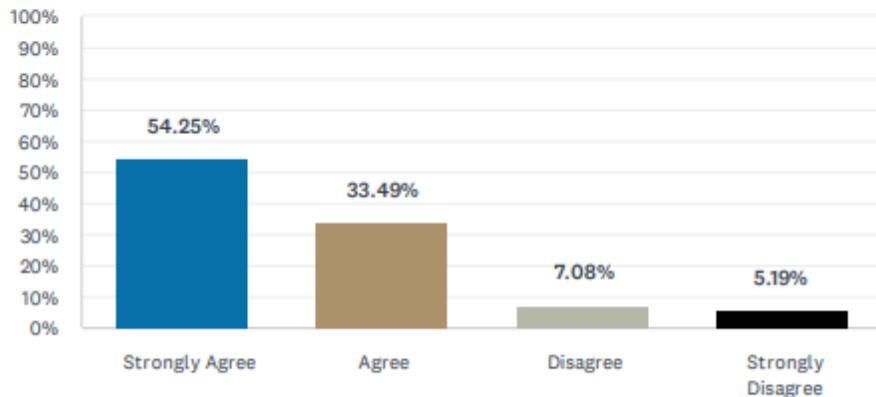
Answered: 212    Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No Interaction	45.28%	96
Excellent	33.96%	72
Good	14.15%	30
Fair	5.66%	12
Poor	0.94%	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>212</b>

## Q9 The proximity of a fire station to my home or work is appropriate for my needs.

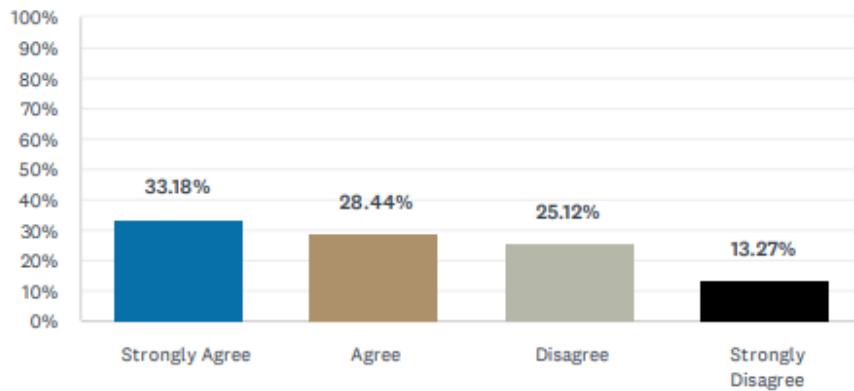
Answered: 212 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly Agree	54.25%
Agree	33.49%
Disagree	7.08%
Strongly Disagree	5.19%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>212</b>

**Q10 The taxes I pay to support the Fire Department are appropriate to the service that is provided.**

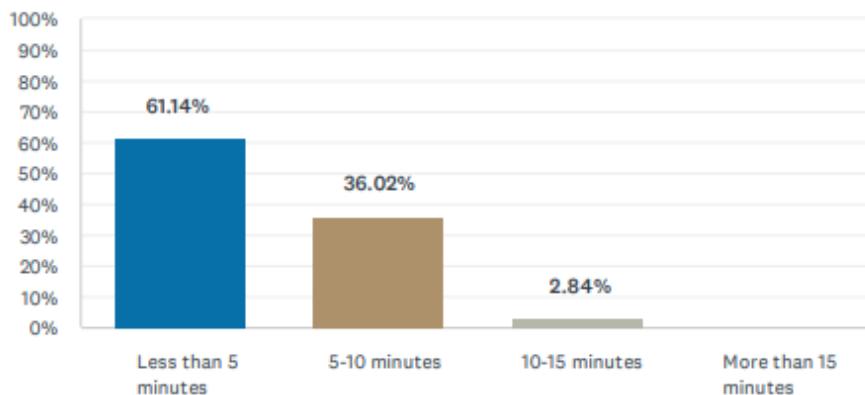
Answered: 211 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	33.18%	70
Agree	28.44%	60
Disagree	25.12%	53
Strongly Disagree	13.27%	28
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>211</b>

**Q11 What do you feel is the appropriate amount of time from when a person calls 9-1-1 until the arrival of the Fire Department at an emergency?**

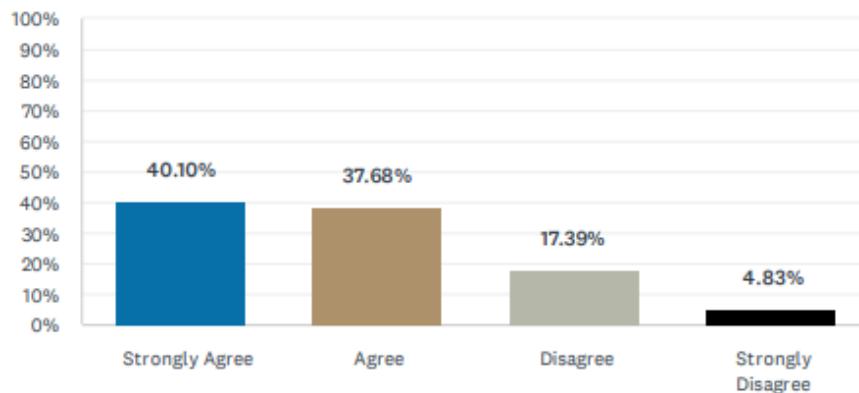
Answered: 211 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Less than 5 minutes	61.14% 129
5-10 minutes	36.02% 76
10-15 minutes	2.84% 6
More than 15 minutes	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>211</b>

**Q12 The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department responds to all emergency calls in a timely manner.**

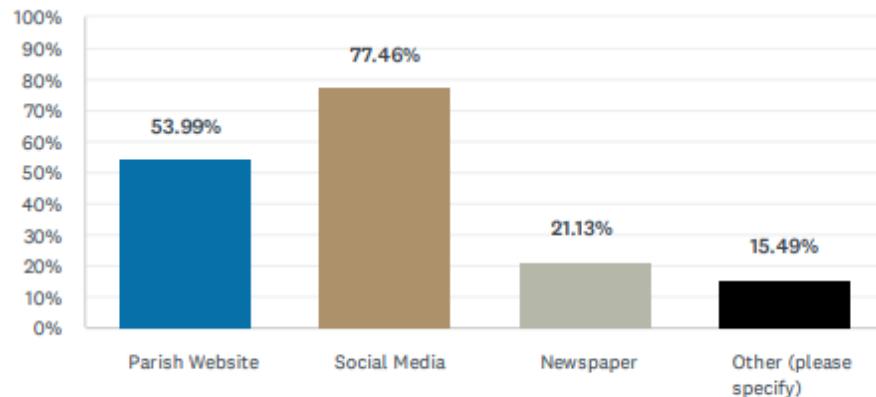
Answered: 207    Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	40.10%	83
Agree	37.68%	78
Disagree	17.39%	36
Strongly Disagree	4.83%	10
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>207</b>

**Q13 Where do you look for information from the Fire Department? Please check all that apply.**

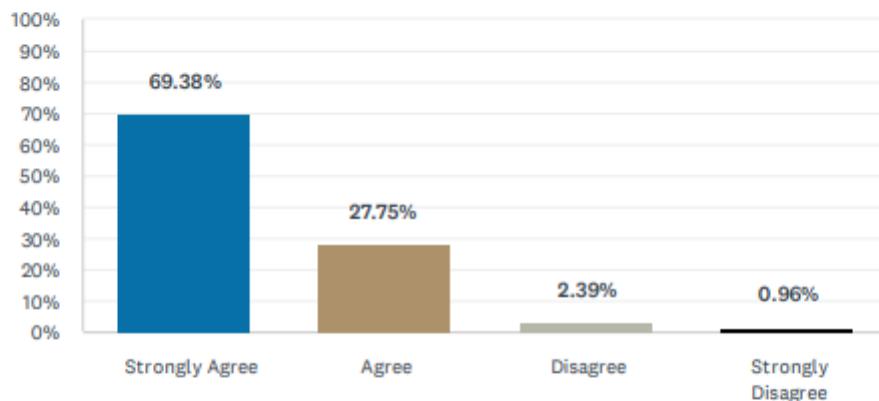
Answered: 213 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Parish Website	53.99% 115
Social Media	77.46% 165
Newspaper	21.13% 45
Other (please specify)	15.49% 33
Total Respondents: 213	

## Q14 St. Bernard Parish Firefighters and Staff Members are kind, courteous and professional.

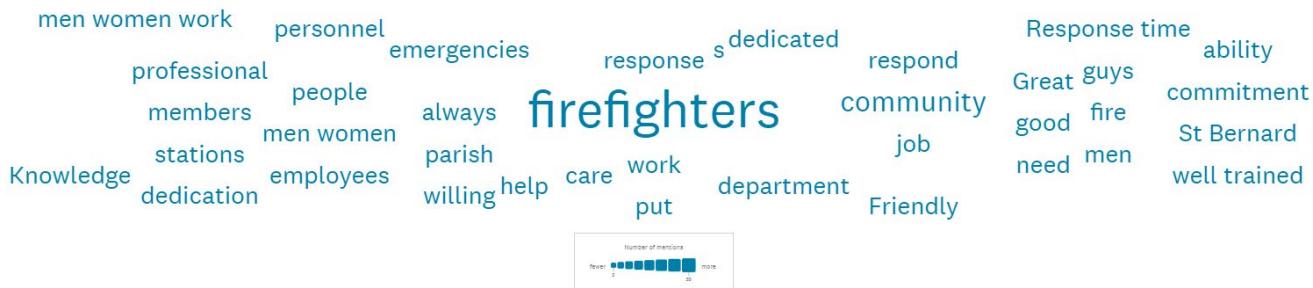
Answered: 209 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	69.38%	145
Agree	27.75%	58
Disagree	2.39%	5
Strongly Disagree	0.96%	2
Total Respondents: 209		

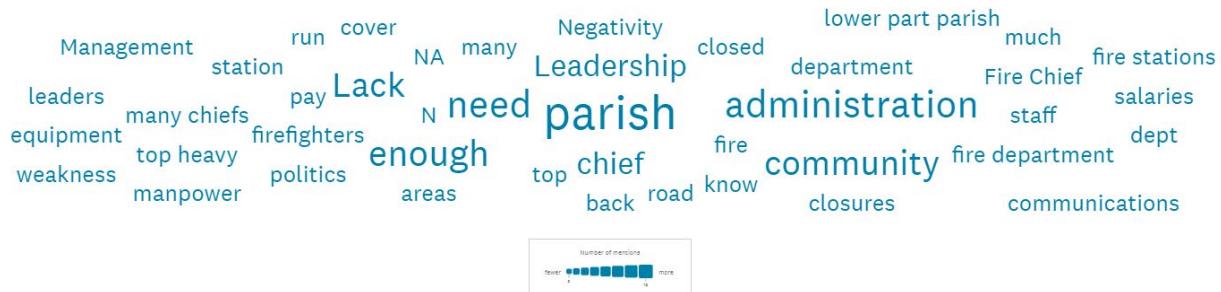
## Q15 What is the greatest strength of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department?

Answered: 160 Skipped: 54



## Q16 What is the greatest weakness of the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department?

Answered: 158 Skipped: 56



## Q17 What is the greatest opportunity in the future for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department?

Answered: 140 Skipped: 74

services provide  
 fire chief fire department chief equipment Growth Increase stations open Parish government  
 better serve St Bernard Taking New stations will fire houses  
 ambulance service fire stations make staff pay personnel response times  
 New administration calls run keep public department Open opening stations  
 leadership administration change Taking EMS services



## Q18 What is the greatest challenge in the future for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department?

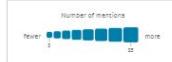
Answered: 148    Skipped: 66



## Q19 Other comments you would like to share about the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department:

Answered: 84    Skipped: 130

people Administration    St Bernard parish    people parish  
 fire dept    service    men women  
 great job    stations    need  
 deserve    St Bernard    department  
 salaries    everyone    fire department  
 without    see    guys  
 give    new making  
 None think    keep upper  
 work chief    paid parish  
 good fire    job years  
 Keep great work    will money  
 change    firefighters  
 many chiefs    community  
 funding    growing

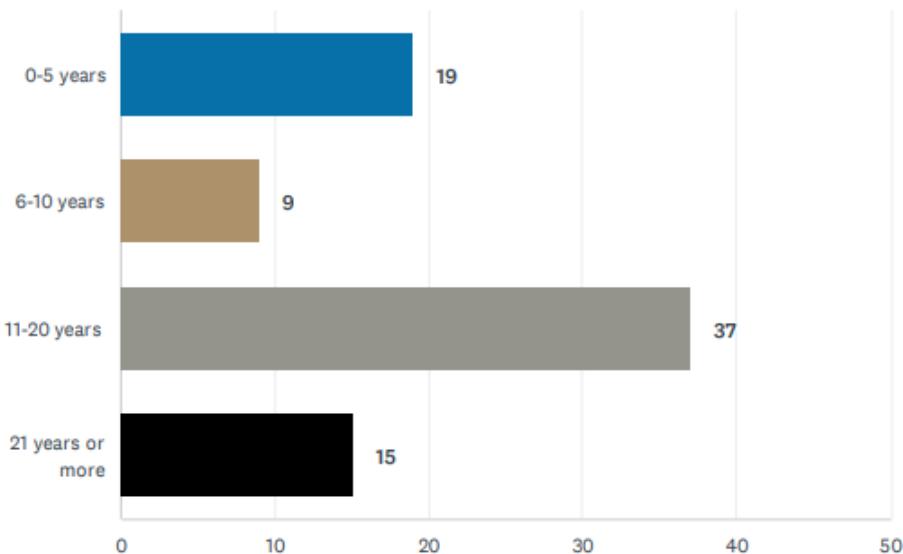


## Appendix B: Fire Department Survey

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**Q1 Please identify your number of years of service to the fire department.**

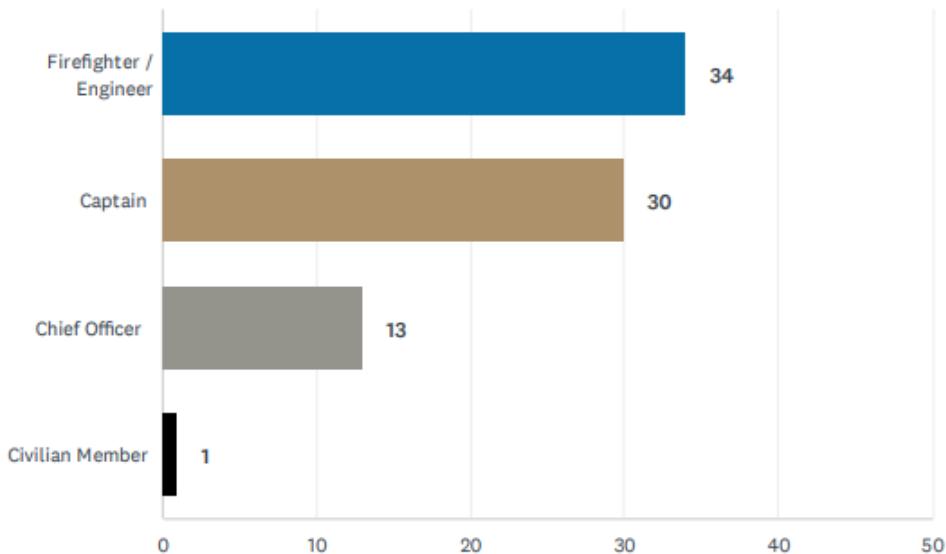
Answered: 80 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-5 years	23.75%	19
6-10 years	11.25%	9
11-20 years	46.25%	37
21 years or more	18.75%	15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>80</b>

## Q2 What is your current position?

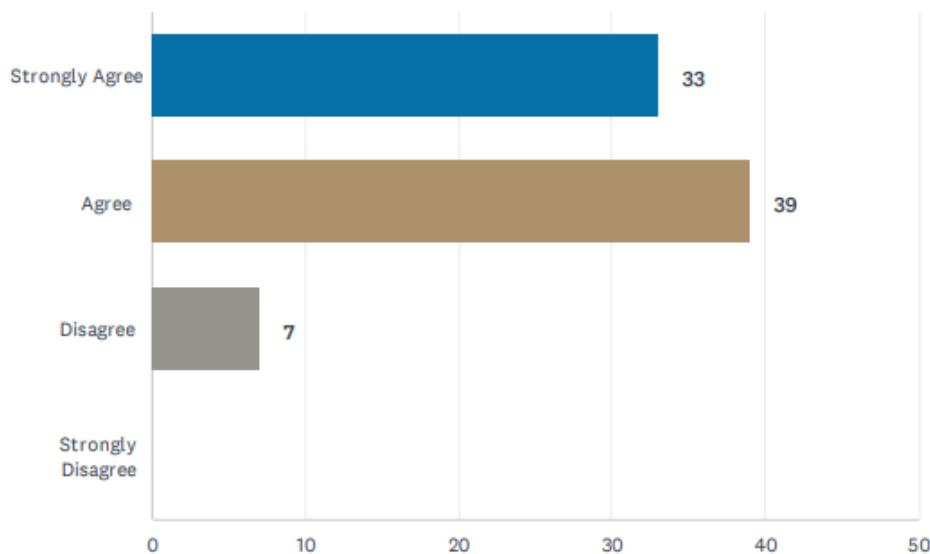
Answered: 78 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Firefighter / Engineer	43.59% 34
Captain	38.46% 30
Chief Officer	16.67% 13
Civilian Member	1.28% 1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>

### Q3 I am proud to tell other people that I work for the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department.

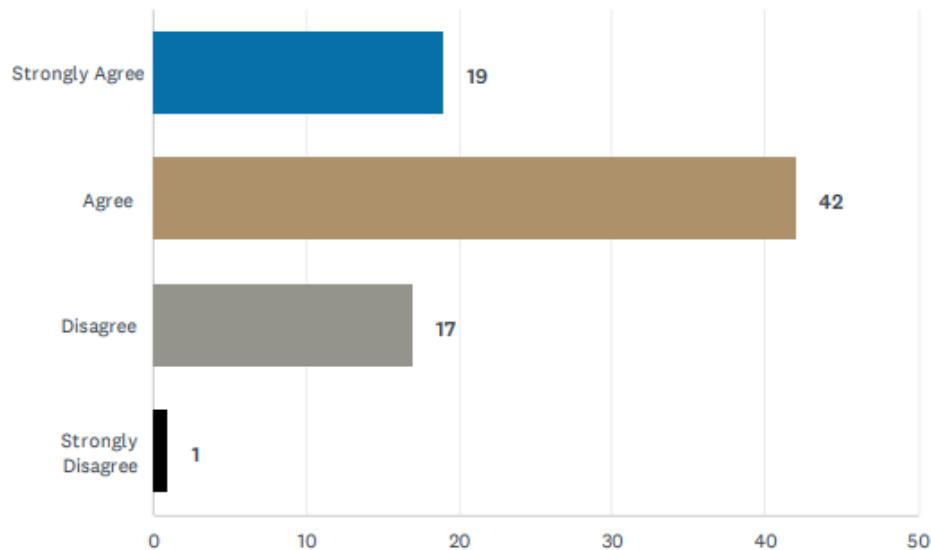
Answered: 79 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly Agree	41.77% 33
Agree	49.37% 39
Disagree	8.86% 7
Strongly Disagree	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>

## Q4 The St. Bernard Parish Fire Department is respected by the community it serves.

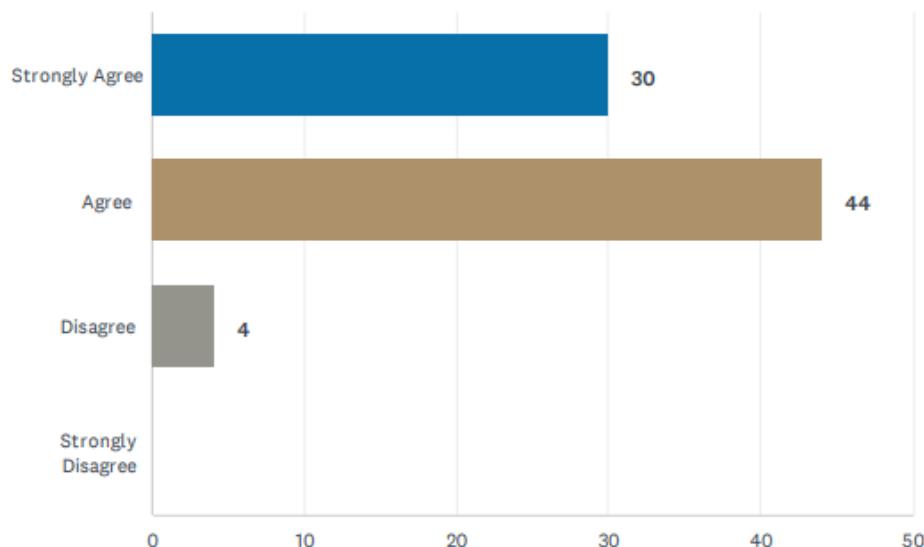
Answered: 79 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly Agree	24.05% 19
Agree	53.16% 42
Disagree	21.52% 17
Strongly Disagree	1.27% 1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>

**Q5 The Department provides me with the appropriate personal protective equipment to do my job safely and efficiently.**

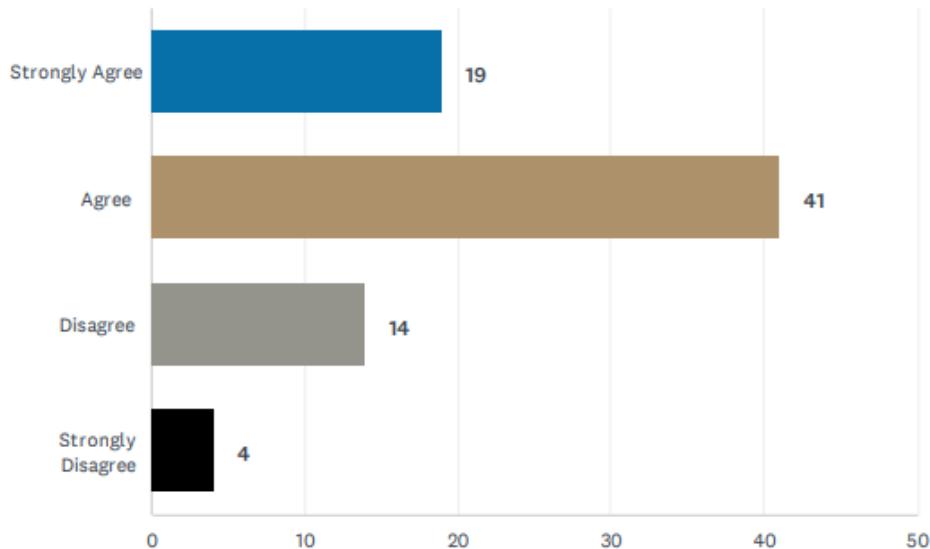
Answered: 78    Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	38.46%	30
Agree	56.41%	44
Disagree	5.13%	4
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>78</b>

**Q6 The Department provides me with the appropriate equipment and tools to do my job safely and efficiently.**

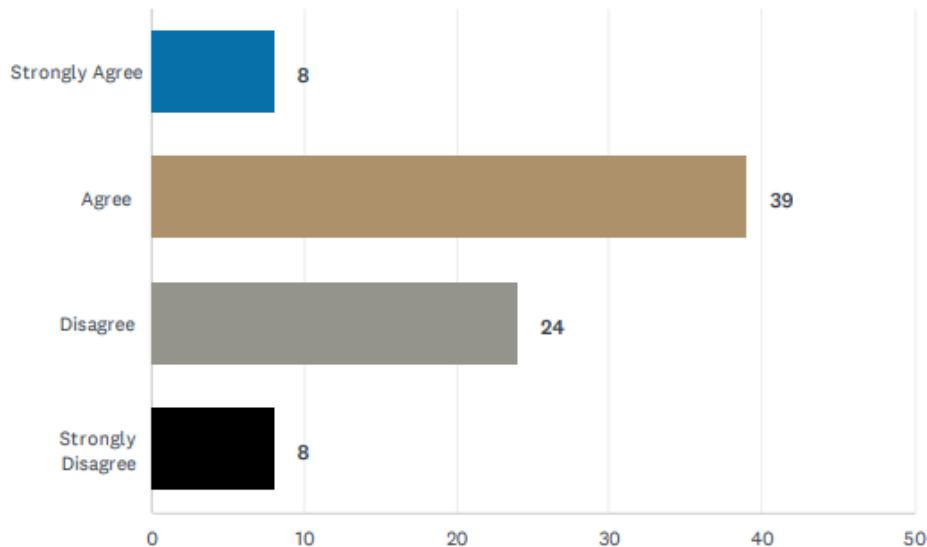
Answered: 78    Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly Agree	24.36% 19
Agree	52.56% 41
Disagree	17.95% 14
Strongly Disagree	5.13% 4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>

**Q7 The Department provides me with the appropriate apparatus/vehicles to do my job safely and efficiently.**

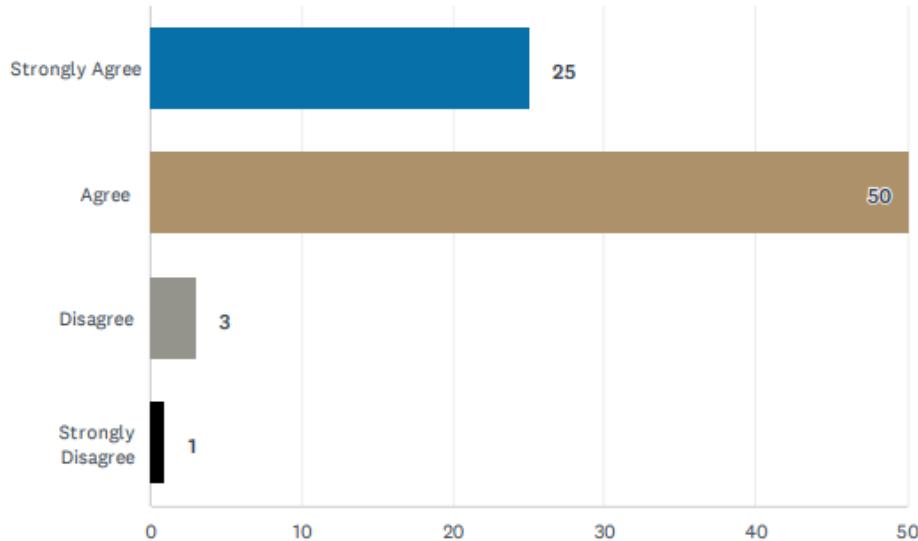
Answered: 79    Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	10.13%	8
Agree	49.37%	39
Disagree	30.38%	24
Strongly Disagree	10.13%	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>79</b>

**Q8 The Department provides me with the appropriate type and number of training hours to do my job safely and efficiently.**

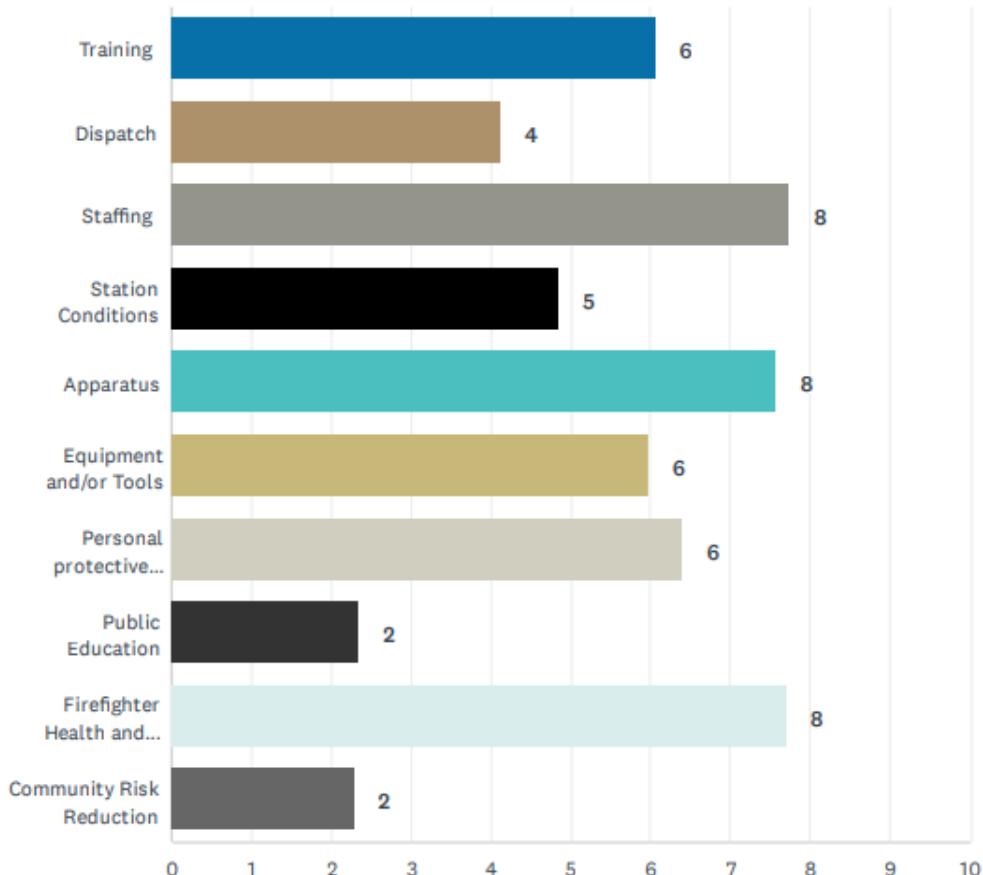
Answered: 79 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly Agree	31.65%
Agree	63.29%
Disagree	3.80%
Strongly Disagree	1.27%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>

**Q9 Please use the arrows below to put in order of priority the following items you feel would benefit the Department the most, with 1 being your first priority and 10 being the opportunity you feel would benefit the Department the least.**

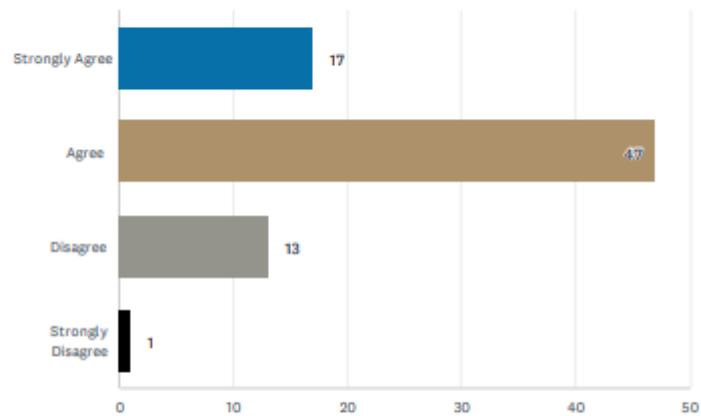
Answered: 75 Skipped: 5



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Training	12.00% 9	5.33% 4	12.00% 9	17.33% 13	12.00% 9	9.33% 7	13.33% 10	12.00% 9	5.33% 4	1.33% 1	75
Dispatch	1.33% 1	6.67% 5	6.67% 5	4.00% 3	8.00% 6	9.33% 7	21.33% 16	13.33% 10	8.00% 6	21.33% 16	75
Staffing	30.67% 23	21.33% 16	17.33% 13	5.33% 4	2.67% 2	10.67% 8	2.67% 2	4.00% 3	2.67% 2	2.67% 2	75
Station Conditions	0.00% 0	5.33% 4	8.00% 6	13.33% 10	10.67% 8	13.33% 10	17.33% 13	17.33% 13	10.67% 8	4.00% 3	75
Apparatus	10.67% 8	25.33% 19	24.00% 18	16.00% 12	12.00% 9	4.00% 3	4.00% 3	2.67% 2	1.33% 1	0.00% 0	75
Equipment and/or Tools	1.33% 1	8.00% 6	6.67% 5	18.67% 14	28.00% 21	22.67% 17	6.67% 5	4.00% 3	2.67% 2	1.33% 1	75
Personal protective equipment	1.33% 1	20.00% 15	12.00% 9	16.00% 12	14.67% 11	14.67% 11	16.00% 12	2.67% 2	1.33% 1	1.33% 1	75
Public Education	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.67% 2	2.67% 2	8.00% 6	21.33% 16	44.00% 33	21.33% 16	75
Firefighter Health and Safety	42.67% 32	6.67% 5	12.00% 9	9.33% 7	6.67% 5	6.67% 5	4.00% 3	9.33% 7	1.33% 1	1.33% 1	75
Community Risk Reduction	0.00% 0	1.33% 1	1.33% 1	0.00% 0	2.67% 2	6.67% 5	6.67% 5	13.33% 10	22.67% 17	45.33% 34	75

**Q10 I have adequate time and resources to engage with the community and provide public education.**

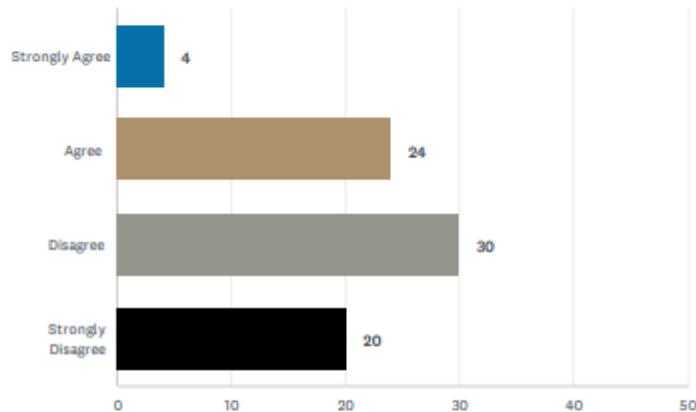
Answered: 78 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly Agree	21.79% 17
Agree	60.26% 47
Disagree	16.67% 13
Strongly Disagree	1.28% 1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>

**Q11 The Department staffs all its front-line apparatus with the appropriate number of personnel.**

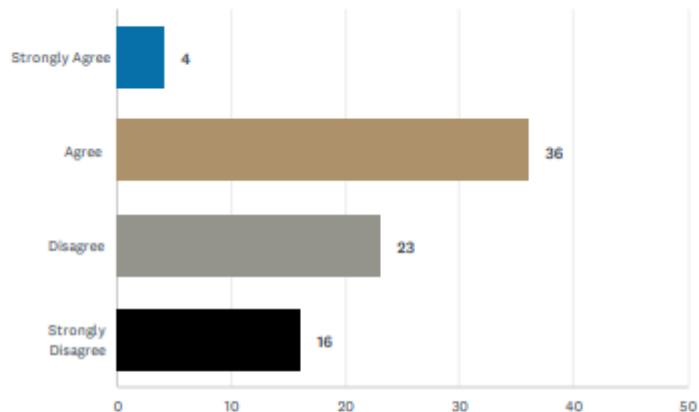
Answered: 78 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	5.13%	4
Agree	30.77%	24
Disagree	38.46%	30
Strongly Disagree	25.64%	20
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>78</b>

**Q12 The Department's fire stations are well maintained.**

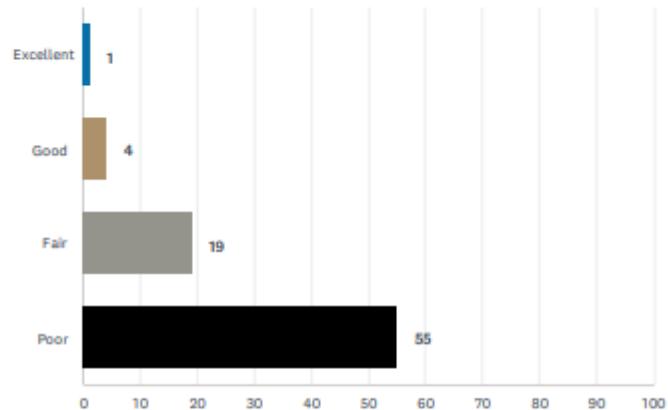
Answered: 79 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	5.06%	4
Agree	45.57%	36
Disagree	29.11%	23
Strongly Disagree	20.25%	16
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>79</b>

**Q13 Morale among Department personnel is:**

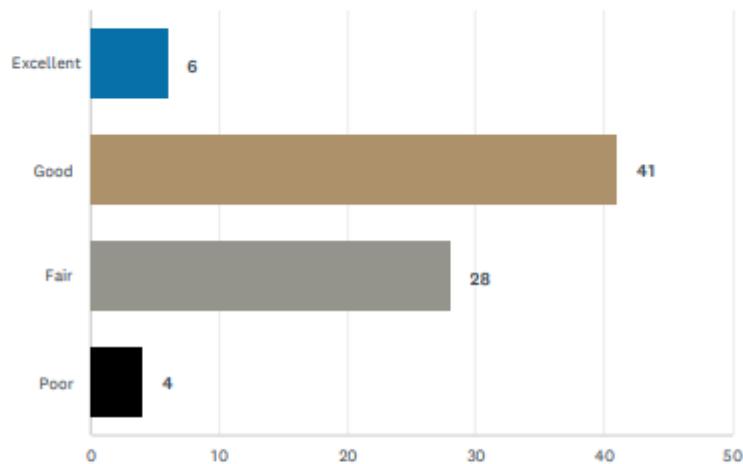
Answered: 79 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Excellent	1.27%
Good	5.06%
Fair	24.05%
Poor	69.62%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>

**Q14 I would describe my work environment as:**

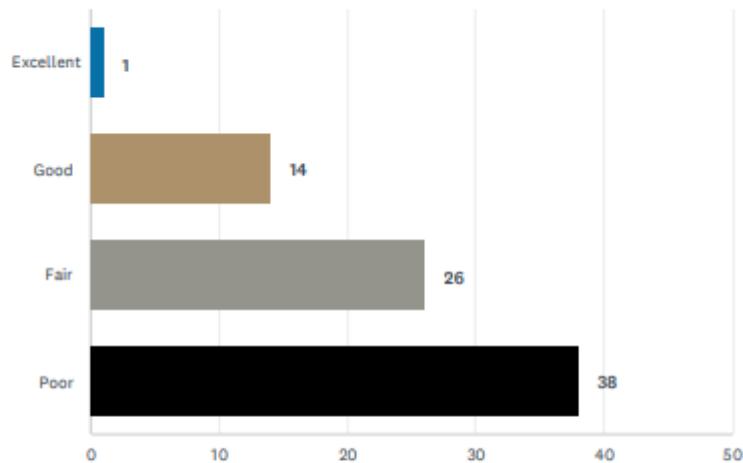
Answered: 79 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Excellent	7.59%
Good	51.90%
Fair	35.44%
Poor	5.06%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>

### Q15 How would you rate communication within the Department?

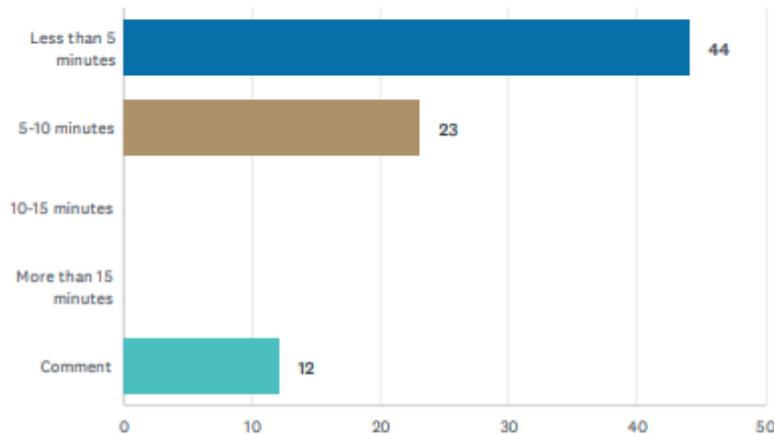
Answered: 79 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	1.27%	1
Good	17.72%	14
Fair	32.91%	26
Poor	48.10%	38
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>79</b>

**Q16 What do you consider to be an acceptable amount of time from when someone calls 9-1-1 until the arrival of the fire department at an emergency?**

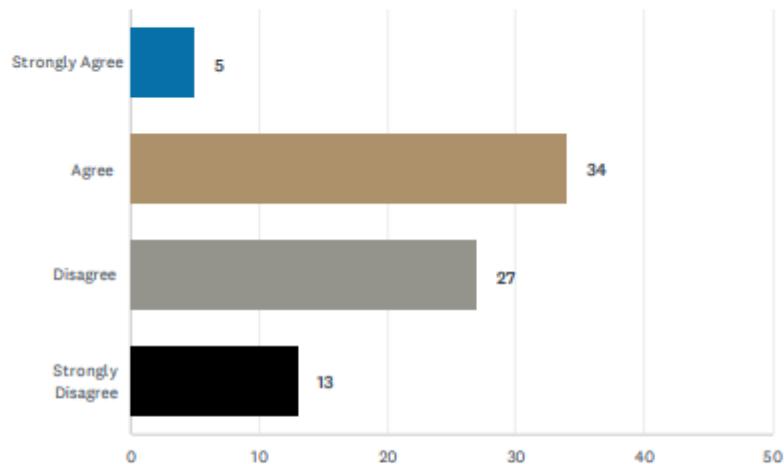
Answered: 79 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Less than 5 minutes	55.70% 44
5-10 minutes	29.11% 23
10-15 minutes	0.00% 0
More than 15 minutes	0.00% 0
Comment	15.19% 12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>

**Q17 The Department provides the most up-to-date measures to address cancer reduction measures amongst its personnel.**

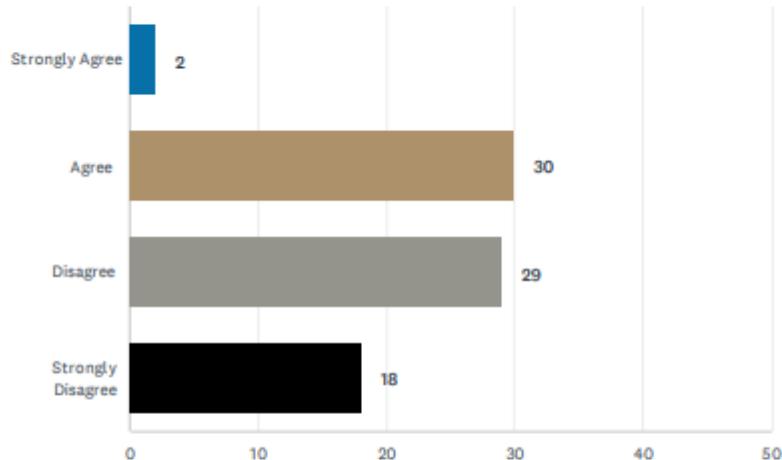
Answered: 79    Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly Agree	6.33%
Agree	43.04%
Disagree	34.18%
Strongly Disagree	16.46%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>

**Q18 The Department provides the most up-to-date measures to provide mental wellness training and access to resources amongst its personnel.**

Answered: 79 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	2.53%	2
Agree	37.97%	30
Disagree	36.71%	29
Strongly Disagree	22.78%	18
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>79</b>

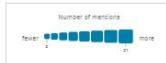
### Q19 The greatest strength of the Department is:

Answered: 72 Skipped: 8

decision firefighters  
 make decision still public men women  
 department better care call make  
 guys trucks care  
 Fire putting  
 serve  
 personnel community  
 trucks care community

people  
**Work**  
 suppression

job men  
 department guys  
 personnel community



## Q20 The greatest weakness of the Department is:

Answered: 73 Skipped: 7

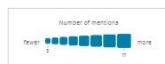
morale leadership politics many PAY stations  
 manner lack pay dept guys firefighter doesnt always timely  
 timely manner lack chief communication department always timely manner  
 takes test better low also staff fire leaders  
 Information doesnt always



Q21 The greatest future opportunity for the Department is:

Answered: 60 Skipped: 20

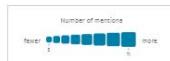
St Bernard Parish people stations public Raise pay guys guys truck open  
pay guys truck morale fire new department best apparatus truck open stations  
EMS service parish Training service will make great



## Q22 The greatest future challenge for the Department is:

Answered: 71 Skipped: 9

personal stations Changing workers  
 need retention Staffing  
 pay raises employees personnel  
**department** keep pay will  
 retain personnel Manpower  
 come together ONE people  
 pay increase apparatus  
 stay leave better opportunities  
 new trucks leave better opportunities  
 good people stay leave



**Q23 Other comments you would like to share about the St. Bernard Parish Fire Department or explanations for your replies to any of the above questions:**

Answered: 39 Skipped: 41

LOVE move spots equipment degree  
 take week hope treat will change years raise hire future  
 starts think us work pay better believe job way great Leaders  
 will never amount fire dept Chief feel people things men come incentives  
 think dept appreciated interest look keep trying one make new place really  
 stations nothing around fix money fire dept want see employees continue  
 leadership Fire Chief

**need department**





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