

# WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN



2022-2026



# Executive Summary

Washington Township Fire Department has worked with its internal and external stakeholders to establish a Strategic Plan that identifies current and future needs of the department and community. It is this collaboration that we have been able to meet the increase demand for service delivery with the City of Dublin and residents of Washington Township.

This Strategic Plan is a living document and will always be a work in progress. Delivering a high level of service to our community is the foundation in which this document is based. The department successfully earned our annual re-accreditation by meeting established benchmarks and guidelines. In addition to our accreditation, the department has maintained an Insurance Services Office rating of one (ISO 1), which positively influences the residential and commercial insurance premiums. Our accreditation status and our ISO 1 rating place us among a select group of fire departments across the country. We are proud of our accomplishments and thankful for the leadership of the Trustees, Administrator and the hardworking, competent members of the department. These accomplishments would not be possible without support from the citizens, partnerships with our mutual aid departments, and the City of Dublin.

We will continue to meet the expectations of our citizens through strategic planning, projecting the needs of our community, and by providing proactive education. The department is truly indebted to the citizens of Dublin and Washington Township and appreciates their ongoing support.

## **Mission Statement**

The Department's mission statement was created in February 1999 through a joint labor and management process evaluating the Department's operations and is also used for planning purposes. The mission statement displays the Department's goal to meet community expectations for emergency services while taking into account the safety aspects associated with the profession and wellbeing of employees. It stands as the driving force behind department strategic planning, development of policies and procedures, as well as the daily services provided by employees at all levels. The Washington Township Fire Department mission statement is:

***"To provide for the protection and preservation of life and property, mindful of acceptable levels of risk by maintaining the highest standards of Emergency Medical Services, Fire Suppression, Fire Prevention, Education and Safety programs."***

## **Vision Statement**

The vision statement for the Township drives the long-term outlook and direction for future decision-making. As the community grows and funding changes, the Township looks to the vision statement as a reminder of what the fire department, and other township programs, can provide. The statement is a combination of goals and intent of elected officials, administration, along with stakeholder input as it pertains to the Township's influence and service in the community.

***"Be a force that fuels community pride, cohesion, caring and wellness."***

## **Organizational Values**

**Partnership** – Collaborating to provide outstanding service;

**Respect** – High regard for our profession, ourselves, and community;

**Integrity** – Truthfulness and honesty in every action;

**Dedication** – To safety and wellness;

**Excellence** – In all we do.

## **Population Served**

According to data available from the 2020 Census, Washington Township is home to nearly 50,000 residents. Currently, the median age of a resident is 40.1 years of age; 28 percent of residents are aged 18 and under, and approximately 12 percent of residents are aged 65 and over. Township residents are predominantly white (74 percent) and residents identifying as Asian comprise approximately 20 percent of the population. Approximately 19 percent of residents are foreign-born (80 percent of whom are from Asian countries); 20 percent of households do not speak English as their primary language and 6 percent of residents describe their ability to speak English as “less than very well”. This creates an increasing potential for on-scene and dispatching communication challenges for the Department. The utilization of translating resources is available before, during, and after emergency events.

As it pertains to education of the population, 75 percent of residents hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, and 32 percent of residents have a graduate or professional degree or higher. This shows that the population with the Department’s coverage area is highly educated as compared to the national average. Several research studies suggest a significant correlation between level of education and health status, in which a higher educated population lives healthier and longer lives. Similarly, research shows that higher educated populations create a lower fire potential. Both of these aspects affect the department’s response needs for their coverage population.

## **Socio-Economics**

The Washington Township Fire Department serves a population that can be described as affluent in nature—the median household income is nearly \$138,000 annually and the average home value is estimated at nearly \$385,000. Nearly 33 percent of households make less than \$100,000 annually, and about 2.5 percent of the population is estimated to live below the poverty level.

According to the annual American Community Surveys, residents of Washington Township have an estimated unemployment rate of approximately 1.8 percent. Of residents making up the work force, 67 percent work in management, business, science and arts occupations and 18 percent work in sales and office roles. As it relates to their commute, 89 percent of workers commute in private vehicles and less than one percent of workers utilize public transportation.

Nearly all of the residents in the coverage area have health coverage (99 percent) and 92 percent of residents have private medical insurance (resulting in broadly reliable revenues from departmental medical billing for services).

## **Education**

The Washington Township Fire Department's coverage area includes abundant educational institutions, including one public school district, more than twenty childcare centers, and two satellite campuses for larger universities. Dublin City School District, the local public school, is comprised of one preschool facility, fourteen elementary schools, five middle schools, and four high schools (three traditional and one alternative). The school district serves over 16,500 students with enrollment growing each year and employs more than 2,000 faculty and staff.

Ohio University welcomed its first class to the Dublin campus in 2014 and has enjoyed consistent growth ever since. Currently, the campus houses programs from the College of Health Sciences and Professions, the Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine, College of Business, College of Fine Arts, and the George V. Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs. Comprising approximately 111 acres, the Ohio University Dublin Campus is located in the West Innovation District. Similarly, the University of Dayton also has a Dublin Campus, though it is much smaller—a single building contains six classrooms as well a collaborative space. Courses are offered through the School of Education and Health Science for three Masters level programs.

## **Planning and Development**

The City of Dublin has seen substantial growth over the past several decades, and such development continues today. The City currently has eleven major area development plans in progress that include the Dublin Corporate Area Plan, Dublin-Jerome Crossroads Area Plan, Bridge Street District, Southwest Area Plan, Avery Road Corridor, Bright Road Area Plan, Emerald & Perimeter Area Plan, West Innovation District, Northwest Glacier Ridge Area Plan, Summit View Sawmill Area Plan, and the US Route 33 Corridor. These development plans primarily revolve around commercial development in the City. However, some have a residential component. Of these major area development plans, there are numerous ones that present a possible impact on emergency services. Impact from the development on Washington Township services include a potential increase in run volume, additional permit approval and inspection needs, preplanning and occupancy education for on-company personnel, additional hydrant inspection, testing infrastructure expansion, as well as constantly changing traffic patterns during and following construction. Though the residential development will increase population in the coverage area, the more significant impact will likely come from increased daytime population and occupancy type in the commercial development. Furthermore, the development provides opportunities for the Department to improve, expand, and add to their services to meet the needs of the coverage area.

## **Business and Services**

The coverage area is home to nearly 70,000 jobs and holds a significant economic impact on the Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area. Commerce in the City of Dublin represents 6.2% of the total jobs and 8.7% of the \$90 billion gross product in the Columbus MSA. Major employers in the Township include Cardinal Health, OhioHealth, Sedgwick, OCLC, Wendy's International, Quantum Health, Fiserv Corporation, Univar Solutions, Express Scripts, United Healthcare, and IGS Energy. Several of the companies are headquartered in the coverage area as well.

There are numerous medical facilities in the Township ranging from a full-scale hospital with an emergency room to doctor's offices and rehabilitation facilities. Some of the most notable facilities include Dublin Methodist Hospital, Columbus Springs of Dublin, Reunion Rehabilitation, Nationwide Children's Hospital Close to Home Urgent Care, Nationwide Children's Hospital Specialty Offices, Ohio Gastroenterology, Central Ohio Surgical Associates, OhioHealth Urgent Care, and current development of an Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center campus. These facilities present both benefits and challenges for the Department as they provide an emergency room transport location in the coverage area and unique outreach resources, but also add emergency medical service runs with unique health challenges.

With the growing senior population in Central Ohio, the City of Dublin has taken advantage of senior housing opportunities and encouraged such housing development through incentives for independent living communities, assisted living communities, skilled nursing facilities, and continuity of care retirement communities. A 2016 Senior Housing Study performed by the City of Dublin analyzed the need and impact of current and future senior housing options. Based on land use considerations in the study, fourteen land areas were set aside for future senior housing needs—adding to the numerous senior living options already present in the coverage area. Since 2016, several of these sites have already started or completed development. The Department analyzes additional senior living options due to their potential impact on run volume.

Information for these sections were gathered from various websites including the City of Dublin, Washington Township, and the U.S. Census Bureau.

## **Budget**

Washington Township's primary revenue source is property taxes. The taxes for fire service come from a voter-approved 8.25 mill five-year levy along with smaller permanent levies to total 14.95 mills. In 1975, the Operating Budget for the Washington-Perry Township Fire Department was \$180,000.00. Today's budget is approximately 23 million dollars.

Revenues and expenditures are forecasted for a rolling five-year period and a ten-year outlook. Each July, a temporary budget for the upcoming year is developed utilizing a projected 2-3% increase in expenses plus any additional known increases in operating and capital costs. This temporary budget is reviewed and approved by the Washington Township Board of Trustees. In August, the Franklin County Budget Commission, Delaware County, and Union County, researches property tax revenue resources for the upcoming year. In October and November, staff develops a more detailed budget for the upcoming year, including updating revenues and personnel costs. The revenue and expenditure forecasts are developed by the Township Administrator with significant input from the Fiscal Officer, Fire Chief, Human Resource Manager, and Communications Manager. The forecasting process includes an in-depth analysis of assessed valuation changes, planned capital improvements, projected personnel costs, and operating expenses. This budget is presented to the Washington Township Board of Trustees for consideration in December. Upon adoption by the Board of Trustees, this revised budget is then submitted to the Franklin County Budget Commission for final approval and issuance of a revised certification of estimated resources for the fiscal year. The final budget is then submitted in April with the Trustees' approval having occurred in March. Washington Township retains a 25% carryover policy to ensure that at least three months of operating expenses are available.

### **Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification**

The Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification (PPC) Program plays an important role in the underwriting process at insurance companies. Most U.S. insurers, including the largest ones, use PPC information as part of their decision-making process when deciding what businesses to write, coverage to offer, or price to charge for personal or commercial property insurance. Communities whose PPC improves may get lower insurance prices. The PPC also provides fire departments with a common benchmark, and is used by many departments as a valuable tool when planning, budgeting, and justifying fire protection improvements.

ISO is the leading supplier of data and analytics for the property and casualty insurance industry and collects and evaluates information from communities in the United States and Canada on only their structural fire suppression capabilities. ISO analyzes the data using the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, and assigns a PPC number to the community. ISO's PPC program evaluates communities according to a uniform set of criteria, incorporating nationally recognized standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association and the American Water Works Association. A combination of meetings between trained ISO field agents, a dispatch center coordinator, community fire official(s), and the water superintendent is used in conjunction with a comprehensive questionnaire to collect the data necessary to determine the PPC grade.

The Washington Township Fire Department completed the rating process of questionnaires, data collection, document preparation, a site visit, and final reporting. The Department was awarded the coveted PPC "1" rating on December 18, 2017 with an effective date of April 1, 2018. This is the highest rating possible for any fire department and places the Washington Township Fire Department as one of only 411 fire departments in the United States and one of only six fire departments in the state of Ohio to achieve this recognition. Additionally, the fact that the Washington Township Fire Department is accredited by the Center for Fire Accreditation International and holds the PPC of a "1" rating makes the Washington Township Fire Department one of only 114 departments in the United States and one of only four departments in Ohio to achieve both of these distinguished designations.

### **The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI)**

Accreditation is a comprehensive self-assessment and quality improvement model that enables organizations to examine past, current, and future service levels and internal performance standards and compare them to the industry's current best practices. This process leads to a more efficient and effective emergency service organization.

The Center for Public Service Excellence (CPSE)'s Accreditation Program, administered by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) allows fire and emergency service agencies to assess the following:

Determine community risk and safety needs and develop community-specific Standards of Cover.

Evaluate the performance of the department.

Establish a method for achieving continuous organizational improvement.

Local government executives face increasing pressure to "do more with less" and justify their expenditures by demonstrating a direct link to improved or expanded services. Particularly for emergency services, local officials need criteria to assess professional performance and efficiency. The CFAI accreditation process provides a well-defined, internationally recognized benchmark system to measure the quality of fire and emergency services.



## **SWOT Analysis**

### **Strengths**

- Accreditation
- ISO 1 Rating
- Mentoring
- 99% Customer Satisfaction
- Strategic Planning
- Partnerships
- Community Education
- Mental Health Evaluations for New Full-Time Hires
- Structured Training Program
- Data Collection (Analysis, Forecasting)
- Current Funding
- Lateral Transfers
- Updated Equipment
- Recruitment and Retention Plan

### **Weaknesses**

- Diversity
- Succession Planning
- Community Risk Reduction
- Mental Health and Wellness Program
- Limited Equipment Storage
- EMS FTO
- Absence of Compliance Officer
  - ISO & Accreditation Manager
  - Data Analyst/GIS

## **Weaknesses**

- Diminished Pool of Qualified Candidates
- Exceeding Response Time Standards in Multiple Planning Zones

## **Opportunities**

- Absence of Compliance Officer
  - ISO & Accreditation Manager
  - Data Analyst/GIS
- Diminished Pool of Qualified Candidates
- Exceeding Response Time Standards in Multiple Planning Zones
- Resident Stakeholder Meeting
- Compliance Officer
  - ISO & Accreditation Manager
  - Data Analyst/GIS
- Social Media Presence

## **Threats**

- Career Related Illnesses
- Tax Increment Financing
- Increased Vehicle Maintenance Costs
- Reduction in Revenue (Non-Collected)
- Levy 2025
- Increased Demand on Services
- Extended Care Facilities
- Diminished Pool of Qualified Candidates
- Retirement of Experienced Personnel

## **Strategic Goals**

### **Goal 1 – Maintain Accreditation**

Accreditation focuses on constant improvement with annual evaluations from industry experts. Maintaining our accreditation is consistent with the expectations of our external stakeholders and in line with the City of Dublin's requirements for their Dispatching, Police and Road Departments. To maintain accreditation, the township must be prepared to effectively address the future needs of the community.

### **Goal 2 - ISO**

Insurance Services Office (ISO) evaluates a departments ability to effectively deploy an acceptable level of well-trained staff with sufficient apparatus for fire suppression. The evaluation process also focuses on the efficiency of our partners such as; NRECC, Columbus Water Department and the City of Dublin. The departments current rating of ISO 1, not only benefits residents and local business, but it's another external agency evaluating our daily operations. It is imperative the department maintains the highest ranking possible.

### **Goal 3 – Recruitment/Retention/Promotion Standardized Process**

The department recognizes the need consistently hire qualified candidates and retain our current staff. This is effectively done by streamlining the hiring process, ensuring the needs of the employees are met along with competitive compensation. In addition, we must define a career path for members looking for future management opportunities. A career path should have a clear job description and an outline of the testing process.

### **Goal 4 – Mental Health and Wellness Program**

The fire service is both physically and mentally demanding. Resources must be available to meet their needs. This shall include regular evaluations of department physicals, annual mental health evaluations, regular training, PEER support and regular interaction with the departments service dog.

### **Goal 5 – EMS Development**

The department is committed to delivering first class care with highly trained responders. To maintain qualified personnel, the department must provide training, regular testing and continual evaluation of service delivery to identify development opportunities. Through this process, the department has recognized the need to implement Field Training Officers (FTO) to train and oversee personnel during their regular duties.

## Goal 6 – Diversity Group

The township is committed to equality for all. This does not only include the hiring process, but policies, facilities and career path advancement. Development of this group will assist the department in maintaining an environment supportive of all members.

## Goal 7 – IT Technology

With the departments ISO 1 rating and accreditation, we rely heavily on data analysis to set benchmarks and monitor outputs. Technology also greatly impacts our service delivery through CAD and mobile devices. Midway through 2022, we will be transitioning from FireHouse software to ESO, which will not only track emergency responses, but encompasses several modules associated with department operations. Monitoring future IT advancement will assist us in operating more efficiently.

## Goal 8 – Station/Personnel Safety Updates

Due to the age of our facilities there are items that need addressed to either make them safer for employees or assist with service delivery. This does not include the regular maintenance items but rather necessary improvements.

### Action Items

<b>Goal 1 - Maintain Accreditation (Accreditation Manager)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>1.1</b> Evaluate the need of a Compliance Officer to ensure all accreditation and ISO requirements are addressed.	<b>1-2 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>1.2</b> Develop a Master Plan to evaluate future staffing, apparatus and facility needs	<b>1-2 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>1.3</b> Fire Officer Credentialing	<b>5 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>Goal 2 – Maintain ISO 1 Rating (Battalion Chief)</b>	
<b>2.1</b> Maintain statistical data consistent with ISO reporting.	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Status</b>	

<b>2.2</b> Annually evaluate ISO worksheets to track data and identify any deficiencies.	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>Goal 3 - Recruitment/Retention/Promotion Standardized Process (Fire Chief/HR Manager)</b>	
<b>3.1</b> Streamline hiring process by setting bi-annually timeframes for PT testing, Interviews, Mental Health Evaluations and background checks.	<b>1 Year</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>3.2</b> Annual evaluation of employee benefits to ensure we are competitive within the market.	<b>1-2 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>3.3</b> Update department Succession plan to identify all aspects of the promotional process including timeframe, requirements and Scoring.	<b>1-2 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>Goal 4 - Mental Health Program (Fire Chief/HR Manager)</b>	
<b>4.1</b> Hire a mental health professional to assist with evaluations, training and counseling.	<b>1 Year</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>4.2</b> Maintain departments PEER Support/Chaplain/Fitness Plan	<b>1-5 years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>4.3</b> Implement department Service Dog Program	<b>1 Year</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>4.4</b> Work with Ohio State Universities Mental Health Program to address counseling needs, training, ride-along, annual evaluations and incident debriefing.	<b>1-5 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>Goal 5 – EMS Development (EMS Manager)</b>	
<b>5.1</b> Establish acceptable benchmarks related to protocol scores, Core Comps, On-Scene times, Peer Review violations.	<b>1-2 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>5.2</b> Develop and Implement Field Training Program	<b>6 Months</b>
<b>Status</b>	

<b>5.3 Measure Patients Lost/Saved – Key Factors</b>	<b>1-2 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>Goal 6 – Diversity Group (Township Administrator)</b>	
<b>6.1 Establish diverse committee and set quarterly meeting dates.</b>	<b>1 Year</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>6.2 Initial review of processes, policies and facilities.</b>	<b>1-5 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>6.3 Provide annual report with recommendations</b>	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>Goal 7 – IT Technology (Fire Chief)</b>	
<b>7.1 Deployment ESO software</b>	<b>6 Months</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>7.2 Identify kiosk software for real-time reporting</b>	<b>1-2 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>7.3 New employee evaluation program</b>	<b>2 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>7.4 FirstWatch Software implementation</b>	<b>1 Year</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>7.5 CAD Upgrade</b>	<b>2-4 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>Goal 8 – Station Safety Updates (Safety Committee)</b>	
<b>8.1 Identify safety concerns such as; isolating turnout gear and chemical storage.</b>	<b>1-5 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>8.2 Purchase gear extractors and dryers for each station</b>	<b>1-2 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>8.3 UV Lighting HVAC Systems</b>	<b>3-5 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	
<b>8.4 Building/Vehicle Security</b>	<b>3-5 Years</b>
<b>Status</b>	