



THE FIRE-RESCUE PLAN

2019-2022





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Richmond Fire-Rescue (RFR) plays an integral part in ensuring community safety for the City of Richmond. The agency is responsible for public education, prevention services and 24 hour emergency response. All these services are made possible through hard work, dedication and genuine care for the city and its people. Given this level of exceptional commitment, it is important for RFR to have a clear outlook for the organization and its staff.

The purpose of this guiding document is to establish a distinct vision and develop initiatives' that all stakeholders can support. The goal is for everyone at RFR to see themselves as a vital part of the organization and its mission. In the past, guiding documents such as the 2016-2018 Fire Rescue Plan built on strategic goals and developed tactics that did not apply to all RFR personal. However, this dynamic document serves as a more high level analysis that defines RFR's organizational culture while ensuring continued service excellence for the community.

CONTENTS

Alignment with the City of Richmond is an integral part of upholding community safety and unifying priorities. In this report, RFR outlines what organizational and corporate elements will act as a background to the next four years of work, including support of the City's vision, values and other essential strategies and documents.



To compliment this unified approach, the planning for this report involved a multi-step process led by external and internal research. Internal research included surveys, focus groups and discussions among all different levels of RFR staff. External research included a public survey, discussions with stakeholders and reviews of existing documents and demographic information.

With the support of the City's vision as well as a thorough internal/external analysis, RFR has created a vision and mission that expresses the ambition and big picture outlook for the next four years.

VISION

To be the best fire department in Canada.

MISSION

We act as an effective team to proactively protect and enhance the City's livability by serving and educating our community; preventing harm and responding to emergencies.

VALUES

People - Excellence - Leadership - Team - Innovation

1

VISION

RFR also developed corporate focus areas – steps the organization needs to pursue in order to support the guiding vision. This includes: defining values, emphasizing leadership principles, committing to customer service, invigorating people, re-evaluating internal structure and improving all areas of performance. With these focus areas in mind, RFR established strategic initiatives that the organization will actively be striving to develop and implement from 2019-2022.

6

FOCUS AREAS

23

STRATEGIC
INITIATIVES

RFR hopes that this vision and its resulting strategic initiatives will represent the voice of all RFR members, unite our practice with the City of Richmond, and above all, continue to enforce outstanding community safety.

MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

Richmond Fire-Rescue (RFR) is a progressive, professional and proud group of individuals all of whom are dedicated to creating the safest environment possible for the people who live, work, visit and play in the City of Richmond.

It is my honour and a privilege to lead the women and men of Richmond Fire-Rescue into a new era.



RFR is an excellent fire department filled with people who are driven to bring their best performance to work on an everyday basis. With our team committing to the shared vision created within this guiding document, I am sure that we will achieve our goal of being the best fire department in Canada and contribute greatly to our City being the most appealing, livable and well managed community in Canada.

I look forward to working with our Council, Senior Managers, International Association of Firefighters Local 1286 and RFR staff over the upcoming Council Term to achieve the goals of the City, RFR and all of our individual team members.

Tim Wilkinson

Fire Chief

Richmond Fire-Rescue

PLANNING ROADMAP



RECAP

6 8

The 2016-2018 Fire-Rescue plan brought forward many valuable achievements, such as the Community Outreach and Public Education Plan (COPEP). Although we took into consideration many of the initiatives from this previous plan, we made the decision to move forward with a fresh perspective for the next four years.

■ Our Process:



■ Research Methods:

EXTERNAL

- Interviews with key stakeholders including partner agencies and other departments within the City of Richmond
- Review of the City of Richmond's key initiatives and programs
- Analysis of external trends, demographics, issues and opportunities
- Review of internal documents such as the Community Outreach and Public Education Plan along with its complimentary research
- Creation of a paper survey for the public, garnering over 380 responses

INTERNAL

- Discussions with "One Team One Vision" Group
- Creation of an online survey sent to all RFR employees
- Discussions with IAFF – Richmond Firefighters Association Members
- Meetings with RFR Management Team

ALIGNMENT WITH THE CITY OF RICHMOND

Aligning RFR with the City of Richmond is a critical success factor in developing and implementing our guiding vision. RFR is committed to supporting and advancing the City's overarching vision, values and strategies.

I. City's Vision

Vision: For the City of Richmond to be the most appealing, livable, and well-managed community in Canada.

RFR will align with this vision by supporting initiatives that maintain and elevate the City's mission - to protect and enhance the City's livability and economic well-being for current and future generations through:



II. City's Values

City of Richmond values include: People, Excellence, Leadership, Team, Innovation (PELTI). These Core Values define our Corporate culture, how we interact with each other and perform our duties at work.

RFR understands that establishing clear values is a critical factor in best serving the community and enhancing employee satisfaction. Adapting our value system to match the City's will strengthen and unite our culture while also sending a clear message to all RFR community members.

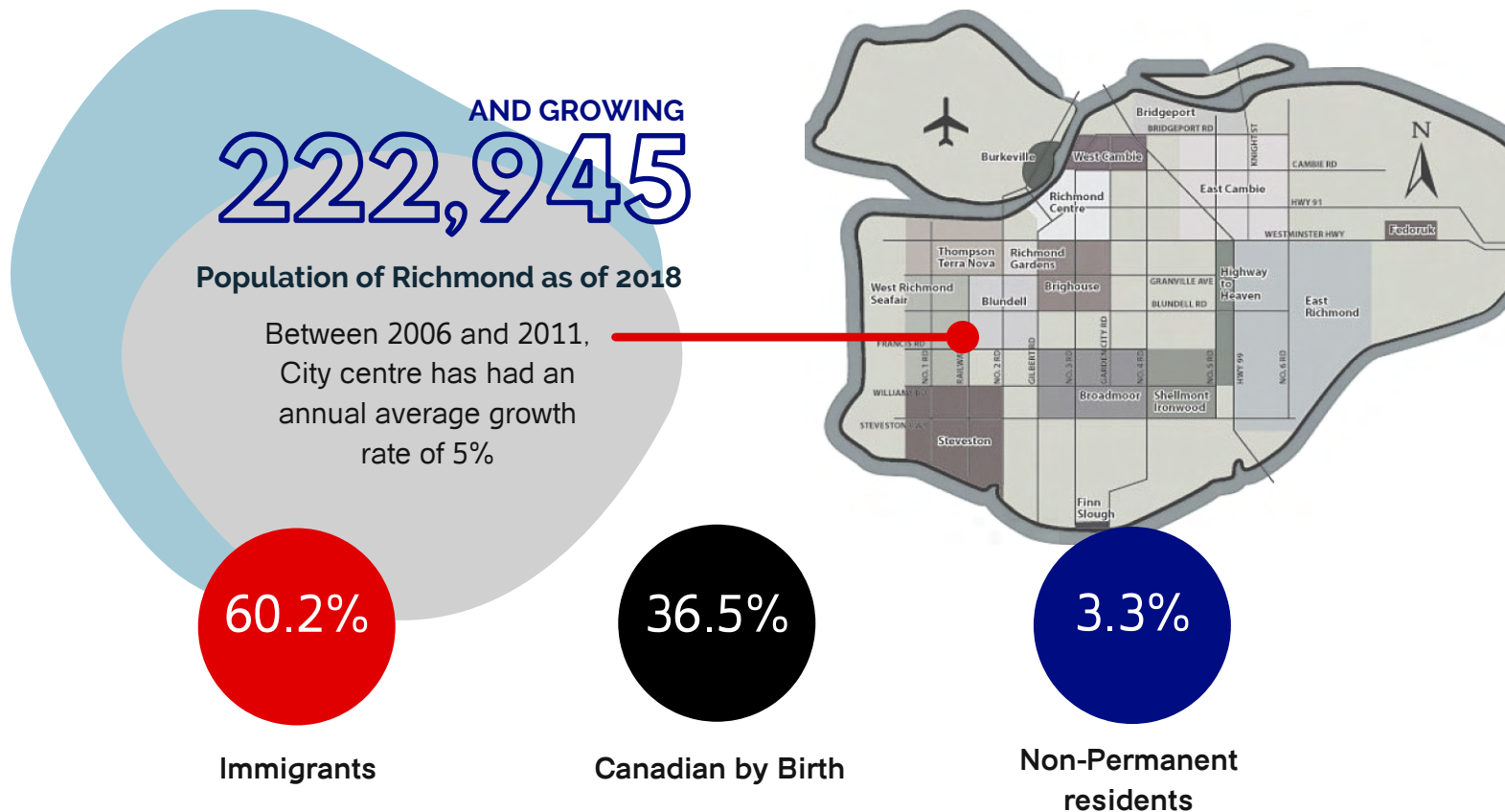
III. Other Strategies

RFR recognizes that within the City, there are several layers of planning that provide direction to our vision and everyday work. We will support all existing strategies including:

- The City of Richmond's Organizational Development Program.
- 10-year Long-Term Goals, Policies, Targets (e.g. Official Community Plan, Sustainability Framework).
- Mid-Term Goals and Plans (e.g. Social Development Strategy, Richmond Resilient Economic Strategy).
- Shorter-term Goals, Plans, and Priorities.
- Milestones and progress towards mid-term and long-term goals (e.g. Council Strategic Plan 2018-2022, renewed every 4 years).
- Specialized Plans and Strategies.
- Programs and Services.
- Operational Plans.

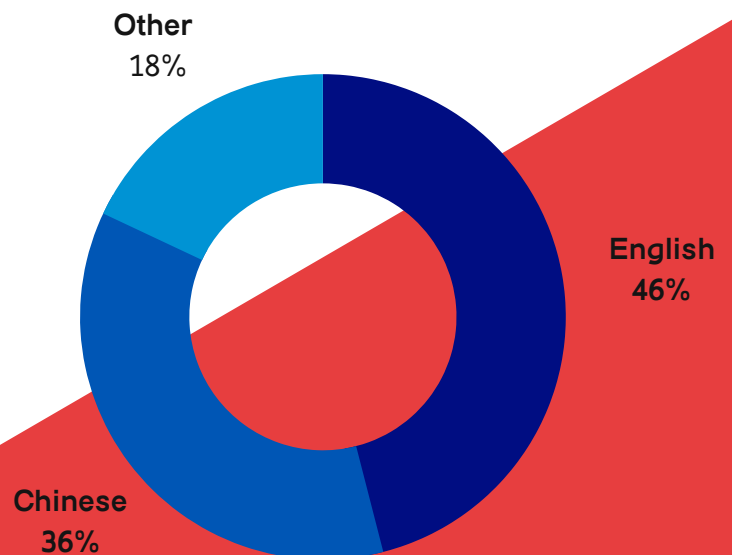
EXTERNAL SCAN

The City of Richmond is a robust community whose evolving political, economic, socio-cultural and technological landscape presents new threats and opportunities. It is important for all our staff to understand these factors in their day to day work and in support of new initiatives.



Language Spoken at Home

As a result of its growing immigrant population, Richmond has the largest percentage of residents who claim Chinese as their mother tongue compared to other municipalities in the Lower Mainland.

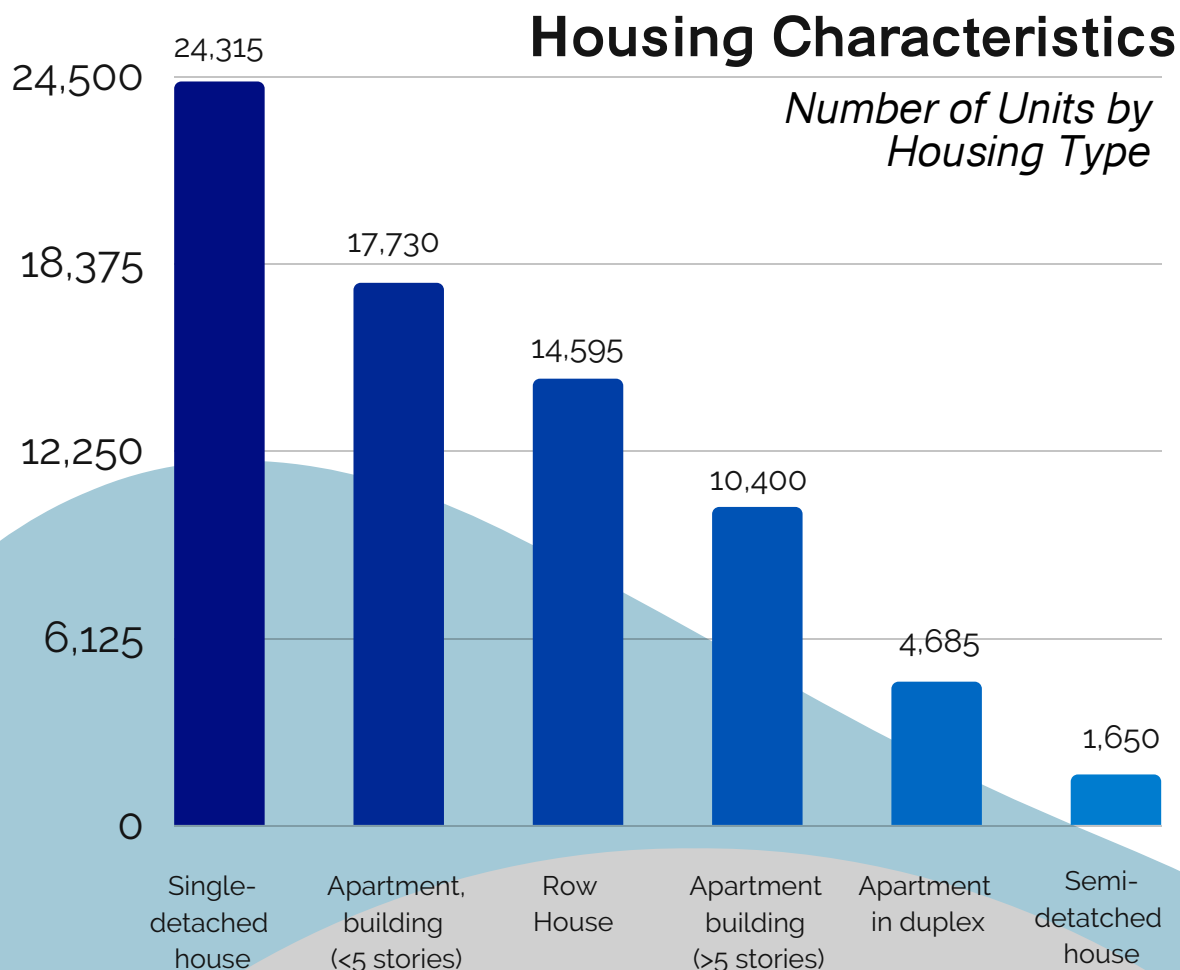




DEATHS FROM OVERDOSE
recorded in 2018

Richmond has one of the lowest death rates for illicit drug overdose deaths in B.C. However, with the opioid crisis decreasing life expectancy in British Columbia, drug overdoses may pose an alarming threat to Richmond's community safety and wellness.

Illicit Drug Overdose Deaths in BC, BC Coroners Service



CLIMATE

Richmond is a city that sits just one meter above ocean levels, high tides and rising sea levels are a serious and imminent threat. By the end of the century, sea levels along Richmond's coast are expected to rise by about 1.2 meters.

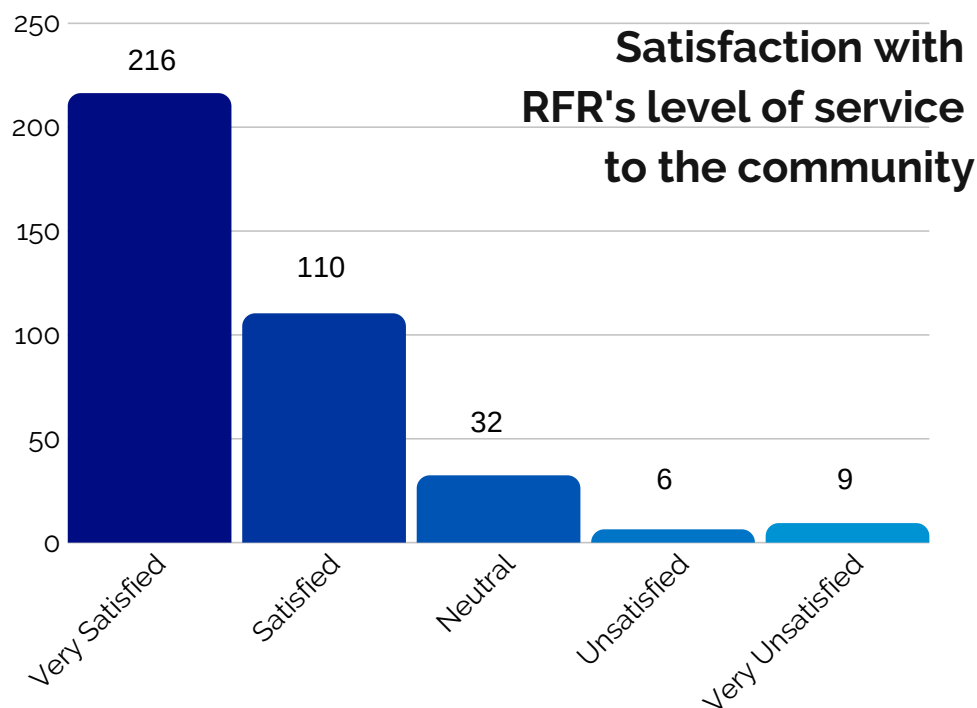
Moreover, rising temperatures could mean a greater risk of fire for our city.

About Richmond: Population and Demographics

Part of RFR's external research involved a 7 question survey to community members, which garnered 377 responses. The following is a selection of survey results:

99%

of survey respondents feel that RFR is capable of serving the needs of the community.



Awareness of RFR Services

76%

of respondents are aware of
School and Community
Education Visits

73%

of respondents are aware
of Safety Awareness
Campaigns

69%

of respondents are aware of
Electrical Fire Safety
Investigations

69%

of respondents are aware
of Response to Medical
Emergencies

65%

of respondents are aware of
Building Development Code
Enforcement and Inspections

58%

of respondents are aware
of Response to Airport
Emergencies

INTERNAL SCAN

RFR prides itself in being a thriving organization, and with that comes a responsibility to observe our own structure, staff and resources. RFR's internal staff have identified the following as areas of improvement for our organization.

TRUST

RFR has a rich history full of successes, accomplishments and challenges. The journey this department has been on throughout the years has led to an erosion of trust, which must be rebuilt.

TRAINING

In a recent RFR survey, 75% of respondents identified training as an underperforming department - the most out of any category. Given this response, it's time for RFR to shift our mindset when it comes to education and guidance.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Nearly 20% of staff mentioned "accountability" when asked what one change would make the greatest difference to RFR. Although this is a broad term, it is important for our organization to approach the issue head on.

RESOURCES

When asked to identify the one change that would make the greatest impact on RFR, 35% of responses fell into the theme of increased staffing. This is a problem our team has continuously faced and must take measures to address.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is one of, if not the most important aspect of any thriving organization. Given the feedback received from staff, it's clear that RFR needs to rethink it's methods of communication and adopt a new system.

MENTAL HEALTH

In any given week, 500,000 Canadians are unable to work due to mental health problems or illnesses. RFR is not averse to this national crisis and must work towards creating a healthier workplace where mental illness carries no stigma.

RICHMOND FIRE-RESCUE'S VISION

Given the external and internal background of research, RFR is proud to present a clear vision and mission for our organization, as well as a dynamic diversity statement that defines our culture of inclusivity, excellence and growth.



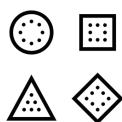
Vision

Be the **best** fire-rescue department in Canada.



Mission Statement

We act as an effective team to proactively protect and enhance the City's livability by serving and educating our community; preventing harm and responding to emergencies.



Diversity Statement

Richmond Fire-Rescue is committed to the creation and maintenance of a diverse and inclusive workplace environment where all people are welcome and valued for their individual characteristics. Richmond Fire-Rescue will not tolerate discrimination in any form not only because it is the law, but rather because it is the right and humane way to treat people.

The only way individuals can be the very best version of themselves is if their environment embraces the principles of valuing Diversity and Inclusion - and that is exactly the environment that Richmond Fire-Rescue intends to create.

“

*Be your best
version of you;
everyday*

CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

After defining our alignment with the City of Richmond, conducting an external/internal analysis and discovering our overarching vision, we have determined the following as areas of focus for our organization:

I. Defining Our Values

The City of Richmond's Fire-Rescue Department is a values based organization. Our values guide everyday decisions as we interact with our community and shape our workplace environment. As previously mentioned, RFR now shares values with the City of Richmond, allowing for a unified vision.

1 **PEOPLE**

Our belief in people is our number one commitment. We are fair, respectful, supportive and inclusive. We reflect this belief by:

- putting people first
- supporting and encouraging staff growth and development
- celebrating and appreciating each other's efforts and successes

2 **EXCELLENCE**

To be the best we can possibly be, we must always strive for outstanding results from all parts of the organization. We demonstrate excellence through:

- focusing on customer service
- practicing continuous improvement
- being accountable and taking responsibility for ourselves and our work



3

LEADERSHIP

As we strive to achieve our vision, quality leadership is demonstrated by every person in the organization through behaviours that reflect:

- honesty, integrity, and respect
- effective and open communication
- empowerment and commitment to our purpose

4

TEAM

We believe in the power of team. We are all one team; there are no silos. We succeed, learn and work together to achieve our vision through:

- focusing on our common goals
- demonstrating concern for fellow team members
- building on our strengths and collective knowledge

5

INNOVATION

Innovation is the key to our success. We work collaboratively, both internally and externally, to be innovative, imaginative and responsive leaders in a rapidly changing world. We do this by:

- challenging the status quo
- learning from others and from our past experiences
- taking well-managed risks and unleashing our creativity

“Our
values
guide
everyday
decisions



II. Emphasizing Our Leadership Principles

RFR recognizes that an organization achieves greatness when everyone is inspired by a shared vision and empowered to personally excel in their roles. One of the values that supports all employees in reaching their full potential is leadership.

A RFR leader's role and responsibility is to support and enhance their workmates while striving towards our vision and mission.

The Leadership Principles we live by are:



INTEGRITY



A leader with integrity uses humility while being accountable and is trustworthy to those inside and outside of the organization.

INFLUENCE



An influential leader uses clear communication and persuasion to achieve effective results.

VISION



A visionary leader is one who inspires and innovates while being persistent in achieving results for the organization.

STRATEGY



A strategic leader is one that embodies business and political acumen while being nimble to adapt in a rapidly changing work environment. This agile leader has keen organizational awareness and is focused on achieving results that are values based and result oriented.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING



A leader needs the ability to manage and build strong relationships both inside and outside the organization.

AWARENESS



A leader who is aware of themselves and their team is vital to fostering development and continuing to find opportunities to learn and grow as an individual and an organization.

III. Committing to Customer Service

RFR is committed to providing world class service to all people who live, work, play and learn within the City of Richmond. Our Customer Service commitments are anchored solidly in our values - they define what our customers can expect of us and remind us of our obligation to service excellence.

RFR staff recognizes that service to our colleagues is equally important, as this helps break down silos, improves internal relationships and ultimately enhances service to our customers. RFR Customer Service Commitments are:



INTEGRITY

Performing in a fair, ethical, transparent and accountable manner - taking pride in delivering quality services that provide value.



RESPECT

Treating everyone in a friendly, courteous and professional manner - being approachable and understanding, listening to questions, needs and concerns.



RELIABILITY

Providing knowledgeable and resourceful service in order to deliver clear, accurate and relevant information.



TIMELINESS

Delivering timely service to anticipate needs and to respond with accessible, efficient and effective processes and procedures.



RESPONSIVENESS

Being open to new ideas and opportunities to offer greater choices.



IV. Invigorating Our People

People put the life into our organization by supporting and enhancing the transformation of our culture. The Richmond Fire-Rescue team is a diverse and high functioning group of professionals who strategically plan and deliver impactful programs.



Richmond residents view the RFR team as committed, responsible, confident and resilient. We are the individuals educating the community, preventing fires, and responding to emergencies every day of the year. To provide this level of service, an organization must have a dedicated support network of people who work tirelessly in the background and foreground. These are the people who provide a safe and stable platform as well as efficient and effective service.



RFR recognizes the importance of physical and mental health and safety when it comes to our organization. Our goal is to create a thriving workplace where we feel comfortable, respected and engaged. By acknowledging our own satisfaction and well-being, we will serve our community to the best of our ability.



The people who work at Richmond Fire-Rescue are

***Progressive,
Professional
and Proud.***

V. Evaluating Internal Structure

RFR's internal organizational structure is traditionally set up with the goal of (1) having the configuration support the overall functionality of reporting relationships and (2) to introduce assignments to personnel that are specifically needed to increase overall efficiency and effectiveness across all branches of our service.

The structure of RFR is intended to support the notion of “One Team/ One Vision” which will unite the workforce. Our structure also supports:

- Deployment of resources in alignment with our strategic priorities.
- Communication that is open, top down, bottom up and horizontal.
- Organizational wide sharing of information, knowledge and best practices.



VI. Improving all Areas of Performance

OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

RFR is committed to excellence in every aspect of our work. We strive for superior results when we develop and execute our services, processes and programs.

Continuous improvement is embedded in the organization's working style. All staff are empowered to understand, design, manage and improve everyday operations in the pursuit of extraordinary results.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

RFR recognizes that in every project we undertake, there is meaningful purpose for the City of Richmond as a whole. It is important that RFR staff understand how the services we provide connect with other City wide initiatives and programs. It is equally important that we support other business units and the overall corporate strategy of the City.

2019 - 2022 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The following strategic initiatives reflect our corporate focus areas and support the vision of both the City of Richmond and RFR. They are all tangible steps that will improve the fulfillment of our staff, enhance safety for our community and lead to RFR to be the best fire-rescue department in Canada.

DURING THE TERM OF THIS PLAN, RFR WILL:



I. Defining Our Values

- ✓ Integrate our values into every business unit by educating new and existing employees and supervisors.
- ✓ Create a recognition system based on behaviours that reflect our five values.
- ✓ Create a values based decision making matrix.



II. Emphasizing Our Leadership Principles

- ✓ Review and amend the **Richmond Fire-Rescue Leadership Development Initiative** as necessary. ¹
- ✓ Review and amend the **Officer Development Program**. ²
- ✓ Initiate a supervisory learning and development opportunity for Fire Prevention Officers.



III. Committing to Customer Service

- ✓ Initiate a customer feedback opportunity for the community to provide insight and improvement to current and future programming.
- ✓ Create customer service standards for all business units.



IV. Invigorating Our People

- ✓ Review and adopt, as appropriate, the **National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace**. ³
- ✓ Create a comprehensive succession plan based on three tenets; Education, Exposure and Experience.
- ✓ Enhance employee feedback opportunities.
- ✓ Work to support the initiatives brought by the **One Team, One Vision Group**. ⁴



V. Evaluate Internal Structure

- ✓ Strengthen the relationship with IAFF Local 1286.
- ✓ Review and amend the organizational structure to align with current and future needs.



VI. Improving All Areas of Performance

OPERATIONAL

- ✓ Take action on the 2017 Fire Underwriters Survey recommendations with the goal of attaining the highest possible rating within the Survey parameters.
- ✓ Review and implement the recommendations coming from the 2017 Corporate Service Level Review.
- ✓ Review industry standards and our operational performance on an ongoing basis to ensure optimal results.
- ✓ Create a **Professional Standards** manual to guide service expectations, performance and conduct of the department and its team members. ⁵
- ✓ Continue to encourage collaboration among supporting organizations such as the RCMP and BC Emergency Health Services.
- ✓ Undergo the **Fire Service Accreditation Process** in order to become a nationally recognized organization. ⁶

CORPORATE

- ✓ Ensure that all goals and outcomes are aligned and drive us towards the Corporate Vision and RFR's Mission.
- ✓ Guarantee that all team members understand corporate, divisional and departmental plans and direction.
- ✓ Create work plans that ensure completion of the goals set out in this guiding document.

In addition to the new initiatives, we are committed to supporting the Community Outreach and Public Education Plan as well as the Fire Prevention Plan. These are ongoing initiatives that have been valuable to our team and successful for the community.



BACKGROUND OF MAJOR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Certain strategic initiatives require additional background information in order for their significance to be understood. The following is an explanation of the initiatives that may require further insight.

¹ **Leadership Development Initiative**

The Leadership Development Initiative (LDI) was developed by a multi-divisional work group in 2012. This group developed a leadership competency map for each of the roles within RFR. The competency map was intended to be the basis of a succession plan whereby staff could create a learning plan based on the role they wished to achieve. The map is an excellent document, however it is not used to any great effect. Through this review there may be a way to reinvigorate the information with current data and incorporate it into a comprehensive succession plan.

² **Fire Officer Development Program**

Fire Officer development training has been conducted through a combination of Fire Officer 1 and 2 courses at the Justice Institute of BC (JIBC) and a number of in-house courses that are seen to be required for officer success. In order to ensure consistent training across the board, RFR is pursuing a customized development program. The Officer Development Initiative would review the education, experience levels and exposure opportunities that a person would need to be a competent Officer/Supervisor. This will ensure that every RFR member is capable of serving the needs of the community.





³ **The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2018)**

Mental Health is a growing struggle for many Canadians, one that workplaces have a newfound responsibility to address. The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace is a set of voluntary guidelines, tools and resources intended to guide organizations in promoting mental health and preventing psychological harm at work. It is a four stage long-term project that will demand cooperation and involvement from all levels of RFR.

One Team One Vision Group

⁴

Teamwork is an integral part of our jobs and everyday lives. Without effective collaboration and communication, we could not have a well-managed organization and a protected community. That is why we must be united together to achieve common goals and promote inclusiveness. In the following years, we will work to support the initiatives brought by the One Team, One Vision Group - a collective of individuals from all levels of RFR that continuously review the department's direction and suggest actions going forward. By encouraging this sort of collaboration, involvement and thoughtful decision making, we can grow together as a team.

⁵ Professional Standards

These standards are the development of basic beliefs and principles that guide professional behaviours. On the path to becoming a highly functioning team, all staff need to understand what the specific departmental standards of care are in regards to respectful behaviours, values, ethics, practices and norms in the context of the fire service environment.

The goal of this project would be to work with staff to collaboratively create a Professional Standards Manual based around eight pillars of trust:

CLARITY	CONNECTION
COMPASSION	CHARACTER
COMPETENCY	CONSISTENCY
COMMITMENT	CONTRIBUTION

6

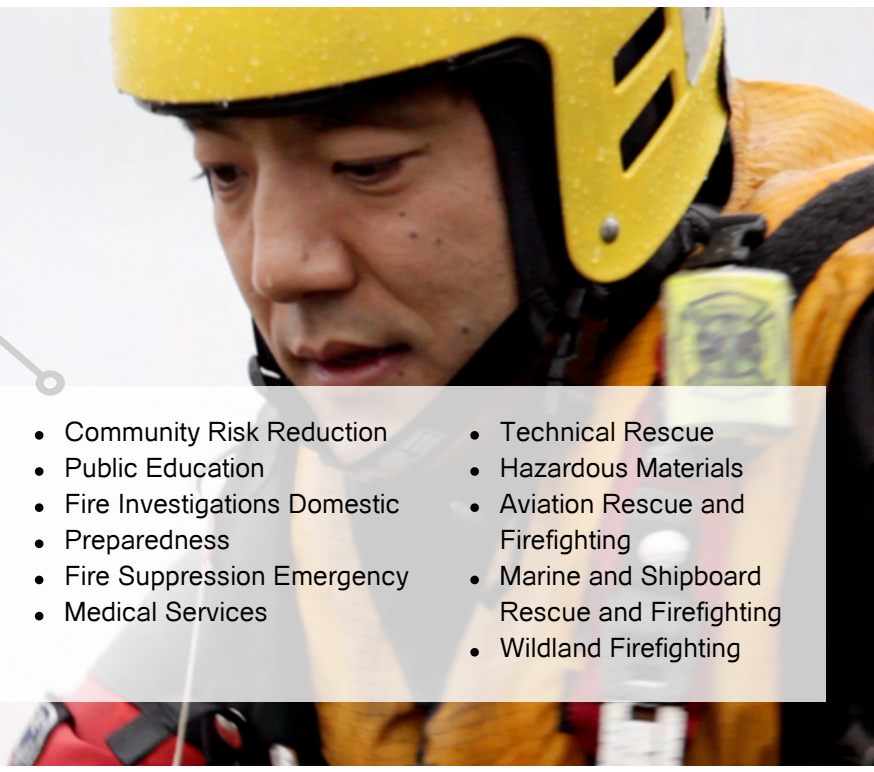
Fire Service Accreditation Process

The goal with this process is to become an internationally recognized organization that would be described by peers as community focused, data driven, outcome focused, strategic-minded, well organized, properly equipped, properly trained and well staffed.

Fire Service Accreditation is a 3 -5 year voluntary process comprised of conducting service level reviews, identifying areas of improvement and implementing plans to address these areas. At the end of the process, the fire department will receive an accreditation score commensurate with their achievement. The specific areas focused on are;

1. Governance and Administration
2. Assessment and Planning
3. Goals and Objectives
4. Financial Resources
5. Programs
6. Physical Resources
7. Human Resources
8. Training and Competence
9. Essential Resources
10. External Systems Relationship

- Community Risk Reduction
- Public Education
- Fire Investigations Domestic
- Preparedness
- Fire Suppression Emergency
- Medical Services
- Technical Rescue
- Hazardous Materials
- Aviation Rescue and Firefighting
- Marine and Shipboard Rescue and Firefighting
- Wildland Firefighting



FINAL WORDS

With the guidance of this document, we will pursue four years of excellence, collaboration and community safety. Our corporate focus areas will guide us, our strategic initiatives will drive change and our vision will strengthen the team and the community.

We hope that this plan is successful in uniting our vision with that of the City and the community while emphasizing the importance of our most valuable asset the people of RFR.

We are committed to building an organization whose success matches its ambition; whose staff are passionate and capable; and whose work protects Richmond's lively community.





Richmond Fire-Rescue
Brighthouse Fire Hall #1
6960 Gilbert Road Richmond, BC
V7C 3V4
Tel: 604-278-5131
E-mail: fire@richmond.ca

