



DUBUQUE FIRE STRATEGIC PLAN

2025–2030

THE CITY OF
DUBUQUE
Masterpiece on the Mississippi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
2025 – 2030 Priorities	4
Methodology and Planning Process	5
Citywide Vision, Mission, and Goals	9
Department Vision, Mission, and Goals	11
Organizational Background	13
Community Profile	16
Environmental Scan and SWOT Analysis	19
Assumptions Statement	22
Summary Statement	23
Strategic Initiatives and Objectives	24
References	31



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dubuque Fire Department is a professional, all-hazards public safety emergency response department with more than 100 highly trained and dedicated members. When emergencies happen, sometimes in the middle of the night, it is our team that responds first, delivering lifesaving protection to the residents and visitors of Dubuque. We are the first to enter danger, act decisively, and stay on scene until the community is safe. Our services are called upon when seconds matter and lives, property, critical infrastructure, and the environment are at risk.

Beyond responding to emergencies, we work tirelessly to prevent harm, safeguard the local and national economy, and protect our community's infrastructure and natural resources. Our mission is to ensure that everyone in Dubuque enjoys a high quality of life with full confidence in

our capabilities, our resources, and our commitment to public safety. We hope our neighbors never need our help, but when they do, they will remember the extraordinary impact of our team.

We take pride in the dedication, skill, and professionalism of our firefighter paramedics, officers, and support staff. They embody the highest standards of service and represent the very best of Dubuque's values.

The Dubuque Fire Department Strategic Plan 2025–2030 builds on the 2019 framework and follows the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) model for continuous improvement. Our planning process combined internal and external input. We reviewed progress from earlier plans, hosted an external stakeholder session, conducted a department-wide internal survey, and gathered community feedback through

a public survey (310 responses). A leadership retreat and a final wrap-up session helped us refine our mission, vision, and values. Working with the City's data analyst, we performed an environmental scan of community risks, threats, and assumptions to identify priorities and gaps that will guide our future.

This inclusive, data-driven process produced five strategic initiatives with clear objectives and measures for accountability, ensuring that the Dubuque Fire Department continues to protect lives, property, critical infrastructure, the economy, and the environment well into the future.



2025-2030

PRIORITIES

The Dubuque Fire Department Strategic Plan 2025-2030 focuses on five priorities for the next five years:

- 1** Workforce and leadership capacity

- 2** Modernize facilities, fleet, and technology for all-hazards readiness

- 3** Enhance service delivery, response, staffing, emergency medical services (EMS) capacity, community education, and community risk reduction

- 4** Expand prevention, public education, and code compliance

- 5** Strengthen communication, accountability, and regional collaboration

These priorities acknowledge Dubuque's growth, aging infrastructure, and evolving risks such as hazardous materials, severe weather, large-scale events, and hostile incidents. As the region's only full-time career fire department, we remain uniquely positioned to provide reliable, high-performance public safety services.

Guided by the City's SPIRIT values (Service, People, Integrity, Responsibility, Innovation, Teamwork) and CPSE principles, the Dubuque Fire Department will measure what matters, report progress, and continually improve. We thank our community partners, neighboring departments, city leadership, and every member of Dubuque Fire for their candor and dedication during the 2025-2026 community-driven strategic planning process. Together, we will keep Dubuque safe, prepared, and well-served, today and into the future.





METHODOLOGY & PLANNING PROCESS SUMMARY

Key steps included:

- Review of the 2019 strategic plan and goals accomplished.
- An open community survey collected an additional 310 responses in the first and second quarter of 2025.
- A community (external stakeholder) session and survey were held on February 26, 2025.
- Employee (internal stakeholder) sessions and surveys took place July 14–16, 2025, with 55 internal survey participants across all stations, shifts, ranks, and levels of experience.
- Data analysis and coding of survey responses were conducted.
- A community risk review and Standard of Cover alignment were completed.
- The process also included a review of development and growth and city comprehensive plans.
- A leadership retreat and review took place on July 22, 2025.
- A strategic planning wrap-up session was held on August 20, 2025.
- The development of updated goals, objectives, and measures followed.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Open Community Survey

To ensure the Dubuque Fire Department Strategic Plan 2025–2030 reflected the needs and expectations of our residents, the department partnered with the Dubuque Fire Department's Training Division and the City's Communications Office to design and promote a community-wide survey. This process aimed to collect and evaluate candid feedback from community

members on how the fire department delivers services today and where improvements are most needed in the future.

The survey included questions and topics designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative feedback. Community members were asked to:

- Rank Dubuque Fire Department services in order of importance.
- Evaluate how well the department meets their expectations.
- Identify which services they have personally utilized.
- Indicate which services they would like to see improved.
- Provide feedback on current response times and their expectations.
- Offer open-ended input on what the department does well, areas for improvement, and general feedback or follow-up needs.

This comprehensive approach yielded 310 responses, which were analyzed for content and themes to inform the department's strategic priorities. The insights gained from this process helped ensure that the Strategic Plan reflects community values, service expectations, and opportunities for continuous improvement.

External Stakeholder “Community-Driven” Strategic Planning Session

The one-day external stakeholders session invitation was sent to 127 various stakeholders. The department utilized the expertise and community partnership knowledge of several city departments to establish a master list of community partners. This included support and partnership from the City's Human Rights Department, Office of Community Impact, and the Office of Economic Mobility. Invitations were distributed to the following stakeholder groups to ensure representation:

Utilities and Industry

Alliant Energy, Black Hills, Hormel, Medline Industries, Anderson Window and Door, Hodge Companies, Rainbo Oil, Rite Hite Corporation, Sedgwick, Simmons, Nordstrom Distribution Center

Healthcare and Social Services

Alzheimer's Association, American Cancer Society, American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, Crescent Community Health Center, Dubuque Rescue Mission, Fountain of Youth, Four Oaks, Good Will Industries, Habitat for Humanity, Hillcrest Family Services, Hope House Catholic Worker, Hospice of Dubuque, Mary's Inn, Medical Associates, MercyOne Dubuque, Unity Point Health - Finley, Visiting Nurse Association, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

Education

Clarke University, Loras College, University of Dubuque, Emmaus University, Keystone Area Education Agency, Northeast Iowa Community College, Holy Family Catholic Schools, Dubuque Community Schools

Youth Services

Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys/Girls Club, St. Mark's Youth Enrichment, Four Mounds Foundation, March of Dimes, Dream Center

Neighborhood and Community Development

Bluff Street Neighborhood Association, North End Neighborhood Association, The Point Neighborhood Association, Gronen, Greater Dubuque Development, Convivium Urban Farmstead

Government and Public Services

Police Department, Communications, Public Works, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Legal Aid, East Central Intergovernmental Association

Faith-Based and Spiritual Services

Catholic Charities, Knights of Columbus, Sisters of Charity BVM, Sister of Presentation PBVM, Franciscan Sisters, Shalom Spirituality Center, Opening Doors

Support and Advocacy Groups

Dubuque Chapter of NAACP, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Dubuque, Latino Empowerment and Development (LEAD), Narcotics Anonymous, Right to Life

Financial Institutions

Capra Bank, Dupaco Community Credit Union,

Dutrac Community Credit Union, MidwestOne Bank, Green State Credit Union, Collins Credit Union

Veteran and Military Organizations

American Legion, VFW, Dubuque County Veteran's Affairs

Media and Communications

TH Media, TH Media/Woodward Community Media, Voices Studio

Civic Organizations, Clubs, and Volunteerism

Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Lions Club, Dubuque Jaycee's, Eagles Club, Chamber of Commerce, United Way, United Therapy, Resources Unite

Miscellaneous/Other

Diamond Jo Casino, Q Casino, Du Ride, Dubuque Area Labor Harvest, Dubuque Area Landlord Association, Honkamp Krueger PC, Mt. Pleasant Home, Dubuque Monsoon Asian and Pacific Islanders in Solidarity, Cottingham & Butler

- City of Dubuque Human Rights Department
- Conlon Construction
- Convivium Urban Farmstead
- Crescent Community Health Center (Crescent CHC)
- Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce
- Dubuque NAACP Chapter
- Goodwill Industries of Northeast Iowa, Inc.
- Hills & Dales
- Hospice of Dubuque
- MercyOne Dubuque – EMS Coordinator
- Multicultural Family Center
- Northeast Iowa Community College
- Progressive Processing, LLC
- Telegraph Herald
- The Salvation Army
- United Way of Dubuque Area Tri-States
- UnityPoint Health – Finley Hospital

Top Five External Stakeholder Priorities Identified

1. Improve response times and expand coverage.
2. Enhance staffing capacity and workforce reliability.
3. Modernize facilities, equipment, and technology.
4. Expand public education, prevention/code compliance and review, and outreach.
5. Build community confidence through professionalism and service excellence.

External Feedback Session (February 2026)

Twenty-four individual stakeholders participated, representing an impact of approximately 2,000 individuals throughout the participating groups:

- Alliant Energy
- Alzheimer's Association
- Bluff Street Neighborhood Association





Internal Feedback Sessions and Survey

The department conducted a series of internal stakeholder planning sessions designed to reach all personnel across every shift. Fire station rounds were held July 14–16, 2025, with two stations gathering at a time at Fire Station 3, Fire Station 2, and Fire Headquarters. Each shift began with the Battalion Chief providing an overview of the strategic planning process during the morning video briefs, followed by presentations from senior staff at each location.

During these sessions, the Fire Chief reviewed the accreditation process, strategic planning, and fundamental fire department documents. Areas discussed also included the role of commissioners, including their representation areas, accreditation strategic recommendations, and annual compliance reporting. Personnel were guided through the strategic planning process including internal and external stakeholder processes, survey questions, and a general review for understanding. The discussions also highlighted how the strategic plan aligns with departmental initiatives, long-term effort, and budget requests for the next three to five years.

Each session concluded with an open question-and-answer period to ensure all personnel had an opportunity to contribute their ideas and gain clarity on the planning process from members of senior staff. Members were provided with survey links and a timeline for completion.

Top Five Internal Stakeholder Priorities Identified (55 Surveys)

1. Improve communication, transparency, and accountability.
2. Strengthen staffing, recruitment, and retention.
3. Modernize facilities, equipment, and technology.
4. Expand training, development, and career growth.
5. Enhance leadership, morale, and inclusivity.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Data Statement

To ensure transparency and accuracy in interpreting stakeholder input, the City's Data Analyst supported Dubuque Fire's analysis of the internal and external survey results using established, evidence-based methods (coding, trend detection, cross-tabulation). This outside analysis followed City data governance and privacy practices and was performed to surface clear, consensus priorities, so strategic goals, objectives, and measures reflect what our community and employees told us.

This approach aligns with CPSE's emphasis on data-informed planning and continuous improvement. All raw data and survey results are incorporated within a companion reference document to this plan. (Dubuque Fire Department Strategic Planning Survey and Data Document).



CITYWIDE VISION, MISSION, AND GOALS

2040 Vision Statement

Dubuque 2040 is a sustainable and resilient city, an inclusive and equitable community where ALL are welcome. Dubuque 2040 has preserved our Masterpiece on the Mississippi, has a strong, diverse economy and expanding connectivity. Our residents experience healthy living and active lifestyles; have choices of quality, affordable, livable neighborhoods; have an abundance of diverse, fun things to do; and are successfully and actively engaged in the community.

Mission Statement

Dubuque city government is progressive and financially sound with residents receiving value for their tax dollars and achieving goals through partnerships. Dubuque city government's mission is to deliver excellent municipal services that support urban living; contribute to an equitable, sustainable city; plan for the community's future; and facilitate access to critical human services.

City of Dubuque Goals 2030

- Healthy and Safe Community
- Financially Responsible, High-Performance City Organization: Sustainable and Effective Service Delivery
- Robust Local Economy: Diverse Businesses and Jobs with Economic Prosperity
- Livable Neighborhoods and Housing: Great Place to Live
- Sustainable Environment: Preserving and Enhancing Natural Resources
- Connected Community: Equitable Transportation, Technology Infrastructure, and Mobility
- Diverse Arts, Culture, Parks, and Recreation Experiences and Activities

City Values

SPIRIT: SERVICE • PEOPLE • INTEGRITY • RESPONSIBILITY • INNOVATION • TEAMWORK



Policy Agenda

Policy agenda items are issues that need direction or a policy decision or a major funding decision by the City Council, or issues that need City Council leadership in the community or with other governmental bodies. The policy agenda is divided into top priorities and high priorities.

2025 – 2027 Top Priorities

(in alphabetical order)

- Commercial Air Service Future: Strategy and Action Plan to Sustain and Expand
- **Comprehensive Fire Station Location and Facilities Study**
- **Fire Department Staffing Increases**
- Police Department: Full Staffing and Hiring
- Sanitary Sewer Investments and Implementation
- Sports Complex Development
- Stormwater Management Investments and Implementation
- Street Maintenance/Rehabilitation Program

2025 – 2027 High Priorities

(in alphabetical order)

- Continued Implementation of Central Avenue Revitalization Plan
- Downtown Master Plan Update
- Dubuque Law Enforcement Center (DLEC) Short-Term Facility Enhancements and Future Plan
- East-West Corridor/Roundabouts Projects
- Next Phases of Chaplain Schmitt Island Development
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan Adoption and Implementation
- Water Resource and Recovery Center Facility and Process Improvements and Odor Reduction

DEPARTMENT

VISION, MISSION, AND GOALS

Vision

A safer, healthier, and more resilient Dubuque served by a modern fire department that learns, adapts, and leads. Our greatest investment is in our people, the most important resource we have, through continual education, skill development, and leadership growth. We are committed to building crew integrity, teamwork, trust, and alignment across the department to ensure excellence in every response.

We envision a future where services are right-sized to meet evolving EMS and community health needs; where prevention, inspection, and risk reduction are central to protecting lives and property; and where data, technology, and innovation enhance decision-making and accountability. Guided by national fire service best practices, we will prepare for complex hazards such as hazardous materials, severe weather, active assailant threats, and the demands of an aging community and infrastructure.

Together with our county partners, we will build capacity for regional resiliency while honoring the trust placed in us today. By embracing continuous improvement, community connection, and



forward-looking leadership, the Dubuque Fire Department will embody the vision of the modern fire service: a people-centered, prevention-focused, all-hazards organization committed to protecting and serving our community into the future.

Mission

As part of the strategic planning process, the Dubuque Fire Department undertook a thoughtful review of our mission, vision, and values. Stakeholder feedback confirmed that our mission continues to reflect the department's purpose and direction. The department refined the mission statement for clarity and broad application, removing the specific reference to "community and visitors" as Dubuque Fire provides a high level of service to all.

Previous

"To protect, assist, and educate our community and visitors with pride, skill, and compassion."

Updated

"To protect, assist, and educate with pride, skill, and compassion."

Core Values

The Dubuque Fire Department's values are not meant to replace the personal values of our members. Instead, they focus and connect with us around a shared purpose. They tie directly to our mission and help ensure that our words are backed by consistent action.

Our previous values: Integrity, Professionalism, Dedication, Skill, Compassion, and Pride, have long represented qualities that guided our department with strength and credibility. As part of our strategic planning process, we took time to review and refine these values to make sure they still fit our direction and future needs.

In August 2025, the department held a working session with input from our members to identify a clear and updated set of shared values. This process helped us recommit to what is most important and ensure our values provide clarity and focus moving forward. The result is a refined set of values that will guide the Dubuque Fire Department:

PROFESSIONALISM

We demonstrate excellence in every action. Professionalism means holding ourselves to the highest standards of conduct, skill, and service. It shows up in the way we present ourselves, how we engage with the public, and the pride we take in delivering quality outcomes every time.

RESPONSIBILITY

We are accountable to our mission, our team, and our community. Responsibility reflects ownership of our decisions and actions, whether on an emergency scene, in training, or in daily operations. It is demonstrated through reliability, preparedness, and commitment to doing what is right.

INTEGRITY

We act with honesty, fairness, and transparency. Integrity builds trust within our department and

with the public we serve. It shows up in keeping our word, upholding ethical standards, and making choices that reflect honor and respect for our profession and to one another.

DUTY

We honor our calling to serve and protect. Duty reflects our commitment to safeguarding lives, property, and the well-being of our community. It shows up in our readiness to respond, our persistence in overcoming challenges, and our willingness to put service above self.

EMPATHY

We serve with compassion and understanding. Empathy guides how we interact with those experiencing crisis and with each other as colleagues. It shows up in listening with care, treating others with dignity, and recognizing the human element in every call, decision, and interaction.

These values reflect not only who we are, but who we strive to be each day. They confirm our commitment to serve with pride, skill, and compassion, while setting a standard for the culture we continue to build together.

The Dubuque Fire Department's values, **Professionalism, Responsibility, Integrity, Duty, and Empathy**, closely align with the City of Dubuque's SPIRIT framework. Both sets of values emphasize service, accountability, ethical conduct, and teamwork, while also recognizing the importance of compassion and professionalism in every action.

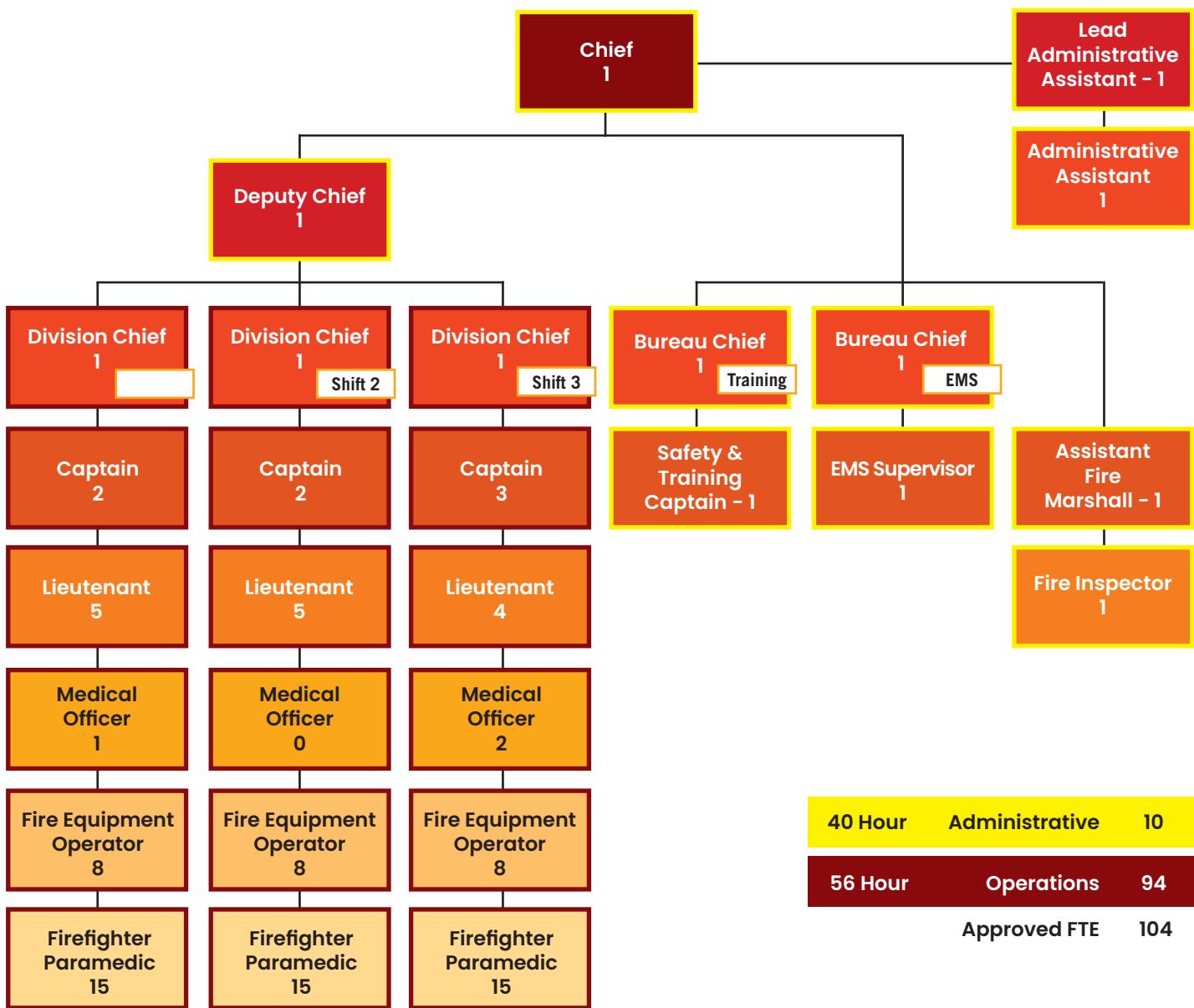
The City values provide broad direction for how municipal services are delivered, while the fire department's values apply these principles to the unique responsibilities of emergency response, community protection, and public safety. Together, these values reinforce one another and ensure that the fire department operates with consistency.

VALUES: PROFESSIONALISM • RESPONSIBILITY • INTEGRITY • DUTY • EMPATHY

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Department Overview

The Dubuque Fire Department serves the city of Dubuque, home to approximately 60,000 residents across 32 square miles, with an ISO Class 2 fire rating. The department operates six fire stations with 94 career firefighter/paramedics and 10 administrative support staff, providing a full spectrum of services from emergency medical transport to technical rescue and prevention.





A Short History of the Dubuque Fire Department

The Dubuque Fire Department holds the distinction of protecting Iowa's oldest city, with roots tracing back nearly two centuries. What began as a small group of citizen volunteers organized in 1842 as the Independent Fire Company has steadily evolved into a modern, full-service emergency response organization.

By the mid-1800s, fire protection in Dubuque grew in both size and sophistication. In 1854 the original Independent Fire Company was reorganized as the Washington Fire Engine Company No. 1, and within a few years additional volunteer companies, including Protection Fire Engine Co. No. 2, Mechanics Fire Engine Co. No. 3, and the Key City Hook & Ladder Co. were formed. Recognizing the importance of structure, the Dubuque City Council adopted the first official rules and regulations for fire service in 1858, placing the Chief Engineer in command and establishing the framework for what would become a permanent city department.

The late 1860s marked a turning point. Dubuque acquired steam fire engines, requiring skilled engineers and stokers who became some of the department's first paid employees. The volunteer system gradually gave way to a part-paid, part-on-call model before transitioning fully to a career department on January 1, 1884, when 31 professional firefighters were assigned to two engine companies and a hook and ladder unit. As Dubuque's population and footprint grew, so too did its fire stations: Hose Company No. 4 opened on

Delhi Street in 1894, followed by Companies 5 and 6 on Grandview Avenue and Rhomberg Avenue in the early 1900s. Truck Company No. 2 came online in 1953, housed at the new University Avenue station.

Staffing models also evolved. For decades, crews worked in two shifts until 1966, when a third shift was introduced, a system still in place today. New stations were strategically built to keep pace with westward city growth, including Station 2 on John F. Kennedy Road in 1967.

Alongside fire suppression, the department became a leader in emergency medical services (EMS). Dubuque first considered a municipal ambulance as early as 1910, and by 1914 placed a city ambulance in service at no cost to residents. After local funeral homes withdrew from providing ambulance transport in 1969, the Fire Department assumed full responsibility and rapidly expanded training, eventually becoming one of Iowa's first paramedic level services.

Since 1996, all new firefighters have been required to hold paramedic certification, ensuring advanced medical care on every response. In 2013, the department introduced paramedic engine companies with automated external defibrillators (AEDs), advanced airway capabilities and some introductory front-line medications, equipping each front-line unit with life-saving technology and trained personnel.

In 2024 the department enhanced its advanced life support capabilities by including cardiac monitors and the full complement of advanced airway and pharmacology to begin lifesaving measures on any EMS call prior to ambulance arrival. This force multiplier ensures that every Dubuque vehicle has the full complement of advanced life support equipment to ensure immediate lifesaving capabilities upon first unit arrival, regardless of suppression vehicle or ambulance.

The Fire Department has consistently expanded its specialized capabilities. In the 1990s, teams were trained as Hazardous Materials Technicians, and a countywide agreement formalized Dubuque's role as the lead Dubuque County hazmat response agency. Confined space and high-angle rescue programs soon followed, supported by trench rescue and rope systems. Given Dubuque's location on the Mississippi River, water rescue operations have long been essential. Today, the department maintains three rescue boats, one staged seasonally at the city marina for rapid deployment on the Mississippi River.

From bucket brigades in the 1840s to a multi-station, all-hazards department with paramedic fire companies, the Dubuque Fire Department's history reflects the city's resilience, innovation, and commitment to protecting its people. That legacy continues to guide the department's vision for the future.

Services Provided to the Community

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AND AMBULANCE TRANSPORT (ALS): Dubuque Fire Department provides advanced life support care and transport for medical emergencies, accidents, and sudden illnesses. Paramedics respond rapidly, deliver critical on-scene care, and ensure safe transport to area hospitals from three front line ambulances and one cross-staffed ambulance.

FIRE SUPPRESSION: Involves responding to and extinguishing fires in homes, businesses, vehicles, and natural settings. Crews use specialized equipment and tactics to stop the spread of fire, protect lives, and minimize property loss.



PUBLIC EDUCATION AND RISK REDUCTION:

The department offers community programs such as fire safety presentations, CPR training, smoke alarm installations, and outreach in schools. These efforts aim to prevent emergencies before they happen and empower residents to reduce risks.

FIRE INSPECTIONS AND CODE ENFORCEMENT:

Fire personnel conduct inspections of businesses, schools, and public spaces to ensure compliance with fire codes. This work identifies hazards, enforces safety standards, and promotes safer buildings for the community.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESPONSE: Specially trained teams respond to incidents involving dangerous chemicals, gases, or other hazardous substances. They work to contain spills, protect the public and environment, and support regional emergency management efforts.

TECHNICAL RESCUE (High/Low Angle, Trench, Confined Space, Vehicle and Machinery, Water): Dubuque Fire Department provides specialized rescue services, including:

- **High/Low Angle Rescue:** Rope systems for victims trapped on cliffs, slopes, or tall structures.
- **Trench Rescue:** Stabilizing and rescuing workers trapped in collapsed excavations.
- **Confined Space Rescue:** Accessing and rescuing victims from tanks, tunnels, or tight enclosures.
- **Vehicle and Machinery Rescue:** Extrication of people trapped in crashes or equipment.
- **Water Rescue:** Surface water, swift water, and ice rescue operations.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

- **Population (city): 59,271**
(American Community Survey 2023)
- **Median Age: 38.3**
- **Households: 25,800**
- **Average Commute: 14.8 minutes**
- **Median Household Income: \$64,985**
- **Poverty Rate: 12.2%**
- **Homeownership: 64.8%**
- **Median Home Value: \$193,100**
- **Population Composition:**
 - White 85.1%
 - Black 6.3%
 - Hispanic/Latino 3.7%
 - Asian 1.2%
- **Land Area: 32.3 square miles**
- **Regional Non-farm Employment: 60,500**
- **Unemployment: 3.6%**
(June 2025)

City of Dubuque Economic Profile

Top industries within Dubuque include Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Retail. Major employers include: John Deere Dubuque Works, MercyOne Dubuque, UnityPoint-Finley Hospital, Dubuque Community Schools, Medical Associates, Cottingham & Butler, Andersen Windows, A.Y. McDonald, Hormel, and City of Dubuque.

Labor indicators:

Unemployment 3.6% (Jun 2025)



Population and Health Indicators

Dubuque's population is aging. Residents age 65+ increased from 16.5% in 2010 to 20.4% in 2023, with 21–22% projected by 2030. This shift points to more EMS calls, fall and injury risks, and greater need for prevention, home-safety checks, and alternative response options. The department is planning for simultaneous EMS incidents, senior-focused public health and safety efforts, and preparedness programs that support older adults.

Growth and Development Profile

Between 2010 and 2020, the city of Dubuque experienced steady population growth, increasing from 57,637 to 59,667, an overall gain of approximately 3.5%, or an average annual growth rate of 0.35%. If this trajectory continues, Dubuque's population is projected to reach approximately **62,807 by 2035, 65,061 by 2045, and 67,396 by 2055**. These projections assume consistent incremental growth but do not account for major policy shifts or external changes that could accelerate or decelerate the trend.

Regional forecasts from the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (DMATS) anticipate the urbanized region growing from about 89,300 in 2025 to roughly 96,100 by 2035, 102,100 by 2045, and 108,000 by 2055.

HAZARD ANALYSIS

Dubuque's risk profile spans single and multi-family residential (including vulnerable populations), historic downtown and mixed-use blocks, commercial/industrial corridors, healthcare and education campuses, transportation (highway, rail, river), and riverine/flood and ice hazards. These drive priorities for prevention, inspection, training, deployment, and capital investments.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: RESILIENCY & ACCESS

- **Continuity and Redundancy:** Emphasis on station/fleet resilience, backup power, and interoperable communications for severe weather, flooding, and long-duration incidents.
- **Access Constraints:** Bridges, rail crossings, construction zones, seasonal river conditions, and special events can impact travel times; pre-plans, alternate routing, and deployment adjustments (right size response) to mitigate risk.
- **Vulnerable/High-Life Hazard Sites:** Senior housing, healthcare/behavioral health, schools, and high-occupancy venues require elevated pre-planning, inspections, and coordinated risk reduction efforts.
- **Regional Interoperability:** Mutual aid, marine response coordination, and hospital surge procedures expand surge capacity and reliability during peak EMS demand and low-frequency/high-consequence events.

MUTUAL AID CONTEXT (CAPACITY & DISTANCE)

- **Local First Ring (Volunteer/Combination Partners):** We rely on a strong network of Dubuque County volunteer/combination departments e.g., Asbury, Key West, Centralia-Peosta, Epworth, Farley, Dyersville, Sherrill, Bernard, Cascade, and cross-border partners in East Dubuque (IL), Jo Daviess County (IL), and Grant County (WI). These agencies are valued teammates and routinely provide engines, tenders, and personnel for initial surge, rural water supply, brush incidents, and extended operations. Volunteer availability and turnout times can vary by time of day and incident

complexity can create limitations of support resources, so pre-plans, certification/training levels, and common radio procedures are critical to performance.

- **Next Municipal (Career) Reinforcements:** Outside the city, the nearest fully career municipal departments are generally 60–90+ minutes away under normal conditions (e.g., Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, Quad Cities metro). This distance means immediate depth must be built locally through our own effective response force (ERF), reserves, callback procedures, and county mutual-aid partners, while career municipal aid is planned as second-wave or sustained-operations support rather than first-due reinforcement. Resiliency of response will be evaluated regularly to ensure service delivery and the ability to maintain services during surge (high call volume) periods and multiple, complex, high-risk incidents.
- **Implications for Strategy:** Our deployment model, staffing targets, reserve apparatus posture, and specialty team capabilities (marine/river, technical rescue, HazMat, Tactical EMS, Rescue Task Force) continue to be designed to achieve early incident control understanding the limitations of immediate assistance.

HISTORIC FIRES AND LOSS EXPERIENCE

Past multi-alarm events in historic/mixed-use structures highlight vertical/horizontal spread risks and concealed spaces; incidents in multi-family and special-needs housing emphasize life-safety and evacuation needs; commercial/industrial and riverfront fires validate pre-plans, foam capability, and coordinated marine/shore operations. Seasonal brush/riverbank fires reinforce Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) pre-plans and multi-agency coordination.

Note: Comprehensive risk analysis, data tables, GIS layers, occupancy tiers, and methodology are provided in the Fire Department's Standard of Response Coverage (SOC), which serves as the technical basis for this Strategic Plan.

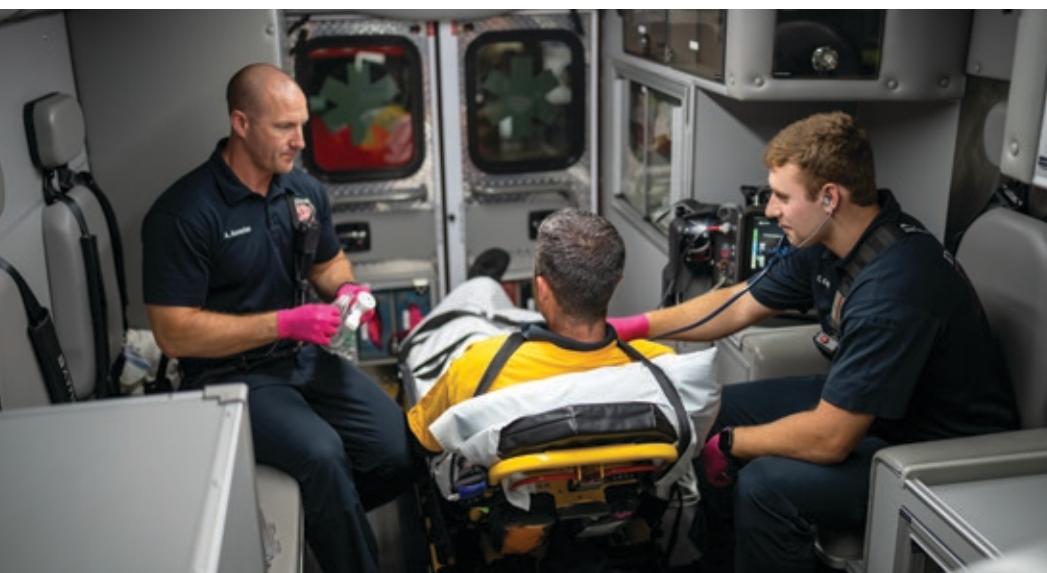
ANTICIPATED IMPACTS ON FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSE AND STAFFING (10–20 YEARS)

The demand for fire and emergency medical services in Dubuque is projected to grow faster than population increase alone. While the city's population is expected to expand at roughly 0.35% annually, historical data show that emergency call volume, especially EMS, rises 1.2 to 1.5 times faster due to aging demographics, greater density, and the increasing complexity of service needs. Over the next 20 years, this trend could translate into a 15–20% increase in total calls for service even under conservative assumptions, with a potential doubling of call volume if recent high-growth patterns continue. This outlook highlights the need for deliberate, phased investments in staffing, apparatus, and infrastructure.

As the city expands and call volume increases, the department's capacity to self-sustain operations without immediate support or aid becomes more critical. This reality requires Dubuque to plan for complex, resource-intensive incidents assuming delayed or minimal outside help. By building sufficient in-house staffing, strengthening training for cross-functional response, and strategically locating resources, the department can enhance its resiliency and ensure uninterrupted service to the community even under high-demand or large-scale emergency conditions.

Growth is expected to concentrate in areas already identified in the City's 2017 comprehensive plan (Imagine Dubuque 2037): Southwest Arterial/North Cascade Road area, east of Key West near Granger Creek, along US20 near Swiss Valley Road, the airport/industrial corridors, and continued infill and mixed-use intensity downtown (Port of Dubuque, Historic Millwork District, Central Avenue corridor). Inside the city, previously documented land capacity includes approximately 2,490 acres of vacant/developable land overall, including 880 acres of residential land with potential for 6,800 additional dwellings, an indicator that a significant share of regional growth can still be accommodated within city limits through a mix of infill and edge development.

Employment in the metro is projected to rise from roughly 53,500 (2022) to 65,000 by 2055, keeping the employment to population ratio near 0.6. For the Fire Department, that implies steady daytime population and traffic along the Southwest Arterial/US61/151/US20 corridors, continued demand in downtown/event areas, and the need to maintain coverage of the identified growth zones while preparing for denser mixed use buildings, inspections, and special event operations.



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN SWOT ANALYSIS



STRENGTHS

Professionalism, compassion, and technical expertise.

WEAKNESSES

Staffing deficiencies, aging facilities, and communication gaps.

OPPORTUNITIES

Partnerships, grant funding, evolution of EMS service delivery, and city growth planning.

THREATS

Seventeen priority threats are outlined below, each accompanied by corresponding goals.

THREAT **1** Leadership and Succession Planning

Threat: Generational leadership transition as senior officers retire and newer officers take on greater responsibilities.

Goal: Ensure company officers are prepared, equipped, and supported to succeed in leadership roles.

THREAT **2** Reliable Funding and Infrastructure

Threat: Maintaining service levels requires reliable funding for buildings, apparatus, equipment, and training.

Goal: Secure sustainable funding to modernize, maintain, and replace critical resources.

THREAT **3** Processes and Operational Efficiency

Threat: Multi-step approval and decentralized support may create inefficiencies.

Goal: Streamline processes and improve collaboration with city departments. Ensure proper support systems for divisions (administrative, budget, human resources, etc.).

THREAT **4** Talent Acquisition and Retention

Threat: Recruiting/retaining paramedic-capable firefighters amid competition and job demands.

Goal: Reduce barriers and build career pathways; sustain a skilled, committed workforce. Continue to build training division/EMS division instructor cadre/team.

THREAT**5****Technology Changes and Implementation**

Threat: Systems implemented with limited fire service input; uneven adoption; accountability expectations with employees in process improvement and efficiency.

Goal: Ensure tech/software changes support department operations through inclusive planning and tailored training. Maintain balanced subject matter expert (SME) development and project implementation across all ranks and experience.

THREAT**6****Legal and Litigious Environment**

Threat: Increased litigation risk and public expectations for accountability.

Goal: Protect the City, department, and members via policy, training, and legal awareness.

THREAT**7****Preparedness for Complex and Catastrophic Events**

Threat: High expectations for readiness across CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive), cyber, weather, and large public events.

Goal: Enhance preparedness through training, planning, and partnerships.

THREAT**8****Response Resiliency and County Reliance**

Threat: Surrounding communities rely on volunteer departments; rising call volume strains regional capacity, reliability, and consistency. Continually increasing call volumes impact unit availability and department resilience. Limitations on large scale incident support.

Goal: Strengthen regional capacity via partnerships, training, and appropriately trained and equipped mutual aid resources. Confirm appropriate risk/response through Standard of Cover/Community Risk Reduction, match response to appropriately categorized risk and alarm elevation planning beyond the local response.

THREAT**9****Changing Demographics, Community Expectations, and Service Delivery**

Threat: Growth requires strategic/balanced deployment; current suppression staffing below best practice; station locations and growth.

Goal: Align staffing/deployment (fire and EMS) with industry best practices, budget, and community expectations.

THREAT**10****Compliance and External Mandates**

Threat: Rising OSHA/NFPA/IDPH/Federal, State, and Local requirements demand resources.

Goal: Maintain compliance while balancing operations.

THREAT**11****Firefighter Health, Wellness, and Safety**

Threat: Physical/mental demands, risk of injury and burnout, and cancer exposure. Support for prevention measures and funding in reducing overall impact and improving job satisfaction/connection.

Goal: Enhance health and safety through comprehensive programs and prevention efforts.

THREAT**12****Lithium-Ion Battery/EV Hybrid Vehicle Fires and Emerging Hazards**

Threat: Li-ion/EV hybrid vehicle hazards are severe and evolving; tools/knowledge limited.

Goal: Build capability and public awareness. Establish response policies and protocols.

THREAT**13****Changing Political Environments, Community Understanding, Clarity of Services and Capabilities, Challenges and Expectations**

Threat: Shifting priorities affect funding/policy/public safety visibility at federal, state, and local levels.

Goal: Maintain focus on public safety with clear communication/education

THREAT**14****Aging City Infrastructure and Community Risk/Code Compliance**

Threat: Older/deteriorating buildings increase hazards and risk; gaps in business tracking at the city and department level; fire inspection, and plan review process improvement opportunities.

Goal: Strengthen inspection, code enforcement, pre-planning, and speed of AHJ review.

THREAT**15****Community Risk Reduction (CRR) and Evolution of Service Delivery**

Threat: Expectations for proactive risk reduction (Alternate EMS response, senior safety, mental health support) can outpace resources/response requirements. Ability to absorb increased EMS support for low acuity calls and community support.

Goal: Expand CRR (community risk reduction) and evolve services; prepare for changes in resources or shifts in current EMS response.

THREAT**16****Public Education and Community Engagement**

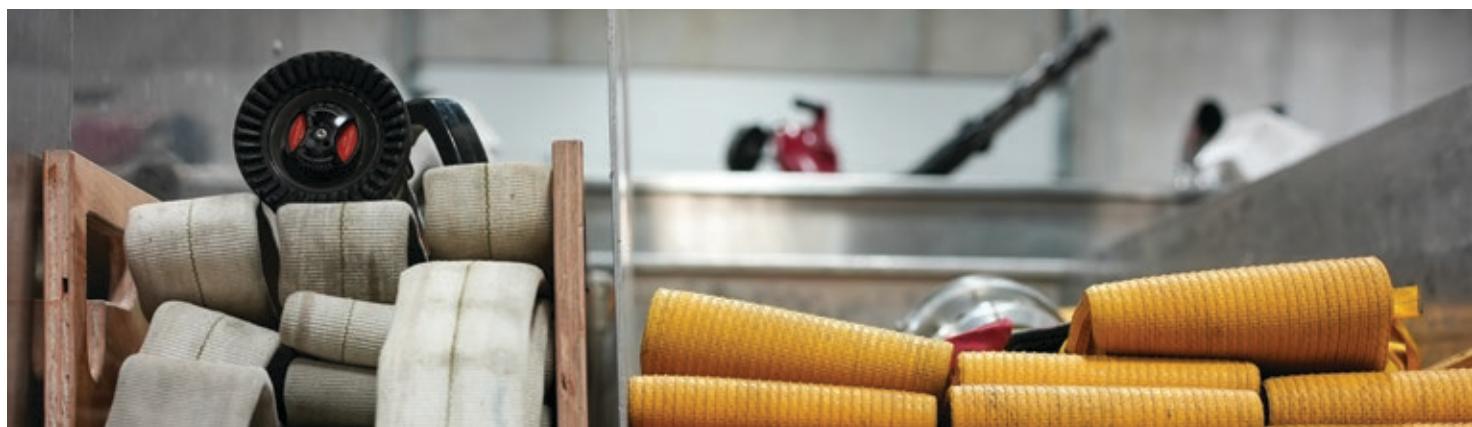
Threat: Limited outreach capacity; risks associated with gaps in awareness/resources.

Goal: Expand education and engagement to be targeted and measured.

THREAT**17****Internal Communication and Organizational Cohesion**

Threat: Communication gaps, accountability, and administrative workload cohesion.

Goal: Strengthen internal communication and streamline admin processes/support, align projects and budget requests with strategic plan, balance workload across all positions, morning video briefings, monthly staff meetings, and division meetings.



DUBUQUE FIRE DEPARTMENT

ASSUMPTIONS STATEMENT

WORKFORCE AND PIPELINE

Recruitment challenges will continue, particularly for paramedic-level candidates. Training new hires to paramedic after appointment will remain essential; local pipelines (job shadowing, explorer/ cadet, internships) are needed.

WORKFORCE TRANSITION AND LEADERSHIP

Nearly one-third of personnel have been hired in the past three years. A younger organization requires aggressive officer development, leadership training, and mentorship to offset loss of experience.

DEMAND, RISK, AND MISSION

Call volume will grow and become more complex. EMS remains the majority of calls with more overlaps; risks include hazmat, active assailant incidents, severe weather, and special events. Regional resilience requires DFD independence given the distance to other career departments. Continued exploration into technology solutions as alternate response models.

EMS AND COMMUNITY CARE

Expect increases in lower-acuity and citizen-assist calls; right-size responses to preserve ALS capacity. Expand prevention (senior home inspections, community advocate programs) and prepare for more discharges/transfers from two local hospitals.

TRAINING, STANDARDS, AND PREPAREDNESS

Training demand will increase across Active Shooter Hostile Environment Response (NFPA 3000), ISO, hazmat, technical rescue, weather, and EMS standards will continue to be challenging amongst increasing mandatory training requirements of the city, state, and federal level. Accreditation and continuous improvement remain central. Technology and reporting systems will remain challenging, members will continue to struggle with adapting to changes.

TECHNOLOGY, DATA, AND FACILITIES

Data/analytics will be critical for deployment modeling and accountability. Facilities and fleet will require sustained investment matched to risk and demand. Struggles will continue in maintaining the appropriate level of training to maintain and test specialty fire response fleet, expectations of software and shortcomings in performance/ deliverables, speed of technology changes.

COMMUNITY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Growth and aging infrastructure will increase service demand. Expand inspections, pre-plans, and risk mitigation; collaborate with developers to support growth without compromising safety.

LARGE FLEET INVESTMENT PROTECTION

Sustained fleet stabilization and maintenance will be critical in maintaining longevity, reliability, and performance of large fleet. Mechanics should be certified to the appropriate emergency vehicle technician levels and participate in the vehicle specification and acquisition process. Mechanics should participate in the in-service training, preventative maintenance program training and engagement with vehicle operators on a regular basis. Daily vehicle checks and regular preventative maintenance should be completed. Annual driver operator training should be completed and documented.



SUMMARY STATEMENT



The Dubuque Fire Department's Strategic Plan 2025–2030 is grounded in a comprehensive review of both internal and external expectations, an analysis of identified threats, and an informed set of assumptions about the future of fire and emergency medical services response.

Stakeholder Feedback

Internal and external engagement served as the foundation for this process. Internal stakeholders emphasized the need to improve communication, accountability, staffing, recruitment, leadership development, facilities, and morale. External stakeholders reinforced these themes, while also prioritizing response times, coverage expansion, prevention and public education, and visible professionalism. Together, these inputs provided a clear picture of shared priorities between employees and the community.

Evaluation of Threats

Seventeen threats were identified and analyzed across workforce, infrastructure, service delivery, compliance, health and wellness, emerging hazards, and community risk reduction. These threats were paired with goals and outcome measures aligned with national standards such as NFPA, CPSE accreditation guidance, and best practices from the fire service. The threat analysis clarified both current vulnerabilities—such as staffing shortages, aging infrastructure, and regional reliance on volunteer

partners—and future challenges, including lithium-ion battery hazards, special event demands, and catastrophic preparedness.

Assessment of Assumptions

The department's assumptions reflect trends in recruitment, service demand, and community change. These include continued challenges in hiring and retaining paramedic-level candidates, a younger workforce requiring accelerated leadership development, growing EMS call volume and hospital transfer needs, and increased complexity from hazardous materials, severe weather, and active assailant risks. Assumptions also highlight Dubuque's aging infrastructure, future development pressures, and the city's unique role as the only career department in the region. These assumptions provide realistic guideposts for planning and resource allocation.

From Issues to Priorities

By integrating stakeholder priorities, threat evaluation, and planning assumptions, the department established five strategic initiatives.

Each initiative is supported by specific, measurable objectives that form the roadmap for the next 3–5 years. These initiatives allow the department to:

- focus resources on the most pressing needs,
- align daily operations with long-term resilience, and
- measure progress in a transparent and accountable manner.

A Roadmap for Alignment

The strategic initiatives and objectives serve as the department's roadmap. They direct effort toward strengthening workforce and leadership, modernizing facilities and technology, enhancing service delivery and risk reduction, expanding prevention and education, and reinforcing communication and collaboration. This focus ensures that investments are efficient, priorities are aligned, and the department is prepared to serve a growing and evolving community.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Strengthen Workforce, Leadership, and Resiliency

1

Objective 1.1 – Build robust pipelines for firefighter-paramedics and future leaders

1.1.1 Evaluate options for an in house EMT Certification Academy (hire at EMT, sponsor to Paramedic within 18–24 months; tuition/clinical support).
[Lead: EMS/Training * Support: HR, Finance]

1.1.2 Stand up an Explorer/Cadet program with monthly skills nights, summer camp, and scholarship pathways. [Lead: Recruitment/Prevention/Training * Support: PIO/Comms, HR]

1.1.3 Evaluate alternate EMS response resource to right-size basic life support and citizen assist incidents, leverage technology options and partnerships.
[Lead: EMS/Training * Support: Hospitals/Educational Institutions]

Objective 1.2 – Accelerate officer development, mentorship, and credentialing

1.2.1 Adopt a tiered Officer Development Curriculum (acting officer → company officer → chief officer), mapped to State Fire Training/industry best practice.
[Lead: Training * Support: Command Staff]

1.2.2 Issue task books for acting roles with sign-off standards and simulation requirements; maintain two-week officer orientation assignment
[Lead: Training * Support: Ops Battalion Chiefs]

1.2.3 Track And support credentialing (FO, CFO, CEMSO, CTO) with annual completion targets.
[Lead: Admin * Support: Training]

1.2.4 Conduct annual officer development for all lieutenants/captains.
[Lead: Training * Support: Ops]

Objective 1.3 – Retain talent through wellness, safety, and career growth

1.3.1 Target ≥90% five-year retention for new hires; track reasons for separation and corrective actions. [Lead: Admin]

1.3.2 Expand Peer Support and Peer Fitness Team, (24/7 line/ap use, external clinicians; supervisor training in recognition/referral).
[Lead: Peer Support/Peer Fitness/Health and Safety]

1.3.3 Strengthen cancer reduction (Exposure tracking, fire gear replacement, on-scene decon kits/policy development, annual physicals).
[Lead: Safety/Training * Support: Labor/city safety]

1.3.4 Add duty-injury case management and return-to-work pathways and support meaningful alternate duty assignments, flexible but compliant schedule, work life balance. Add accountability piece in department near miss program/ after action reviews of accidents and injuries at employee and committee level.
[Lead: Operations/Admin]

Objective 1.4 – Build a resilient, engaged culture that develops people

1.4.1 Conduct/coordinate annual leadership workshops/training for all personnel/soft skills, (identified and established at the fire department level) for impact and alignment (communication, professionalism, resilience, emotional intelligence, conflict skills, psychological safety). [Lead: Training * Support: HR]

1.4.2 Publish a clear promotion calendar/timeline, process/policy and study resources hub (digital library). [Lead: Training/Admin/Labor * Support: City Clerk/HR]

1.4.3 Align acting up assignments with promotional lists and “next up” concepts. Maintain next up communications for preparation. [Lead: Training/Admin/Labor]

1.4.4 Recognize excellence with annual awards tied to values (Professionalism, Responsibility, Integrity, Duty, Empathy) Create/refine awards policy and recognition bar definition. Add Class A coat to uniform requirements for employees
[Lead: Admin * Support: EMS]

2

Objective 2.1 – Execute a disciplined 20-year capital and lifecycle plan

2.1.1 Adopt/maintain a 20-year capital replacement schedule (stations, apparatus, specialty equipment) with funding windows. [Lead: Admin * Support: Finance]

2.1.2 Establish a funding mechanism for bringing current facilities to maintenance level conditions. [Lead: Admin * Support: IT]

2.1.3 Identify a designated project manager for Fire to coordinate building modifications, renovations, and updates to include alignment with other city buildings and facilities. [Lead: Admin * Support: Engineering/CMO] Position review for future FTE or partial FTE (25-30% workload)

2.1.4 Establish a software and technology review process which prevents blind application of software and technology and includes IT as the confirmation mechanism to ensure alignment with policy and other department software and technology. [Lead: Admin * Support: IT]

Objective 2.2 – Protect investments with aggressive fleet maintenance and driver programs

2.2.1 Expand EVT certifications and prepare the shop for changes in specialty fire and EMS vehicles/testing and requirements. [Lead: Admin/Operations * Support: Training]

2.2.2 Implement/maintain a preventive maintenance program (daily/weekly/monthly/annual checklists in e-platform; compliance dashboard). [Lead: Ops * Support: Fleet]

2.2.3 Standardize driver/operator annual training and accident review board (aligns with 5.2.1 to reduce city, department, member liability). [Lead: Training * Support: Safety]

Objective 2.3 – Modify/ build stations that are safe, efficient, and responder-centric

2.3.1 Integrate hot/warm/cold decontamination zones, gender-inclusive facilities, and turnout gear ventilation. [Lead: Admin * Support: Safety]

2.3.2 Complete bunk room modifications for each fire station. [Lead: Admin * Support: Safety]

2.3.3 Install station alerting, zoned lighting, and noise mitigation in individual bunk areas to reduce fatigue. [Lead: Admin/IT]

2.3.4 Conduct annual facility life-safety inspections and track corrective actions. [Lead: Safety * Support: Admin]

2.3.5 Select a specialized fire-station rep/design/construction expert in FY2027 to complete feasibility study; target construction starts in FY2029.

[Lead: Admin * Support: City Engineering, Finance, Planning]

Objective 2.4 – Align technology to operations and data governance

2.4.1 Require fire department SME input for every tech acquisition (charter, use-cases, training, post-go-live survey with ≥90% confidence target). [Lead: IT/Admin * Support: Ops, EMS]

2.4.2 Standardize MDTs to improve connection and AVL reliability and create uptime service-level/support agreements to ensure responsiveness. [Lead: IT * Support: EMS, Ops]

2.4.3 Implement new CAD system with system improvements, cross-department collaboration, and department support in implementation and go live period support. [Lead: IT * Support: EMS, Ops]

2.4.4 Identify an in-house fire department technology FTE to ensure technical support for 100 plus employees in an advanced technology resourced environment which includes the highest priorities in vulnerability and continuity of operations. [Lead: Admin/IT * Support: Ops]

2.4.5 Confirm appropriate training RMS system and implement for needs and end user use, alignment with state training records. [Lead: Admin/IT * Support: Ops]

2.4.6 Review and implement advanced scheduling modules to improve automated timekeeping processes, appropriate overtime tracking and budget impact reporting and ease of end user use. [Lead: Admin/IT * Support: Ops]

2.4.7 Launch live in station DFD dashboards for awareness (turnout/travel time, unit hours, inspection backlog). [Lead: Admin/Ops * Support: IT/Communications/GIS]

Objective 2.5 – Equip for emerging hazards (Li-ion, river, ARFF interface)

2.5.1 Identify, budget, and procure Li-ion and Electric Vehicle response and mitigation tools (immersion containers/blankets, monitoring meters) and write response SOGs to guide personnel and response. [Lead: Ops/HazMat * Support: Training]

2.5.2 Sustain water rescue posture (seasonal boat placement, boat house, swift water/ice kits, USCG/Iowa DNR exercises). [Lead: Ops * Support: Training]

2.5.3 Maintain ARFF coordination/inventory/response with DBQ airport (foam transition, joint drills). [Lead: Ops * Support: Airport]

**STRATEGIC
INITIATIVE**

3

Enhance Service Delivery, Response, Staffing, EMS Capacity, Community Education and Community Risk Reduction

Objective 3.1 – Right-size deployment and improve response using Standard of Cover (SOC) data, improvement plans, and industry best practice

3.1.1 Complete/update the SOC/deployment study and phase staffing toward benchmarks, simplified response plans and effective response force definitions. [Lead: Administration * Support: Ops]

3.1.2 Implement peak-load adjustments, elevation of alarm protocols and processes, centralization/move up process/policy (response, staffing and training expectations). [Lead: Admin/Ops/EMS * Support: Dispatch]

3.1.3 Publish annual progress/quarterly reporting through forward facing city data portal. [Lead: Admin * Support: Communications/IT/GIS]

3.1.4 Attain a 60 second turn out time performance 90% of the time. [Lead: Admin and Ops * Support: EMS and Training]

Objective 3.2 – Preserve ALS capacity with alternate responses

3.2.1 Stand up a Low-Acuity Response Unit (basic unit, training resource, telehealth/nurse navigation, advocate) for basic life support or assist calls. [Lead: EMS * Support: Dispatch]

3.2.2 Add/ Maintain Paramedic Assessment capability on all engines/trucks (monitors, meds, certifications). [Lead: EMS * Support: Ops]

Objective 3.3 – Address behavioral health and high-utilizer demand

3.3.1 Train Crisis Intervention Team/de-escalation skills for field crews; develop co-responder options where feasible. [Lead: EMS * Support: PD, MH partners]

3.3.2 Explore warm handoff systems, alternate care protocols/systems, and referral scripts . [Lead: EMS * Support: Admin]

3.3.3 Manage a Top-10% High-Utilizer list with case management; target 10% reduction in repeat EMS calls over 5 years. [Lead: EMS/Admin * Support: Hospitals, Social Services]

Objective 3.4 – Strengthen Community Risk Reduction (CRR) and Pre-Incident Intelligence

3.4.1 Identify all occupancies (business license process) within the city for risk tracking, risk reduction identification and support, appropriate response plan assignment, and community risk reduction. [Lead: Prevention * Support: Community Development/Code Enforcement/ Planning]

3.4.2 Build/identify a risk-grading system aligned with response, budget, procure, and adopt [Lead: Prevention/Admin * Support: Ops]

3.4.3 Reach 90% current preplans in 5 years, prioritizing aging/historic stock and target hazards. [Lead: Prevention * Support: Ops]

3.4.4 Launch Senior Safety/Fall-Prevention home visits and track fall-related EMS reductions. [Lead: CRR/EMS * Support: Community Partners]

3.4.5 Update river/bridge disruption SOGs (alternate routes, MCI boats, USCG coordination). [Lead: Ops * Support: Dispatch, Police/DEMA]

Objective 3.5 – Enhance specialty team support and capabilities, mass-casualty incident (MCI) preparedness, and ASHER readiness

3.5.1 Conduct/participate annual MCI/ASHER exercises with hospitals and law enforcement. [Lead: Training * Support: EMS, PD]

3.5.2 Maintain a Tactical EMS Team in coordination with Dubuque PD. Include minimum training, staffing, and policies. [Lead: EMS * Support: Ops Training]

3.5.3 Develop and maintain a Hazardous Materials Specialty Team program to include minimum training, staffing, and policies. [Lead: Ops * Support: Training]

3.5.4 Develop and maintain a Technical Rescue Specialty Team program to include minimum training, staffing, and policies. [Lead: Ops * Support: Training]

3.5.5 Maintain operational surge plans (inbound regional and statewide resource plans) and caches (radios, MCI trailer, PPE, etc.) [Lead: Ops, EMS * Support: Training]

Expand Prevention, Public Education, and Community Engagement

Objective 4.1 - Increase capacity for code compliance and plan review

4.1.1 Add a Plan Review/Code Compliance position and publish turnaround targets to improve processing time. [Lead: Prevention * Support: Housing/Planning/Community Development]

4.1.2 Review/update developer pre-submittal process (fire code, access, water supply early). [Lead: Community Development/Prevention * Support: Planning/Zoning]

Objective 4.2 - Scale company-level inspections and hazard abatement

4.2.1 Assign and track risk-based inspection quotas to companies and track correction rates. [Lead: Prevention * Support: Ops]

4.2.2 Modify inspections to identify high acuity violations for efficiency and impact. [Lead: Prevention * Support: Ops]

4.2.3 Focus the prevention division efforts on target hazards (aging infrastructure, assembly, and high-risk occupancies). [Lead: Prevention]

Objective 4.3 - Deliver a measured, annual public-education calendar

4.3.1 Publish an education calendar (schools, seniors, neighborhoods) and target a 10% increase in events year over year. [Lead: CRR * Support: PIO]

4.3.2 Run hazard-specific campaigns (lithium-ion charging, fire safety, severe weather/river safety, ASHER awareness) targeted for event attendees or location. [Lead: CRR * Support: Communications]

4.3.3 Identify a dedicated community education program with a community education specialist FTE to deliver consistent, targeted education.

[Lead: CRR, Admin * Support: City departments]

Objective 4.4 - Deepen community partnerships and trust

4.4.1 Create a Community Advisory Group, Fire department advisory group for feedback on services and response times. [Lead: Admin]

4.4.2 Expand smoke alarm installs support for at-risk residents, track outcomes. [Lead: CRR * Support: Red Cross/United Way]

4.4.3 Provide multilingual materials and targeted outreach to underserved neighborhoods (After the fire, prevention materials). [Lead: CRR * Support: Human Rights Department]

Strengthen Communication, Accountability, and Regional Collaboration (Reduce liability and risk to the City, the Department, and Responders)

Objective 5.1 – Improve internal communication and participative leadership

5.1.1 Implement an Internal Communication Plan (daily video briefs, monthly division updates, communications policy and expectations). [Lead: Admin * Support: Ops]

5.1.2 Maintain an up-to-date digital reference library (SOP library, training RMS, dept. policy, accreditation reference library, fundamental department documents) with version control and audit mechanisms for compliance. [Lead: Admin * Support: Training]

5.1.3 Maintain regular weekly strategy meetings for situational awareness; monthly staff meetings to include agendas and published notes. [Lead: Admin * Support: Ops]

Objective 5.2 – Institutionalize performance management (metrics that matter)

5.2.1 Continue evaluations for members focused on employee goals, performance, and feedback opportunities. Update format (electronic) [Lead: Admin and Ops * Support: HR]

5.2.2 Publish an Annual Report (lives saved, property protected, EMS impact, prevention outcomes, division summary, vehicle and shift performance). [Lead: Admin/Support: Ops, Training, EMS, Prevention]

Objective 5.3 – Reduce liability through policy, training, and risk controls

5.3.1 Provide annual EVOC/driver training and implement an advanced collision investigation/review process. [Lead: Training * Support: Safety]

5.3.2 Maintain a policy review cycle (OSHA/NFPA/IDPH/legal updates; attorney review of high-risk SOPs). [Lead: Admin * Support: Legal, Safety]

5.3.3 Validate specialty team competencies annually (HazMat, Technical Rescue, Water). [Lead: Training * Support: Team Leads] (Specialty team training also referenced in 3.5.3-3.5.4)

5.3.4 Conduct/document annual EMS legal training to bring situational awareness to the changes in legal protections to EMS providers. [Lead: EMS * Support: Training]

Objective 5.4 – Streamline city processes and strengthen regional resilience

5.4.1 Update mutual-aid/auto-aid agreements; codify box cards and reduce mutual-aid response times by 10%. [Lead: Ops * Support: County Fire/EMS]

5.4.2 Conduct/participate annual county exercises (river MCI, hazmat terminal, airport). [Lead: Ops/Training * Support: EMA, Hospitals] (Regional/county training also identified in 3.5.1)

5.4.3 Plan for independent initial response (closest career backup over one hour away); set ERF thresholds and escalation triggers. [Lead: Ops * Support: Admin] Also aligned with 3.5.5 Maintain operational surge plans and caches.

5.4.4 Continue to work department processes which decrease turnaround times and multiple touch points/decision trees/delays in response/depth of ownership to improve response and limit delays but maintain proper oversight and accountability. [Lead: Admin * Support: City management]

Special Consideration

Maintain an understanding and alignment of billing and revenue. (GEMT, Cost Recovery, and other revenue streams (alarm monitoring, EMS fees for service modifications and ordinances with quarterly reporting). [Lead: Admin EMS * Support: Finance]

Research and verify/validate the Dubuque Fire Departments historical date to align with the departments first known date of fire protection and not the formation of a full-time fire department. [Lead: Admin * Support: Communications/Library/Retiree group]

Review the opportunity/need to create a technology master plan for changes in technology and organizational impact. [Lead: Admin * Support: Communications/Information Technology]

REFERENCES

County Health Rankings (CHR&R) – Dubuque County snapshot extracts.

MercyOne CHNA/Implementation (2024–27).

City of Dubuque. "Demographics" (2020 population and city area).

DMATS. LRTP 2055 Socioeconomic Projections (population & employment series, 2025–2055).

City of Dubuque. Imagine Dubuque 2037: Comprehensive Plan – Land Use (growth nodes; city share; vacant/developable land).

University of Iowa IISC (for the City of Dubuque). Dubuque Affordable Housing Action Plan (2024) (residential capacity; potential dwelling units).

Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). (2023). Community-Driven Strategic Planning. CPSE. Retrieved from <https://www.cpse.org/accreditation/community-driven-strategic-planning>

Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). (2022). Accreditation Model – 10th Edition. CPSE. Retrieved from <https://www.cpse.org/accreditation/accreditation>

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). (2022). NFPA 1710: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments. NFPA.

Carr, B. G., et al. (2020). Temporal trends and future predictions of regional EMS system utilization using statistical modeling. *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, 35(2), 133–140. doi:10.1017/S1049023X20000017

Raleigh Fire Department. (2022). Master Plan – City of Raleigh Fire Department. Retrieved from <https://cityofraleigh0drupal.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/drupal-prod/COR18/RFD-Master-Plan-Full-Report.pdf>

Salinas Fire Department. (2021). Long-Range Master Plan/Community Risk Assessment. Retrieved from <https://www.salinas.gov/files/sharedassets/city/v1/fire/documents/salinas-fd-master-plan-cra-study-final-report.pdf>

Tacoma Fire Department. (2024). Fire Facilities Master Plan. Retrieved from <https://cms.tacoma.gov/fire/2025%20web%20redesign/reports/2024%20tacoma%20fmp%20final%20report.pdf>

National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC). (2022). Volunteer Fire Service Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/NVFC-Volunteer-Fire-Service-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

