



Oswego Fire Protection District

Decennial Report

Adopted – August 12, 2024



**OSWEGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
REPORT FOR COMPLIANCE WITH DECENNIAL COMMITTEE ON
LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT**

I. Introduction

The Oswego Fire Protection District has a rich history that spans over a century. The department's origins can be traced back to the devastating fire that destroyed the Congregational Church in Oswego in 1893. In response to this tragedy, the village purchased a hose and hose cart in 1895, and by August of the same year, a fire company was formed. A hose house was added to the town council house in June of 1897, and in 1898, a bell was placed in a tower atop the house to signal the firemen for a call.

The department continued to grow and evolve over the years, and in 1936, the Oswego Fire Protection District was formed by voter referendum, covering all of Oswego Township and part of Will County. Andrew Pierce, Glenn Leigh, James Steward, and Wally Davis were appointed the first commissioners.

In 1986, the district began providing full-time advanced life support emergency medical services and traditional fire suppression services. The district continued to expand, adding Station 2 in 1998, Station 3 in 2004, and Station 4 in 2006. The district also shifted from contract paramedic/firefighters to full-time sworn district employees in June 2008, swearing in 51 district-employed paramedic/firefighters.

Today, the Oswego Fire Protection District is a career department operating out of four stations. These stations are open 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The district covers 52 square miles of the northeast portion of Kendall County and about 4 square miles of mostly unincorporated industrial parks in northwest Will County, protecting most of the Village of Oswego, unincorporated Boulder Hill, a large portion of the south side of the Village of Montgomery, approximately 1 ½ square miles of the Grande Park neighborhood in the Village of Plainfield, and a small neighborhood in the far northeast area of the United City of Yorkville. The Fire District is governed by five members of the public that are appointed by the Kendall County Board Chairperson.

The district's population is estimated at approximately 75,000 residents and growing, in addition to the daily visitors and workers along the retail centers of Rt. 34, Rt. 30/Douglas, and Orchard Road. Over the years, the district has seen a steady increase in the number of calls for service, with 6,678 calls in 2023 alone.

In addition to providing emergency services, the Oswego Fire Protection District also offers various community services and specialty teams, such as Fire Prevention and Safety Programs, New Construction Plan Reviews, Annual Building Inspections, Fire Cause and Origin Investigation, Technical Rescue Team, Swift Water Rescue Team, Public Education Programs, C.P.R. Classes, Community Block Parties, School Visits and Station Tours, and Certified Child Passenger Safety Seat Technician Services. The district also provides classroom and live fire training facilities available to neighboring fire departments and Waubesa Community College's fire science program.

The men and women of the Oswego Fire Protection District are committed to providing the highest quality of service and strive to challenge themselves to achieve the greatest potential for those they serve. The district's mission is to provide professional fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency medical services while maintaining the confidence and respect of the community. Through exemplary conduct, the district aims to foster and enhance the realization that the Oswego Fire Protection District is an important requisite to the well-being of the entire community. The district's historic bell, once atop the hose house on Washington Street, now proudly displayed at the entrance of the Oswego Fire Protection District Central Fire Station on Woolley Road, serves as a constant reminder of the department's rich history and ongoing commitment to serving the community.

II. General Information

A. Location

The District provides services for the following villages, townships, and cities.

VILLAGES, TOWNSHIPS, & CITIES	
Name	Estimated Population
Village of Oswego	36,000
Village of Montgomery	11,000
Village of Plainfield	1,000
United City of Yorkville	500
Oswego Township	25,000
Bristol Township	500
Na-Au-Say Township	500
Wheatland Township	150

The District is located within the following counties:

- Kendall County

- Will County

The following additional Units of Local Government overlap the District's service area:

- Village of Oswego
- Village of Montgomery
- Village of Plainfield
- United City of Yorkville
- Kendall County
- Will County
- Kendall County Forest Preserve
- Waubensee Community College
- Fox Metro Water Reclamation District
- Oswego Road District

B. District Demographics

The Fire District serves several commercial and industrial areas, including but not limited to:

- The Grid – 275 Route 31
- Orchard Road – retail / commercial
- Route 34 – retail / commercial
- Will County – industrial / commercial

The Fire District has multi-unit residential buildings, assisted living centers and group homes, including but not limited to:

- 3350 White Oak
- 3370 White Oak
- 50 Boulder Hill Pass (Wedgewood Manor)
- Tiller Nursing Home
- The Reserve at Oswego

C. Fire Stations

Name of Station	Location
Station #1	3511 Woolley Road, Oswego
Station #2	2200 Wiesbrook Drive, Oswego
Station #3	2200 Galena Road, Montgomery
Station #4	27100 West 127th, Plainfield

D. Employees

Full Time	Part Time	Volunteer/Paid on Call
85	0	0

E. Fire & EMS Apparatus

Type	Quantity	Age
Ambulances	7	1-15 years old
Engines	5	3-25 years old
Ladder Trucks	2	14 & 24 years old
Water Tender	1	13 years old
Grass Truck	1	13 years old
Boats	2	
UTV	1	8 years old
Staff Cars	13	1-25 years old

F. Services & Programs

SERVICES and Programs	
Existing	Potential Future Services
Fire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “After the Fire” Resources 	Cadet Program Apprentice Program
EMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby Safe Haven • AHA CPR 	Formal Community Risk Reduction Program Accreditation
Special Operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kendall County SRT • Trench • Confined Space • Collapse • Rope • Water • Fire Investigations 	Drone Operations (both aerial and underwater)
Fire Prevention Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan Reviews • Building Inspections • KNOX Security Boxes 	
Public Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled Tours • Open House • Child Safety Seat Installation • Smoke Detector Installation • Fire Extinguisher Training • Oswego Junior Public Safety Academy 	Formal Community Risk Reduction Program Formal School-Based Education Program

Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waubensee Community College collaboration at the Station #3 training facility • Numerous mutual aid departments using the training facility at Station #3 	
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G. Financials

BUDGET	
Fiscal Year	Annual Budget Amount
FY 2019	\$14,688,999
FY 2020	\$14,829,596
FY 2021	\$14,962,105
FY 2022	\$14,266,604
FY 2023	\$15,777,446

END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT		
Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures
FY 2019	\$12,677,967	\$12,921,187
FY 2020	\$12,925,830	\$12,882,177
FY 2021	\$13,192,798	\$13,613,898
FY 2022	\$14,126,236	\$14,351,326
FY 2023	\$14,665,481	\$15,185,856

In the past five years, the District has experienced an approximate 13% increase in revenues.

H. Equalized Assessed Value (EAV)

Levy Year	EAV
Levy Year 2019	\$1,520,826,606
Levy Year 2020	\$1,675,078,950
Levy Year 2021	\$1,754,353,618
Levy Year 2022	\$1,884,968,464
Levy Year 2023	\$2,104,282,010

In the past five years, the District has experienced an approximate 36% increase in Equalized Assessed Value.

I. Insurance Services Office (ISO) Rating

The District's current ISO rating is 02/10. This rating is from our most recent grading in 2020.

III. Committee Information

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	
Title	Name
Chief	Joshua Flanders
Board Chair	Rodger Long
Board Trustee	Ken Holmstrom
Board Trustee	Jason Bragg
Board Trustee	Sarah Zameda
Board Trustee	Rob DeLong
Fire District Resident	Richard Kuhn
Fire District Resident	Tom Tripp
Fire District Resident	Kendall Wilson
Fire District Resident	Bill Helgeson

COMMITTEE MEETING DATES		
Meeting	Date	Location
First Meeting	10/30/2023	2200 Galena, Montgomery
Second Meeting	5/13/2024	3511 Woolley, Oswego
Third Meeting	8/12/2024	3511 Woolley, Oswego
Additional Meetings		

IV. Awards & Recognitions

Award/Recognitions	Description	Date Issued
Numerous Medical	Rush Copley	2022/2023

V. Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) & Interrelationships

The District has automatic aid agreements with multiple other jurisdictions and is located in Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) Division 14. For an exhaustive list of all IGAs and interrelationships see Exhibit.

VI. Review of Governing Statutes, Fire District Policies, Rules, Procedures, Training Materials, Reports, and other Documents

A. Governing Statutes (External Review)

GOVERNING STATUTES	
Fire Protection District Act (70 ILCS/705)	✓
Illinois Open Meetings (OMA) Act (5 ILCS 120)	✓
Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140)	✓
State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1) and other State Ethics Laws	✓

B. Policies, Ordinances, Rules, & Bylaws (Internal Review)

EXISTING POLICIES, ORDINANCES, RULES, & BYLAWS		
Title	Date Enacted	Conclusion
Public Comment Policy	2015	Satisfactory
Does the District have a Sexual Harassment Policy? (775 ILCS 5/2-109)	2013	Last reviewed in 2019, have legal check for any updates.
IDOL Mandated Policies	2013	SOP generalized to say “Other mandatory training as determined by the fire chief. We will rewrite the policy to be more specific.
Drug and Alcohol Policies	2013	Satisfactory, last reviewed in 2022.
Employee Handbook/Policy Manual	2013	Work on reviewing all policies to ensure they remain current.
Board of Trustees Manual	December 2015	Needs updating

Does the District have an OMA Officer? (5 ILCS 120/1.05(a)) If so, identify the individual:
Yes, Wendy Knack.

Does the District have a FOIA Officer? (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a)) If so, identify the individual:
Yes, Wendy Knack and Dan Schiradelly

If applicable, identify the District’s designated auditing official under the Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act (50 ILCS 105/4.1):

C. Procedures

PROCEDURES	
Type	Conclusion
FOIA Forms and Procedures (5 ILCS 140/1 <i>et. seq.</i>)	Forms and Procedures are current.

Perform Semiannual Review of Closed Session Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06)	Satisfactory. We have made the shift to be on the standing agendas for January and July of every year.
Trustees Filed Statement of Economic Interest Policy (5 ILCS 420/4A-101)	Satisfactory.
Retention, Destruction, and Review of other Documents	While the Illinois PAC retention schedule is followed, Organizationally a policy on such must be developed.
Post/File OSHA 300A Report (if required)	Satisfactory.
Grant Management and Reporting	Satisfactory. We have three additional members registered to attend a grant writing course.
NFIRS Compliance	Satisfactory.

D. Training

TRAINING		
Title	Satisfactory?	Unsatisfactory?
Board Member OMA Training (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b))	X	
FOIA Officer Training (5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))	X	
Sexual Harassment Prevention Training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(c))	X	

E. Reports

CALL REPORTS - Appendix		
Title	Findings	Conclusion
Call Volume Reports (3-year trend)	Over a 6% increase in calls for service over the three-year period	As the population of the fire district continues to grow, one could expect the call volume to increase proportionally.
Call Type Reports (3-year trend)	When including MVC's in the EMS totals, approximately 77% of our calls for service are EMS related.	Organizationally, we must continue to devote the appropriate amount of resources to EMS.

FINANCIAL REPORTS		
Title	Findings	Conclusion

Treasurer Statement of Receipts & Disbursements	Monthly reported	Provided by the District's accountant
Annual Audit	Completed	Mack & Assoc contracted
<i>Other Financial Documents</i>		

F. Documents

DOCUMENTS		
Title	Findings	Conclusion
Schedule of all FPD Board Meetings (5 ILCS 120/2.03)	Outlined on website	Ensure information is keep current with the addition of special meeting.
Checklist of Scheduled Annual Tasks	Staff utilizes the Calendar and Checklist of Annual Responsibilities for Illinois Fire Protection Districts.	Ensure that the status of the checklist is transparent.

G. Transparency

For a comprehensive list of items found on the District's website see Exhibit.

WEBSITE		
Type	Findings	Conclusion
General Review of Website Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent photos of Board Members. Missing contact information for numerous boards. Must ensure that all meetings and agendas are posted for the required time frames. 	More time and resources must be devoted to the website to ensure that it remains current and relevant.

VII. Recommendations for Increased Accountability and Efficiency

A. Strengths & Efficiencies

S	W	O	C
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and dedication to excellence • Training and fireground operations • Organizational culture • Building and equipment maintenance • Strong leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and retention • Unified vision and proactive planning • Public education and training opportunities • Financial restraints • Keeping pace with growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental relations • Response to growth • Leadership development • Technology communications • Proactive planning and preparation for growth and staffing levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirements, recruitment, and retention for adequate staffing levels • Rate of growth • Finances • Intergovernmental relations • Building and equipment replacements and maintenance

B. Growth Areas

Item	Recommendation for Improvement
<i>Improve transparency of the website</i>	Education of all of the District Boards on the goals of the District to ensure total transparency. These Boards include, but are not limited to; Foreign Fire Insurance Board, Pension Board and the Board of Fire Commissioners.
<i>Continual review of policies and procedures</i>	While the administration is currently evaluating policies on an “as needed” basis, an effort must be undertaken to review on a wholesale basis.

C. Greatest Needs

The greatest need for the Fire District is to ensure that it keeps pace with the tremendous amount of growth that the area is currently experiencing. There are many aspects to keeping pace:

- Staffing, both sworn members as well as civilian employees
- Additional station locations as well as maintaining the current locations

D. Conclusion

In the spring of 2024, the Oswego Fire Protection District completed a Strategic Plan with the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies. It is this committee's belief that this will provide a roadmap for the Administration to follow for years to come. To work towards

a more efficient operation, we must continually evaluate our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges. The status quo, or the saying that we have always done things this way, must be a thing of the past. In order for this Organization to remain healthy and relevant, we must be willing to evaluate current and future programs and to change how we operate based on those evaluations.

The following additional documents are attached to this report:

✓	NAME OF DOCUMENT
✓	Agenda and Minutes from First Committee Meeting
✓	Agenda and Minutes from Second Committee Meeting
✓	Agenda and Minutes from Third Committee Meeting
✓	Call Report
✓	Fire Protection District Map
✓	Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) List
✓	Summary of Items on District Website
✓	2024 Village of Oswego Zoning Map
✓	NIU Study

E: Approval

The Oswego Fire Protection District's Committee on Local Government Efficiency recognizes that on August 12, 2024 the above final efficiency report was assigned and approved.

Dated: August 12, 2024

Signed: _____

Rodger Long – President Board of Trustees

OSWEGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Decennial Committee on Efficiency – Regular Committee Meeting

October 30, 2023 – 4:00 p.m.

2200 Galena Road, Montgomery, Illinois

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Introduction of Committee Members
- IV. Overview of Purpose of Committee
- V. Discussion / Planning of report
- VI. Survey (if required)
- VII. Public Comment
- VIII. Adjournment

MINUTES
OSWEGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Decennial Committee on Efficiency- Regular Committee Meeting
October 30, 2023- 4:00 pm
2200 Galena Road, Montgomery IL 60538

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Trustees Present: Ken Holmstrom, Sarah Zamed, Jason Bragg (present at 4:15), Rob DeLong and Rodger Long. Also present: Chief John Cornish, and Attorney Shawn Flaherty

The Regular Committee Meeting of the Oswego Fire Protection District Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:03 pm at Station 2, 2200 Galena Road, Montgomery Illinois

1. Introduction of Committee Members

Kendall Wilson (citizen), Dick Kuhn (citizen), Tom Trypp (citizen), Bill Helgeson (citizen), Rodger Long- Committee Chairman and President Trustee, Trustees: Ken Holmstrom, Sarah Zamed, Jason Bragg (present at 4:15), and Rob DeLong

The motion was made by Delong and seconded by Wilson to approve Rodger Long as the Committee Chairman. Voice vote- all in favor motion carries.

2. Overview of Purpose of Committee:

Illinois passed a bill at the Illinois General Assembly and it is a new law called the Decennial Act for Special Districts and Townships. We are required to ascertain and assess what we do well and where we can improve every 10 years. We have 18 months to file a report with the County and it is due November 2024. We are required to meet 3 times in the 18 month period. It is public information and should be made available on website. Shawn explained what is needed in the report and provided a template to follow.

3. Discussion/Planning of Report:

Shawn explained what is needed in the report and provided a template to follow. We then discussed the template and what needs to be included.

- A. Location- what areas are serviced
- B. District Demographics
- C. Fire Stations
- D. Employees
- E. Fire and EMS apparatus- type, quantities, and age
- F. Services and Programs- existing and future potential services
- G. Financials

- H. Equalized Assessed Value
- I. Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating
- J. Committee Information and meeting dates
- K. Awards
- L. IGA
- M. Review of Governing Statutes
- N. Reports
- O. Documents
- P. Transparency

4. Survey Question?: Required since Scott Pugsley attended as a public resident

What do we want to include in the report? Dan responded that we should report on the good things that have been achieved and where we can make improvements. Scott Pugsley responded that yes include the good but asked can we ask for more in the future and then add?

5. Public Comment:

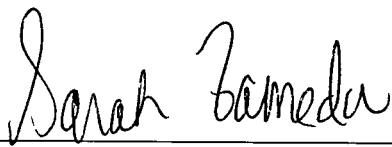
Scott Pugsley noted that this meeting is the first of the Decennial passed by Gov. Pritzger and that this went into law 18 months ago. He Congratulated the 4 citizens that were appointed but expressed that he attends every single meeting and was not appointed to the Committee. He said that hopefully we can figure out spending habits and report back to the Kendall County Board. He also stated that firefighters were given 20% raises over 3 years.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further questions or comments from the public in attendance, President Long thanked everyone for attending and participating. After no further discussion by The Committee, on a motion by Bill Helgeson and seconded by Dick Kuhn, the meeting was adjourned at 4:36 pm Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

SECRETARY



Sarah Zamedra

OSWEGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Decennial Committee on Efficiency – Regular Committee Meeting

May 13, 2024 – 4:30 p.m.

3511 Woolley Road, Oswego, Illinois 60543

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Introduction of Committee Members
- IV. Overview of Purpose of Committee
- V. Review the draft of the report
- VI. Survey (if required)
- VII. Public Comment
- VIII. Adjournment

MINUTES
OSWEGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Decennial Committee on Efficiency – Regular Committee Meeting
May 13, 2024 @ 1630hrs

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Trustees present: Rodger Long, Jason Bragg, Rob DeLong, Sarah Zamede and Ken Holmstrom
Committee Members present: Kendall Wilson, Dick Kuhn, Tom Tripp
Also present: Chief Josh Flanders, DC Dan Schiradelly, DC Dan Gallup, Atty Shawn Flaherty

A meeting of the Oswego Fire Protection District Decennial Committee was called to order at 430 pm at Station 1, 3511 Woolley Road, Oswego

AGENDA

- A motion was made by DeLong and seconded by Zamede to approve the Agenda as posted. Voice vote: Aye - unanimous Nay - 0 Motion carries

PUBLIC FORUM

- None

OLD BUSINESS

- Review of the draft efficiency report
- Work continued on the review of District processes

CLOSED SESSION


- none

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Committee, a motion was made by Holmstrom and seconded by DeLong to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 pm Voice vote: Aye - unanimous Nay-0 Motion carries

Respectfully submitted,

SECRETARY


Sarah Zamede

OSWEGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Decennial Committee on Efficiency – Regular Committee Meeting

August 12, 2024 – 4:00 p.m.

3511 Woolley Road, Oswego, Illinois 60543

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Introduction of Committee Members
- IV. Overview of Purpose of Committee
- V. Review the draft of the report / possible approval
- VI. Survey (if required)
- VII. Public Comment
- VIII. Adjournment

MINUTES
OSWEGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Decennial Committee on Efficiency – Regular Committee Meeting
August 12, 2024 @ 4:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Trustees present: Rodger Long, Jason Bragg, Rob DeLong and Ken Holmstrom
Committee Members present: Kendall Wilson, Dick Kuhn, Bill Helgeson
Also present: Chief Josh Flanders, DC Dan Schiradelly, DC Dan Gallup, Atty Shawn Flaherty

A meeting of the Oswego Fire Protection District Decennial Committee was called to order at 4:04 pm at Station 1, 3511 Woolley Road, Oswego

AGENDA

- A motion was made by DeLong and seconded by Holmstrom to approve the Agenda as posted. Voice vote: Aye - unanimous Nay - 0 Motion carries

PUBLIC FORUM

- None

OLD BUSINESS

- Review of the draft efficiency report
- A motion was made by Helgeson and seconded by DeLong to accept the Decennial Committee Report

CLOSED SESSION

- none

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Committee, a motion was made by Helgeson and seconded by Holmstrom to adjourn the meeting at 4:36 pm Voice vote: Aye - unanimous Nay-0 Motion carries

Respectfully submitted,

SECRETARY 

Call Reports

Total Calls for Service

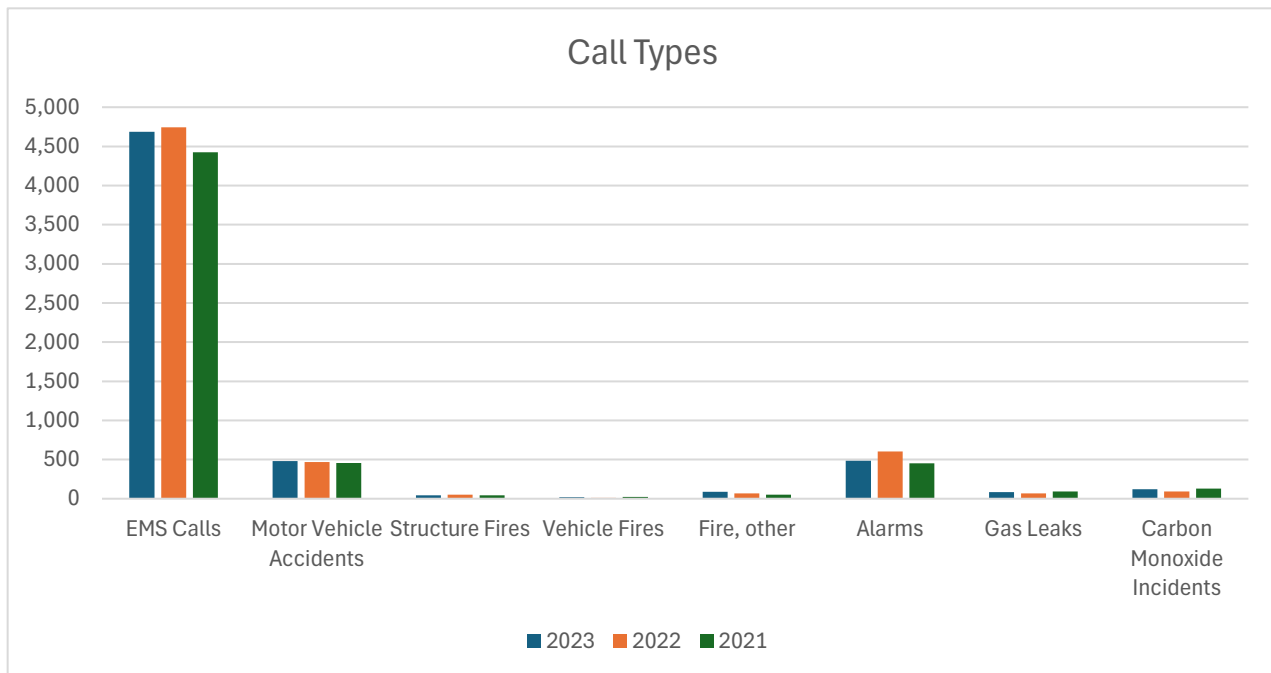
2023 - 6,678

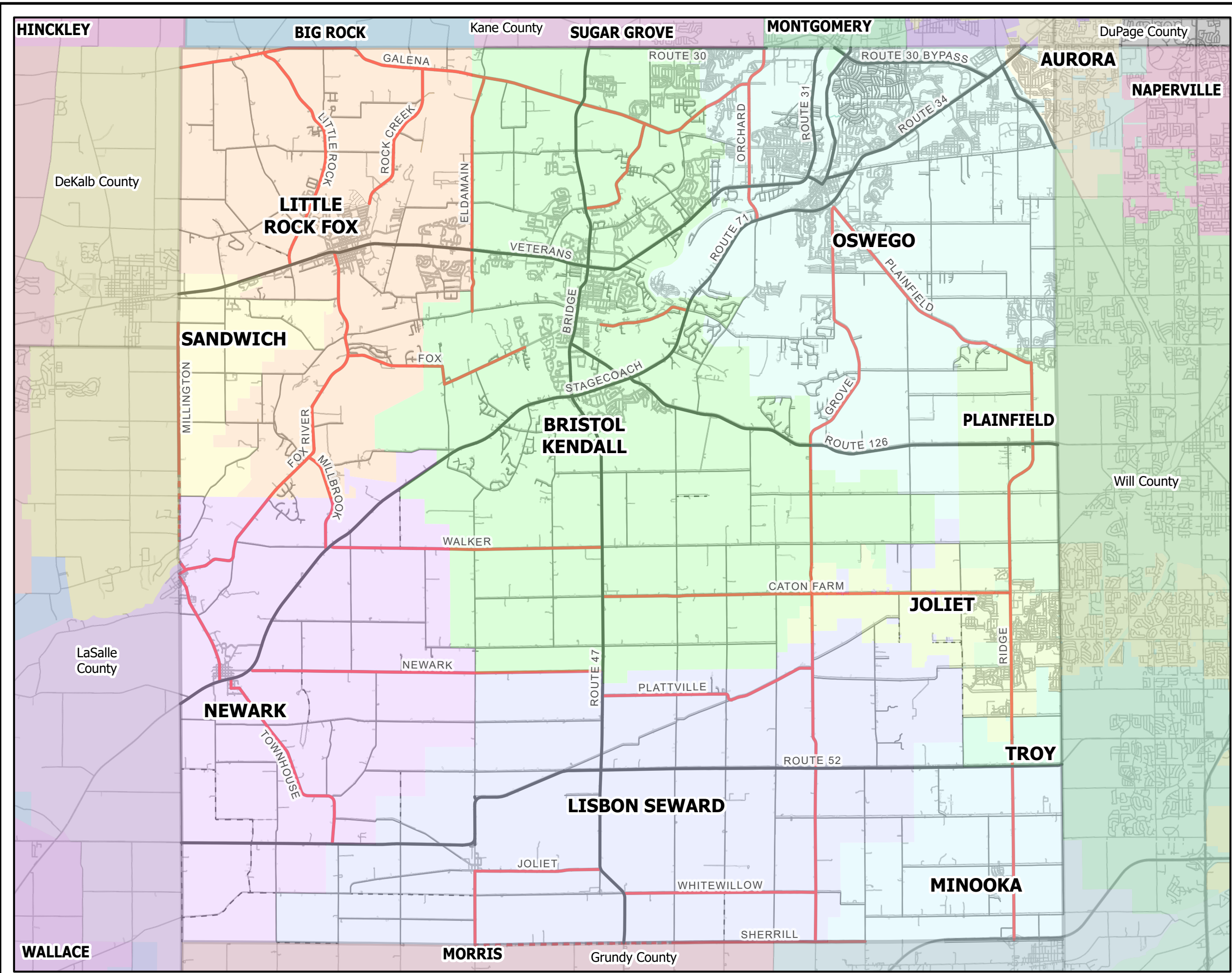
2022 - 6,763

2021 - 6,355

	2023	2022	2021
EMS Calls	4,686	4,743	4,426
Motor Vehicle Accidents	482	467	458
Structure Fires	43	50	44
Vehicle Fires	20	11	21
Fire, other	90	69	53
Alarms	486	602	453
Gas Leaks	84	70	91
Carbon Monoxide Incidents	120	94	129

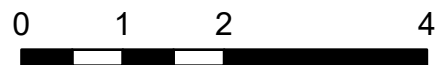
Aid Given	413	421	385
Aid Received	175	162	148





Fire Protection Districts

- AURORA
- AURORA TOWNSHIP
- BIG ROCK
- BRISTOL KENDALL
- CHANNAHON
- HINCKLEY
- JOLIET
- LISBON SEWARD
- LITTLE ROCK FOX
- MINOOKA
- MONTGOMERY
- MORRIS
- NAPERVILLE
- NEWARK
- OSWEGO
- PLAINFIELD
- SANDWICH
- SENECA
- SHERIDAN
- SOMONAUK
- SUGAR GROVE
- TROY
- WALLACE



Miles



Fire Chief Joshua Flanders
3511 Woolley Road
Oswego, Illinois 60543



Current IGA's

- Aurora Fire Department – Will County Territory (west of the railroad tracks)
- Bristol Kendall Fire Protection District – Farm Colony Automatic Aid
- Bristol Kendall Fire Protection District – Shared Information Technology Employee
- KENCOM – dispatch services
- KENCOM – Tyler Software sharing
- MABAS – mutual aid agreement
- Montgomery Fire Protection District – Route 30 & Orchard Intersection
- Naperville Fire Department – Will County Territory (east of the railroad tracks)
- Oswego School District 308 – high school football game coverage
- Plainfield Fire Protection District – automatic aid to the southeast portion of the District
- Sugar Grove Fire Protection District – automatic aid north of Route 30 and west of Orchard
- Village of Oswego – Donation of Wolf Road property
- Village of Oswego – Fuel
- Village of Oswego – Impact Fees
- Village of Oswego – Venue 1012 ambulance coverage
- Village of Oswego / Oswego Twp / Oswego Library / Oswegoland Park District / Oswego School District 308 – sharing of services / staff and equipment

Fire Chief Joshua Flanders
3511 Woolley Road
Oswego, Illinois 60543



Website Contents – Summary

URL: www.oswegofire.com

Home

- Contact Information
- Press Releases
- Message from the Chief
- Station Locations and contact information

About Us

- History
- Administration
- Employment / Transparency
- Board Meetings
- FOIA Information
- Annual Reports
- Photo Gallery
- Community Room Application
- Make Payment
- Helpful Links

Press & Events

- Press Release
- Events

Fire Prevention

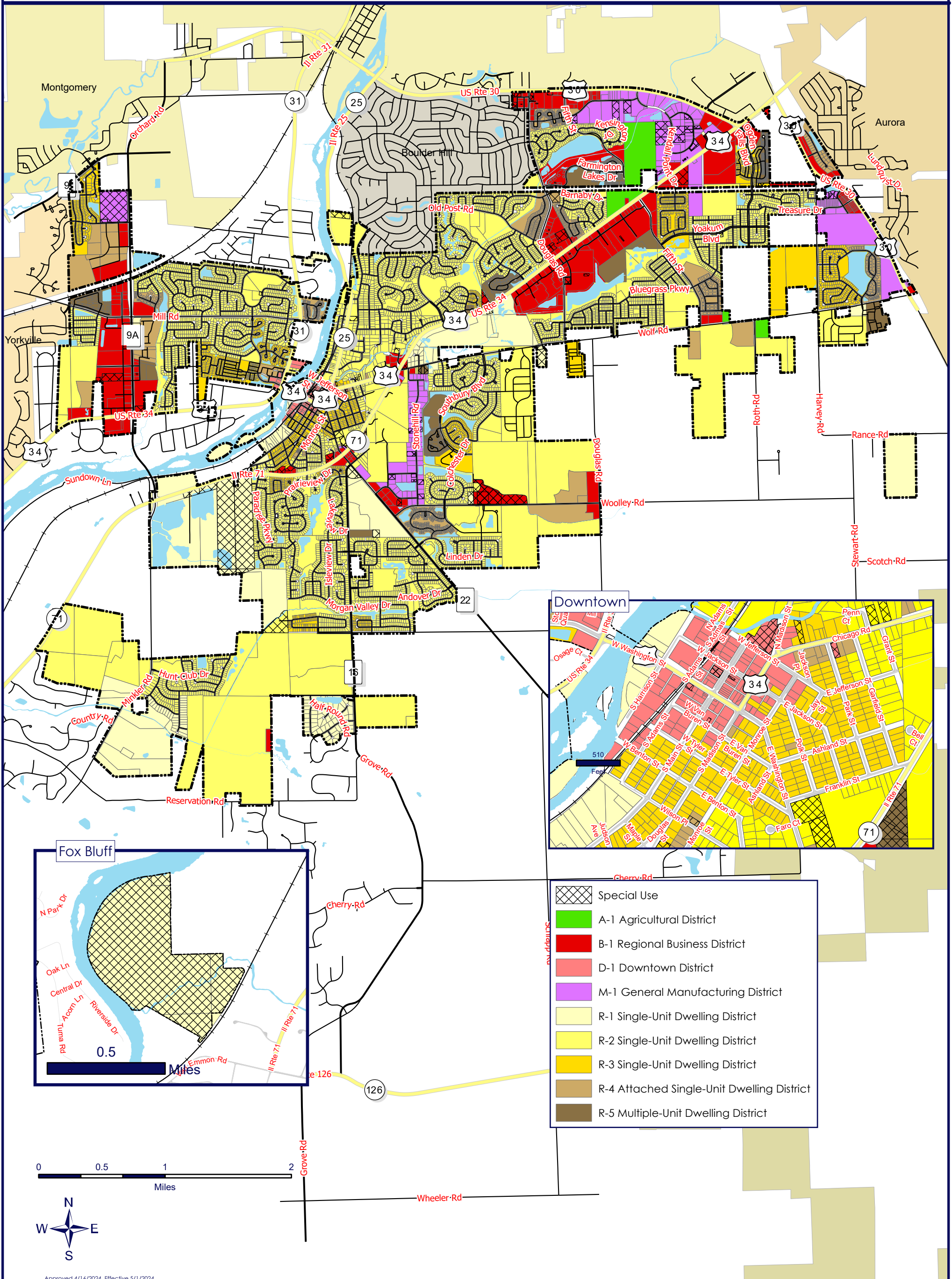
- Public Education
- Fire Prevention Codes
- Open Burning & Bonfires
- Self Inspection Program
- Special Programs

EMS

- About EMS
- CPR Training
- Notice of Privacy Practices
- Request for Ambulance Reports

Contact Us

2024 Zoning Map



OSWEGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Strategic Planning Report

Prepared April 2024



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Center for
Governmental Studies**

Outreach Engagement and Regional Development

Prepared by project coordinators and workshop facilitators

Greg Kuhn, PhD
Director

Jim Norris, MPA
*Local Government
Specialist*

STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rodger Long, President
Ken Holmstrom, Treasurer
Sarah Zamed, Secretary
Rob DeLong, Trustee
Jason Bragg, Trustee

FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

John Hodgson, President
Darrin Johnson, Secretary
Lynn Cullick, Trustee

FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT STAFF CHIEFS

John Cornish, Fire Chief
Josh Flanders, Deputy Chief
Dan Schiradelly, Assistant Chief

FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BATTALION CHIEFS

Jeff Warren
Travis Martinez
Dan Gallup

FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Capt. Alec Keenum, Fire Marshal
Lt. Joe Johnson, Training Officer
FF/PM Jared Schimandle, EMS Coordinator
Lt. Kris Kearns, Support Services
Wendy Knack, Executive Assistant

The Oswego Fire Protection District would also like to thank all staff and the community members who participated in the stakeholder feedback phase of the process. An effective strategic plan includes feedback from stakeholders to ensure that needs and expectations are understood.

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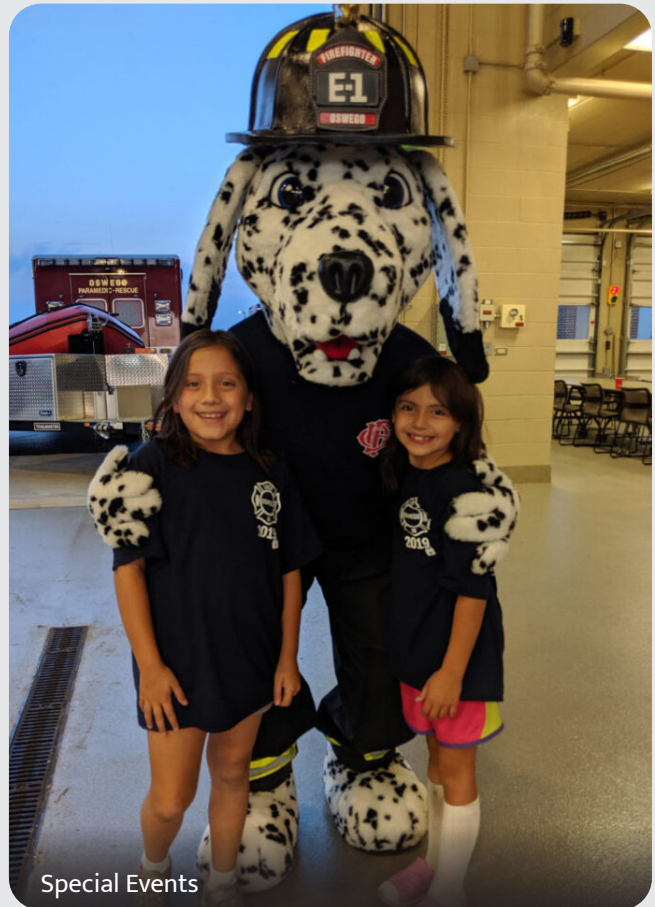
<u>Oswego Fire Protection District Background</u>	1
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OSWEGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BACKGROUND

The Oswego Fire Protection District operates out of 4 stations around the clock, covering 52 square miles in Kendall County and 4 square miles in northwest Will County. It serves various communities, including Oswego, Boulder Hill, Montgomery, Plainfield, and Yorkville, with an estimated population of 75,000 residents. The District has witnessed a consistent increase in service calls, totaling 6,678 in 2023. Apart from emergency response, the Oswego Fire Protection District offers community services and specialty teams such as fire prevention programs, technical rescue teams, CPR classes, and child passenger safety services. Additionally, it provides training facilities for neighboring fire departments and Waubesa Community College's fire science program.



Training



Special Events



Water Rescue



Fire Rescue

INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is an effective way to identify and confirm an organization’s vision for the future and set organizational purpose and direction by incorporating clear priorities and measurable goals. To this end, the Oswego Fire Protection District (the District) engaged the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies (NIU-CGS) in July 2023 to facilitate its strategic planning process. From December 2023 through January 2024, the NIU-CGS team gathered internal and external stakeholder input that was shared at the leadership workshop held in February 2024. The workshop was an opportunity for senior staff and appointed officials to discuss a future vision for the District and establish short and long term goals. It also provided a positive atmosphere to determine the future vision and direction of the District to best serve the organization and the broader community in the coming years. The value of such processes continues to be recognized by policy-making boards, councils, and executive staff in both private and public organizations (Figure 1).

It is important to keep in mind that the judicious use of the District’s limited resources (including financial resources and professional staff time) will be key to achieving good results. Only a limited number of goals and objectives can be managed and implemented effectively at any given time. In a very realistic sense, clear and stable priorities must be maintained if the District desires to stretch its resources as far as they can go.

Figure 1. Strategic Planning Model



PRE-WORKSHOP

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The District’s leadership and elected officials recognized the importance of gaining a comprehensive understanding of their service area and gathering input from various stakeholders during the environmental scanning phase of the strategic planning process. This phase involved examining internal and external factors that shape and influence the District’s activities and mission. To accomplish this, the NIU-CGS team developed a demographic and economic profile of the District, along with conducting focus groups and interviews involving internal and external stakeholders.



DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PROFILE

Prior to the strategic planning workshop, the NIU-CGS team developed a demographic and economic profile of the District. The purpose of this process is to understand the characteristics, trends, and dynamics of the District’s population and the economic activities within their service area. This information helps policymakers and staff make informed decisions about resource allocation, policy development, investment opportunities, and community development initiatives. The demographic and economic profile included the four corner counties: Kane, DuPage, Kendall, and Will. The overview of the profile was shared at the strategic planning workshop and the main points highlighted from the demographic and economic profile are provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Oswego Fire Projection District’s Demographic and Economic Profile Key Takeaways

Demographic Takeaways	The District area has grown faster than the surrounding region	The racial and ethnic composition of the District is consistent with the four counties	The District population skews somewhat younger than the region
Housing and Income Takeaways	Housing stock in the District is newer and skews toward owned dwellings	Population trends toward younger families with children	District has fewer residents with income below poverty level and more with higher income
Employment and Commuting Takeaways	Most residents commute out for work, and most workers commute in	One-fifth of jobs in the District are held by residents	The top three employment sectors for residents and workers are retail, education, and accommodation or food service

FOCUS GROUPS

To gain perspectives from a cross-section of stakeholders, the NIU-CGS team facilitated a series of focus group sessions with community members and partners. A total of three in-person focus groups were conducted in December 2023 to gain stakeholder input. The focus group sessions ranged in number of participants from 10-15 in each group. Figure 3 highlights the groups represented in the focus group sessions.

Figure 3. Focus Group Participants



The focus group sessions were designed as a primer for the strategic planning process. The information presented was shared in summation at the workshop and added exploratory and thematic information for the Board and senior leadership team to consider. As a result of the focus group feedback, the facilitators identified three overarching themes presented in Figure 4. The themes represent important topic areas that the District's leadership and Board considered as they went through the workshop exercises to develop short and long term goals. Therefore, it is not unusual to see alignment between the focus group themes and the priority areas identified as part of the entirety of the strategic planning process. Please see [Appendix A](#) for a full summary of all focus group questions and aggregated responses for each theme.

Figure 4. Aggregated Focus Group Identified Themes



LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS

Interviews with the District's leadership allowed the facilitators to gain perspective by building a balanced and informed view of the District, from each stakeholder's unique vantage point. Individual interviews were offered to all Board members and administrative leadership in January of 2024. These important conversations helped NIU-CGS to understand priorities and opportunities for the District. Several themes and suggestions emerged from these interviews and were also shared at the workshop:

- Rapid growth has impacted all the governments, especially the District due to property tax lag and issues relating to impact fees.
- The District is experiencing issues related to recruitment, hiring, and retention. Not unlike other agencies, the District faces challenges with keeping compensation competitive.
- Succession planning, shared vision, leadership pathways, and mentorship are key areas of focus.
- The District's employees are its greatest strength.
- The District's large service territory is a challenge.

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

OUTLINE OF EXERCISES AND DISCUSSION SESSIONS

All the discussion sessions in the planning effort employed approaches that were highly participative and interactive. The workshop facilitators utilized a group discussion approach called ‘Nominal Group Technique’ where the facilitator assured participants equal opportunities to speak and share opinions. During the workshop discussions, individuals had the opportunity to generate and share their ideas, as well as participate in small and large group activities allowing them to weigh alternatives and refine their thinking through dialogue. As ideas were shared and debated, the group worked steadily toward a consensus regarding the District’s purpose, future direction, goals, and priorities.

INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKER EXERCISE

Participants were asked to introduce themselves and share how they became involved with the District, either as a Board or staff member. Next, they engaged in an icebreaker exercise titled, “Garage Sale.” Workshop participants collected an item from a “garage sale” table that represented to them an idea, issue, or topic that they felt was important to the District’s future and should be discussed as part of the strategic plan. This was a brainstorming exercise, and no evaluative or judgmental debate was permitted during this session. Next is a word cloud summary (Figure 5) and a list (Figure 6) of those answers.

Figure 5. Garage Sale Icebreaker: important issue, initiative, or idea that should be part of the District’s future? Word Cloud



Figure 6. Garage Sale Icebreaker: important issue, initiative, or idea that should be part of the District’s future? List

GARAGE SALE ITEM	IMPORTANT ISSUE, INITIATIVE, OR IDEA
Dollar sign	Money drives everything.
Hard hat	Growth creates challenges such as the need to build and maintain more stations.
Refuse toter	Sometimes we need to be willing to throw things out, change, and move forward. We need to be more proactive and future focused vs. reactionary, be guided by plans and planning for the present and future.
Fire truck	Funding for resources will be critical for the District, especially due to impact of growth (e.g., equipment is expensive).
Super glue	Keep it all together, hard to hire, finances. Working together, retention is key (e.g., need for succession planning).
Life Ring	Safety for membership of the District and for community.
Train car	Parked at the station or moving backward. Need to start moving forward.
Walking the walk	Words are easy to say...actions have bigger impact. Back up the words.
Brick	Building relationships with the public through engagement and building trust. Build relationships with other governments. Keep up with growth. Keep up with station sites.

VISIONING FOR THE FUTURE

The Board and senior staff next participated in a visioning exercise to describe the desired future direction of the District by answering the following question: “If you left the District and the community and didn’t return for 10-15 years, what do you think you will see or what do you hope you will see when you return?” Participants were asked to think about their ideas ahead of time and then be ready to share them with the group during the first session of the workshop. Responses are listed in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Visions of the Future—Hope or think you will see in 10-15 years

Statements that include an asterisk () indicate the idea was repeated/agreed with by other participants.*

“

IF YOU LEFT THE DISTRICT AND THE COMMUNITY AND DIDN’T RETURN FOR 10-15 YEARS...”

WHAT DO YOU **THINK** YOU WILL SEE WHEN YOU RETURN?

- Properly staffed fire stations, potentially 7 or 8 stations, 150 firefighters/paramedics*
- Defined culture and strong foundation
- Will see more mergers and consolidations
- Aging workforce, 2028 retirement bubble, need to maintain identity
- Massive consolidation of smaller districts*
- Mental health ambulance, maybe social worker and EMT
- Equipment will keep changing
- Station 5 and 6 built

WHAT DO YOU **HOPE** YOU WILL SEE WHEN YOU RETURN?

- Appropriate level of staff to support the operation of the District*
- Organization thinks outside of the box, proactive, keeps pace, innovative
- Organization not afraid to change, progressive, not reactive
- Intergovernmental relations improve, recognize each other’s issues. Impact fees keep pace.
- Money spent, hours spent not in vain, keep training and staff development funded, leadership from the top. Teach the next generation.
- If change from appointed to elected Board damages organization
- Keep up with maintenance of buildings, firefighters/paramedics, and equipment
- Progressive, thinking ahead, proactive

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING PART I—
SURRENDER OR LEAD

Next, participants were introduced to a leadership exercise entitled “Surrender or Lead.” Participants were asked, in small groups, to respond to a series of structured questions to reveal hopes, perspectives, challenges, opportunities, and possible barriers based on the collective view of each group. The responses were recorded and combined themes from the three groups are reported next. For a full list of Surrender or Lead responses from each group, see [Appendix B](#).

Themes from Surrender or Lead:

1. Prepare for the future through proactive and strategic planning focused on common goals
2. Undertake succession planning including mentorship and leadership pathways
3. Manage service level demands amidst the District’s growth
4. Maintain financial sustainability and exploration of funding opportunities

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING PART II—
LARGE GROUP S.W.O.C. ANALYSIS

The next step of the strategic planning workshop involved reviewing and accounting for the internal and external factors present in the environment that can potentially influence the District, both negatively and positively. Workshop participants were asked to identify the District’s **strengths (S)** and **weaknesses (W)**. In what areas does the District regularly excel, and in what areas are there difficulties or shortcomings in terms of expertise, resources, training, etc.? What **opportunities (O)** are on the horizon that can be used to the District’s advantage? Conversely, what trends or **challenges (C)** lie ahead that would be obstacles or hindrances? These elements could include both internal and external factors, conditions, trends, regulations, agencies, resources, etc. The top responses to the exercise are provided in Figure 8. For a full list of S.W.O.C. analysis responses, see [Appendix C](#).

Figure 8. S.W.O.C. Top Responses



NOMINAL GROUP GOAL IDENTIFICATION

With the preceding discussion sessions and exercises acting as a sound foundation for goal setting, the next exercise provided time for a healthy group discussion and development of goals and/or objectives needed to achieve the future visions as expressed by workshop participants.

Participants worked in the same small groups from the Surrender or Lead exercise. Each group was allotted time to develop and then report out the three or four important policy and program goals they thought the District should accomplish. Groups were asked to create goals using two timeframes; **short-term** goals (which could be accomplished in the next one to three years), as well as those that would be considered **long-term** goals (four- to eight-year time frame). Each workgroup then shared their short and long term goals with the larger group for feedback and discussion. Goals could be highly specific or general.

OPEN GROUP DISCUSSION AND
CONSOLIDATION OF GOALS AND
OBJECTIVES

This final phase of the discussion served as the forum for Board members and staff to discuss, refine, and compare the ideas and goals offered by each participant. Participants gave their opinions and further explained the fit, ideas, and policy outcomes expressed in the goals and discussed if additional goals were needed. Lastly, the group categorized each goal as complex or routine. Complex goals are complicated, multi-layered goals that require extraordinary resources, such as technical specialists, funding, or the collaboration or agreement of another unit of government or an outside organization, business, or agency. Routine goals are not simple or easy but could largely be accomplished by the organization with required budget and staffing allocations or with minor external assistance.

Routine goals

not simple or easy but could largely be accomplished by the organization within current resources

Complex goals

multi-layered goals requiring extraordinary resources, such as specialists, funding, or collaboration with an outside organization

POST-WORKSHOP

GOAL PRIORITIZATION AND RANKING EXERCISE

Workshop participants and the Board of Trustees were asked to delineate, via a post-workshop online ranking exercise, which goals should be given the highest priority. The workshop participants and Board were provided an online ranking tool where point values were assigned to each goal in both the short and long term categories. The calculation of goal prioritization consisted of “forced ranking” where the ranking of each identified goal is calculated as the average of the rankings given by all participants. For example, if a goal was given scores of 2, 5, 6, 6, 1, 2, and 3, the average total would be 3.57. The lower the score, the higher the priority. Again, the average totals were based on the rankings provided by the workshop participants and the Board of Trustees.

The outcomes of the District’s goal ranking exercise, along with the assigned priority levels for each goal, are presented in Figure 9. The dashboard demonstrates the strategic goals, tasks, and objectives for the Board and staff to address in the months and years ahead. Following the ranked goals, the District’s broader priority areas are shared and defined.

Figure 9. 2023 Ranked Strategic Goals Dashboard

SHORT-TERM ROUTINE STRATEGIC GOALS <i>Short-term goals have a time frame of 1-3 years. Routine goals are not simple or easy but can be accomplished with current District resources.</i>	Priority Level
Undertake a staffing level plan encompassing both operational and support/civilian roles including an analysis of inefficiencies and process improvement plan.	High
Conduct a thorough analysis of existing staff leadership roles and responsibilities to identify areas for optimization and improvement to implement a staff leadership structure/flowchart (e.g., changing department heads to Division Chiefs).	Medium
Create a recruitment and retention plan including strategies addressing apprentice and cadet opportunities.	Medium
Develop and implement a comprehensive succession plan to identify potential employee gaps, needs, requirements, and areas for recruitment, mentorship, and leadership opportunities (e.g., the hiring of a full-time maintenance person, administrative assistant, and full staffing for all stations).	Medium
Expand upon and further develop the District’s Leadership/Mentoring program aimed at firefighters/paramedics, lieutenants, captains, battalion chiefs, etc.	Lower
Develop a multi-year Capital Improvement plan.	Lower
Formulate comprehensive communications strategies for internal and external communication.	Lower
Update the strategic plan every 2-3 years to track progress and status of goals.	Lower

SHORT-TERM COMPLEX STRATEGIC GOALS <i>Short-term goals have a time frame of 1-3 years. Complex goals require extraordinary resources, experts, or funding to accomplish.</i>	Priority Level
Implement the recruitment and retention plan to effectively meet both current and future staffing needs and requirements; including apprentice and cadet opportunities and enhanced EMS training.	High
Consider a comprehensive employee wellness program including physical, mental, and emotional wellness.	Medium
Develop and implement strategies to establish positive working relationships with other organizations, municipalities, and units of government.	Medium
Engage governmental partners involved in building, zoning, and development to ensure input and perspective of the District regarding operations, services, and near and long-term impacts.	Lower
Issue a Request for Proposals and select an architect to design Station 5.	Lower

LONG-TERM ROUTINE STRATEGIC GOALS <i>Long-term goals have a time frame of 4-8 years. Routine goals are not simple or easy but can be accomplished with current District resources.</i>	Priority Level
Develop and implement an equipment and facility repair and replacement program.	High
Develop and implement a Community Risk Reduction Plan.	Medium

LONG-TERM COMPLEX STRATEGIC GOALS <i>Long-term goals have a time frame of 4-8 years. Complex goals require extraordinary resources, experts, or funding to accomplish.</i>	Priority Level
Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for continued adaptation to growth including additional stations, site selection, land acquisition, staffing, and equipment considerations.	High
Implement the multi-year Capital Improvement plan.	High
Assess and evaluate opportunities and concepts that explore shared services or consolidation with other providers, districts, or agencies.	Medium
Start the design of Station 6 while completing construction for Station 5 and addressing apparatus and staffing requirements for both facilities.	Lower

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

Based on an evaluation of the entirety of the process, including the demographic profile, stakeholder feedback, discussions at the workshop, and the goals developed, several high-level strategic priority areas were identified. These priority areas highlight the activities and initiatives that the District will focus on in both the short and long term. The strategic priority areas identified as a result of the strategic planning process are illustrated in Figure 10 and fully defined next. For strategic goal and focus group data alignment related to each area, see [Appendix D](#).

Figure 10. 2023 Strategic Priority Areas



CONCLUSION

The value of the strategic planning process will only be realized if this report is used as an active working guide for both the Oswego Fire Protection District Board of Trustees, commissioners, and staff. This document captures the content of the discussions and assists the District's leaders in developing implementation plans for their high-priority goals.

In the District's ever evolving operating environment, adapting to changes in demographics, community trends, technology advancements, and best practices, among others, will be key. The strategic plan is meant to be a roadmap for the District with the flexibility to adapt to those changes. Therefore, it is recommended that the District undertake a regular review (monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually) of the strategic plan, its goals, and implementation schedule to identify the need for updates or modifications so the entire District consistently recognizes and meets changes in community needs and expectations. In addition, the District is encouraged to continue to engage in regular strategic planning process updates and renewals every three years.

What is apparent from the exchange of ideas and dialogue during the environmental scanning and strategic planning workshop is that the District is fortunate to have progressive leadership and a management team that is looking ahead and committed to strategic thinking and planning.

We wish you well with the ambitious years that lie ahead.



Greg Kuhn and Jim Norris, NIU-CGS Project Coordinators and Session Facilitators

APPENDIX A:

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

SUMMARY

One of the key analytical techniques used for focus group notes is an analyst's search for key phrases, words, or terms that emerged during the focus group sessions, a process known as coding. Coding is done by analysts' individual readings of the data, followed by key term searches. The words and phrases listed below are the results of the study team's analysis of the collected focus group notes. At a glance, the reader can discover what terms were used or referred to most frequently in the feedback notes. Using individual analysts' coding, the researcher identifies terms that recur across groups and across questions. The results reveal key topics or issues that should be weighed and considered when proceeding with strategic planning discussions.

The information that follows is a summary of key themes and topics that emerged during the exploratory focus group sessions. The focus group sessions served as a primer for the strategic planning process. The information that is presented in this summation was designed to add exploratory and thematic information for the Board and leadership staff to consider during the strategic planning workshop.

The same exploratory focus group discussion questions were asked to each focus group and are listed below:

1 How would you describe the District to a stranger or someone who doesn't live or work here?

2 If you left the District tomorrow, and didn't return for 10-15 years, what do you think you'd see, or what do you hope you'd see, when you returned?

3 What do you like best about the District? Related to that, what are the strengths or greatest assets of the District?

4 Conversely, can you identify areas or topics in need of attention or improvement? Related to that, what are the weaknesses or greatest needs for the District? Challenges?

5 What are or should be the top priorities for the District over the next three to five years?

6 If you could change or initiate one key item or thing about District, what would it be?

OVERALL THEMES BASED ON ALL FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

CORE SERVICES AND ORGANIZATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

- Maintain or improve response times even with growth in the District
- Ensure the sustainability of the District's services, equipment, and facilities
 - *Keep technology current*
 - *Explore the addition of a Fire Station #5*
- Implement the strategic plan – work it and follow it
- Keep up with changes in the District (e.g., services, facilities, staffing of facilities)
- Increase services offered (e.g., Dive and search and rescue, number of EMS calls will increase due to aging population – what does that look like?)

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Develop an all-encompassing, regular communication plan
 - *Internal, reach consensus on future needs of Board, management, and employees*
 - *External, increase regular external communication (e.g., residents, other taxing bodies)*
- More community engagement
 - *E.g., hiring civilians to do community education and share public information*
 - *Engage and partner with the District's businesses to provide programs and events*
- More community outreach and education
 - *E.g., communication and education about what the District does, who falls into the District, services offered, etc.*

PROACTIVE GROWTH MANAGEMENT

- Develop financial plan to keep level of service amidst growth and communicate plan to public
 - *Explore increased revenue opportunities*
 - *Address developer contributions and impact fees*
 - *Develop a facilities plan that is related to growth*
- Focus on attracting, hiring, and retaining qualified employees
 - *Develop a recruitment, training, cross-training, and retention plan, competitive compensation evaluation*
 - *Succession planning for all roles*
 - *Need for more support staff to accommodate the growing district*
- Encourage strong intergovernmental cooperation to minimize impact of growth

APPENDIX B:

SURRENDER OR LEAD EXERCISE

The **bolded and underlined** sections are key phrases that each group provided in response to the Surrender or Lead exercise's open-ended questions and prompts during the leadership workshop.

Group #1

1. We want to **prepare and plan for the future** but we **lack a strategic plan.**
2. The two most important things to focus on are **funding** and **personnel** because **of growth.**
3. If it weren't for the **lack of planning**, we would **be prepared for current and future growth.**
4. We need to finally **establish and implement a plan.**
5. **Funding** will have the biggest impact on the Oswego Fire Protection District in the coming 2-3 years.

Group #2

1. We want to **progress** but **we must be united and share common goals.**
2. The two most important things to focus on are **recruitment** and **retention** because of **well-being and community commitments.**
3. If it weren't for the **lack of vision and direction**, we would **be off to the races.**
4. We need to finally **go offensive.**
5. **Retirement and turnover** will have the biggest impact on the Oswego Fire Protection District in the coming 2-3 years.

APPENDIX C:

S.W.O.C. ANALYSIS

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges (S.W.O.C.) – Full List

INTERNAL

STRENGTHS

- Training
- Staffing
- Intergovernmental relations
- Technology
- Bond referendum
- Employees
- Strong employee work values
- Strong commitment
- Self-initiative
- Professionalism
- Desire to excel
- Growth
- Openness
- Buildings, facilities, and equipment
- Safety
- Fire ground operations
- Ability to adapt
- Our members, dedication,
- Overall, it is our people
- Teamwork on incidents
- Good leaders
- Compassion
- Integrity
- Trustworthy
- Excellent Maintenance Department

WEAKNESSES

- Politics
- Retention and recruitment
- Finances and the small amount of funding
- Intergovernmental relations
- Communication
- Maintenance and technology
- Vision – Planning
- Compensation
- Leadership – lack of experience diversity
- Promoting intangibles to recruits and public
- Being proactive
- Executing a vision
- Management by emotion
- Growth – hard to keep up
- Impact fees
- Educating the public
- Lack of EMS training
- Financial constraints

APPENDIX C:

S.W.O.C. ANALYSIS (CONT.)

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges (S.W.O.C.) – Full List

EXTERNAL

OPPORTUNITIES

- Capital replacement plan
- Training
- Politics
- Staffing
- Recruiting
- Intergovernmental relations
- Getting more staff involved
- Communications (internal and external)
- Technology
- Employees and personnel
- Our long-term service
- Leadership development
- More diverse thinking, innovation
- Creative leaders
- Organic culture
- Communicating our intangibles and telling the District's story
- Board relations and new Board membership
- Explore comprehensive wellness plan
- Let's go get things done
- Response to growth
- County government
- State of Illinois and legislation
- Municipalities, impact fees, and development input
- Prepare for the unknowns
- Prepare for the next administration in a positive manner

CHALLENGES

- Politics
- Retirements and upcoming vacancies
- Overtime fatigue
- Finances – monetary issues and saving money
- Intergovernmental relations
- Communications (internal and external)
- Technology
- Technical maintenance and utilization
- Availability of equipment and vehicles
- Competitiveness of salary – compensation
- Keeping up with change
- Rate of growth
- State of Illinois
- Legislation
- Municipal policies and decisions
- County government
- Aging fleet
- Recruitment and retention
- Building and staffing stations
- Proactively obtaining vehicles and equipment
- Keeping the Board educated
- Utilizing the bond money effectively

APPENDIX D:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS,

GOAL AND STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ALIGNMENT

PRIORITY AREA:

COMMITMENT TO QUALITY SERVICES WHILE MANAGING THE IMPACTS OF GROWTH

Emphasizes maintaining high standards of service delivery while addressing the challenges of potential expansion and development. It involves strategies to ensure that service quality remains consistent and effective despite the pressures and changes brought about by growth, including infrastructure expansion, resource allocation, risk management, and community engagement.

Commitment to Quality Services While Managing the Impacts of Growth-Related Goals from the Workshop:

- Update the strategic plan every 2-3 years to track progress and status of goals.
- Develop and implement a Community Risk Reduction Plan.
- Assess and evaluate opportunities and concepts that explore shared services or consolidation with other providers, districts, or agencies.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for continued adaptation to growth including additional stations, site selection, land acquisition, staffing and equipment considerations.

Commitment to Quality Services While Managing the Impacts of Growth-Aligning Stakeholder Comments from the Pre-workshop Stakeholder Sessions:

- Encourage strong intergovernmental cooperation to minimize impact of growth.
- Maintain and improve response times even with growth in the District.
- Ensure the sustainability of the District's services, equipment, and facilities.
 - Keep technology current.
 - Explore the addition of a Fire Station #5.
- Keep up with changes in the District (e.g., services, facilities, staffing of facilities).
 - Increase services offered (e.g., Dive and search and rescue, number of EMS calls will increase due to aging population – what does that look like?
- Rapid growth has impacted all the governments, especially the District due to property tax lag and issues relating to impact fees.

PRIORITY AREA:

ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

Aims to improve the organization's adaptability to changing circumstances, foster leadership skills, and ensure smooth transitions of responsibilities and roles over time. It involves enhancing organizational resilience, developing leadership abilities among employees at all levels, and identifying and preparing potential successors for key positions to meet future needs through comprehensive recruitment and retention strategies.

Organizational Adaptation, Leadership Development and Succession Planning-Related Goals from the Workshop:

- Undertake a staffing level plan encompassing both operational and support/civilian roles including an analysis of inefficiencies and process improvement plan.
- Create a Leadership/ Mentoring program aimed at firefighters/paramedics, lieutenants, captains, battalion chiefs, etc.
- Conduct a thorough analysis of existing staff leadership roles and responsibilities to identify areas for optimization and improvement to implement a staff leadership structure/flowchart (e.g., changing department heads to Division Chiefs).
- Create a recruitment and retention plan including strategies addressing apprentice and cadet opportunities.
- Implement the recruitment and retention plan to effectively meet both current and future staffing needs and requirements; including apprentice and cadet opportunities, and enhanced EMS training.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive succession plan to identify potential employee gaps, needs, requirements, and areas for recruitment, mentorship, and leadership opportunities (e.g., the hiring of a full-time maintenance person, administrative assistant, and full staffing for all stations).
- Consider a comprehensive employee wellness program including physical, mental and emotional wellness.

Organizational Adaptation, Leadership Development and Succession Planning-Aligning Stakeholder Comments from the Pre-workshop Stakeholder Sessions:

- Focus on attracting, hiring, and retaining qualified employees.
 - Develop a recruitment, training, cross-training, and retention plan, competitive compensation evaluation.
 - Succession planning for all roles.
 - Need for more support staff to accommodate the growing district.
- Implement the strategic plan – work it and follow it.
- The District is experiencing issues related to recruitment, hiring, and retention. Not unlike other agencies, the District faces challenges with keeping compensation competitive.
- Succession planning, shared vision, leadership pathways, and mentorship. Develop plan to address retirement bubble potentially occurring in 2028. Proactive vs. reactive planning for the future of the District.
- The District's employees are the greatest strength.
 - The employees really care and are positively engaged in the community beyond just doing their job, go above and beyond.

PRIORITY AREA:

CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Focuses on the strategic management of financial resources and the systematic planning, development, and maintenance of capital and physical infrastructure assets. It encompasses the careful allocation of funds for infrastructure projects, ensuring cost-effective solutions, optimizing asset utilization, and maintaining fiscal responsibility to sustain the organization's long-term viability and operational efficiency.

Capital Infrastructure Planning and Financial Stewardship-Related Goals from the Workshop:

- Develop a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan.
- Issue a Request for Proposals and select an architect to design Station 5.
- Develop and implement an equipment and facility repair and replacement program.
- Start the design of Station 6 while completing construction for Station 5 and addressing apparatus and staffing requirements for both facilities.
- Implement the multi-year Capital Improvement Plan.

Capital Infrastructure Planning and Financial Stewardship-Aligning Stakeholder Comments from the Pre-workshop Stakeholder Sessions:

- Develop financial plan to keep level of service amidst growth and communicate plan to public.
 - Explore increased revenue opportunities.
 - Address developer contributions and impact fees.
 - Develop a facilities plan that is related to growth.

PRIORITY AREA:

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH, COLLABORATION, AND ENGAGEMENT

Concentrates on fostering strong relationships with government partners and community members. This involves actively engaging with a variety of internal and external stakeholders to enhance communication, work together on projects, share resources, exchange information, and participate in meaningful discussions addressing common interests.

Intergovernmental and Community Outreach, Collaboration, and Engagement-Related Goals from the Workshop:

- Formulate comprehensive communications strategies for internal and external communication.
- Engage governmental partners involved in building, zoning, and development to ensure input and perspective of the District regarding operations, services and near and long-term impacts.
- Develop and implement strategies to establish positive working relationships with other organizations, municipalities, and units of government.

Intergovernmental and Community Outreach, Collaboration, and Engagement-Aligning Stakeholder Comments from the Pre-workshop Stakeholder Sessions:

- Develop an all-encompassing, regular communication plan.
 - Internal, reach consensus on future needs of Board, management, and employees.
 - External, increase regular external communication (e.g., residents, other taxing bodies).
- More community engagement.
 - E.g., hiring civilians to do community education and share public information.
 - Engage and partner with district businesses to provide programs and events.
- More community outreach and education.
 - E.g., communication and education about what the District does, who falls into the District, services offered, etc.