Mission

VFRS saves lives and builds safer communities.

Vision

VFRS will be the international leader in fire, rescue, community risk reduction, and staff safety and wellness.
# Contents

## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION
- MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF .......................................................... 1
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ............................................................................. 2
- RISKS AND OPPORTUNITES ..................................................................... 3
- VANCOUVER FIRE RESCUE SERVICES AND THE CITY OF VANCOUVER ......................................................................................... 5
- STRATEGIC THINKING .............................................................................. 8
- OVERVIEW OF VFRS 2019-2021 STRATEGIC PLAN .................................. 9

## SECTION 2 - GOALS, INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS
- A - SERVICE EXCELLENCE ..................................................................... 10
- B - ADVANCE PARTNERSHIPS .................................................................. 14
- C - INCREASE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ..................................................... 18
- D - ENHANCE CULTURE ......................................................................... 22
- E - SAFETY AND WELLNESS A PRIORITY ............................................... 26
- IMPLEMENTATION PLAN ........................................................................... 30

## SECTION 3 - APPENDICES
- VFRS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART ............................................................ 31
- EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS ...................................... 32
- RESOURCE PLAN .................................................................................... 33
- DETAILED OVERVIEW OF THE 2019-2021 VFRS STRATEGIC PLAN .... 34
Since 1886, Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) has protected the residents, visitors and businesses of the City of Vancouver. We have a proud history of service to our city, connection to our communities and supporting each other. We have learned many lessons since we were founded, and now we are a department that has positioned itself as a leader in the Canadian and North American fire service (while always being honest about how we can be better).

Today, we are Canada’s busiest fire department in terms of emergency calls per firefighter. The opioid crisis and other socio-demographic impacts, including severe housing and homelessness challenges, have led to significant risks for us to overcome. Our population is aging and diverse, and the west-end is the most densely populated neighbourhood in North America. In 2018, we experienced eight fire related civilian fatalities, a statistic which is not acceptable.

We also have many challenges that extend beyond front-line emergency response. Maintaining training and education levels for our teams in a world of increasing public expectations and legal requirements is a significant issue. Public education in a city as diverse as Vancouver requires innovation and creativity. Ensuring code compliance and building safety in one of North America’s most vertical and fastest growing cities increases demands on VFRS resources every year. Smartly engaging technology, ensuring effective emergency communications and maintaining a complex fleet are other examples of the range of issues we need to address.

This strategic plan represents the goals and strategic initiatives for a department shifting from being reactive to being proactive. Having been developed and reviewed by front-line staff from throughout VFRS, it identifies the priority problems that we face.

It also outlines the solutions that our teams are confident VFRS can implement to overcome these problems. Our staff are highly engaged, and I am excited about the innovative ideas they brought to the table throughout the strategic planning process.

VFRS is committed to measurably improving our response performance, advancing our partnerships, increasing public engagement, enhancing our culture and improving the health, safety and wellness of our people. We will achieve these goals through evidence-based strategies, effective internal and external stakeholder engagement and a willingly to positively embrace change.

I am excited to see our VFRS team work together to achieve our goals! VFRS will be a recognized leader in the international fire service, protecting our world-class city to the highest level while ensuring our staff is safe, healthy and happy!

Fire Chief Darrell Reid
Vancouver Fire Rescue Services
Executive Summary

Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) aims to protect quality of life in Vancouver through ensuring our city is safe for residents, visitors, and businesses. We are shifting from a reactive, response based focus to a proactive focus built on public education and fire prevention. With the goal of reducing injuries, death, and loss from fires and other hazards, VFRS will improve all components of emergency response.

The VFRS 2019-2021 Strategic Plan outlines the priorities, key challenges, strategies and processes to guide VFRS toward becoming the safest fire service in the world. It includes five strategic goals and eighteen associated initiatives.

Through comprehensive current state analysis and predictive modeling of trends and performance; recommendations were developed on how VFRS could most effectively serve the needs of the community while aligning with industry standards. Workshops with staff, management, Local 18 leaders, and external stakeholders identified new priorities and strategies to align with the new mission and vision.

VFRS is focused on achieving shared goals and aligning with other City of Vancouver plans, such as:

• Mayor’s Opioid Task Force - working together to develop mitigation strategies
• Greenest City 2020 Action Plan - VFRS now sends smaller apparatus’ to medical calls as an efficiency
• Earthquake Preparedness Strategy - enhanced access to post-earthquake fire-fighting water supply
• 2019-2022 City Capital Plan - ensuring alignment with VFRS’s vehicle replacement program and fire hall requirements
Risks and Opportunities

There are a number of risks and opportunities that must be addressed to ensure ongoing efficient and effective fire service for Vancouver. These include but are not limited to the following:

- **Public education sustainability**
  Defining high-risk communities based on probability and cause becomes increasingly difficult as the community changes and evolves.

- **Population diversity and demographics**
  Vancouver's diversity provides challenges for fire prevention and public education efforts, and to be effective, messaging needs to be offered in many languages and formats. VFRS also strives to attract a workforce that reflects the diversity of the city.

- **Vertical urbanization**
  High-rise developments effect response times; fire fighters require extra time to get to the location of the emergency incident.

- **Urban density**
  Emergency response travel times are negatively impacted by traffic which is increasing as the city continues to grow and develop. The City’s Transportation Plan contains projects such as the ‘Congestion Management Strategy’ which may assist with these pressures; VFRS may require new response and deployment models for meeting service delivery requirements.

- **Talent and resourcing**
  Ensuring staffing levels are maintained to keep appropriate and sufficient apparatus in-service to effectively respond to Vancouver’s risk profile.
Next Steps

VFRS’ 2019-2021 Strategic Plan will guide divisional priorities and resources over the next three years.

1. **Implementation** will include all initiatives be incorporated into the annual work plans of our Senior Management team.

2. **Goals**, will be reviewed quarterly and updated as needed to reflect current state. The plan will be dynamically assessed and adapted to adjust to current and developing pressures.

3. Strong, transparent **internal communications** is integral to the success of this plan. Collaboration with the core of our service, the members of Local 18, is vital to the success of this plan.

4. VFRS’ 2019-2021 Strategic Plan is meant to be the first stage for VFRS to carry out the **accreditation** process defined by the Center for Public Service Excellence (CPSE). The accreditation process and commitment to **continuous improvement** will support VFRS in achieving its objectives over the next three years and beyond.

Each day VFRS strives to provide Vancouver’s communities with exceptional fire and rescue services. This Plan, developed by the VFRS Senior Leadership Team, Members of Local 18 and support staff helps align our priority goals and initiatives for the three years ahead. This plan will enable us to address the opportunities and challenges we experience along the way, while maintaining focus on our goals. These key goals and initiatives advance VFRS’s work already underway across the organization.
Vancouver Fire Rescue Services and the City of Vancouver

VFRS provides service to Vancouver’s 129 km² and an estimated population of 680,000 residents, making it one of Canada’s most densely populated city with close to 5,300 people per km². Adding in the over 200,000 commuting workforce, as well as being responsible for protecting the nearly 10.3 million tourists yearly, VFRS protects over 1,000,000 people on a daily basis. VFRS is also responsible for protecting and providing service to the more than 214,000 properties, 8 stadiums/centers, 7 churches and 10 bridges.

The City of Vancouver’s unique makeup causes challenges in delivering effective response. Initiatives are being developed to overcome challenges, such as:

- Significant number of single room occupancy (SRO’s) buildings due to the large number of lower income and homeless citizens
- Abundant medical responses due in part to the current opioid crisis, pose a serious threat to our resources
- Densely populated downtown west end with an abundance of high-rise buildings
- Water bordering three sides and large bridges connecting its downtown core
- The large secluded area of the University of British Columbia, creates a different set of demographically driven issues
- Many heritage buildings gives rise to their own fire safety issues
- Continuous growth with both new construction and redevelopment, which includes many structures having industrial/commercial space below residential units
- The current Opioid Crisis which we are constantly examining best practices to respond and remediate the situation
VFRS is also responsible for inspecting and ensuring compliance with Vancouver’s Fire Bylaw, leading fire and life safety education in the community and hosting community health clinics. VFRS also leads the Canada Task Force 1, Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (HUSAR) team, which is available as a key emergency response resource deployable across the province, country and world.

VFRS consists of four (4) divisions each having important roles in protecting the community (See Appendix A for Organizational Chart):

- Operations, Special Operations and Professional Development
- Technology, Fleet, Infrastructure and OH&S
- Community Safety and Risk Reduction
- Organizational Performance and Business Operations

VFRS is nearing a tipping point. To provide a clearer perspective of how busy VFRS is, in 2018 VFRS saw 82 incidents per 1,000 residents, while the Canadian fire services average ranged between 26 and 53 incidents per 1,000 residents. VFRS’ halls responded to an average of 2,794 incidents, while most other Canadian metro cities were in the 1,500 range. Vancouver fire fighters respond on average to twice as many incidents as the average fire fighter in any other Canadian city. Initiatives to rectify the current staffing model and increase resources are identified as a high and immediate priority in this plan. It is senior management’s mission to proactively address impacts that could arise from severe workload, such as compassion fatigue, mental health challenges including occupational stress injury (OSI), and compromised citizen and city safety.

Despite emergency call volume, a recent third party employee engagement survey showed that our staff is very positive and engaged. Employees feel committed to and proud to work for the organization, they are willing to apply themselves and feel supported to perform to their potential (see Appendix B). Staff feel their development is now in an area of strength and can focus on being empowered in their environment, building skills and training, and expanding and redefining work processes. This survey showed highly positive ratings of both leadership and clarity of direction. It is this optimism, commitment and vision that will guide the department to continued success and improvement over the next three years and beyond.

**VFRS Services**

- Fires
- Hazardous material events
- Medical emergencies
- Marine responses

- Motor vehicle incidents
- Technical rescue incidents
- Public service calls
- Special operations
Founded in 1886 and proudly staffed by members of Local 18, Canada’s first association to join the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), VFRS is Canada’s busiest fire services per firefighter. Responding to 60,000 incidents per year (with over 70 per cent of these being medical related), VFRS not only protects the city from fire specific incidents but is very skilled at responding to “all hazards.”
Strategic Thinking

MISSION

VFRS saves lives and builds safer communities.

VISION

VFRS will be the international leader in fire, rescue, community risk reduction, and staff safety and wellness.

TEAMWORK C - I - R - C - L - E

CORE VALUES

Teamwork - WE display commitment and trust through collaborative communication and actions
Courage - WE have the conviction to defend our values and willingness to challenge the process
Integrity - WE demonstrate sound moral and ethical principles
Respect - WE encourage opinions and ideas of self and others
Compassion - WE demonstrate empathy for others, offer guidance and acknowledge strengths
Leadership - WE inspire and empower others to achieve the best results
Excellence - WE surpass expectations and set benchmarks above the standards to measurably be the best
## Overview of the VFRS 2019-2021 Strategic Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>A SERVICE EXCELLENCE</th>
<th>B ADVANCE PARTNERSHIPS</th>
<th>C INCREASE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT</th>
<th>D ENHANCE CULTURE</th>
<th>E SAFETY AND WELLNESS A PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INITIATIVES</td>
<td>A.1 Achieve Accreditation</td>
<td>B.1 Build Inter-Operability and Key Partnerships</td>
<td>C.1 Implement Communications Plan</td>
<td>D.1 Increase Staff Attraction/Retention</td>
<td>E.1 Develop Staff Wellness and Fitness Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.2 Complete the Growth/Resource Plan</td>
<td>B.2 Optimize Medical Response</td>
<td>C.2 Increase Community Interaction Opportunities</td>
<td>D.2 Enhance Staff Engagement</td>
<td>E.2 Enhance Decontamination and Anti-Cancer Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.3 Reduce Response Times</td>
<td>B.3 Increase Disaster Response Involvement</td>
<td>C.3 Complete Community Needs Assessment</td>
<td>D.3 Expand Career Growth Plans</td>
<td>E.3 Expand Fire Safety Officer Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.4 Complete 30 year Fire Hall Plan</td>
<td>B.4 Develop Opioid Crisis Mitigation Strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E.5 Continual Development of a Mental Health Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the development of these 5 Goals and 18 strategic initiatives, it was recognized that they are connected and dependent of each other. Cooperation will be essential, thus each strategic initiative involves the efforts of the whole organization and/or several city departments to effectively accomplish.
SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Provide excellent service to the residents and visitors of Vancouver

A.1 Achieve International Center for Public Safety Excellence Accreditation
A.2 Growth and resource planning
A.3 Reduce response times
A.4 Long-term fire hall planning

2019 2020 2021
Vancouver Fire Rescue Services understand public safety as a priority and aim to deliver the best service in the country. Saving lives, property and environment as quickly and safely as possible is a main function of VFRS. By increasing our resource model, setting service delivery performance targets and methods of enhancement to reach these targets we will achieve improved public safety.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE A.1

ACHIEVE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EXCELLENCE ACCREDITATION

Description

Vancouver Fire Rescue Services aims to achieve Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) accreditation by the end of 2021. This program will hold VFRS accountable to setting goals, and designing specific plans with continuous monitoring and evaluation of services. VFRS’ management and labour groups are fully committed to the department’s pursuit of excellence.

Developing a continuous improvement model while educating and informing staff on the importance of accurate data capture will be key to success. Optimizing performance in support of public safety is the end objective.

The Standard of Cover and Risk assessment component of this initiative will form a basis for response time targets and resource tasking, and will align fire hall specific staff levels and deployment requirements. These are crucial in delivering optimal service to the public.

**ACTIONS**

- Q3 2019 - Complete a 3 year Strategic Plan to set a prioritized focus for the service
- Q3 2019 - Initiate a comprehensive city-wide Risk Assessment to identify threats/hazards
- Q4 2020 - Develop a Standard of Cover report to outline resource requirements and set targets
- Q4 2021 - Complete a Self-Assessment which aims to provide an internal and external review of the services we provide to the community
- Q4 2021 - Develop a detailed performance management and measurement framework
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE A.2

DEVELOP A RESOURCE PLAN WITH DIRECTIVE AND CORE SERVICES REQUIRED TO APPROPRIATELY PROTECT AND SERVE THE CITY

Description
As part of the council approved 5 year growth plan, over the next 3 years, a total of 72 new personnel will be added to VFRS (see Appendix C). A full and comprehensive resource allocation plan is to be developed and observed. The plan should aim to detail resources required to implement the growth, including apparatus, gear and succession into the adjusting structure.

A needs assessment for assignment of fire fighters and optimal positioning of specialty teams will be part of the plan which will be monitored, reviewed and redefined.

The plan includes the addition of training staff to ensure safe practices and meet legal requirements, and prevention staff to support proactive risk mitigation.

**Actions**

Based on an initial needs assessment and the approved Darkhorse report, resource allocation will include:

- Q1 2019 - Advance 7 Resources
- Q1 2020 - Advance 35 Resources
- Q1 2021 - Advance 30 Resources

---

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE A.3

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RESPONSE TIMES

Description
Improve public safety by reducing response times, specifically targeting turnout time and alarm handling time.

Through accurate data capturing, targets will be developed and more data driven and evidence based decisions for improvement can be achieved and supported. Communicating target times, goals and rewards to all staff will be critical to achieving goals. When crews are accountable to performance and of response times, improvements are felt at a deeper level.

Work with our emergency communications provider (EComm) to streamline dispatch processes to ensure closest and most appropriate emergency response resources are being deployed. Consistent review of call processing times of medical incidents initially handled by BCEHS will be a focus.

**Actions**

Based on an initial needs assessment and the approved Darkhorse report, resource allocation will include:

- Q1 2019 - Define and implement strategies to achieve set turnout time targets
- Q1 2019 - Share established turnout time targets and develop improvement strategies
- Q4 2019 - Streamline call evaluation and dispatch processes
- Q3 2020 - Complete assessment of current deployment and reconfigure as needed to provide the best service to our community
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE A.4

DEVELOP A LONG-TERM FIRE HALL PLAN

Description
Assess the recent fire hall location and standard of cover research report to align fire hall needs and planning for the next 30 years. Include staff input in the design stages to ensure accurate representation of needs is achieved. Continually revisiting and monitoring the fire hall renewal capital plan, and increasing capacity in the downtown and the Cambie corridor areas will be a priority.

 ACTIONS

Current hall improvements underway include:

• Q3 2019 - Hall #5 completed and in service
• Q2 2020 – Finalize the 30 year fire Hall Plan documents
• Q2 2020 - Explore satellite offices for fire prevention staff in new fire halls
• Q2 2021 - Begin hall #17 construction in 2019; planned for completion end of 2020; in-service by 2021
ADVANCED PARTNERSHIPS
FOSTER CONTINUOUS AND TRANSPARENT COLLABORATION WITH COV BUSINESS UNITS AND WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

B.1 Advance inter-operability with City departments and external agencies
B.2 Optimize medical response across the City
B.3 Increase disaster response involvement
B.4 Opioid crisis mitigation strategies
Vancouver Fire Rescue Services realizes the need to address community concerns that affect public safety and aims to strengthen relationships with external and internal partners to work together and identify new collaboration opportunities. Inter-operability with other departments is crucial to success from all aspects of our business including planning, safety and procedures prior to, during and after emergency situations. Saving lives is core to our mission statement, therefore we are doing all we can to support and work on mitigation strategies with the city to increase performance abilities. This will be addressed by supporting the community through education and increasing our ability to assist at overdose calls. We will work with the City of Vancouver and all partners to focus on issues that have an impact on public safety. Working with these groups will prove to reduce the impacts of this crisis.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE B.1

ADVANCE INTER-OPERABILITY WITH CITY DEPARTMENTS AND EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Description
Increase collaboration and integration with City departments on strategic and development planning for a more integrated planning process. VFRS involvement in the initial stages of planning and modifications would ensure the best and safest outcomes for the city.

City initiatives that VFRS can contribute and promote safety include the innovative co-location model or green initiatives like bike calming measures, where road pathways are being reviewed and safety models need to be adjusted.

ACTIONS

Initiatives targeted to advance inter-operability include:

- **Q3 2019** - Communicate VFRS’s mandate to staff and stakeholders, including mission, vision and strategic plan to better manage expectations
- **Q4 2020** - Develop a consistent and reliable integrated internal communications and planning program which will build trust and respect with other agencies
- **Q4 2021** - VFRS aims to advance inter-operability with many departments and external agencies, including but not limited to: VEMA/ VPD/ BCAS/ BCEHS/ REFM/ Finance/ HR/ ECOMM/ EQS/ IT and other local fire agencies where partnerships are a means to success
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE B.2

ENHANCE INTEGRATION WITH BCEHS AND BCAS TO OPTIMIZE MEDICAL RESPONSE ACROSS THE CITY

Description
VFRS wants to partner in a system where responses to all medical responses support a positive patient outcome.

VFRS’ relationship with BCEHS is effective on the scene but from a strategic perspective VFRS plans to improve coordination of medical call information with BCEHS to enable accurate in depth analysis leading to better patient outcomes. VFRS is frequently on scene with non-serious patient responses awaiting transfer of care.

Actions
Initiatives include working with the mayor, city management and the ministry of health to:

• Q3 2019 - Investigate improvements with transfer of care and patient release
• Q2 2020 - Streamline dispatch to ensure closest and most appropriate emergency response resources
• Q4 2020 – Engage in joint planning discussions to better understand challenges and opportunities with current medical calls and where calls could optimize VFRS and BCEHS resources

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE B.3

INCREASE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND EDUCATION IN DISASTER RESPONSE

Description
Greater community involvement and education in disaster response in alignment with Vancouver Emergency Management Agency (VEMA) is required to support Vancouver’s resilience.

Actions

• Q2 2019 - Increasing media coverage to educate the community
• Q2 2019 - Combined department exercises and scenarios
• Q2 2020 - Expand community outreach programs; NEAT teams, school and business programs, recreational centers activation roles

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE B.4

OPIOID CRISIS MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Description
VFRS is supporting the Mayor’s Opioid Emergency Task Force to develop mitigation strategies and recommendations to save lives. Ultimately, build a program and public health based response complemented by robust partnerships.

Actions

• Q2 2019 - Share with task force how opioid incidents drive call volumes
INCREASE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGE PUBLIC AND STAFF VIA STRONG COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

C.1 Implement a strong communications plan
C.2 Increase community interaction opportunities
C.3 Develop an in-depth community needs assessment

2019 2020 2021
Vancouver Fire Rescue Services aims to further engage with the community and partner agencies to foster relationships and trust within our diverse communities. Building positive relationships with the city’s diverse communities is core to improving public education and fire prevention safety. Methods to deliver information to the community include social media and more conventional and traditional methods like getting out into the community as a crew and meeting face to face. Building the community risk assessment will determine where VFRS priorities for public safety lie.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE C.1

IMPLEMENT A STRONG COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

**Description**
Enhancing internal and external communications to build connections and fire safety. Building external communications within our community and other city departments will enhance the safety of the community. VFRS plans to involve community partners in the design and roll out of fire safety and education programs. (See Appendix D for VFRS’ current social media platforms.)

Increased internal communication and engagement will involve sound, ongoing and open dialogue including more face to face communications and implementing logical ideas from front line staff while taking a ‘from the floor’ approach. Accountability to our priorities through proper and timely communication, updates and delivery of our goals and targets aims to increase motivation and empowerment of our staff and community.

**ACTIONS**
External communications improvements will include:

- **Q1 2019 -** Increased social media presence, including VFRS website and fire safety messaging (ex. Wake up Vancouver)
- **Q4 2019 -** Post incident outcome and education with regular press releases (ex. After the fire)
- **Q3 2020 -** Raise internal profile with other city departments and commitment to staff

**STRATEGIC INITIATIVE C.2**

INCREASE COMMUNITY INTERACTION OPPORTUNITIES

**Description**
Increasing active community interaction and fire safety education to the residents of the City of Vancouver is a powerful tool to ensure citizen safety and infrastructure integrity. As prevention and public education resources are added, opportunities to engage the community will be increased accordingly. VFRS plans to monitor fire incident volume and severity of fire calls which will be a means of measuring if targeted community risk reduction activities are successful and adjust as demand mandates.

**ACTIONS**

- **Q4 2019 -** Expand the current fire safety program, with initiatives such as getting involved in more community events including ladder-truck sprinkler parks, open houses, safety tours, and face to face interactions at social events
- **Q4 2019 –** Engage activities towards the targeted community risk assignments
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE C.3
DEVELOP AN IN-DEPTH COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Description
VFRS plans to develop a community risk assessment, identifying the needs of the community and build a comprehensive Fire Life Safety education program. This approach targets improvement of quality of life and promotes a standard of care not only to respond to emergencies but to prevent or reduce their occurrence. The goal is to create a fire service that acts proactively as a risk-reduction entity for our community, which entails partnering with other community organizations to realize risk reduction objectives. This comprehensive community needs assessment aims to reduce risk and increase resiliency through programs, training in preparedness, prevention and mitigation.

Addressing the community needs and identifying where the real risks may lie, aims to have a positive impact in lowering fire related injury and fatality rates.

Another critical aspect of community risk assessment in Vancouver for 2019 is the mental health and addiction issues in the community. The number of addiction related incidents that VFRS responds to is significant and having programs and processes in place to mitigate through this time of crisis for the city are vital for proper service delivery.

**ACTIONS**

- Q3 2019 - Investigate community risk assessment methodology
- Q4 2019 - Preliminary risk assessment assignments for prevention staff
- Q4 2019 - VFRS plans to work with community partners in a collaborative approach to address issues and gaps in the health care system
ENHANCE CULTURE
VFRS IS AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

D.1 Increase staff attraction and retention strategies
D.2 Enhance staff engagement strategies
D.3 Expand career growth and training opportunities
Staff are the core of our service. Their health and professional wellbeing is critical to the success of our service.

Vancouver Fire Rescue Services aims to attract and retain a talented, diverse workforce who perform at a high level while also reflecting the community of Vancouver. The current culture and work environment in VFRS is very positive and we are excited to continue to improve engagement and enablement.

There is an overall awareness that VFRS lacks both gender and ethnic diversity and needs to address this with a constant and full time presence working in the community to establish VFRS as an employer of choice and an option for those who would otherwise not consider it. Enhancing a program to intentionally seek out and encourage individuals who meet the existing high standards for acceptance and are of varied gender identities and ethnicities to seek careers with VFRS is a priority.

VFRS aims to empower staff through increased engagement in relevant training and ongoing staff development opportunities. There is currently an increased focus on the importance of training and certification and VFRS plans to implement ways to meet these desires.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE D.1
INCREASE STAFF ATTRACTION STRATEGIES
Description
VFRS is determined to establish our service as an employer of choice by building on strengths such as sense of pride, community engagement and teamwork. Progressive actions by our management team and commitment from our staff to exemplify current successes and advances will help achieve this. The community has a positive and supportive view of VFRS and we will focus on encouraging diverse individuals to seek careers with the VFRS while maintaining high standards for acceptance to build culture and diversity.

ACTIONS
Some programs VFRS plans to implement:

- Q4 2019 - Conduct an in-depth review of the recruitment and outreach programs and expand efforts to attract and maintain a workforce the represents the City of Vancouver
- Q2 2020 - Develop various outreach strategies including youth programs (ex. Co-Ops)
- Q3 2020 - Engage fire staff to contribute in recruitment outreach and build a program to intentionally seek out and encourage individuals who meet the existing high standards for acceptance
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE D.2

ENHANCE ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

Description
Our people and their professional success are core to our mission to be a leading fire service. Engaging, empowering and retaining expert and professional staff in VFRS is a high priority. Strategies to retain and advance staff such as establishing career paths for success are in action. Performing at the top of one’s ability derives from guidance and encouragement.

Actions
VFRS plans to explore development opportunities in many career stages, including:

- Q3 2019 - Developing and expanding rewards and certificate programs
- Q3 2020 - Develop transparency in the training program so that all staff are aware of objectives and position requirements

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE D.3

EXPAND CAREER GROWTH AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Description
Ongoing staff development includes; enhancement of training programs, incorporating inter-agency training and utilizing accredited programs, certifications and more live practices. Excellence may also be recognized with robust competency management programs in all specialties as well as mentorship throughout all levels.

VFRS recognizes that Vancouver has one of the most complex environments for fire training requirements, with a multitude high-risk structures, the port, earthquake susceptibility, the opioid crisis, flood and tsunami risk, etc. To achieve excellence in such a complex environment we must develop and implement a comprehensive training program, and develop transparent objectives for staff development.

Actions
Programs to be developed will include:

- Q1 2020 - Develop potential growth areas and expand the range of specialties for staff (Training in specialties, EMR/PCP within the specialties, marine training, Fire Inspector)
- Q1 2020 - Building professional development plans
- Q4 2020 - Development and implementation of a comprehensive training program which will take into consideration many elements and include accountability by the individual and leadership

This initiative will include metrics such as career path planning and tracking, which will be used to monitor effectiveness and accountability.
SAFETY AND WELLNESS A PRIORITY

STAFF SAFETY, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

E.1 Develop and implement a staff wellness and fitness program
E.2 Enhance existing decontamination and anti-cancer processes
E.3 Expanding appropriate safety officer staffing and responsibilities
E.4 Further develop our mental health programs
VFRS promotes a positive and healthy work environment where employees are able to thrive and contribute to the success of the service.

With mental health challenges, cancers, and traumatic injuries all significantly impacting our staff, support from a physical, mental and resiliency perspective needs to be proactive, customized, responsive and preventative.

Although the culture is becoming more supportive of mental wellbeing, staff need better access to external support systems. VFRS plans to bolster the physical and mental health, wellness and safety programs in place by adding appropriate safety and personal wellness initiatives as well as by developing a comprehensive wellness plan.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE E.1
DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STAFF WELLNESS AND FITNESS PROGRAM

Description
VFRS plans to develop and implement a staff health program to ensure staff can face the physical and mental demands of their job. Implementing a peer support program for personal health awareness will also be a part of this program.

Actions
• Q4 2019 - Develop partnerships in research to advance health initiatives
• Q2 2020 - Methods of personal and organizational accountabilities
• Q2 2020 - Develop a health program in line with the IAFC/IAFF Wellness Fitness Initiative (WFI) but more customized to the needs of our staff and include annual physicals, pre-cancer screening, and confidential counselling/coaching

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE E.2
ENHANCE EXISTING DECONTAMINATION POLICIES TO INCLUDE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE STAFF SAFETY

Description
Attaining a proactive and preventative approach to decontamination issues with fire safety is of high importance to VFRS. On the job experts who can attest to what is working and what needs improvement will be part of the plan, which will identify what measures can be taken to improve staff safety.

Actions
Pilot initiatives include:
• Q3 2019 - Expanding hall#13 as a proper specialty for firefighter rehab, decontamination, and monitoring
• Q3 2019 - Implement strategy for action-ready, service ready gear
• Q4 2019 - Develop comprehensive decontamination policies and procedures
• Q2 2020 - Support units and Air-light units to be equipped at their full capacity
• Q3 2020 - Proper Hall and equipment cleaning for mask/gloves/restocking of equipment
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE E.3

EXPAND APPROPRIATE SAFETY STAFFING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Description
VFRS strives to advocate for a continuing culture shift relating to safety, and to enhance the personal and organizational accountability for health and safety throughout the service. The importance of assigning fire safety officers will allow success and empowerment to support executive team to influence the safety culture of the department.

The role of Safety Officer includes managing risks that our members take at emergencies, monitoring and assessing hazardous and unsafe situations and developing measures to assure personnel safety. As well, Safety officers ensure a health plan is prepared and implemented.

**ACTIONS**

- **Q4 2021** - Develop the position of Health, Wellness and Safety Officer Position for each shift

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE E.4

CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT OF A HOLISTIC MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Description
VFRS plans to implement a holistic, evidence-based, non-biased mental health program with a mental health professional as part of the VFRS Mental health team.

Some initial steps have been recently taken to improve the overall wellbeing of staff – such as re-instituting sports in the Fire Hall and the “resilient minds” program.

**ACTIONS**

The plan to achieve this is to:

- **Q4 2019** - 90 per cent of staff complete the Resilient Minds program
- **Q2 2020** - Further develop our Mental Health Programs, including hiring a mental health professional
Vancouver Fire Rescue Services aims to complete the goals within this plan by the end of 2021.

- Initiatives described herein will be considered a priority for all divisions of VFRS and will be implemented into respective divisional work plans.
- Performance targets for each initiative will be assigned, monitored and reviewed quarterly. As needed, adjustments will be made to ensure successful resource allocation, program changes, and achievement of outcomes.
- Successes and outcomes will be communicated to all staff, and the leadership team will actively seek input and feedback from VFRS members.
- VFRS’ Strategic Plan will be communicated to City Council, the City Leadership Team, all VFRS staff and other stakeholders including the citizens of Vancouver. Communicating the plan will be done via many media outlets including; social and mainstream media, hard copies for VFRS worksites, Vancouver intranet and the VFRS website.
**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS**

- **Employee Engagement**
  - VFRS 2018 Results: 80%
  - General Industry (Norm): 67%
  - Public Sector and NFP (Norm): 74%
  - North America (Norm): 70%

- **Employee Enablement**
  - VFRS 2013 Results: 41%
  - High Performing (Norm): 54%
  - Public Sector and NFP (Norm): 67%
  - North America (Norm): 68%

---

- Engagement represents the per cent of employees committed to the organization and willing to apply discretionary effort in their work.

- Enablement represents the per cent of employees well matched to their role and who experience job conditions that support them to perform to their full potential.

(Third party employee engagement survey completed by Kornferry)
# RESOURCE PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION TYPE</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIRE FIGHTERS</td>
<td>1FF (X5)</td>
<td>6FF (X5)</td>
<td>5FF (X5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREVENTION/PUB ED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTREACH &amp; DIVERSITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYTICS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSION</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCREDITATION MANAGER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL PERMANENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Detailed Overview of the 2019-2021 VFRS Strategic Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>INITIATIVES</th>
<th>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>ACCOUNTABLE BRANCH</th>
<th>DECIDER DIVISION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.1</td>
<td>Achieve Accreditation</td>
<td>Complete a 3 year Strategic Plan</td>
<td>Q3 2019</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Bus/Perf And Ops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Initiate city-wide Risk Assessment</td>
<td>Q3 2019</td>
<td>OrgPerf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a Standard of Cover</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td>OrgPerf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete a Self-Assessment</td>
<td>Q4 2021</td>
<td>OrgPerf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a performance framework</td>
<td>Q4 2021</td>
<td>Analytics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2</td>
<td>Complete the Growth/ Resource Plan</td>
<td>Advance 7 Resources</td>
<td>Q1 2019</td>
<td>OPS</td>
<td>FC / GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advance 35 Resources</td>
<td>Q1 2020</td>
<td>OPS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advance 30 Resources</td>
<td>Q1 2021</td>
<td>OPS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.3</td>
<td>Reduce Response Times</td>
<td>Define and Implement turnout time targets</td>
<td>Q1 2019</td>
<td>Analytics</td>
<td>BusPerf and OPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Streamline call evaluation and dispatch processes</td>
<td>Q2 2020</td>
<td>CommTech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete assessment of current deployment</td>
<td>Q3 2020</td>
<td>OrgPerf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.4</td>
<td>Complete 30yr Fire Hall Plan</td>
<td>Hall #5 completed and in service</td>
<td>Q3 2019</td>
<td>Tech/Fleet/OHS</td>
<td>Tech/Fleet/OHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explore satellite offices for fire prevention staff</td>
<td>Q2 2020</td>
<td>Tech/Fleet/OHS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete the 30yr Plan</td>
<td>Q2 2020</td>
<td>Tech/Fleet/OHS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hall #17 planned for completion</td>
<td>Q4 2021</td>
<td>Tech/Fleet/OHS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Building Inter-operability and Key Partnerships

| B.1 | Build Inter-operability and Key Partnerships | Communicate and implement VFRS’s mission, vision and strategic plan | Q3 2019 | Strategy | BusPerf |
|     |                                             | Develop an integrated internal communications and planning program | Q4 2020 | All Branches | |
|     |                                             | Advance inter-operability | Q4 2021 | Strategy | |

### Optimize Medical Response

| B.2 | Optimize Medical Response | Investigate improvements with transfer of care and patient release | Q3 2019 | EmergOps | OPS |
|     |                             | Streamline dispatch to ensure efficient emergency response resources | Q2 2020 | CommTech | |
|     |                             | Engage opportunities to optimize medical call resources | Q4 2020 | SpecOps | |

### Increase Disaster Response Involvement

| B.3 | Increase Disaster Response Involvement | Increasing media coverage to educate community | Q2 2019 | Prev/Inv/PubEd | FC / GM |
|     |                                         | Combined department exercises and scenarios | Q2 2019 | EmergOps | |
|     |                                         | Expand community Outreach programs | Q2 2020 | Prev/Inv/PubEd | |

### Develop Opioid Crisis Mitigation Strategies

<p>| B.4 | Develop Opioid Crisis Mitigation Strategies | Share with task force how opioid incidents drive call volumes | Q2 2019 | Analytics | FC / GM |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>INITIATIVES</th>
<th>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>ACCOUNTABLE BRANCH</th>
<th>DECIDER DIVISION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>C.1 <em>Increase Public Engagement</em></td>
<td>Post incident outcome and education with regular press releases</td>
<td>Q4 2019</td>
<td>EmergOps</td>
<td>Com Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased social media presence</td>
<td>Q1 2019</td>
<td>Prev/Inv/PubEd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Raise internal profile with other city departments and commitment to staff</td>
<td>Q3 2020</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C.2 <em>Increase Public Engagement</em></td>
<td>Expand fire safety program</td>
<td>Q4 2019</td>
<td>PubEd</td>
<td>Com Safety / Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explore activities towards targeted community risk assignments</td>
<td>Q4 2019</td>
<td>Prev/Inv/PubEd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C.3 <em>Complete Community Needs Assessment</em></td>
<td>Investigate community risk assessment methodology</td>
<td>Q3 2019</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Com Safety / Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Preliminary risk assessment assignments for prevention staff</td>
<td>Q4 2019</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Address issues and gaps in the health care system with community partners</td>
<td>Q4 2019</td>
<td>Prev/Inv/PubEd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.1 <em>Enhance Culture</em></td>
<td>Review recruitment and outreach programs</td>
<td>Q4 2019</td>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop various outreach strategies</td>
<td>Q2 2020</td>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Engage fire staff to contribute in recruitment outreach</td>
<td>Q3 2020</td>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D.2 <em>Enhance Staff Engagement</em></td>
<td>Developing and expanding rewards and certificates programs</td>
<td>Q3 2019</td>
<td>ProfDev</td>
<td>ProfDev and OPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop transparency in the training program</td>
<td>Q3 2020</td>
<td>ProfDev</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D.3 <em>Expand Career Growth Plans</em></td>
<td>Develop potential growth areas and expand the range of specialties for staff</td>
<td>Q1 2020</td>
<td>EmergOps</td>
<td>ProfDev and OPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Building professional development plans</td>
<td>Q1 2020</td>
<td>EmergOps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development and implementation of a comprehensive training program</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td>ProfDev</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOALS</td>
<td>INITIATIVES</td>
<td>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</td>
<td>DATES</td>
<td>ACCOUNTABLE BRANCH</td>
<td>DECIDER DIVISION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E.1 Develop Staff Wellness and Fitness Program</td>
<td>Develop a wellness and fitness program</td>
<td>Q2 2020</td>
<td>OH&amp;S</td>
<td>OPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop partnerships in research to advance health initiatives.</td>
<td>Q4 2019</td>
<td>OH&amp;S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Methods of personal and organizational accountabilities</td>
<td>Q2 2020</td>
<td>ProfDev</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.2 SAFETY AND WELLNESS A PRIORITY</td>
<td>Enhance Decontamination and Anti-Cancer Safety</td>
<td>Expand Hall#13 as a proper specialty (airlight)</td>
<td>Q3 2019</td>
<td>Tech/Fleet/OHS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Implement strategy for service-ready gear</td>
<td>Q3 2019</td>
<td>OHS</td>
<td>OPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop comprehensive decontamination policies and procedures</td>
<td>Q4 2019</td>
<td>OHS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support/ Air light units equipped at capacity</td>
<td>Q2 2020</td>
<td>Fleet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proper Hall and equipment cleaning</td>
<td>Q3 2020</td>
<td>OHS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.3 Explore Appropriate Safety Staffing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a Health, Wellness and Safety Officer Position</td>
<td>Q4 2021</td>
<td>OH&amp;S</td>
<td>OPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.4 Continual Development of Mental Health Program</td>
<td>90 per cent of staff complete the Resilient Minds program</td>
<td>Further develop our Mental Health Program</td>
<td>Q4 2019</td>
<td>OH&amp;S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LEGEND**

**Fire Division/Branch**

**Fire Chief / General Manager**

**Operations / Special Operations / Professional Development**

**Special Operations and EMS**

**Emergency Operations**

**Training and Professional Development**

**Outreach and Recruitment**

**Community Safety and Risk Reductions**

**Fire Prevention, Investigations, Public Education**

**Fire Protection Engineer & University Endowment Lands / UBC**

**Technology, Fleet, Infrastructure OH&S**

**Communications and Technology**

**Fleet and Equipment Service**

**Occupational Health and Safety**

**Operational Performance and Business Operations**

**Analytics and Decision Support**

**Strategy and Policy**

**Organizational Performance & Accreditation**

**Acronym**

**FC / GM**

**OPS**

**SpecOps**

**EmergOps**

**ProfDev**

**Outreach**

**Com Safety**

**Prev/Inv/PubEd**

**Engineer**

**Tech/Fleet/OHS**

**CommTech**

**Fleet**

**OH&S**

**BusPerf**

**Analytics**

**Strategy**

**OrgPerf**
EXPLORE MORE / CONTACT US

Website: https://vancouver.ca/your-government/vancouver-fire-and-rescue-services.aspx
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/VancouverFireRescueServices
Twitter: https://twitter.com/VanFireRescue
https://twitter.com/FireChiefReid
https://twitter.com/IAFF18
Charities: https://twitter.com/VanFireCharity
https://vancouver.ca/your-government/join-fire-and-rescue-services.aspx