



Forest Lakes Fire District

where customer service is job one

2023 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE – ONE PAGE SUMMARY

MISSION

To provide comprehensive fire, emergency medical and search and rescue services to the Forest Lakes community and our surrounding Service Delivery Area.

VISION

To provide superior services to our communities via the use of up to date facilities, rolling stock, supplies and trained personnel funded, to the greatest extent possible, by new revenue sources.

GUIDING OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Excellence - If you are going to hang out your shingle, you better be prepared do the best job you can.

Integrity - We will act with integrity in everything we do.

Responsibility - We will do what is morally, legally and ethically responsible.

Compliance - We will comply with all legal and statutory requirements.

Safety - We will operate in a way that makes the safety of our personnel and equipment paramount.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Continue to pursue our designated Master Facilities Plan projects, especially as they relate to housing for our Front Loader and succession planning for Chief Rodriguez's stated retirement plans.

Goal: Upgrade our rolling stock as planned in our latest STRAP (Strategic Plan).

Goal: Improve non-tax revenues each year by identifying new revenue sources, and by leveraging community resources via the Auxiliary, grants, on-going donations and corporate/other.

Goal: Rebuild cash reserves to take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

Goal: Continue to develop governmental relationships and influence with our local politicians at the Federal, State and County levels, coordinating with the Arizona Fire District Association or other representative groups as appropriate, to ultimately be able to call on these relationships for assistance with governmental matters that would benefit our District, especially related to increasing our tax revenues and home rule for tax rates.

Goal: Identify and develop the FLFD Leadership Team for the future, including qualified candidates for the Board of Directors.

DISTRICT ISSUES

Facilities Master Plan/Equipment. With the completion of our new fire station and exterior refurbishment of our Annex, we have finalized a master plan for the rest of our property which included repurposing the Annex for lease to the Coconino County Sheriff's Office, equipment storage, and other secondary needs as well as addressing ancillary needs such as providing electric power to the Tuff Sheds behind the fire station. We have included capital expenditure funding in the next two years' budgets to provide covered storage for our front-end loader and fueling station. We are pursuing significant grant funding through the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management that will minimize the use of district funds for the referenced loader covered storage unit. We are continuing the planning process to replace our engine and other outdated rolling stock.

Staffing Model/Sustainability/Demographics. Our combination staffing model continues to receive high marks from our community and customers. We plan to maintain the 24X7 Paramedic plus Firefighter service delivery model. We remain concerned about the declining participation of Paid-On-Call support from the local community although we have made some progress in this area. Our 5 Year Finance and Budget projections are based on maintaining the current level of Paid-On-Call support. Our community's demographics are changing, making it a challenge to keep the community engaged in supporting the fire district as it has in the past. Our updated financial plan includes pay adjustments for both On-Duty-Staff and Paid-On-Call personnel. This is both well-deserved and important for our pay rates to remain competitive in this inflationary environment.

Revenue Constraints. We continue to experience significant pressure on fire district revenues. Arizona fire districts are limited as to both tax levy and property valuation increases. Mill rates, previously capped at \$3.25 per \$100 assessed valuations, have been allowed to be adjusted over a two-year period (FY22-23 & FY23-24) to \$3.50 and to \$3.75 thereafter (FY24-25, ...). This change is welcome as it provides some financial relief while having a modest impact on our residents. We continue to be restricted to 5% year-over-year tax levy increases, presenting additional challenges to the leadership team for addressing our building and rolling stock needs as well as sustaining our staffing and service delivery models. Cost pressures are concerning as we have doubled our inflation factors in our 5-year STRAP budget forecast for the coming year and may need to adjust them again if inflation continues unabated. Therefore, to accomplish our strategic goals over the coming 5-year time frame, we are committed to finding new revenue sources outside of the traditional tax revenue structure. An example of that we have put in place is leasing floorspace in the Annex to the Coconino County Sheriff's office. We will continue this focus along with ongoing efforts to decrease expenses to the greatest extent possible so that we can increase our cash levels to take advantage of future opportunities to improve the capabilities of the District. In addition, FLFD actively supports the efforts of the Arizona Fire District Association to work with the legislature to provide additional tax revenues to rural districts like ours and to allow small districts such as ours to establish tax rates based on home rule.