CITY OF

Hopkins

Fire Department Staffing Study

Project Report / September 2023

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RAFTELIS

September 13, 2023

Dale Specken
Fire Chief
101 17th Ave S,
Hopkins, MN 55343

Subject: Fire Department Staffing Study

Dear Chief Specken:

We are pleased to present the Fire Department Staffing Study Project Report for the City of Hopkins (City). The following report includes observations and recommendations intended to improve the effectiveness of the Hopkins Fire Department's (Department) current operations, provide the capacity necessary to meet service level expectations and assess alternative operating models to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Department.

The Fire Department staff engaged in this process take pride in their work and strive to offer exceptional service. However, investments and operational changes are needed to allow the Department to improve service delivery. Addressing operational practices and staffing capacity will ensure that the Hopkins Fire Department remains a trusted asset for the entire community.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with the Hopkins Fire Department.

Sincerely,

Michelle Ferguson
Vice President - Organizational Assessment

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Executive Summary

The City of Hopkins Fire Department is responsible for providing the City of Hopkins with fire suppression, emergency medical services, and a series of fire prevention activities, including annual occupancy inspections, code enforcement, building plan review, fire prevention planning, community outreach, and more.

The Department provides these services through a combination of full-time, paid-on-call, and part-time staff. Full-time staff includes the Fire Chief, Fire Marshall, and Firefighters/Inspectors. Paid-on-call firefighters are effectively volunteer firefighters who live within a 12-minute drive of the fire station and are compensated hourly for training and responding to calls-for-service through an on-call system or by staffing available shifts. The designated part-time firefighters are also compensated hourly for training and responding to calls for service, but live outside of the 12-minute drivetime radius and therefore are not part of the on-call system; they instead only staff available shifts.

This service model, hereafter referred to as the "paid-on-call" model, has historically served the city well. However, the paid-on-call model, which relies heavily on volunteers to perform emergency call response, is reaching an inflection point. There are three primary challenges that must be addressed.

The first challenge relates to emergency deployment approach and response times. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is a professional organization whose sole focus is to define and advance fire service standards and best practices. The NFPA has established a best practice standard indicating that fire department's should target to arrive at the scene an emergency incident within five minutes of being dispatched. This maximizes the likelihood of being able to perform a rapid intervention that saves lives and/or property. The Hopkins Fire Department routinely arrives on scene of an emergency within that five-minute threshold. However, there are many periods when the initial response is performed by one firefighter. This is because there are periods when the City's fire station is unstaffed. In these instances, paid-on-call firefighters first respond from home to the station where they don their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and then depart for the location of the emergency. This means that the Department is often unable to engage in firefighting activities until at least four firefighters are on scene, which can reportedly take over 20 minutes, though clear data regarding this response time parameter is currently unavailable

The second challenge relates to declining rates of volunteerism. Historically, many cities have been able to staff fire response operations with volunteers. However, rates of volunteerism and the willingness of volunteers to spend significant periods outside of their lives staffing fire companies are declining in Hopkins and across the Country. Serving as a volunteer firefighter requires a larger time commitment than other forms of volunteerism. There are multiple training requirements and a need to stay actively engaged in working emergency events so that critical skills do not perish. Further, the pool of volunteers that can be drawn upon is limited to a 12-minute driving radius from the Hopkins fire station. The City has done an excellent job recruiting and retaining volunteers and has a highly skilled paid-on-call workforce. However, adjustments are needed to sustain service levels in the long term.

Third, the City of Hopkins is experiencing growth. Since 2010 the City's population has grown by over 8% and is expected to continue growth with the addition the METRO Green Line Extension, which expected to be operational in 2027. The City further anticipates that future growth will include extensive multi-family development and more density, which presents special challenges and workload demands for fire suppression, prevention and inspection activities.

The City engaged Raftelis to determine how best to structure departmental operations to maintain or enhance service levels within the context of these challenges. To complete this effort, the Raftelis project team completed an extensive

engagement process, which included staff interviews, city council member interviews, a site visit, and a public engagement and stakeholder feedback session. In addition, the project team competed extensive data analysis as well as peer benchmarking and best practices research.

The project team evaluated four alternative operating models to evolve the Department and sustain operations well into the future, including optimizing the current paid-on-call staffing model, operating with a full-time staff of firefighters, forming a regional department with a neighboring jurisdiction, and utilizing a public safety officer model that combines law enforcement and fire department operations together or training public works employees to assist with larger, complex incidents. This analysis provides City leadership with a better understanding of the benefits, costs, and considerations that would need to be evaluated prior to pursuing any of these options.

This assessment yielded several important conclusions. The current paid-on-call operating model has served the City well and is currently functioning at a high level. However, there are significant challenges that must be addressed in the near term. Further, it is unlikely that the current model is sustainable in the long-term. Ultimately, the City should move toward an operating model that provides consistent, 24/7 coverage from the City's fire station and ensures that at least four firefighters, or one fire company, is able to consistently respond on-scene within the 5 minute response time benchmark. However, there is not an emergent need to immediately implement an expensive full-time staff service model adjustment. Rather, there is an opportunity to implement a series of more manageable and affordable staffing, process and procedure adjustments to strengthen the current paid-on-call model.

This will position the City to thoughtfully plan for and execute, over a longer-term implementation period, a transition to a full-time firefighting model where operations are primarily staffed with full-time firefighters, while still allowing for staff augmentation from part-time and paid-on-call staff. This will also allow the City to engage with its neighbors about whether a consolidated or regional fire service model would be worth pursuing.

The Raftelis project team analyzed the implementation and cost implications associated with a regional approach and determined that there may be opportunities for cost savings should the City choose to pursue a full-time model through a regional approach rather than unilaterally standing up a full-time department. However, there are also trade-offs, such as the loss of autonomy, that must be considered. It will take extensive intergovernmental conversations to determine whether a path exists that offers mutual benefit to all communities involved.

To that end, this report offers a series of recommendations designed to enhance the current operations of the Fire Department through 24-hour station coverage, enhance paid-on-call and part-time recruitment efforts, increase efficiency and effectiveness in providing services, and create additional staff capacity in key service areas. If implemented, these recommendations will allow the City to further assess the long-term feasibility and budget implications of continuing to use the paid-on-call and part-time staffing approach and plan for future investments needed to implement a transition to a full-time or regional Department. Ultimately, the City must continue utilizing paid-on-call and part-time staff members over the next five to 10 years to sustain operations while planning for a full-time staff or seeking potential partners to form a regional Department.

To implement the recommendations, it is vital for the Department to work closely with the City Manager's Office and City Council to identify a funding and investment plan for additional staff, technology, and long-term facility improvements.

A full list of the recommendations contained in this report can be found in the following table.

Table 1: List of Report Recommendations

Number	Recommendation
Organization and Staffing	
1	Hire an experienced full-time Assistant Fire Chief to oversee operations and provide administrative support.
2	Add a minimum of two full-time firefighters to the Department over the next one to three years.
3	Utilize the scheduling of shifts to provide 24-hour station coverage and create more opportunities for paid-on-call and part-time firefighters.
4	Conduct an updated space needs analysis with a funding plan for improvements to the Fire Station in the next three to five years.
5	Hire an Administrative Assistant to support the Department.
Data Collection and Performance Measurement	
6	Enhance data collection and develop incident response performance measures.
Recruitment and Training	
7	Enhance recruitment efforts for paid-on-call and part-time staff.
8	Enhance training opportunities for full-time staff conducting inspections, code enforcement, and plan review activities.
9	Develop and maintain standard operating procedures for fire prevention and administrative functions.
Fire Prevention and Inspections	
10	Work with local industries to develop/update Fire Prevention Plans and inform HAZMAT and technical training.
11	Adjust the annual commercial inspection model to improve Department's ability to conduct inspections.
12	Review and revise the fire and alarm system-related inspection, plan review, and permit fee schedules.
Equipment and Technology	
13	Identify opportunities to utilize technology to improve operational efficiency.
14	Maintain current equipment and apparatus maintenance practices and consider starting a vehicle replacement fund for future apparatus replacement.
Alternative Service Models	
15	Pursue a full-time staffing model with consideration of regional consolidation opportunities within 10 years.

The recommendations that have financial implications for the City are summarized below. They total an estimated $516,635, not including the cost of the space needs analysis and facility improvements as these are to be determined. Please note, all estimated costs do not account for inflation or shifts in the marketplace which are expected to rise annually.

Table 2: Summary of Staffing Costs

Positions	Estimated Salary	Health Insurance Estimate	Non-Health Benefit Estimate	Estimated Total Compensation	#	Estimated Total Cost
Assistant Chief	$125,000	$21,672	$17,125	$163,797	1	$163,797
FT Firefighters	$77,667	$21,672	$10,291	$109,630	2	$219,260
Administrative Assistant	$64,376	$21,672	$9,109	$95,157	1	$95,157
Total					**4**	**$478,214**

Table 3: Summary of Additional Costs

Description	Estimated Cost	#	Estimated Total Cost
Turn Out Gear	$3,541	3	$10,623
IT/Technology	$25,000	1	$25,000
Tablets	$500	4	$2,000
Certified Fire Inspector I (CFI) Training	$399	2	$798
Space Needs Analysis			TBD
Facility Improvements			TBD
Total			**$38,421**

Introduction

Background and Methodology

The City of Hopkins engaged Raftelis to assist with a Fire Department Staffing Study. To perform this assessment, the project team was tasked with analyzing the organization and staffing structure of the Hopkins Fire Department including operational policies and procedures (such as relevant personnel rules and provisions that impact the efficient operations of the organization and delivery of fire services) as well as relevant data regarding calls for service and fire prevention activities.

The project began with a kick-off meeting with City and Department leadership to review the details and expectations of this effort. Next, the project team visited the City of Hopkins to conduct a tour of the Fire Station and the community and conduct interviews with staff members throughout the various ranks of the Department. The project fieldwork provided the project team with a better understanding of how the Department operates and the specific challenges pertaining to staff capacity, organizational structure, and service delivery.

For additional perspectives, the project team also completed interviews with the Mayor, members of the City Council, City Manager, the Assistant City Manager, Police Chief, Chief Building Official, and conducted two virtual public engagement sessions with Hopkins community members.

The Mayor and City Council recognized the strength of the Department's existing leadership, the hard-working, dedicated staff, and the long, rich history of the Department that has led to a strong bond with the community. However, they also recognized the long-range challenges facing the Department, notably the ability of the Department to recruit new staff and the impact of the growth and development in the City on the demand for fire services. Collectively, the Mayor and City Council are interested in utilizing the City's limited resources in the most cost-effective manner to pursue the best staffing model that will sustain the operations of the Department long-term, allow the City to keep pace with growth and development, and maintain a high level of service to the community.

The community members that attended the engagement sessions echoed the Mayor and Council in recognizing the leadership within the Department, the strength of the staff, and the deep connection the Department has with the community. They also pointed out that the idea of change is always a difficult topic to address, and there is a need to clearly articulate the need for change, which this effort seeks to do.

Finally, the project team reviewed and analyzed staffing data, budget/financial reports, workload and call volume data, facility and equipment information, and other applicable documentation relating to the service delivery approach for the Department. This information was compared to best practices from industry organizations as well as benchmark information from peer communities identified by the City to help inform the recommendations in this report.

About the City of Hopkins

The City of Hopkins, Minnesota, is located three miles from the City of Minneapolis border. Incorporated in 1893 as the Village of West Minneapolis, the name changed to Hopkins in 1928 to honor one of the original homesteaders, Harley H. Hopkins. Over time the village continued to grow, eventually becoming a city in 1947. Today, Hopkins' population is 19,079 per the most recent census data. The population is 62% White, 18% Black or African American, 8% Hispanic or Latino, 6% Asian, 0.1% American Indian and/or Alaskan Native, and 5% two or more races.

The City is in an era of growth, seeing nearly 8% population growth since 2010. This is expected to grow by another 10% over the next five years. Three new light rail transit stops, as part of the METRO Green Line Extension, are currently being built, which has ushered in a rush of residential and some commercial construction.

The METRO Green Line Extension, expected to be operational in 2027, is a 14.5-mile light rail line that will have 16 stations serving the cities of Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie. It will connect to the existing Green and Blue Lines at the Target Field Station in Downtown Minneapolis.

The City's land area is only 4 square miles, and while this compactness also contributes to the small-town feel and identity, it also means that future redevelopment is dense, multi-family style projects with a mix of ages.

With new multifamily development around the City and more residents aging in place, the City of Hopkins is expected to become larger, older, and more diverse over the next 20 years. 33% of residents will be over age 55 by 2037, up from 29% in 2023 and above the state average of 30%.

Hopkins Fire Department Overview

The City of Hopkins Fire Department began operations the same year the Village of West Minneapolis incorporated (1893) after a fire devastated the community, bringing awareness to the need for public fire protection services. Since then, the Department has sought to build a safer and stronger community through its commitment to innovation, science, and excellence. Additionally, the Department strives to be a leader in fire and life safety services and a model of a progressive and successful fire department.

The Department has operated with volunteer or paid-on-call firefighters throughout its history. However, in the last eight years, the City has had to rethink the staffing structure due to changes in the ability to recruit paid-on-call staff and the growth within the City limits. In 2016, the Department added two full-time firefighters to support the operations and conduct commercial business inspections. In 2018, the City then brought on a full-time Fire Marshal to oversee the fire prevention activities of the Department. From 2021 to 2022, the City transitioned rental housing inspections and Code Enforcement from the Building Inspections Divisions to the Fire Department, resulting in the addition of another full-time firefighter.

Today, the City of Hopkins Fire Department provides comprehensive fire services to the community through a combination of full-time, paid-on-call, and part-time staff. The full-time staff includes the Fire Chief, Fire Marshall, and three full-time firefighters providing daytime apparatus operations, conducting housing and commercial inspections, and performing code enforcement. Paid-on-call firefighters live within a 12-minute drive of the fire station and are compensated hourly for training and responding to calls-for-service through an on-call system or by staffing available shifts. The designated part-time firefighters are also compensated hourly for training and responding to calls for service, but live outside of the 12-minute drivetime radius and therefore are not part of the on-call system; they instead only staff available shifts.

The following table highlights the Department's core services; however, this list is not meant to be an all-inclusive summary of the Department's responsibilities.

Table 4: Department Core Services

Department Function/Division	Program Area	Activities and Service Levels
Emergency Response	Fire Suppression	• Mitigate, control, and extinguish fires
	Emergency Medical Services	• Provide urgent pre-hospital treatments
	Special Operations	• Respond to high-risk, but low-frequency emergency situations • Respond to a five-county area to support local fire departments in hazardous materials incidents (as one of 11 Chemical Assessment Teams for the State of Minnesota)
	Community Emergency Response Team	• Train a group of volunteers to assist with basic disaster response such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization and disaster medical operations
Fire Prevention	Fire Investigations	• Examine scenes of fires to determine the origin and cause
	Plan Review, Inspections, and Code Enforcement	• Examine development plans and perform property inspections to ensure applicable fire codes are met • Examine plans for new construction projects and fire protection structures and systems installations • Perform commercial inspections throughout the City annually • Perform rental property inspections throughout the City based on a points system that determines the frequency of inspections. Perform code enforcement
		•
	Planning	• Develop long-range plans related to emergency preparedness/response
Community Relations	Public Education	• Conduct community education events at local schools, as well as for businesses, homeowners, and the elderly
	Public Relations	• Participate in public events, holding open houses, and managing communication efforts, programming, and special events

STAFFING AND STRUCTURE

The Fire Chief oversees the Department's current staffing structure, which consists of four full-time firefighters, 32 paid-on-call firefighters, and four part-time firefighters. Currently, all positions in the Department are not represented by a Union.

A paid-on-call firefighter is an individual who works for the Department part-time and is compensated for training and responding to calls for service either by staffing set shifts or on an on-call basis. To be defined as a paid-on-call firefighter for the Hopkins Fire Department, these individuals must live within a 12-minute drive time of the Fire Station. These employees are eligible to participate in the Department's Relief Association which provides ancillary benefits if they meet specific response and coverage criteria throughout the year. Part-time firefighters who live outside of the 12-minute drive time can still work for the Department but are not eligible for the Relief Association or part of the on-call system. Instead, those individuals staff set shifts as defined by the Fire Chief.

The Department's organizational structure is illustrated in the figure below.

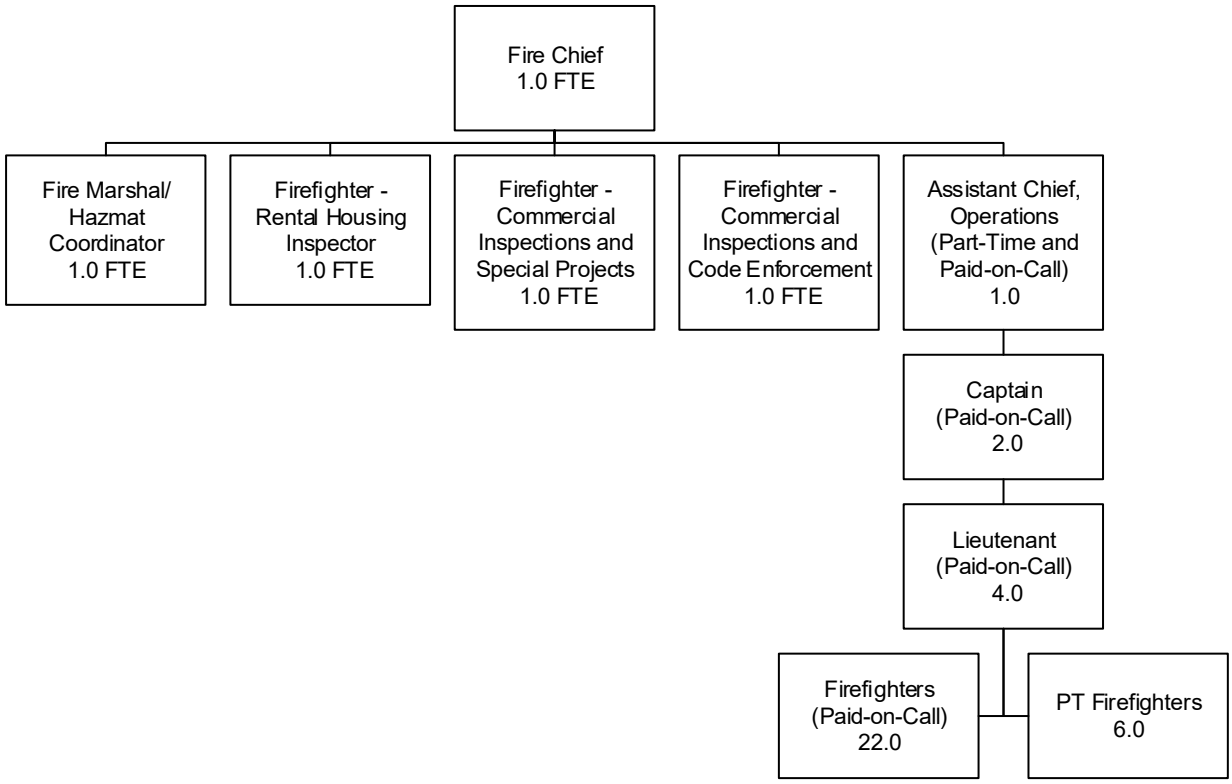

Figure 1: Department Organizational Structure, FY2023

It is worth noting that the current staffing complement of the Department has remained consistent in recent years.

The current staffing complement is as follows:

- **Fire Chief:** works varying hours between 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM Monday-Friday
- **Paid-on-call Assistant Chief of Operations**: works varying hours
- **Fire Marshal:** works 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM Monday-Friday
    - Covers the apparatus from 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM
    - Works in the Station as Fire Marshal from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
- **Full-Time Firefighter - Commercial Inspector:** works 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM Monday-Friday, covering the apparatus and performing inspections
- **Full-Time Firefighter - Commercial Inspector:** works 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday-Friday, covering the apparatus and performing inspections
- **Full Time Firefighter - Rental Housing Inspector:** works 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday-Friday
    - Performs housing inspections from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
    - Covers the apparatus from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM
- **Paid-on-call firefighters/Part-Time Firefighters:**
    - Shifts of three cover the station from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM every day
    - Shifts of three cover the station from 2:00 PM to 10:00 PM on weekends

This staffing complement means the periods between 6:00 PM and 10:00 PM on weeknights and 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM on weekends have no personnel providing station coverage. Instead, paid-on-call firefighters respond from home during these hours.

The Fire Chief and command staff share on-call responsibilities as the Duty Officer for 24/7 coverage. This ensures that a firefighter responds to every call for service. The Duty Officer has a take-home vehicle for this role. As necessary, the paid-on-call firefighters fill in for the full-time positions when needed. When a call comes in, the Duty Officer is dispatched directly to the scene to initiate the Department's response to an incident while an effective response force that includes some combination of full-time and or paid-on-call/part-time firefighters arrive separately with the apparatus.

The City requires paid-on-call firefighters to live within 12 minutes of the station, respond to 20% of "all calls," attend trainings, work as Duty Officers, and staff at least three 8-hour shifts per month. The full-time and part-time staff members do not need to meet these requirements. Full-time firefighters can cover shifts outside their regular schedule for a pay rate blended between their full-time hourly rate and the paid-on-call rate. There is no cap on the number of additional shifts the full-time firefighters can cover.

BUDGET

Between FY2019 and FY2023, the Fire Department budget has increased by an average of 2.4% over four years as shown in the following table

Table 5: Total Department Budget –FY2019 through FY2023

Expense Category	FY2019 Actual	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Actual	FY2022 Budget	FY2023 Budget	Average Annual Growth
Salaries and Wages	$560,867	$591,545	$657,576	$624,360	$661,293	4.37%
Fringe Benefits	$304,361	$372,282	$369,871	$387,675	$370,376	5.50%
Professional & Technical Services	$22,162	$13,306	$26,284	$24,900	$24,900	13.08%
Utilities and Maintenance	$129,271	$110,749	$133,361	$128,550	$129,800	0.86%
Operations	$95,861	$77,337	$139,469	$86,570	$86,670	5.80%
City Support Services	$209,188	$228,551	$250,868	$266,406	$277,592	7.35%
Supplies and Materials	$111,852	$129,136	$108,959	$81,660	$82,760	-5.97%
Equipment	$62,949	$8,710	$1,442	$16,700	$0	197.13%
Grand Total	**$1,496,511**	**$1,531,616**	**$1,687,830**	**$1,616,821**	**$1,633,391**	**2.34%**

CALLS FOR SERVICE

According to the Department's data repository, ImageTrend™, the Hopkins Fire Department responded to 1,948 calls for service in 2022. Of those 1,235 (63%) were EMS-related calls and 4% were for fires. Since 2018, the total number of calls has increased by 28%. EMS calls over that same period have increased nearly 30% and fire-related calls increased 132%. The call for service data showing the over number as well as the number of EMS and fire calls between 2018 and 2022 are shown in the figure below.

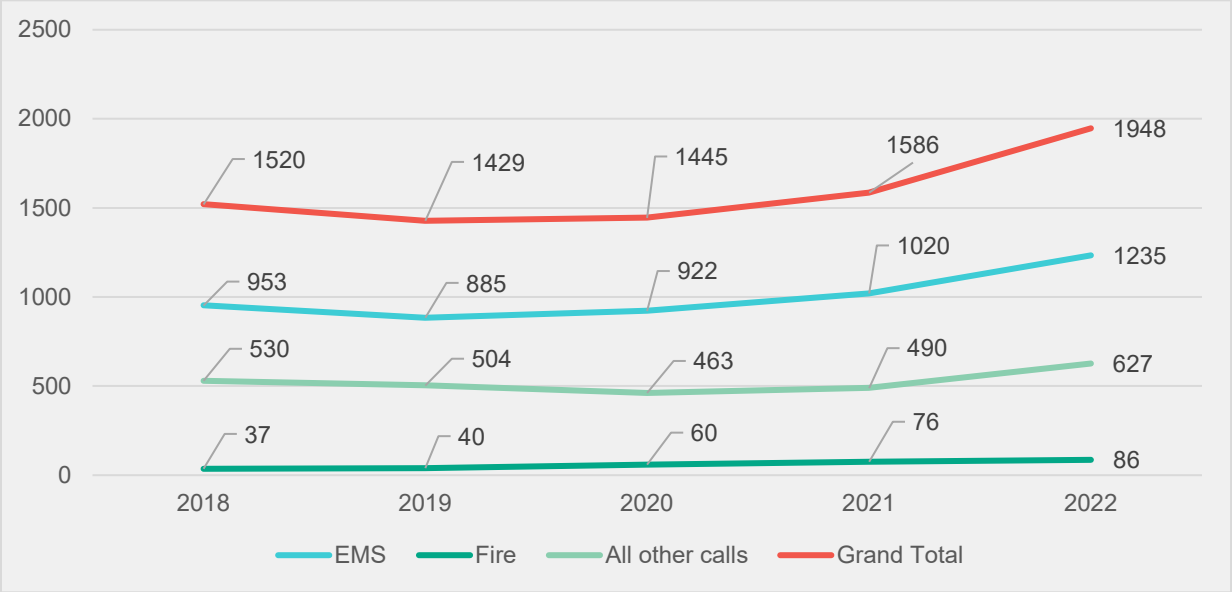

Figure 2: Fire and EMS Call Volume Trends 2018-2022

Within these call volumes, the project team identified calls to 24-hour care nursing homes with four or more persons to evaluate the impact of these properties on the overall call volume. The results are illustrated below.

Table 6: Calls to 24-hour Care Nursing Homes with Four or More Persons 2018-2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Calls	1520	1429	1445	1586	1948
24-hour care nursing homes, four or more persons	221	176	188	219	272
% of calls to 24-hour care nursing homes	**14.5%**	**12.3%**	**13.0%**	**13.8%**	**14.0%**

Between 2018 and 2022, an average of 13.5% of the total calls for service were to 24-hour care nursing homes with four or more persons. Only two of these calls over the entire five-year period were categorized as fires according to the data. The development occurring in the City limits includes additional housing for senior living and assisted care, which will likely lead to additional increases in the number of EMS and non-fire related calls in the future.

The project team further analyzed the call data to determine volumes of calls during the time and days of the week. This information is detailed in the figure below.

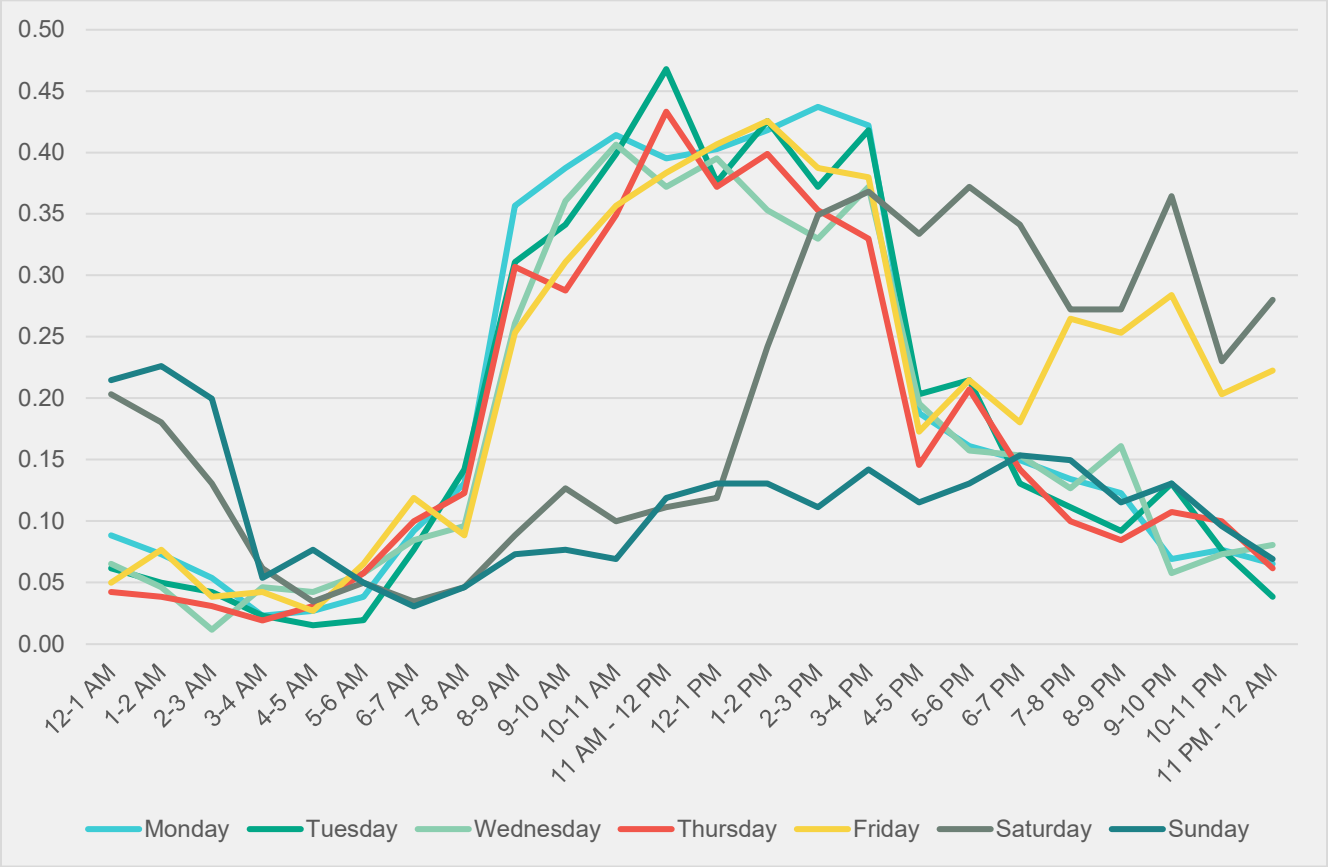

Figure 3: Average Number of Calls For Service Per Hour and Day of the Week 2018-2022

Based on the staffing information detailed previously, the periods between 6:00 PM and 10:00 PM on weeknights and 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM on weekends have no personnel providing station coverage. Instead, paid-on-call firefighters respond from home during these hours. Figure 3 shows the average number of calls for service per hour and day of the week from 2018 to 2022. According to this data, call volumes fluctuate during the periods of time without station coverage. In particular, Fridays experience higher average calls per hour compared to other days of the week during the period with no station coverage. To ensure an effective response to calls for service at all times throughout the week, the Department would benefit from a revised shift schedule to provide station coverage 24 hours a day.

RESPONSE TIMES

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), a leading non-profit organization that is committed to eliminating death, injury, property, and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards,[1] publishes codes and standards designed to minimize the possibility and effects of fires and other risks.[2] These codes and standards are widely accepted by the fire service industry as best practice guidelines.

According to the 2020 version of NFPA 1710 "Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operation to the Public by Career Fire Departments," fire departments should establish and follow the following performance objectives for first response:

[1] https://www.nfpa.org/About-NFPA
[2] https://www.nfpa.org/Codes-and-Standards/All-Codes-and-Standards/List-of-Codes-and-Standards

Table 7: Industry Benchmarks for First Response

	Fire and Special Operations Response	EMS Response
Turnout Time	1:20	1:00
Initial Response Travel Time	4:00	4:00
Total Initial Response Time	**5:20**	**5:00**

According to data supplied to the project team, the Hopkins Fire Department has historically reported response times at or within industry benchmarks, as shown in the following table.

Table 8: Department Average Response Times – 2017-2022[3]

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Minutes	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.6	5.0

However, the Department currently deploys a strategy that involves sending a Duty Officer immediately to the scene of a call in a Department-owned vehicle separate from the apparatus. The arrival of the Duty Officer on the scene was the metric captured for the Department's response time data. The historically reported response times do not reflect the arrival of the first effective firefighting force, which, according the NFPA 1710, is four firefighters. That data has not been historically tracked and reported on. Thus, this deployment model does not fulfill the performance objective stated in NFPA 1710. To meet the performance objective, a four-person effective response force would need to arrive on scene within the 5:00 benchmark time, not just the Duty Officer.

Under the current paid-on-call model, if the apparatus is staffed, it can deploy immediately to the scene either from the station or in the community (if staff is performing inspections) and meet up with the Duty Crew Officer to form an effective response force. During the periods when there is no station coverage and the Department issues an "all-call," the paid-on-call staff report from their homes first to the station to staff the apparatus and then deploy to the scene. The amount of time it takes to assemble an effective response force for the apparatus is variable as paid-on-call staff could live up to 12 minutes away from the station. Neither the average response time of a staffed apparatus nor the average time it takes for the paid-on-call staff to reach an effective response force size and arrive at the scene was historically captured by the Department. However, it is clear that the nature of the response process which requires the response of paid on call firefighters to go from their homes to the station, and then to the scene of an active incident significantly prolongs the arrival of an effective firefighting force. This, coupled with the aforementioned increase in calls for service, is a fundamental issue driving the need to create more consistent firefighting capacity housed at the Fire station.

FALSE ALARM AND FALSE CALLS

False or nuisance alarms result in the deployment of expensive equipment and staff, tying up limited emergency response personnel when a genuine emergency could occur elsewhere. Repeated false/nuisance alarm calls can undermine the occupants' confidence in their alarm system's reliability and potentially reduce their response to the alarm.

The level of false alarms and calls (7.5%) stayed relatively consistent between 2018-2022 in the City of Hopkins. The number of these types of calls is shown below

[3] Hopkins Fire Department Year End Report 2022

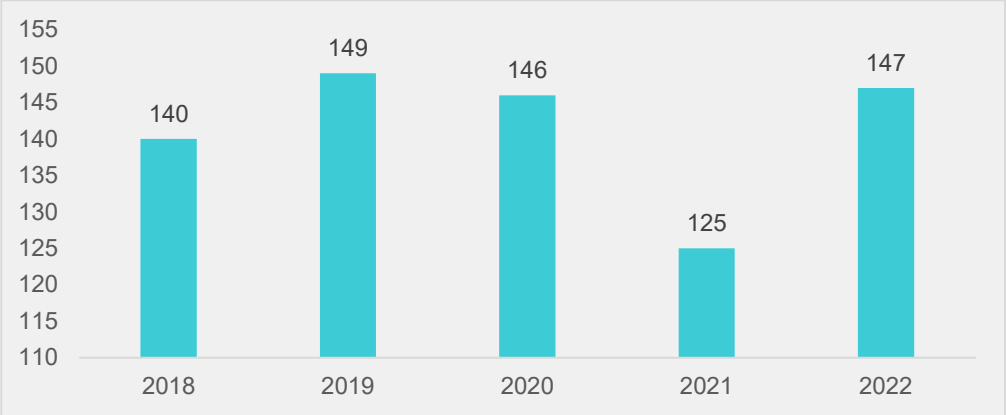

Figure 4: False Alarm and False Calls 2018-2022

AUTOMATIC AND MUTUAL AID

Mutual aid is assistance to the scene of an incident that is dispatched by request of the responding fire department. For example, if there is a large structure fire within the City of Hopkins, the Department may deem it necessary to request support from neighboring jurisdictions to mitigate and suppress the fire. In addition to receiving mutual aid, in 2010, the City of Hopkins passed a resolution, "Authorizing Dispatching and Use of Fire Department Equipment for Statewide Mutual Aid". This resolution empowers the City Manager, Fire Chief, or their designee to authorize the dispatch of Hopkins Fire Department equipment and personnel to respond to calls for service whether the incident occurs within the Hopkins Fire Department boundaries or not.[4]

Similar to mutual aid is automatic aid, which is additional support to or from another jurisdiction that is dispatched automatically to the scene of an incident based on contractual agreements between the municipalities. According to call data provided by the City, the Hopkins Fire Department has previously provided automatic aid to the City of Eden Prairie, City of Minnetonka, City of St. Louis Park, and the City of Wayzata.

The following figure illustrates the automatic, mutual, or other aid given or received by the Department from the years 2018-2022.

[4] City of Hopkins, Hennepin County, Minnesota Resolution 2010-010

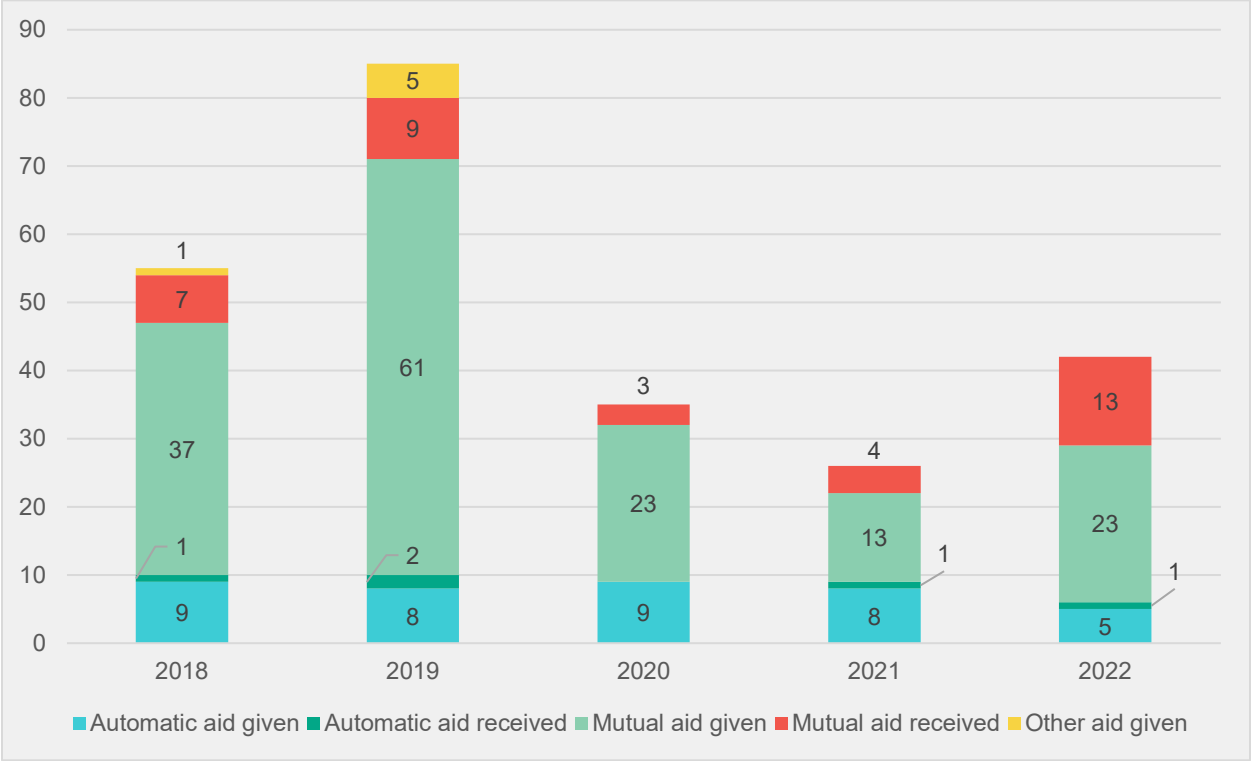

Figure 5: Automatic and Mutual Aid 2018-2022

While the overall amount of automatic and mutual aid has decreased between 2018 and 2022, the figure shows that each year, the Department provides automatic and mutual aid more often than they receive it. Within this data, the top three recipients of aid from the Hopkins Fire Department from 2018-2022 were Minnetonka (29% of aid provided), St. Louis Park (19% of aid provided), and Eden Prairie (13% of aid provided).

FIRE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Fire prevention responsibilities for the City of Hopkins Fire Department are performed by the Fire Marshal and three full-time firefighters. The estimated allocation of responsibilities by position is illustrated in the table below:

Table 9: Staff Allocation of Fire Prevention Duties

Position	Estimated Current Allocation
Fire Marshall	50% Fire Apparatus 50% Fire Inspections & Plan Review
Firefighter- Rental Housing Inspector	50% Fire Apparatus 50% Rental Inspections & Code Enforcement for Rental Properties
Firefighter – Commercial Inspector & Special Projects	85% Fire Apparatus 10% Commercial Inspections 5% Call Entry Process Improvement
Firefighter – Commercial Inspector & Code Enforcement	85% Fire Apparatus 8% Commercial Inspections 5% Housing (non-rental) Code Enforcement 2% Recruitment

Fire Marshal

The Fire Marshal is responsible for conducting investigations of fire scenes to determine the origin and cause of a fire. Additionally, they are involved in plan review activities related to building permits throughout the City. The Fire Marshal's role in plan review includes checking fire protection structures and systems for code compliance and checking egress in coordination with the Building Department.

The total number of building permits issued in 2022 throughout the City was 455. While the total number of building permits issued each year has fluctuated between 2017 and 2022, the value of the building permits has significantly increased, indicating that the projects associated with the building permits have become larger, more complex, and therefore require a significant increase in time in terms of the review of plans associated with these permits. The volume and size of building projects in the City of Hopkins are not likely to decrease in the future due to the continued growth the City is experiencing connected to the Green Line extension currently underway. The number and value of building permits in the City of Hopkins from 2017 to 2022 are shown in the table below.

Table 10: Building Permits 2017-2022[5]

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Building Permits	485	405	506	636	707	455
Value of Building Permits	$19,553,988	$27,785,861	$45,193,752	$21,124,485	$38,156,628	$137,019,951

In addition to fire investigations and plan review, the Fire Marshal is also responsible for overseeing the Department's hazmat team, community education program, grant writing activities, fire prevention planning, and assisting with residential and commercial business inspections as needed.

Full-time Firefighter and Rental Housing Inspector

The City of Hopkins has over 6,000 rental units, representing approximately 67% of all the housing units in the City. In October 2021, the Department took over responsibility for inspecting these properties, including:

- All apartment complexes
- Rented single-family homes
- Condominiums
- Townhomes
- Double bungalows
- Rooming units
- Owner-occupied double bungalows

Since taking over the rental inspections, the Department has performed 350 housing inspections and 150 rental code enforcement inspections.

To help identify substandard properties and to determine the frequency a rental property needs to be reinspected, the City utilizes a point system. The firefighter performing an inspection will assign a property deficiency points for each violation found during an initial inspection. Following the initial inspection, the firefighter issues a report with the violations, the code sections, the total number of points assigned, and the category the property falls into based on the points. The categories are as follows:

[5] City of Hopkins, Minnesota Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for year ended December 31, 2022

- Category A: Category A properties have a deficiency score of four or fewer points. These properties are to be inspected on a three-year cycle.
- Category B: Category B properties have a deficiency score of five to 10 points. These properties are inspected on a two-year cycle.
- Category C: Category C properties have a deficiency score of 11 or more points. These properties are inspected on a one-year cycle.

According to the City's website, approximately 30 days prior to the rental inspection, property owners and/or management companies will be contacted by the City of Hopkins to schedule an inspection time. The Fire Department will send out the Rental Inspection Deficiency Point System overview, along with a list of the most common repair orders. This information is designed to let property owners, management companies, and tenants prepare and ultimately pass the initial inspection.

The full-time firefighter assigned to rental housing inspections also oversees the Department's property maintenance code enforcement activities. This work involves:

- Coordinating with the Zoning staff
- Inspecting properties for code violations
- Sending out code violation notices with photos of the violation
- Issuing citations
- Attending Board of Zoning Appeals meetings as needed

According to information provided by the Department, there are approximately 100 code enforcement inspections done annually.

Full-time Firefighters and Commercial Business Inspectors

The Department performs approximately 450 commercial property inspections annually throughout the City. Unlike the rental housing inspections, the Department does not have a system to determine how often commercial businesses in the City should be inspected; therefore, each is inspected annually.

Commercial business inspections can be difficult to schedule and can often be interrupted when the Department receives a call for service. According to information provided by the Department, roughly one-third of commercial businesses must be reinspected to complete properly.

Records of both the residential and commercial business inspections are done using a paper-based system. This paper-based system makes referencing past inspection information difficult and can add to the time spent on each inspection.

In addition to the fire prevention activities, each firefighter, including the Fire Marshal, provides apparatus coverage for 50% of each shift. There can be an overlap between apparatus coverage and the performance of these activities. For example, firefighters can take the apparatus to properties being inspected. This practice allows firefighters to maintain effective response times while performing fire prevention activities.

Peer Benchmark Research

Benchmarking is the practice of collecting and comparing information from various sources to provide context for how other organizations operate and provide services to the community. To help inform the service level recommendations included in this report, the project team conducted peer benchmarking regarding core fire service operations within four nearby municipalities the City identified.

The following table shows the benchmark communities as well as the population and land area of each.

Table 11: Benchmark Fire Departments

c	Population[6]	Land Area[7]	Fire Budget (2022)	$ Per Person	$ Per Square Mile
Hopkins	19,110	4.06	$1,633,390	$85.47	$402,313
St. Anthony	9,274	2.24	$1,247,056	$134.47	$556,721
Minnetonka	53,962	26.91	$5,293,200	$98.09	$196,700
St. Louis Park	50,016	10.63	$5,364,179	$107.25	$504,626
South Metro[8]	41,371	10.54	$6,931,947	$167.56	$657,680

Staffing and Structure

Each peer community approaches fire service delivery differently. The following table shows the overall staffing, budget, and the number of stations for each benchmark community.

Table 12: Staffing[9]

Department	FTEs	PT/On-call FF	# of Stations	Average Response Time in Minutes
Hopkins	5	36	1	5:00
St. Anthony	7	24	1	2:56
Minnetonka	21	80	5[10]	8:06
St. Louis Park	33	-	2	4:30
South Metro	40.5	-	2	8:30

As the chart indicates, each of the peer departments currently utilizes one of the three alternative service models the project team assessed for the purposes of this report. St. Anthony and Minnetonka continue to use paid-on-call firefighters in their models. St. Louis Park has an all-full-time staffed department and South Metro is a consolidated regional department covering the cities of South St. Paul and West St. Paul.

Additional details regarding the operations of each peer community are as follows.

[6] US Census QuickFacts
[7] US Census QuickFacts
[8] South Metro's budget figure includes costs for Emergency Medical Services
[9] Information found in publicly available budgets and financial reports from each municipality and the South Metro Fire Department Board Meeting Packets
[10] According to the Minnetonka Fire Department website, only one of the five stations is staffed; the others are used by on-call staff

St. Anthony (Village) Fire Department

St. Anthony Village is home to more than 9,000 residents and is situated approximately five miles to the northeast of Minneapolis. The population grew 12.5% between 2010 and 2020 according to the latest census data. St. Anthony is roughly half the size of the City of Hopkins in terms of land area, covering 2.24 square miles.

Like the City of Hopkins, the St. Anthony Fire Department combines paid on-call and full-time staff and operates out of one station. To provide immediate response 24 hours a day, the department has seven full-time personnel and utilizes its paid on-call in support.

Table 13: St. Anthony Staffing Approach

Description	Staffing
Command	• Fire Chief (full-time) • Training Officer/Captain 1 (part-time) • Assistant Training Officer/Captain 2 (part-time)
Fire Prevention	• Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshall (full-time) • Housing Code Inspector (part-time) • Rental Code Inspector (part-time)
Emergency Response	• (5) Full-time Firefighters • (20) Part-time or paid-on-call Firefighters

St. Anthony's approach, in particular, offers a glimpse into what a modified paid-on-call staffing approach could look like for the City of Hopkins, as they operate from a single station just as the Hopkins Department does. From that station, St. Anthony deploys a combination of paid-on-call and full-time staff to provide 24-hour effective response coverage. In Hopkins, the full-time staff currently split their time between emergency response and fire prevention activities. With the addition of some additional full-time support, and a strategy to deploy the full-time and full-time resources through shifts, Hopkins could also provide 24-hour station coverage with an effective response force while ensuring all other responsibilities of the Department have adequate resources dedicated to them.

Minnetonka Fire Department

Minnetonka is located approximately eight miles west of Minneapolis and is home to more than 53,000 residents. The population grew over 8% between 2010 and 2020 according to the most recent Census data. Minnetonka is the largest of the benchmark communities both in terms of population and land area. Minnetonka spans approximately 27 square miles. According to Minnetonka's website, there are several active development projects, including large multifamily housing, senior living, commercial businesses, and a hotel.

The Minnetonka Fire Department has 21 full-time and approximately 80 paid-on-call staff. The department also manages five stations, although they only actively staff one of them, with the other four being used by paid-on-call as needed.

Table 14: Minnetonka Staffing Approach

Description	Staffing
Command	• Fire Chief • Deputy Chief, Operations • Assistant Fire Chief, Administration and Emergency Management • Battalion Chief, Training Division • Fire Department Administrative Coordinator
Fire Prevention	• Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal • Deputy Fire Marshal
Emergency Response	• (13) Full-time Firefighters

Description	Staffing
	• (80) Paid-on-call Firefighters

St. Louis Park Fire Department

The City of St. Louis Park shares a border with the City of Hopkins and is located approximately five miles to the west of Minneapolis. St. Louis Park is home to over 50,000 residents within a 10.6 square mile area. The population of St. Louis Park grew over 10.5% since 2010 according to the latest census data. St. Louis Park has several approved development projects underway including mixed-use, multifamily, and commercial projects[11]. Overall, St. Louis Park features a wide variety of retail, hotels, restaurants, and attractions.[12]

The City of St. Louis Park's Fire Department is an all-full-time department and is described in the table below.

Table 15: St. Louis Park Staffing Approach

Description	Staffing
Command	• Fire Chief • Deputy Fire Chief of Operations • Assistant Chief of Training and EMS
Fire Prevention	• Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention (serves as Fire Marshal) • (2) Lieutenants • (3) Fire Prevention Specialists
Emergency Response	• (24) Firefighters assigned to one of three 24-hour shifts

The St. Louis Park staffing approach offers a glimpse into what a full-time operation in the City of Hopkins could be modeled after. St. Louis Park assigns their full-time firefighters on of three 24-hour shifts to provide 24-hour station coverage with an effective response force. The City of Hopkins could add full-time resources and make station improvements over the next several years to ultimately transition the Department from the current paid-on-call model to a full-time model.

South Metro Fire Department

The South Metro Fire Department is an all-full-time staffed consolidated department that provides fire prevention and emergency response services to South St. Paul and West St. Paul. Combined, South St. Paul and West St. Paul make up an area that is 10.5 square miles and has a population of approximately 41,000. The population grew 4.2% between 2010 and 2020 according to the latest Census data. The staffing structure of the South Metro Fire Department is displayed in the table below.

Table 16: South Metro Staffing Approach

Description	Staffing
Command	• Fire Chief • Executive Assistant • Secretary (0.5 FTE) • Chief of Operations • Training Officer
Fire Prevention	• Fire Marshal • (2) Fire Inspectors

[11] https://www.stlouisparkmn.gov/government/departments-divisions/community-development/development-projects
[12] https://discoverstlouispark.com/about-st-louis-park/

Description	Staffing
Emergency Response	• (33) Firefighters assigned to one of three 24-hour shifts

The South Metro Fire Department provides an example of what a consolidated regional department could look like if the City of Hopkins and another nearby jurisdiction combined services.

The detailed staffing tables indicate that each peer community has more administrative and operations support than the Hopkins Fire Department in both leadership roles and support roles. For example, St. Anthony's model has the full-time Fire Marshall also serving as the Assistant Fire Chief. In Hopkins, the Fire Marshal, instead of supporting operations, staffs the apparatus for a portion of their shift. Minnetonka has a Deputy Chief of Operations, Assistant Fire Chief, Administration and Emergency Management, and Administrative Coordinator, and the Fire Marshal also serves as an Assistant Chief. Finally, St. Louis Park has a Deputy Fire Chief of Operations. South Metro has a Chief of Operations, Executive Assistant, and a part-time Secretary.

While the staffing level information and details regarding how fire services are handled in each peer community provide a useful comparison to the operations in the City of Hopkins, it is important to acknowledge that each peer community has different attributes and faces different challenges despite working in a similar operating environment. For example, the City of Hopkins has a significantly higher percentage of rental housing (67%)[13] than owner-occupied housing, which is unique compared to neighboring jurisdictions. The analysis and recommendations in this report were informed by the comparisons to peer communities but are primarily based on interviews, analysis, research, and industry best practices relevant to the City of Hopkins' specific operational needs.

[13] US Census QuickFacts

Analysis and Recommendations

The City of Hopkins Fire Department is well-managed and has a strong "family-like" culture. The strong organizational culture and leadership set a solid foundation by which the Department can build and strengthen its service delivery to the community. There is pride throughout the Department, City staff, City Council, and the community in the Fire Department's history, reputation, and service levels. However, there are a number of challenges associated with the Department's paid-on-call service delivery model.

These include the ability to provide 24-hour station coverage and adequate response times to calls for service with an effective response force. Though the City is typically able to dispatch the scheduled Duty Officer[14] on scene within five minutes, it typically takes longer for an effective firefighting force of four firefighters to respond. This is because paid-on-call firefighters must first respond to the fire station to equip themselves and then respond to the fire. Though actual response time data was not available to determine the average time for key response milestones outside of the initial on-scene response by the individual Duty Officer, the nature of the response protocol discussed above demonstrates the challenge.

The overarching goal is to have the apparatus staffed 24 hours per day every day of the year, with a minimum of three firefighters whether full-time, part-time, or paid-on-call, plus the duty officer. The combination of three firefighters and the duty officer gives the Department the best opportunity to improve response times with an effective level of responders and establish a two-in two-out objective. The two-in/two-out objective is a provision that calls for at least two firefighters to enter an emergency and always remain in visual or voice contact with each other. A minimum of two firefighters remain outside and can facilitate the rescue of the entry team if necessary. This practice is cited as a best practice in the NFPA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

Additionally, the growth and development patterns in the City have increased departmental workload for critical fire prevention activities such as inspections, development plan review, and code enforcement. Finally, the paid-on-call model, which relies on the sense of volunteerism in the community, is no longer sustainable in the long-term. It is becoming difficult to attract the level of volunteerism required to maintain the paid-on-call service model. This is a trend that is evident in Hopkins and across the country. While previous direct outreach to community members has brought in several exceptionally talented individuals in paid-on-call roles, it has become more difficult for the City to successfully recruit volunteers within the residential 12-minute drivetime radius required to serve as a paid-on-call firefighter.

To address these issues, it is appropriate to consider adjustments to the current operating model. There are four primary alternatives available. These include optimizing the current paid-on-call model, transitioning to a full-time model, and/or partnering with neighboring jurisdictions on a regional or shared-service model, or creating a public safety officer model where other City employees outside of the Fire Department support emergency response.

Though each of these alternatives is analyzed individually, it is important to emphasize that there is not a current need in Hopkins to immediately transition to a much more expensive full-time service-delivery model. Rather, there are opportunities to make targeted investments in resources and processes to optimize the paid-on-call model while providing capacity to thoroughly plan and implement service model changes over the next 10 years that move toward

[14] Duty officer refers to an individual firefighter who is on-call as the initial responder to emergency indents.

the full-time coverage. Further, each of these alternatives are not stand-alone. There may be opportunities to blend multiple operating models.

Paid-on-Call Service Model Optimization

The first alternative to consider is whether the paid-on-call model can be optimized to adequately address the current challenges facing the Department. Before identifying the implications of this approach, it will be helpful to consider the general challenges associated with the current operating model.

First, and most important, the current model does not provide 24-hour station coverage seven days a week. There is no station coverage from 6:00 PM and 10:00 PM on weeknights and 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM on weekends. Instead, the Department relies on paid-on-call staff to respond to calls during these times. While the Department has previously reported average response times that meet industry standards (five minutes), they are responding in a manner that reflects the arrival of the first individual firefighter (a Duty Officer) who is not on the apparatus but instead responding from home in a take-home vehicle. To meet industry standards, the response time would need to reflect the first effective responding force, which, according to NFPA 1710, is four firefighters. With 24-hour coverage with a minimum of three firefighters plus the Duty Officer, the Department would be better positioned to meet the industry standards for effective response 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Relying on paid-on-call staff reporting from their homes cannot meet this standard, as paid-on-call firefighters may live up to 12 minutes from the Hopkins Fire Station, and, prior to responding to the incident location, they first report to the station to assemble the effective response force on the apparatus. Furthermore, using paid-on-call firefighters within the current staffing model requires the Department to maintain a pool of willing community members available to respond to calls and staff available shifts. Recruitment for these positions has become more difficult over time due, in part, to a decline in volunteerism. The Department, in turn, has created part-time positions that can be people who live outside of the 12-minute radius. However, these firefighters are only able to staff shifts and cannot respond to "all-calls" due to living outside of the 12-minute boundary.

In addition to these response challenges, the Fire Chief has limited leadership and administrative support to manage operations, oversee work planning, perform special projects, and track and report on core fire service performance metrics. As the community grows and fire service workload increases, there will be need to create more executive level capacity for the Fire Chief position. There is also a need to improve the Department's ability to balance fire prevention activities with incident response. The Fire Marshal and current full-time firefighters have dual roles for the Department wherein they staff the apparatus and perform fire prevention-related work. Balancing these responsibilities can lead to a greater need for re-inspections based on interruptions from service calls, inconsistent reporting, and a lack of capacity to pursue training that would enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform fire prevention-related tasks.

Through optimization, these challenges would be addressed by:

- Adding additional leadership support to the Department to manage operations, oversee work planning, and perform special projects.
- Adding a limited number of full-time firefighters to create greater response capacity from the fire station and enabling the Department to deploy a 24-hour shift schedule to eliminate periods without station coverage.
- Adding administrative staff support to enhance reporting and data collection capabilities.
- Realignment of the staff performing fire prevention services
- Modifying the current inspection models to allow for a better balance of fire prevention responsibilities and capacity for staff to pursue fire prevention training.

- Enhancing the Department's use of technology and software to help improve the efficiency of operations within the Department.

The following summarizes the staffing required to optimize the current model:

- Transition from the paid-on-call Assistant Fire Chief to a full-time Assistant Fire Chief to provide the necessary daily operations, supervision, and special project support.
- The addition of a minimum of two full-time firefighters to allow for a modified shift schedule that would provide 24-hour station coverage.
- The hiring of an Administrative Assistant to support the operation and facilitate coordination with the City's internal service departments such as Information Technology, Human Resources, Finance, and more. This position could also assist the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief with recruitment efforts, purchasing equipment and technology, annual budgeting, internal and external communications, documentation, reporting, and more.

Furthermore, the Fire Marshal, as the lead fire prevention specialist for the City, should no longer be regularly responding to calls for service and serve the Hopkins community full time as the Fire Marshal. The Fire Marshal should maintain their training as a firefighter to provide aid for major incidents and during busy times, but their primary focus should be on conducting commercial inspections and supervising the fire prevention program. The Fire Marshal would be supported by a full-time firefighter who would perform rental housing inspections and assist with some smaller commercial inspections. The other two full-time firefighters that currently assist with fire prevention responsibilities can continue to do so as needed through company-based fire inspections, but their primary focus would be on incident response. Company-based fire inspections utilize on-duty firefighters assigned to incident response to perform inspections. The firefighters staff the apparatus while conducting the inspections allowing them to immediately respond to calls for service id necessary. This approach is currently utilized by the Hopkins Fire Department and can continue to be done in a support capacity through the optimized paid-on-call model. The Fire Marshal would be responsible for supervising any fire prevention activities the full-time firefighters perform, however, these two full-time firefighters would report up through Assistant Fire Chief.

The new proposed organizational chart under this model is shown in the figure below. The positions that are colored blue represent new full-time positions within the organizational structure and the orange represents the positions realigned within this structure.

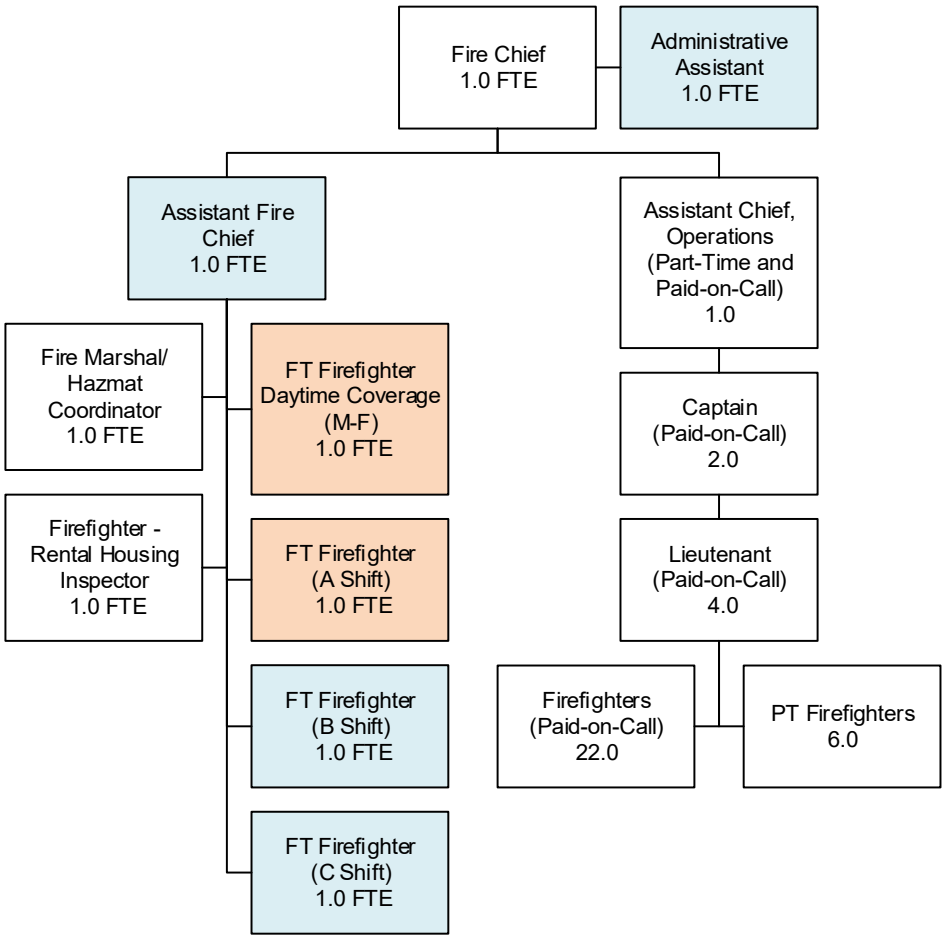

Figure 6: Optimized Paid-On-Call Model Organizational Structure

The following chart further illustrates the estimated reallocation of responsibilities by position under this model:

Table 17: Proposed Reallocation of Responsibilities by Position

Position	Estimated Hours Proposed
Fire Marshal	100% Fire Inspections & Plan Review (take over majority of commercial inspections for all the medium to larger sites)
Firefighter- Rental Housing Inspector	75% Rental Inspections & Code Enforcement 25% commercial inspections (minor businesses)
Firefighter – FT Daytime Coverage	85% Fire Apparatus 5% Code Enforcement & Inspections Back-up 5% Fire Prevention 5% Special Project Support
Firefighter – Shifts	90% Fire Apparatus 5% Inspections & Code Enforcement Back-up 5% Fire Prevention

The full-time Assistant Fire Chief would work a standard 40-hour work week consisting of eight-hour shifts Monday through Friday. The full-time firefighters would be deployed by the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief in the most effective manner through an optimized shift schedule to achieve 24-hour station coverage. Each of those shifts would

then be supported through smaller sets of shifts staffed by part-time or paid-on-call staff. The use of shifts would add regularity to the schedule for the paid-on-call and part-time staff and reduce their need to respond to "all calls" since the Department would maintain minimum staffing on the apparatus. It would also eliminate the periods that currently have no personnel providing station coverage.

An example of what this shift schedule could look like on a given day is shown in the following table with color coding to represent different staff being on-duty for set periods of time. However actual lengths shifts will be determined by the Fire Chief and the Assistant Fire Chief.

Table 18: Sample 24-hour Station Coverage Shift Schedule

	Full-time FF Shifts	Full-time FF - Daytime Coverage	Paid On-Call/Part-time Shifts
Hour 1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Hour 2	1.0	1.0	1.0
Hour 3	1.0	1.0	1.0
Hour 4	1.0	1.0	1.0
Hour 5	1.0	1.0	1.0
Hour 6	1.0	1.0	1.0
Hour 7	1.0	1.0	1.0
Hour 8	1.0	1.0	1.0
Hour 9	1.0		2.0
Hour 10	1.0		2.0
Hour 11	1.0		2.0
Hour 12	1.0		2.0
Hour 13	1.0		2.0
Hour 14	1.0		2.0
Hour 15	1.0		2.0
Hour 16	1.0		2.0
Hour 17	1.0		2.0
Hour 18	1.0		2.0
Hour 19	1.0		2.0
Hour 20	1.0		2.0
Hour 21	1.0		2.0
Hour 22	1.0		2.0
Hour 23	1.0		2.0
Hour 24	1.0		2.0

The combination of staffing would provide full 24-hour station coverage with three firefighters to operate the apparatus. This coverage level ensures an adequate initial response to calls for service from the station. Additionally, the Department can maintain its Duty Officer response under this model to establish the two-in/two-out objective.

Employing an optimized shift model to utilize the new full-time staff would require the Department to work with the Relief Association to develop new paid-on-call policies regarding all-call response levels and the percentage of shifts they agree to staff on a monthly/quarterly basis. Additionally, the Department would be able to either maintain its current level of paid-on-call staff to have a larger pool from which to staff shifts, or through attrition allow the

pool of paid-on-call to be reduced before needing to recruit a new class from the Hopkins community. In the event the Department needs to recruit additional paid-on-call or part-time staff, the Department will need to perform direct outreach and a sustained marketing campaign to attract willing community members to apply for available positions to combat the reduction of volunteerism and promote the benefits of serving the community in the fire service.

In addition to salary and benefits for each new position, the new full-time firefighters and Assistant Fire Chief would need to be outfitted with appropriate turnout gear, and the personal protective equipment used by firefighters. This gear should be custom fit to each firefighter for proper function and safety. The Department currently utilizes a lease purchase agreement with Republic First National Corporation wherein the Department paid $123,941 for 35 sets of turnout gear or approximately $3,541 per set. Based on this calculation, the total for three additional sets would be approximately $10,623.

Optimizing the current model would also involve adjusting the commercial inspection model utilized by the Department. Currently, rental property inspections are performed based on a points system which determines how often a property is to be inspected. On the other hand, commercial inspections are done on all commercial properties annually. Instead, the Department should adjust the commercial model to use specific parameters such as occupancy types to determine the inspection frequency, like the way the points system is used for rental inspections. For example, occupancies used for assembly, education, manufacturing, hazardous materials, and institutional (hospitals, nursing homes, etc.) should continue to be inspected on an annual basis, but properties used for retail (such as clothing stores), general office space, and low hazard storage and manufacturing may be inspected every other year or at another interval.

To further support the fire prevention program, the Fire Marshal and Full-time Firefighter – Rental Inspector, as well as any other staff identified by the Fire Chief or Assistant Fire Chief, could pursue training to hone their knowledge, skills, and abilities regarding fire prevention, such as the NFPA's certification program to become a Certified Fire Inspector I (CFI) or an International Code Council (ICC) Certified Fire Inspector I. The goals of NFPA program are to[15]:

- Recognize and provide evidence of competence as related to NFPA 1031, Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner.
- Enhance professionalism.
- Ensure proficiency in the use of codes and standards.
- Promote professional development.
- Ensure a uniform, fair process for certification that is accessible to everyone.

The cost of the NFPA CFI program is $399 for the initial application and exam.

The ICC Certified Fire Inspector I program prepares professionals to:

- To evaluate compliance with means of egress and fire protection requirements
- Identify deficiencies
- Identify life safety and fire issues such as interior finish, occupancy type, height and area limitations, construction type, and general fire safety
- Determine the operational readiness of existing fire protection systems

[15] https://www.nfpa.org/Training-and-Events/Certification/Certification/Certified-Fire-Inspector-I

The ICC Certified Fire Inspector I exam and digital reference materials cost $493.55.

Finally, the Department would need to make technological enhancements such as acquiring a minimum of four tablets to help perform inspections in the field and enhance fire prevention planning, inspections, and reporting capabilities through the current ImageTrend™ system. Costs for mobile devices can vary depending on the device or vendor; however, costs per device are estimated to be approximately $500 each ($2,000 total). The Department would need to work with the City's Information Technology Department to identify actual costs per device through vendor contracts and incorporate those devices into existing equipment replacement polices. According to staff, to upgrade ImageTrend™, the upfront cost is estimated to be approximately $25,000, but the annual service fee to the vendor could also be impacted. The Department would need to work with the vendor to better understand the costs on the desired scope of services. The Department could also seek alternatives to ImageTrend™, such as First Due™ or another equivalent program, that would provide comprehensive functionality for reporting, inspection, fire prevention planning, and more which ultimately could lead to overall savings or reduce additional expenses associated with the software enhancement. Furthermore, to ensure the new technology is deployed and used appropriately, the Department must ensure adequate staff training. The vendor should provide this training as a part of the service contract. If not, the Department will need to work identify appropriate training courses for staff at a cost to be determined.

The total estimated cost to optimize the current model is $516,635, A summary of costs associated with optimizing the current staffing model is in the tables below. Please note, all estimated costs do not account for inflation or shifts in the marketplace.

Table 19: Estimated Staffing Costs

Positions	Estimated Salary	Health Insurance Estimate	Non-Health Benefit Estimate	Estimated Total Compensation	#	Estimated Total Cost
Assistant Chief	$125,000	$21,672	$17,125	$163,797	1	$163,797
FT Firefighters	$77,667	$21,672	$10,291	$109,630	2	$219,260
Administrative Assistant	$64,376	$21,672	$9,109	$95,157	1	$95,157
Total					**4**	**$478,214**

Table 20: Estimated Additional Costs

Description	Estimated Cost	#	Estimated Total Cost
Turn Out Gear	$3,541	3	$10,623
IT/Technology	$25,000	1	$25,000
Tablets	$500	4	$2,000
Certified Fire Inspector I (CFI) Training	$399	2	$798
Total			**$38,421**

The recommendations detailed below outline the most effective approach to optimize the paid-on-call operating model. The recommendations are organized under the following categories.:

- Organization and Staffing
- Data Collection and Performance Measurement
- Recruitment and Training

- Fire Prevention and Inspections
- Technology

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

Recommendation 1: Hire an experienced full-time Assistant Fire Chief to oversee operations and provide administrative support.

The full-time command staff within the Hopkins Fire Department includes the Fire Chief and the Fire Marshal. The Fire Chief oversees the operations while the Fire Marshal is responsible for managing the fire prevention activities and staffing the apparatus for a portion of each shift. Assisting the full-time command staff is a paid-on-call Assistant Chief of Operations.

This structure has historically been effective but is not sustainable moving forward. The development occurring throughout the City has increased the amount of fire prevention activities needed such as plan review, fire prevention planning, code enforcement, and inspections. Furthermore, the addition of any new full-time staff will require increased supervision and work planning efforts. With the Fire Chief as the sole full-time position overseeing the operations, the Department does not have enough capacity to pursue any special administrative projects, there are no career advancement opportunities with broad administrative and operational responsibilities, and there is no succession plan for the Fire Chief.

This position would take on some of the workload demand being placed on the Fire Chief and be dedicated to tasks to be assigned by the Fire Chief, which may include:

- Work/shift planning for deploying full-time and paid-on-call staff to provide 24-hour coverage from the station
- Supervision of full-time firefighters
- Review of internal Department processes for improvement and standardization
- Recruitment and marketing activities
- Programming community events
- Equipment and gear procurement, maintenance, and replacements
- Pursuit of grant opportunities

Having the Assistant Fire Chief position as full-time would enable the Fire Chief to be more strategic and focus on long-term initiatives that may come with the pursuit of an alternative service delivery model such as planning for the implementation of any process improvements, budgeting for new positions the Department may add or for capital expenses related to potential facility improvements, and documenting processes and information to codify their institutional knowledge to assist with training and succession planning.

To create additional leadership capacity, operations support, and open a career advancement opportunity, the Department should hire a full-time Assistant Fire Chief. The selected candidate for the full-time role should be experienced and knowledgeable in fire department operations. While an estimated salary figure was previously discussed in this report, the salary for this position is estimated to be approximately $125,000, but ultimately should be determined by the City Human Resources Department and Department leadership based on the City's salary structure, employer taxes, employee retirement contributions, and health insurance/other benefits. While the creation of this position does require some investment, it will improve the overall leadership capacity of the Department, focus attention on special administrative projects, and create a key career advancement opportunity.

The new Assistant Fire Chief would also need to be outfitted with appropriate turnout gear. This gear should be custom fit for proper function and safety. The estimated cost to outfit the Assistant Chief would be approximately $3,541 based on the Department's existing lease purchase contract with Republic First National Corporation.

Recommendation 2: Add a minimum of two full-time firefighters to the Department over the next one to three years.

To optimize the current paid-on-call model effectively, the Hopkins Fire Department would benefit from adding a minimum of two full-time firefighters dedicated to fire suppression and incident response. Under the current model, the Department uses a combination of the Fire Mashal, full-time firefighters who also perform fire prevention activities, and paid-on-call/part-time staff to respond to calls for service. This model is not sustainable due to the growing emphasis on fire prevention activities such as inspections, plan review, and code enforcement tied to the growth and development occurring in the City and the increased difficulty in recruiting willing community members to fill paid-on-call and part-time positions.

Adding two additional full-time firefighters would alleviate the need for the Fire Marshal to staff the apparatus and allow them to focus on the strategic development of the Department's fire prevention function. It would also increase the Department's capacity for fire prevention, plan review, and code enforcement by providing staff that can respond to calls for service while inspectors are in the field performing those duties, thus reducing the need for re-inspections based on interruptions. Finally, the additional resources would allow the Fire Marshall and Full-time Firefighter - Rental Housing Inspector to seek additional training to hone their knowledge and skills regarding fire prevention, such as pursuing Certified Fire Inspector I (CFI) Training.

The new full-time firefighters would also provide staffing flexibility to enable the Department to deploy a shift schedule that would provide the City with 24-hour station coverage supplemented by the existing pool of paid-on-call and part-time staff (see Recommendation 3). Furthermore, the new full-time positions would help the Department build an organizational structure with career advancement opportunities and succession planning.

As the City continues to evaluate the long term viability of alternative staffing models for the Fire Department, the addition of two full-time firefighters can serve as a litmus test for the Department to continue evaluating the potential of shifting to a full-time staffing model or pursuing a regional Department. It further enables the Department to improve current operations while conducting an updated space needs assessment of the facility to define the total cost of improvements needed to house a larger full-time staffing complement, developing a capital funding plan, and, if pursued, making those facility improvements.

The Department should either work with the City's Finance Director to identify the budget resources to add these positions all in the next budget cycle or seek to spread the costs by budgeting for one position per year for the next three years. As detailed previously, the estimated total compensation package for each firefighter is estimated to be approximately $109,630 inclusive of salary ($77,667), health insurance ($21,672), and non-health benefits ($10,291). The total estimated cost to add two full-time firefighters is $219,260. The new full-time firefighters would also need to be outfitted with appropriate turnout gear. This gear should be custom fit to each firefighter for proper function and safety. The estimated cost for two additional sets would be approximately $7,082 based on the Department's existing lease purchase contract with Republic First National Corporation.

While adding these positions requires investment, it will improve the Department's ability to perform fire prevention activities and deploy staff to provide 24-hour station coverage.

Recommendation 3: Utilize the scheduling of shifts to provide 24-hour station coverage and create more opportunities for paid-on-call and part-time firefighters.

The addition of additional full-time staffing to the Department, as discussed in Recommendation 2, enables the Department to modify its current scheduling model to provide 24-hour station coverage. As previously stated in the report, certain coverage periods have no staff at the station and rely solely on paid on-call and part-time staff to respond via the "all call" system. While response times during these periods remain low due to the use of the Duty-Officer dispatched directly to the scene, achieving an effective response force is slowed by the paid-on-call and part-time staff first needing to report to the station before taking the apparatus to the scene. If the Department has 24-hour station coverage, it will have an effective response force to the scene faster, which can reduce threats to public health and safety and keep property losses minimal in the event of a fire.

To develop a modified shift schedule, the Fire Chief and/or Assistant Fire Chief should determine the most effective manner to deploy the new and current full-time firefighters to provide 24-hour station coverage. This process can be done in advance of their hiring and implemented as soon as the new full-time staff are onboarded. As stated previously, each of those shifts would then be supported through smaller sets of paid-on-call and part-time shifts bringing total staffing at a given time to three.

The use of shifts in this manner would add regularity to the schedule for the paid-on-call and part-time staff and reduce their need to respond to "all calls" since the Department would maintain minimum staffing on the apparatus. It would also eliminate any periods that currently have no personnel providing station coverage. This approach would balance meeting response needs and providing flexibility for paid-on-call and part-time firefighters, especially those with other commitments.

While a modified and expanded shift coverage model would reduce the number of "all-calls," it will not eliminate them; therefore the "all-call" system would still be used for incidents requiring additional support such as working fires, motor vehicle accidents with entrapment, hazardous materials, etc. Additionally, under this model, the Department should still maintain its on-call supervisor response. This would add a fourth firefighter to the scene of an incident and establish the two-in/two-out objective cited in the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards as previously discussed. Over time the Department can monitor performance and determine whether to also transition or promote the additional full-time staff on the apparatus to a supervisory position such as a Lieutenant or Captain.

To encourage paid-on-call and part-time staff participation in the extended coverage system, the Department can revise the Relief Association requirements for the number of "all calls" or shift coverage in a given period. Furthermore, under the current staffing model, existing full-time staff can claim shifts at a blended pay rate, which is higher than the wages of paid on-call and part-time firefighters. This practice can potentially lead to significant overtime costs incurred by the Department. By providing more opportunities for paid on-call and part-time firefighters to contribute to 24-hour fire station coverage, the Hopkins Fire Department can achieve improved budget optimization with reduced overtime expenses and an improved emergency response capability. The savings in overtime expenses will help offset some of the costs associated with adding full-time staff.

Recommendation 4: Conduct an updated space needs analysis with a funding plan for improvements to the Fire Station in the next four to six years.

The Hopkins Fire Station is a three-story modern firehouse primarily built for the paid-on-call staffing model. The Department has converted three offices into sleeping quarters for the night coverage shift personnel. This works adequately in the current staffing pattern and should be sustainable until more office space is necessary. The sleeping

quarters are located on the third floor. There is no fire pole, so firefighters must traverse four flights of stairs to respond to the apparatus bay. The station was designed to accommodate sleeping quarters above the apparatus bay. Currently, the roof of the apparatus bay hosts a solar array.

Currently, the station has sufficient space for the apparatus, facility maintenance, equipment placement and storage, training and meeting area, dayroom, kitchen, and locker room. The station has two bunker gear extractors and is extremely clean and well-maintained, showing pride in the ownership of the Department and its personnel. Finally, the station has appropriate exhaust removal to protect personnel in the apparatus bays.

While the station is currently suitable to meet the needs of the current staffing model of the Department, significant facility improvements will be required at the Hopkins Fire Station, including approximately 5,000 square feet of dorm space, additional office space, and enhancements to the training and meeting space, if the City decides to pursue an all-full-time staffing model. As mentioned previously, the City, in the construction of the existing facility, had the foresight to ensure that it could one day be expanded if the need ever arose, with a portion of the building being constructed in a manner that can be built on top of to provide the needed space. In 2022, the Department received an estimate on the cost of making facility improvements, which totaled approximately $3.2 million. This estimate falls within the range price per square foot range of what other jurisdictions have paid for recent fire related capital projects.

While the recommended addition of two full-time staff and an expanded shift schedule to provide 24-hour coverage would not necessarily trigger the needed facility improvements, the Department should conduct an updated space needs analysis in the next several years to further understand the scope of transitioning to a full-time staffing model. A space needs analysis examines how existing facilities can be optimized for staff use and identifies renovations needed to meet the Department's operational needs. This process involves systematically studying operations, functions, existing space usage, condition assessments of buildings and office space, a discussion of key qualitative attributes, and a quantitative analysis to calculate the actual space needs of the Department and estimated costs to make any necessary changes. The results of the analysis should include a funding and evaluation plan to expand the current building to absorb the future growth of full-time staffing. With the funding plan, the City will be able to prepare a capital budget to plan for the improvements.

Prior to conducting this analysis, the Department and City should use the next several years to evaluate the how the operations of the Department evolve through the implementation of staffing, technology, and process improvement enhancements, as these could impact the scope of the Department's facility needs. If, after that evaluation period, the City wants to continue to transition the Department to either an all-full-time staffed Department or a regional Department, the space needs analysis will provide the most up-to-date analysis of the costs based on the existing conditions of the Department at that time.

Finally, should the City choose to pursue significant facility improvements for the Fire Station, the City's bond rating of AA+ by Standard & Poor's[16] means it is in a strong financial position and could receive favorable terms to utilize bond financing.

Recommendation 5: Hire an Administrative Assistant to support the Department.

The hiring of a full-time Assistant Fire Chief would provide leadership support for operations. However, the Department would also benefit from additional administrative and analytical support in the form of an Administrative Assistant.

[16] https://www.hopkinsmn.com/251/Finance

An Administrative Assistant can provide vital support to Department leadership and the firefighters by handling routine administrative tasks and performing community outreach. This includes managing social media accounts, correspondence, scheduling appointments, maintaining records, and organizing meetings. The delegation of these responsibilities to a dedicated staff member means the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Fire Marshal, and Inspectors can focus on their core responsibilities and provide additional oversight and leadership to the Department.

Having an Administrative Assistant within the Department also can facilitate improved coordination both internally among staff, but also with other City Departments such as Finance during the annual budget process, Information Technology on procurement and system related issues, Human Resources with recruitment efforts, and more. This coordination can help streamline processes and enhance performance. Finally, the Administrative Assistant can help the Department maintain records, generate reports, and organize data which will be beneficial to tracking key performance metrics like calls for service, response times, and inspections.

The estimated salary for this position is approximately $64,376 based on information provided by the City. However, the salary should ultimately be determined by the City Human Resources Department and Department leadership based on the City's salary structure, employer taxes, employee retirement contributions, and health insurance/other benefits. This position should be prioritized and added within three to five years to help support the implementation of the recommendations included this report and to coordinate recruitment efforts for both the new full-time staff as well as new paid-on-call and part-time staff.

DATA COLLECTION AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Recommendation 6: Enhance data collection and develop incident response performance measures.

High-performing government departments utilize data collection and performance measurement to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services. Government departments can support high-quality and actionable analysis by identifying and using measures that capture the effectiveness of service delivery. Implementing a comprehensive performance measurement program can assist local governments in developing strategic initiatives, evaluating service delivery, making future staffing decisions, and ultimately enhancing operations.

A comprehensive performance measurement program comprises performance measures that capture meaningful, reliable, accurate, and relevant data points to compare performance against established goals. This data should be collected at routine intervals and reviewed by Department leadership. The performance measurement program should also be flexible and able to be adjusted and refined over time based on changes made to Department operations to ensure continued relevance.

The Hopkins Fire Department is capturing data for portions of its operations, including "all call" responses, shift coverage for paid-on-call staff, and overtime accrued by the full-time staff. The Department also captures call data such as the total number of calls, false alarms, mutual aid given and received, the number of incidents by type, and limited response time data. Inspection-related metrics are captured through a paper-based system and the software program Permit Works.

To develop a comprehensive measurement program, the Department must expand its current data collection efforts to shed additional light on workload and drivers. The expanded data collection should include additional data points related to the Department's services, staff hours to perform responsibilities, and qualitative information to provide additional context. Capturing staff hours spent on tasks will help Department leadership understand capacity and

reallocate resources appropriately. For example, the Hopkins Fire Department needs a better understanding of the time the current full-time firefighters are spending performing inspections, plan reviews, code enforcement, and other fire prevention work. This information will help the Department understand how these firefighters can contribute to the incident response shift schedule to provide 24-hour station coverage and how the demand for fire prevention services is evolving due to the growth and development in the City. Qualitative measures can provide context for why certain goals are met or not met. For example, knowing the reasons for missed performance goals by the paid-on-call staff can help the Department adjust recruitment efforts to understand external demands on these staff. The following table identifies several data points that the Department is already capturing, as well as others

Table 21: Relevant Data to Track

Description	Metric
Staffing	• "All call" response • Paid-on-call shift coverage • Reasons for missing paid-on-call performance metrics • Recruitment-related metrics • Number of hours of overtime • Reasons for overtime approval
Fire and EMS Incident Data	• Number of incidents by type • Response Time of effective response force/apparatus • Mutual/Automatic Aide Given/Received • False alarm calls • Estimated Dollar Loss • Pre-fire incident dollar values • Estimated Dollar Saved • Percentage of time structural fires are "interceded before flashover"
Training	• Trainings per year by type (internal and external) • Staff hours spent training
Residential Inspection Data	• Number of residential inspections performed • Labor hours spent performing inspections • Revenue from inspections
Commercial Inspection Data	• Number of commercial inspections performed • Labor hours spent performing inspections • Revenue from inspections
Code Enforcement	• Number of code enforcement inspections performed • Labor hours spent performing code enforcement activities • Number of letters issued • Number of citations issued
Plan review	• Number of plans reviewed • Labor hours spent performing plan review
Fire related permits	• Number of permits issued by type • Labor hours spent issuing permits • Revenue generated from permits
Community Engagement Activities	• Number of community events attended • Number of smoke detectors issued/installed • Number of educational events held

Department leadership and staff should be trained to gather and analyze data accurately. It is also essential to ensure that all staff performing fire prevention activities and the Administrative Assistant position recommended in this report know how to enter, collect, and retrieve data from all the software programs utilized by the Department, such as ImageTrend and Permit Works. The new full-time Assistant Fire Chief and Fire Marshal should share responsibility for identifying and including relevant software training opportunities in the Department's annual training plan to better support the Department's data collection efforts.

Once the Department staff are trained, and this data is collected routinely and accurately, the Department should develop a comprehensive performance measurement program. This effort should be managed by the new Assistant Fire Chief and begin with an incident response to help the Department measure the effectiveness of staffing additions and the implementation of a 24-hour shift schedule. This information will allow the Department to continue to evaluate how to evolve its staffing model to sustain operations long-term.

The following table identifies several incident response performance measures identified by the project team based on best practice research.

Table 22: Incident Response Performance Measures

Indicator	Description	Industry Standard	Performance Goal	Performance Measure	Agency Involved
Alarm Processing	The time between when the call is received by dispatch and begins to be transmitted to the Department	NFPA 1221, 1710	90% of calls processed in less than 64 seconds, 95% processed within 106 seconds	% of calls processed within the goals	Hennepin County and HFD
Department Turnout Time	The time between the Department receiving the call and the beginning of travel time	NFPA 1710	80-second Fire and Special Operations turnout time	% of turnout times at or under 80 seconds for Fire and Special Operations calls	HFD
			60-second EMS turnout time	% of turnout times at or under 80 seconds for EMS calls	
Department Travel Time	The time between the apparatus leaving the station and arriving on scene	NFPA 1710	90% of first response (4 firefighters) arriving within 4 minutes (fire and EMS calls)	% of first response travel time within 4 minutes	HFD
			90% of full alarm response for EMS and low/medium hazard structures arriving within 8 minutes	% of full alarm response travel time for EMS and low/medium hazard structures within 8 minutes	
			90% of full alarm response for high hazard structures arriving within 10 minutes	% of full alarm response travel time for high hazard structures within 10 minutes	
Department Response Time	The total time of Department response (Turnout + Travel Time)	NFPA 1710	90% of first response (4 firefighters) responding within 5 minutes	% of first response within 5 minutes	HFD
			90% of full alarm response for EMS and low/medium hazard structures arriving within 9 minutes	% of full alarm response for EMS and low/medium hazard structures within 9 minutes	
			90% of full alarm response for high hazard structures arriving within 11 minutes	% of full alarm response for high hazard structures within 11 minutes	
Fire Staffing	Number of on-duty firefighters necessary to perform required services given expected conditions	NFPA 1710	Minimum 4 on duty	% of responses that receive an initial response force with a minimum of 4 firefighters	HFD
Water on Fire Time	Time it takes to get water on a structure fire		TBD by the Department	TBD by the Department	HFD
Primary Search Complete Time	Time it takes to complete a coordinated and systematic search for victims within a structure or area		TBD by the Department	TBD by the Department	HFD

Indicator	Description	Industry Standard	Performance Goal	Performance Measure	Agency Involved
Basic Life Support Arrival on Scene	The travel time of a basic life support unit with an automatic external defibrillator (AED) at an EMS incident	NFPA 1710	4-minute travel time	% of EMS response with basic life support services within 4 minutes	HFD
Advanced Life Support on Scene	The travel time of an advanced life support unit at an EMS incident	NFPA 1710	8-minute travel time	% of EMS response with advanced life support services within 4 minutes	Hennepin County and HFD

Department leadership and staff should also be provided with appropriate training to ensure data is gathered and analyzed as accurately as possible. To ensure accurate information is captured and to enhance the Department's performance reporting, it is also essential to ensure that all staff performing fire prevention activities, as well as the Administrative Assistant position recommended in this report, know how to enter, collect, and retrieve data from all the software programs utilized by the Department, such as ImageTrend and Permit Works. The new full-time Assistant Fire Chief and Fire Marshal should share responsibility for identifying and including relevant software training opportunities in the Department's annual training plan to better support the Department's data collection efforts.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Recommendation 7: Enhance recruitment efforts for paid-on-call and part-time staff.

With declining volunteerism, the pool to find paid-on-call and part-time firefighters could be impacted, making it challenging to recruit candidates. However, as the City of Hopkins continues to examine or transition to an alternative staffing model, it will need to continue to utilize these positions. To ensure an adequate pool of paid-on-call and part-time staff, the Department will need to enhance its recruitment efforts and outreach to the community. There are several ways this can be done, listed below:

1. **Review marketing materials and compensation:** Any enhancement to the recruiting efforts should begin with thoroughly examining current marketing materials to ensure the positions are being framed to the public appropriately to maximize interest. The Department should also work with the City's finance and human resources staff to review compensation and incentives to ensure they align with current market conditions.

2. **Direct Outreach:** The Department should engage with the Hopkins community by organizing direct outreach programs to raise awareness about the benefits and importance of firefighting. This could include attending local events, performing recruitment drives or setting up booths at community events, giving presentations at schools, hosting open houses at the fire station, and/or walking the neighborhoods and talking to residents directly.

According to staff, the last time direct outreach was utilized, it successfully attracted several community members to apply to become paid-on-call or part-time firefighters. Efforts such as this will be required to continue to find willing and able candidates.

2. **Social Media Campaigns and Use of Online Platforms:** The Department should utilize its social media platforms, such as its Facebook page, which has approximately 2,800 followers, and its website to promote paid-on-call and part-time firefighting opportunities. These campaigns should include engaging content, such as sharing stories about current firefighters, while highlighting the benefits of joining as a paid-on-call and part-time firefighter to encourage community members to consider applying themselves or identifying individuals to apply.

3. **Focus recruitment efforts on part-time positions:** By developing a shift schedule to provide 24-hour station coverage, the Department can focus recruitment efforts on part-time positions instead of paid on-call positions to increase the available candidate pool. Paid-on-call staff must live within a 12-minute drive of the Hopkins Fire Station to be able to respond to all calls. Deploying shifts will significantly reduce the number of all calls, and therefore, the Department can widen its reach for recruiting.

4. **Developing Partnerships with Local Businesses**: The Department's inspection services allow it to collaborate with local businesses to raise awareness about the need for paid-on-call firefighters. The Department can leverage these interactions to offer fire safety training sessions and fire prevention activities to their businesses and employees and help organize joint community events with the benefits. In return, the business owners and employees can assist in the promotion of the Department's recruitment efforts to their personal and professional networks and connections.

5. **Collaboration with Volunteer Organizations:** In addition to leveraging the Department's interactions with local businesses, staff should engage with volunteer organizations in Hopkins to explore opportunities for collaboration. This will allow the Department to tap into populations of existing volunteers to gauge their interest in also taking on paid-on-call or part-time firefighting roles.

6. **Create Mentorship Programs:** The Department can develop mentorship programs which pair experienced paid-on-call, part-time, or full-time firefighters with new recruits, allowing them to guide and support individuals throughout their training and entry into fire service. A mentorship program can create positive experiences and establish strong family-like bonds that will help fuel word-of-mouth recruitment.

These recruitment efforts will require coordination with the City's Human Resources Department and should be tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of the Hopkins community and highlight the benefits, flexibility, and community impact of becoming a paid-on-call firefighter. By doing so, the Department will hopefully be able to attract individuals who are passionate about serving their community while also addressing the reduction in volunteerism. Additionally, they can serve the Department as an evaluation tool for future recruitment efforts by gauging the engagement and success levels of these activities. It will be important to include current paid-on-call and part-time staff in the effort to talk directly about their personal experiences and the benefits they have experienced. To encourage their participation, the Department should consider their involvement with the various activities as coverage time for the relief association.

Recommendation 8: Enhance training opportunities for full-time staff conducting inspections, code enforcement, and plan review activities.

The Hopkins Fire Department performs several important fire prevention activities, including commercial and residential inspections, plan review, code enforcement, and fire prevention planning. To ensure staff stay current on best practices for performing these activities and applicable local, state, and federal regulations, the Fire Chief should work closely with the Fire Marshal and the new Assistant Fire Chief to enhance training opportunities for the staff assigned to these tasks.

One way the Department can enhance training opportunities for fire prevention topics is to utilize external training. Outside conferences and training seminars can empower the fire prevention staff and develop their knowledge and skills around specific topics. Additionally, utilizing outside training in this manner would allow the Hopkins Fire Department to send specific staff to external training courses, and those employees can, in turn, share what they

learned with others who may perform those duties in relief, but were unable to attend, such as the part-time and paid-on-call firefighters.

One such training that would benefit the fire prevention staff would be the NFPA Certified Fire Inspector I program. The goals of this program are to[17]:

- Recognize and provide evidence of competence as related to NFPA 1031, Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner, enhance professionalism.
- Ensure proficiency in the use of fire codes and standards.
- Promote professional development for fire service personnel.

The cost of this certification program is $399 per firefighter.

To enable staff to access external pieces of training and seminars, such as the NFPA certification program, the Department should first develop a formal process to determine who is eligible to attend, what conferences and seminars offer pieces of training that align with Department goals, objectives, and culture, and allocate funds in the annual budget to fund sending employees to the outside training.

By identifying which outside training courses are the most applicable for the Department, staff will be able to estimate a budget and determine which staff members are the most suitable to attend. The staff selection process should be intentional and based upon an attendee's ability and desire to absorb the information presented and facilitate what was learned to the rest of the Department as needed. The Department should also exercise caution around sending staff to any training classes and seminars that are "trendy" in fire service but would have little benefit to the Hopkins Fire Department.

Recommendation 9: Develop and maintain standard operating procedures for fire prevention and administrative functions.

During the project fieldwork, staff reported that there are very few documented standard operating procedures (SOPs) in the Department for fire prevention and administrative functions. Instead, staff have relied on the knowledge and experience of the employees. While this approach has been successful in the past, as growth within the City increased the workload in these areas and the operational model continues to evolve to include more full-time staff, so should the Department's approach regarding key fire prevention and administrative processes. The additional full-time support detailed in previous recommendations would create the capacity for the fire prevention staff to dedicate resources to SOP development.

SOPs promote consistency in the performance of core functions. Fully developed and documented fire prevention and administrative SOPs would allow the Department to codify institutional knowledge and experience to ensure it is not lost as staff turnover and help train less experienced new full-time staff members and any part-time or paid-on-call staff that may assist with the various activities.

SOPs are an important aspect of fire service operations by providing operational guidance over processes and activities. Developing SOPs in critical fire service areas will ensure compatibility and consistency, standardize staff behavior, avoid confusion, limit liability, and enhance safety. When complete, SOP documents can be used to improve staff training, external communications, and public education.

[17] https://www.nfpa.org/Training-and-Events/Certification/Certification/Certified-Fire-Inspector-I

Each SOP should be written using a standard format. There are numerous ways this can be done, but common formatting elements include:

- A clearly articulated title
- Describing the purpose of the SOP
- Step-by-step instructions of the necessary work to be performed
- Additional considerations
- Reference to other SOPs that may be applicable
- Safety guidelines/protocols

Separate from the SOPs for core fire prevention and administrative functions, the Department should also review and update any existing SOPs for structural firefighting. The team discovered through interviews that the Department is following current, relevant, and effective firefighting, medical, and special operations practices; ensuring updated SOPs focused on structural firefighting can help promote firefighter safety during fire ground operations. They can also be an important training tool as the Department seeks to add full-time and paid-on-call or part-time support over the next couple of years.

In 2019, the NFPA Research Foundation published a report titled "Review of Emergency Responder Standard Operating Procedures /Guidelines (SOP/SOG)." This report gathered and reviewed SOPs and guidelines from fire departments in North America, including career, volunteer, and combination departments, to identify elements of a template for structural firefighting SOPS that features the following elements[18]:

- Creation/Revision Date
- Purpose/Scope of SOP
- Table of Contents
- Appendix
- Definitions
- Staffing and Job Descriptions
- Tactical Considerations
- Operational Responsibilities
- Incident Management/Command
- Safety Considerations
- Scientific references
- Risk-based approaches

As a part of their operational responsibilities, the Assistant Fire Chief position, as discussed in Recommendation 1, and the Fire Marshal should manage the gathering, reviewing, and updating of SOPs for fire prevention/administrative functions and structural firefighting. They should work with Department staff to understand any existing documentation that could assist with developing formal SOPs and prioritize development by assessing safety or liability concerns or the risk of institutional knowledge loss in the future. Once prioritized, the Assistant Fire Chief should identify the staff member responsible for writing each SOP with deadlines to ensure accountability. When complete, the SOPs will provide the Department with a robust knowledge library and establish a unified and safe approach to fire service delivery.

[18] Benna, Lana, "Review of Emergency Responder Standard Operating Procedures /Guidelines (SOP/SOG)," Fire Protection Research Foundation, March 2019

FIRE PREVENTION AND INSPECTIONS

Recommendation 10: Work with local industries to develop/update Fire Prevention Plans and inform HAZMAT and technical training.

The Hopkins community features a mix of commercial industries that vary in size ranging from small shops to large distribution facilities. It is vital for the Hopkins Fire Department to be prepared in the event of an emergency and understand the various hazards that could be present in these commercial businesses. A key part of this preparation is the development of Fire Prevention Plans, which can not only help responders on scene in an emergency situation, but also inform training around HAZMAT and technical rescue.

While the Department does have a limited number of Fire Prevention Plans in place, they should be actively identifying other local industries that utilize hazardous chemicals and/or processes posing elevated levels of risk to firefighters and occupants to develop plans where one is not currently in place. Furthermore, once a plan is in place, a protocol should be established to regularly update fire prevention plans based on the level of risk present at each facility.

The process to build a fire prevention plan starts with a pre-plan inspection. The primary purpose of a pre-plan inspection is for firefighting crews to become familiarized with building layouts and features in the event of an emergency. During this visit, Fire Department staff identifies the most appropriate initial actions and procedures that should occur in the event of an emergency and develops the written fire prevention plan to document this information. For guidance in plan development, the Department should use the NFPA 1620 Standard for Pre-Incident Planning as guidance, which recommends several key data points, including:

- Size
- Construction type
- Utility systems
- A contact person for the property
- Location of transformers and electric utility rooms
- Water and gas shutoffs
- Any available emergency power
- Location of compressed gasses, boilers and steam lines, and fuels
- Access points and obstacles
- Location of key/lock box
- Security features, including animals
- Other structures or people who could be exposed in an incident
- Any potential environmental contaminants
- GPS coordinates
- Occupancy and hours of operation
- On-site emergency response capabilities and emergency plans
- Means of egress
- Water supply systems
- Location of vents
- Any hazardous materials on-site

It is important to note that this visit is different from a commercial inspection. The pre-plan inspection is not an enforcement operation and the staff performing the work are not evaluating the building's compliance with applicable

local, state, and federal fire codes. However, if they become aware of obvious violations, they should report it to the commercial inspections so they can perform a follow-up inspection to enforce the fire codes.

Once developed, it is key that the Department not only utilize the plans to inform training activities, but also access the plans in the field in the event of an emergency so first responders are aware of the circumstances and issues present at the property. The combination of training and use in the field preserves firefighter safety and maximizes their ability to respond to a call for service as needed.

To access the fire prevention plans in the field, the Department should either start working with its current vendor ImageTrend™ or seek out an alternative software program, such as FirstDue™, to implement this functionality as soon as possible. The selected software should interact with Hennepin County's computer-aided dispatch (CAD) program and incorporate data from building permits, assessor information, and more without additional data entry. Utilizing such a program enables staff to focus on only entering the data pertinent to the plan and simplifies accessing this information as needed.

During the project fieldwork, staff reported that upgrading the Department's ImageTrend™ software would cost approximately $25,000 upfront and include a possible increase in the annual service/maintenance fee paid to the vendor. FirstDue™, or another equivalent software, may offer the Department an alternative to ImageTrend™ for all reporting, fire prevention planning, and inspections which could ultimately lead to cost savings, but the Department would need to examine the market to determine that. Regardless of the software solution pursued, the Department will need to work with Hennepin County to ensure proper interaction with its CAD program and train staff to utilize it properly.

Finally, in addition to ensuring an effective response and informing training activities, the interaction with commercial businesses to develop fire prevention plans will also create opportunities to build rapport with employers and increase firefighter safety, furthering the connection between the Department and the community.

Recommendation 11: Adjust the annual commercial inspection model to improve Department's ability to conduct inspections.

Housing and commercial inspectors serve an important role for the Hopkins Fire Department. They are responsible for examining buildings to find potential hazards and ensuring they are kept up to date regarding specific state, local, and national fire codes. There are three inspectors with in the Hopkins Fire Department. One is assigned to housing and two conduct commercial inspections. The Fire Marshal also can be involved in performing inspections. The Fire Marshal and each of the inspectors involved in the code enforcement and fire prevention planning activities are responsible for covering the apparatus and responding to calls for service while on shift.

While the approach of utilizing the Fire Marshal and inspectors to respond to calls for service can be done occasionally as needed, it is not sustainable long-term. As development continues throughout the City, these positions will need to focus more on fire prevention activities instead of having those activities interrupted to respond to calls for service.

As previously detailed, housing inspections are performed based on a points system determining the frequency at which each property should be inspected. Meanwhile, all commercial properties are inspected annually. To create additional capacity around fire prevention, the Department should adjust the service level goals regarding the prioritization and the number of commercial inspections performed annually. With that said, an effective approach utilized by cities across the country is to prioritize commercial inspections by classifying occupancies based on risk profiles created by considering criteria such as:

- Number of occupants
- Square footage
- Nature of work conducted on-site
- Presence of hazardous materials

The Hopkins Fire Department should replicate this approach which entails reviewing occupancies and assessing the risks associated with each one. Higher-risk occupancies should continue to be inspected annually, whereas lower-risk occupancies could be inspected once every two to three years. To develop the risk profiles for each occupancy type, the Department should utilize existing interactions where possible. An example of the prioritization of occupancies and revised inspection frequency is illustrated in the table below.

Table 23: Inspection Frequency by Occupancy Types

Occupancy Type	Description	Inspection Frequency	Risk Profile
Assembly	Places where groups of people gather for worship, entertainment, dining, drinking, civic purposes, etc.	Annual	High
Office	Buildings used for professional, service, or office-based businesses including banks, government offices, etc.	Once every three years	Low
Education	Schools and daycare facilities	Annual	High
Fabrication or Factory	Buildings used for manufacturing, repair, fabricating, processing, finishing, etc.	Bi-annual (unless they store or utilize hazardous chemicals)	Moderate
High Hazard	Businesses that manufacture, process, generate, or store materials that constitute a physical or health hazard	Annual	High
Institutional	Businesses that care for care for people in a supervised environment such as hospitals, assisted living facilities, etc.	Annual or bi-annual	High
Mercantile	Retail and wholesale stores, department stores, drug stores motor fuel dispensing stations, etc.	Once every three years	Low
Residential	Two-family and multifamily housing	Annual	Moderate
Storage	Businesses that store non-hazardous materials such as self-storage facilities, warehouses, etc.	Once every three years	Moderate to Low
Utility and Miscellaneous	Accessory structures not otherwise classified	Once every three years	Low

Adjusting the inspection frequency through risk evaluation and prioritization would help align the inspection process with the Department's fire prevention activities, particularly for the City of Hopkins' high-risk industries.

In addition to adjusting the commercial inspection frequency based on occupancy and risk, the Department should adjust inspection fees to ensure they are in line with neighboring communities to help make Fire Prevention more self-sustainable.

Recommendation 12: Review and revise the fire and alarm system-related inspection, plan review, and permit fee schedules.

According to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Fire Marshal Division, the State of Minnesota enables municipalities to provide for a competent plan review and inspection, conduct plan reviews and inspections, and charge a permit fee for those services[19]. Additionally, the City has the authority to charge fees for various types of fire-related and alarm systems permits. The fees charged by the City of Hopkins for these services as defined in the Appendix A of Chapter 102 of the Hopkins Code of Ordinances are as follows:

Table 24: Fire and Alarm System-Related Fee Schedules

Fire	Fee	Frequency
Fire prevention permit	$75.00	Per permit
Additional fire prevention permit inspections	$40.00	Per inspection
First and second fire inspection (commercial)	$60.00 per hour	Per inspection
Third fire inspection (commercial)	$120.00 per hour	Per inspection
Additional inspections after the third inspection	$150.00 per hour	Per inspection
False alarm fee	$350.00	Per alarm
Fire report	$5.00	
Additional pages	$0.35	
Alarm registration	$30.00	Per alarm registration
Failure to register alarm system	$100.00	Per alarm system
False alarm, intentional	$350.00	Per alarm

According to the City's website, the fee structure for rental housing inspections is as follows[20]:

Table 25: Rental Housing Inspection Fees

Description	Cost Per Building	Cost Per Dwelling Unit Inspected
General		
Periodic Inspection Fee - Initial Inspection	$100	$25
First Re-Inspection	$50	$50
Second Re-Inspection	$75	$75
Each Additional Re-Inspection	Double the previous amount	Double the previous amount
Final Compliance Inspection	$0	$0
Condominiums		
Periodic Inspection Fee - Initial Inspection Per Condominium	$0	$75
First Re-Inspection	$50	$50
Second Re-Inspection	$75	$75
Each Additional Re-Inspection	Double the previous amount	Double the previous amount
Final Compliance Inspection	$0	$0

The permitting and inspections performed by the Fire Department are important to promote community health and safety, but also serve as a revenue source for the Department and are a part of an overall cost recovery strategy for the City. Cost recovery policies establish the level of General Fund support, or subsidy, for a program or provided

[19] https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/sfm/programs-services/Documents/Sprinklers/Fire-protection-fees.pdf
[20] https://www.hopkinsmn.com/249/Rental-Inspections

service compared to the cost charged to users for that program or service. They help clarify service levels, the amount programs are subsidized versus others, and establish revenue sources for the Department to support program enhancements, growth, or otherwise improve customer service.

The adjustment of the commercial inspection model to be based on risk profiles/property use creates the ideal opportunity to reevaluate the fee structure for not only inspections, but all fire-related permits and fire prevention services provided by the Department to ensure they meet any applicable cost recovery goals. This process should be led by the Fire Marshal with guidance from the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief and should include a review of applicable provisions and sections of the Minnesota Statutes and Minnesota Rules. The Fire Marshal can also review the fees charged by other municipalities in the State of Minnesota for additional guidance in recommending a revise fee schedule to the City Administration.

EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Recommendation 13: Identify opportunities to utilize technology to improve operational efficiency.

Technology is a key component of modern fire services. It can help with performing inspections, preparing fire prevention plans, reporting, measuring performance, and improving staff efficiency. This technology includes, but is not limited to, tablets in the field for inspections and accessing fire prevention plans, enhanced GIS capabilities, and software to improve data collection and performance metric reporting capabilities. Improving access to technology would enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department through improved service delivery, planning, equipment and apparatus management, financial management, and more.

The Department should seek to improve access to technology in several areas as resources allow, with priority given to enhancing the fire prevention planning, inspections, and reporting capability in the ImageTrend™ system and supplying Inspectors with mobile devices to be able to log reports and information while in the field. The Hopkins Fire Department currently tracks inspections in a paper-based system. This system makes it difficult to find information from past inspections, leads to inconsistent reporting practices, and does not allow the Department to monitor fire safety risks and compliance efficiently. Deploying an enhanced tracking and reporting system for inspections that staff can access via tablet in the field would enable the Department to shift from a reactive to a proactive approach to fire safety, reduce the time spent trying to find past information regarding a property, reduce the amount of manual data entry, and prioritize inspection activities based on past violations and potential safety risks. By analyzing inspection data, staff can also identify common issues, establish SOPs for conducting inspections, monitor recurring non-compliance, and use the information to identify areas where additional training or resources are needed for staff.

As previously discussed, according to staff, the upfront cost associated with adding an enhanced fire prevention planning, reporting, and inspection capability within the existing ImageTrend™ system was estimated at $25,000; however, the annual service/maintenance fee paid to the vendor may also be impacted. The Department could also seek out an alternative to ImageTrend™, such as FirstDue™ or an equivalent program that could ultimately provide cost savings to the Department. The cost for issuing mobile devices to each of the inspection staff and the Fire Marshal is estimated to be $500 per device, but will be dependent on any existing mobile contacts the City may have with a specific vendor, which the Department will need to coordinate with the City's internal Information Technology group to determine.

The Department should pursue the enhanced fire prevention planning, reporting, and inspection functionality and procure a minimum of four mobile devices to access this information in the field in the next budget cycle. Appropriate

staff should then be trained to utilize each program to maximize its effectiveness properly. This should include the Fire Prevention Staff, any staff that may support those activities, and the recommended full-time Administrative Assistant who will be tasked with maintaining records, generating reports, organizing data, and helping the Department assess performance.

Additional long-term technology and systems that would be further beneficial to Hopkins Fire Department include:

- **Facility management software** – Track facility maintenance activities
- **GIS and CAD integration** – Denotes the precise location of properties to support inspections, fire prevention planning, and call responses
- **Expanded equipment access** – Identifies equipment that could further improve operational efficiency
- **Fleet management software** –Tracks maintenance activities on Department vehicles and equipment

Incorporating these technology systems into the operations of the Department will help create a culture of data-driven decision-making around staffing and work planning decisions and improve service delivery.

Adding new software programs and technology will increase operational costs for the Department. Purchases should therefore be spread out over time as resources allow.

Recommendation 14: Maintain current equipment and apparatus maintenance practices and consider starting a vehicle replacement fund for future apparatus replacement.

During the project team's tour of the Hopkins Fire Station, the team examined the Department's apparatus and equipment to assess their condition and identify possible replacement needs.

The Department's apparatus inventory includes:

Table 26: Hopkins Fire Department Apparatus Inventory

Unit Designation	Year	Make	Model	Type	Use	Miles/Hours
Squad 1	2021	Ford	Explorer		Duty Chief Vehicle	12,490
Squad 2	2023	Ford	Explorer		Duty Chief Vehicle	12
Squad 3	2021	Ford	Explorer		Duty Chief Vehicle	10,642
Squad 4	2023	Ford	Explorer		Duty Chief Vehicle	25
Utility 1	2019	Ford	150		Utility	11,807
Ranger	2016	Polaris	570			625
Engine 3	2005	Peterbuilt	Custom	1500 GPM Pumper	Reserve Engine	2,210
Ladder 7	2018	Pierce	Assendent 107'	Quint 1500 GPM	First out truck	1,877
Ladder 9	2008	Pierce	Arrow XT 95'	Ladder 1500 GPM	2nd out truck	1,625
Engine 1	2023	Pierce	Impel PUC Pumper	1250 GPM pumper		100
Hazmat 23	2004	Freightliner	General	Heavy Squad	State Vehicle	619

Unit Designation	Year	Make	Model	Type	Use	Miles/Hours
Hazmat trailer	2004				State Vehicle	619

Engine 1 is the newest Pierce™ Pumper and was placed into service during the first week of April 2023. This pumper is a 1250 general-purpose pumper (GPM). It is equipped for the Department's needs to serve the community and complies with Insurance Service Offices (ISO) requirements. The engine is well-equipped and is always ready to respond.

Engine 3 is a Custom™ pumper mounted on a Peterbuilt™ conventional cab used as a reserve apparatus. This is the oldest engine in the fleet (2005) but is in excellent working condition. The Department should evaluate the features of this apparatus to ensure they align with any current SOPs and other Department practices. This apparatus would have considerable value on a secondary market if the Department determined a need to replace the apparatus due to obsolete technology and safety features.

Additionally, the Department has two aerial apparatus. Both are Pierce™ quintuples (quint), meaning they have the appropriate pump, water tank, fire hose, aerial device, and ground ladders in compliance with NFPA Standard 1901. Ladder 7 is the "first out" ladder truck/aerial apparatus. The age and condition of the apparatus are excellent for continued operation for a considerable time. The odometer read 1,877 miles during the site visit and the apparatus is extremely well-maintained and clean. It is appropriately equipped with timely technology and equipment. Ladder 9 is also well-equipped, well-maintained, and well-cared for. It is appropriately equipped for its mission and is always ready to respond. It also displayed low mileage (1,625) and was in excellent condition during the site visit. It is 15 years of age, has no discernable deficits, and complements the Department's mission well.

The state of Minnesota provides a hazardous materials (hazmat) response heavy squad along with a hazmat trailer. These two pieces are the oldest apparatus in the fleet yet have extremely low mileage (619). The Department demonstrates great care for and maintenance of these assets.

Current staff vehicles (Squads) are leased and have low mileage, as indicated in the data given to the assessment team. There is a sufficient number of these vehicles for the Department's mission, and there is no need for replacement at this time.

Overall, all apparatus have low mileage, are well maintained, and are clean. The apparatus condition demonstrates the Department's and personnel's pride and ownership. Due to the excellent condition of each vehicle, the Department maintains an appropriate apparatus replacement schedule to meet changing standards and guidelines. The Department also has a service agreement with a local emergency vehicle service center that provides on-site maintenance and service. However, although the apparatus is in excellent condition, the City should consider a sinking fund to set money aside to pay off a debt or bond or another replacement fund for future apparatus replacement. The 2005 Custom backup engine is nearly 20 years old yet still reliable. However, selling the apparatus could be appropriate if the technology and features of the engine are not in line with current SOPs and Department practices. The engine's condition makes it a prime candidate for marketability to smaller fire departments. There is no urgency for replacement. However, opportunities may exist for the sale of the engine, and a replacement fund could be established if one does not already exist.

In terms of equipment, the Department is well-equipped with two sets of turnout bunker gear for each firefighter. Both gear sets are in good repair and monitored for replacement and repair. The Department has an agreement with a personal protective ensemble cleaning and repair service and has scheduled inspection and replacement of gear. The gear the team evaluated was clean, in good repair, and neatly stored in lockers provided in the station.

The Department uses Scott air packs as their Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Each firefighter has his or her own personal fit-tested facepiece. The Department's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) maintains a replacement budget for new air packs as technologies change, and current equipment experiences wear and tear. This practice should be maintained.

Alternative Service Model Analysis

The analysis and recommendations detailed above outline how best to enhance and optimize the current paid-on-call operating model. They define staffing and technology investments as well as process improvements that will strengthen the Department's ability to provide consistent service to public and response to current and anticipated operating challenges. However, given regional and national trends regarding volunteerism as well as anticipated workload growth within the City, the paid-on-call model will not remain sustainable in perpetuity.

To that end, it is appropriate to consider what alternative service models may exist to provide consistent 24-hour station coverage in the future. The primary alternative service models to consider are as follows:

1. Creating a full-time staffing operating model staffed with City of Hopkins employees
2. Pursuing a regional department or shared-service model where the City of Hopkins partners with one or more neighboring municipalities to provide multi-jurisdictional service
3. Utilizing a public safety officer model whereby the City would train other employees outside of the Fire Department to assist with complex incidents

The following analysis details the operating and cost implication associated with pursuing each of these models.

FULL-TIME STAFF OPERATING MODEL

Under this service alternative, full-time firefighters, also known as career firefighters, are employed by a fire department full-time and provide fire protection and emergency services. These positions could be supplemented by paid-on-call or part-time firefighters but the fundamental requirements of staffing a fire company and responding to emergency indents are met with full-time positions. There are several benefits associated with utilizing full-time staff instead of paid-on-call firefighters as the primary response force. These include:

- **Safety** – Appropriately staffed first-arriving apparatus has the appropriate number of firefighters to safely mitigate incidents, reducing the risk of personnel taking actions without appropriate staffing or the incident growing in complexity while initial responders wait for appropriate staffing to act.
- **Response Times** – Whether staffed with full-time firefighters or paid-on-call staff, response times from a staffed fire station are greatly improved since the appropriate apparatus's reaction time and turnout times are naturally faster. This improves the Department's response time of an effective response force and is consistent with the requirements of NFPA 1710 for initial emergency response.
- **Availability** – Full-time staff are typically staffed at a fire station and available 24/7. In contrast, paid-on-call may have other employment or commitments that limit their ability to respond to calls for service, which can be from the station or respond from home to the station.
- **Consistency** – Staffed fire stations and apparatus staffed with a minimum number of personnel maintain a predetermined level of "minimum staffing."
- **Equipment and Resources** – Full-time apparatus staffing does not require staff to respond from home to put the apparatus in service.

- **Career Advancement/Recruitment** – Paid-on-call staff must live near the fire stations in their communities. This limits the pool of applicants, and the Department reportedly finds it difficult to identify suitable applicants.
- **Consistency** – Staffed fire stations and apparatus staffed with a minimum number of personnel maintain a predetermined level of "minimum staffing."

There are several approaches to staffing shifts for a full-time fire Department. For the purposes of this analysis, the project team considered a staffing approach of running three shifts (A, B, C) that each work a 56-hour work week, which can be accomplished through various deployment models including 24 hours on-duty and 48 hours off-duty. Each shift would have a minimum of three firefighters to provide adequate response on the station's apparatus.

A 56-hour work week schedule would trigger the need for the Department to account for "Kelly Days" or account for the overtime that is automatically accrued in the 56-hour week schedule. A Kelly Day is a paid day off given to a firefighter at routine intervals when they would normally be scheduled to work. A Kelly Day alleviates the need to pay firefighters Fair Labor Standards Act overtime for scheduled work shifts. It also provides an additional recovery period for firefighters' physical and mental well-being. In addition to Kelly Days, the Department would have to account for leave time such as vacation, sick time, etc. To avoid the need to utilize Kelly Days, the Department may choose an alternative shift. Regardless of the shift schedule, to limit the overall amount of overtime expenses when firefighters take leave, it is best practice for fire departments to hire more than the minimum number of firefighters required to work the shift. To calculate the total number of full-time staff, the project team used a staffing factor of 1.25. A staffing factor represents the number of employees needed to cover each position on a shift after accounting for leave. In other words, to staff one position, the Department would be scheduling 1.25 employees to fill each position to provide adequate minimum staffing coverage. Using this calculation, the Department would need to hire 15 full-time firefighters to ensure the minimum staffing of 12 required to fill the shift schedule detailed above. With 15 additional firefighters, the Department would be able to ensure 24-hour station coverage while also removing the need for the Fire Marshal and inspectors to staff the apparatus every time they are on shift. Among the 15 new full-time positions, four should be classified as supervisory roles to serve as shift or company officers. This would provide another level of Department leadership, promotional opportunities, and help with succession planning. Furthermore, the Department would need to ensure each new firefighter is also outfitted with custom fitted turnout gear as previously discussed. Since the Department currently leases 35 sets of turnout gear from Republic First National, the Fire Chief should work with the vendor to amend the terms of the lease purchase agreement, which may result with a discounted rate if any unused equipment is able to be returned to the vendor.

The organizational chart for this alternative service model is shown in the following figure:

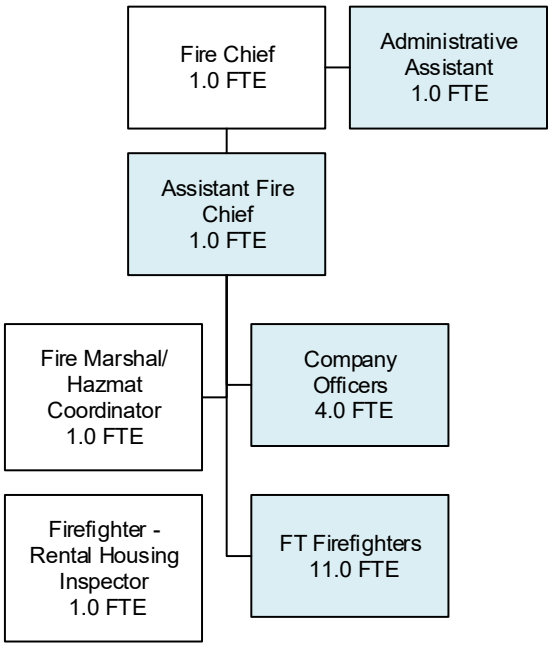

Figure 7: Full-Time Staffing Model Organizational Chart

In addition to a total of 15 full-time firefighters, the Department would also need to add the full-time Assistant Fire Chief position previously discussed to provide additional support in the areas of supervision, operations, work planning, and fire prevention activities; this position will also create a promotional opportunity over time and provide succession planning. The Department would also need to add an Administrative Assistant to support the operation, coordinate with the City's internal service departments, and assist with recruitment efforts, purchasing, annual budgeting, internal and external communications, documentation, reporting, etc.

Adding more full-time staff for support functions and to staff the station will require a new solution for housing. Currently, the fire station is configured to function under the current staffing model, e.g., with a limited amount of dorm space available to house staff overnight. To account for overnight housing, the Department is using designated office space that was converted to dorm space. Under a full-time model, the existing dorm space would need to be converted back to office space and additional housing would need to be built out.

The City, in the construction of the existing facility, had the foresight to ensure that it could one day be expanded if needed. A portion of the building is constructed in a manner that can be built on top of to provide the space that would be needed should the Department shift to the full-time model.

To better understand the estimated costs associated with the expansion of the building the project team researched recent Fire Department Capital Projects in nearby jurisdictions to identify potential costs associated with upgrading the existing Hopkins Fire Station. The details of these projects, including the size and project costs (not including land costs), are shown in the table below.

Table 27: Regional Fire Department Capital Projects

Description	Status	Project Costs	SF	Project Cost/SF
Minnetonka Police and Fire Facility[21]	Completed in 2021	$29,900,000	95,000	$314.74

[21] City of Minnetonka Study Session Agenda from Monday, September 9th, 2019

Description	Status	Project Costs	SF	Project Cost/SF
Edina Community Health and Safety Center Fire Station 2 Replacement Project[22]	Pre-Construction	$28,824,311[23]	36,396	$791.96
Maplewood EMS/Fire Station Improvement Project[24]	Completed in 2022	$10,700,000	30,066	$355.88
Coon Rapids Fire Station[25]	Under Construction	$15,000,000	32,047	$468.06
Average Construction Cost/SF				***$482.66***

Each project varied in size and cost. The project cost per square foot ranged from approximately $314 per square foot to nearly $792 per square foot. Using these metrics, adding 5,000 square feet of dorm space to accommodate a full-time staff at the current Hopkins Fire Station could cost between $1.57 million and $3.96 million. The average cost per square foot among the identified projects was nearly $483 per square foot. Using this figure to calculate the estimated cost of adding 5,000 square feet of dorm space would result in a potential project cost of around $2.41 million. However, it is important to note that the figures above are purely estimated based on other existing projects. A space needs analysis will be required to accurately estimate the total project cost based on the specific needs identified, the furniture and fixtures selected, and other characteristics unique to the City of Hopkins Fire Department.

The City also provided the project team with an estimate on the cost to make the necessary renovations to add dorm space, which was provided to them in 2022. The estimated total was approximately $3,200,000 including design, construction, furniture expenses, and cost of issuance. This estimate falls withing the range of project costs from the nearby jurisdictions. Using that estimate, the annual payment for a 20-year general obligation bond with a 3.5% interest rate is estimated to be approximately $216,886. A sample amortization table is attached in the appendix of this report.

In addition to the staffing and facility improvement implications, the shift to an all-full-time model would further benefit from the adjustment of the inspection model for commercial properties, training for fire prevention staff, and technology enhancements previously discussed. Transitioning to a full-time Department would not require the addition of new apparatus or vehicles. The Department will not need to add an additional engine company, which negates the need for new apparatus, and a review of the existing vehicle inventory indicates that the Department is sufficiently equipped to accommodate expansion.

The total estimated costs associated with this alternative staffing model total $5,308,654. They are detailed in the tables below. Please note, all estimated costs do not account for inflation or shifts in the marketplace.

Table 28: Estimated Staffing Costs

Positions	Estimated Salary/Cost	Health Insurance Estimate	Non-Health Benefit Estimate	Estimated Total Compensation	#	Estimated Total Cost
Assistant Chief	$125,000	$21,672	$17,125	$163,797	1	$163,797
Company Officers	$104,333	$21,672	$13,824	$139,829	4	$559,316
FT Firefighters	$77,667	$21,672	$10,291	$109,630	11	$1,205,930

[22] Community Health and Safety Center Budget Update Presentation to Edina City Council dated June 6th, 2023
[23] Amount does not include $15,450,000 for land costs
[24] City of Maplewood, EMS/Fire Department Space Needs Assessment Final Report, March 2020
[25] City of Coon Rapids Resolution No. 21-65(9)

Positions	Estimated Salary/Cost	Health Insurance Estimate	Non-Health Benefit Estimate	Estimated Total Compensation	#	Estimated Total Cost
Administrative Assistant	$64,376	$21,672	$9,109	$95,157	1	$95,157
Total					**17**	**$2,024,200**

Table 29: Additional Estimated Costs

Description	Estimated Salary/Cost	#	Estimated Total Cost
Turn Out Gear	$3,541	16	$56,656
IT/Technology	$25,000	n/a	$25,000
Tablets	$500	4	$2,000
Certified Fire Inspector I (CFI) Training	$399	2	$798
Facility Improvements	$3,200,000	n/a	$3,200,000
Total			**$3,284,454**

Transitioning to a full-time Department would enable the City to reallocate funds paid to part-time and paid-on-call firefighters and the Relief Association to offset a portion of the new costs. Part-time and paid-on-call are compensated hourly at $17.75 per hour. In the 2023 Fire Department Budget, $168,300 was budgeted for part-time and paid-on-call employee wages. In addition to these funds, the City contributes to the Relief Association for benefits for the paid-on-call firefighters. The City budgeted $45,540 for these contributions in 2023, with another $140,000 being contributed to the Relief Association via state grant funding. Finally, according to the Bylaws of the Hopkins Fire Department Relief Association, the City pays the annual salaries of the Trustees of the Relief Association, totaling $7,000 per year. Combined, the Department could potentially reallocate over $220,000 of currently budgeted expenses to offset new costs that would be associated with the transition to an all-full-time staffed Department. These funds are summarized below.

Table 30: Potential Funds Available for Reallocation

Description	Amount (2023)
Paid-on-call and Part-Time Wages	$168,300
Relief Association Contributions[26]	$45,540
Relief Association Trustee Salaries	$7,000
Total	**$220,840**

REGIONAL/SHARED SERVICE OPERATING MODEL

A consolidated or regional fire department serves multiple communities under a single organizational structure. Forming a regional department is typically done to improve efficiency and effectiveness in providing fire protection and emergency services. Taking a regional approach to fire service can lead to cost savings by promoting the sharing of resources (e.g., equipment, personnel, and training programs_. It can further help standardize operations, ensure consistent service levels, and provide better opportunities for career development for firefighters. Consolidating into a regional department typically occurs through operational consolidation, jurisdictional consolidation, or both.

Operational consolidation involves the development of agreements between municipalities to determine how they will share services, equipment, staff, apparatus, and facilities. Under these municipal operational agreements, duties

[26] Does not include the $140,000 contributed to the Relief Association via state grant funding.

normally performed by each department are combined and carried out as a single department. However, each remains legally and administratively separate from one another. Examples of operational care joint dispatch operations and combined training programs. It could also be applied to a staffing model to share staff among two or more departments through this approach is lee common that jurisdictional consolidation.

Jurisdictional consolidation is a form of consolidation that involves the dissolution of existing departments and reforming a new single entity that is responsible for fire service delivery for the combined area. This entity would be overseen by a new administrative body that has representatives from the partnering jurisdictions that share oversight and decision-making authority. South Metro Fire Department, which covers the Cities of West St. Paul and South St. Paul, is an example of jurisdictional consolidation. There are both advantages and disadvantages to regional models.

There are a number of advantages associated with regionalization. The most referenced is the potential cost savings. At a minimum, savings can be realized through the consolidation of command/administrative personnel and technology. However, the most significant opportunity for savings comes from combing fire stations and/or fire companies. In order to combine stations, there must be an optimal location for a new or existing station that can effectively respond across jurisdictional boundaries. In addition, the calls for service workload in each jurisdiction must be low enough for one fire company, typically comprised of four firefighters on one piece of fire apparatus, to effectively respond to workload.

While there can be cost savings associated with a regional model, there are risks and disadvantages. Each participating municipality risks losing autonomy and unilateral control over the fire services being delivered to their community. For example, decisions regarding staffing, equipment, and response protocols are made not by the elected officials of the jurisdictions the consolidated Department serves but by the new single entity governing operations. While the new governing body has representation from each community, the decisions are made regarding the region as a whole and not just for one community or the other. This can lead to concerns that local priorities will not be met under the new structure and could lead to long-term cost increases. Jurisdictional consolidation can lead to the loss of individual identity. Specifically, the Hopkins Fire Department traces its roots back over 100 years, and in that time, it has built a unique culture, set of traditions, and identity which all can be lost, and the firefighters serving the community may feel disconnected under the new consolidated entity, impacting morale.

In the City if Hopkins, the most viable option for developing a regional department is to collaborate with the City of St. Louis Park and/or the City of Minnetonka. St. Louis Park currently operates a full-time career firefighter model while Minnetonka utilizes a paid-on-call model, like Hopkins. Given the existing operating models in each of the communities, the option to enter into a regional model with St. Louis Park offers the clearest advantage to the City of Hopkins because it would result in Hopkins transitioning to a full-time operating model. Merging with Minnetonka, or other paid-on-call departments, would not address the service delivery issues identified above unless those departments were also trying to convert to full-time.

In addition to these considerations, station location and age/condition are important factors to consider. The City of Hopkins, St. Louis Park, and Minnetonka each have made significant recent investments in their central fire stations. The location of each of those stations meets the service delivery and response time requirements of each respective community; however, the current station locations do not accommodate serving more than one community. This means that the potential cost savings associated with merging fire stations and/or companies could not be realized without the development of new station locations. This is unlikely to occur in the near term because the remaining useful life of each City's existing stations is significant. Therefore, any near-term consolidation effort

would likely only yield cost savings through command/administrative position consolidation and economies of scale resulting from shared technology implementation.

While these factors limit the utility of regionalization in the near term, there will likely be opportunities to pursue regionalization in the future. For example, as existing stations age and St. Louis Park and/or Minnetonka seek to replace or build new fire stations, there may be an opportunity to collaborate on a station location/design that can serve the needs of both communities. Similarly, should Minnetonka decide to pursue a full-time model, there may be an opportunity to collaborate with Hopkins to achieve a regional approach that meets the needs of both communities. However, these are long-term considerations.

Given these considerations, the most viable option for the City of Hopkins to address previously discussed service delivery challenges is to move toward a full-time operating model. Developing a regional approach with St. Louis Park offers the most feasible scenario to accomplish that goal through regionalization over the next 10 years. To illustrate costs associated with forming a regional department, the following analysis provides a theoretical example of a regional department between Hopkins and neighboring St. Louis Park based on publicly available information. It is important to note that any costs outlined in this section are estimated and subject to change as forming a regional department would require lengthy, in-depth negotiations with the City of Hopkins and any potential partner jurisdiction(s).

Staffing

St. Louis Park has an all-full-time staff that operates out of two fire stations. A partnership between it and the City of Hopkins would likely result in an all-full-time Department providing fire suppression and fire prevention activities to both communities. St. Louis Park's current fire stations cannot deploy staff to respond to calls for service within the boundaries of Hopkins within industry benchmark response times. Therefore, the Hopkins Fire Station must remain in service to ensure the fastest response times. This would mean three stations would be needed to adequately respond to calls for service within the new Fire District.

Combining the two departments would consolidate the command and fire prevention staff. St. Louis Park's command and fire prevention staff currently includes the following.

Table 31: St. Louis Park Staffing Approach

Description	Staffing
Command	• Fire Chief • Deputy Fire Chief of Operations • Assistant Chief of Training and EMS
Fire Prevention	• Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention (serves as Fire Marshal) • (2) Lieutenants • (3) Fire Prevention Specialists

If the two cities agree that this command and fire prevention structure is sufficient to oversee the operations of a combined Department, it will result in the cost savings of one Fire Chief position and a Fire Marshall position, as well as the redeployment of up to three full-time firefighter/inspector positions to incident response. The estimated potential cost savings through position consolidation are summarized below.

Table 32: Potential Position Consolidation Savings under a Regional Department

Positions	Estimated Salary/Cost	Health Insurance Estimate	Non-Health Benefit Estimate	Estimated Total Compensation	#	Estimated Total Cost
Assistant Chief	$150,000	$21,672	$21,000	$192,672	1	$192,672
Fire Marshall	$77,667	$21,672	$10,291	$109,630	1	$109,630
Total						**$302,302**

The estimated $300,000 related to savings through the consolidation of the Fire Chief and Fire Marshal could be reallocated to hire additional full-time firefighters to staff the Hopkins station.

St. Louis Park provides 24-hour station coverage with 24 full-time firefighters deployed on three shifts. If this staffing model is expanded to include the Hopkins station, 12 full-time firefighters must be added to the regional Department, with at least three of those being Company Officers to provide leadership over the shifts at the Hopkins station. The estimated cost of the new staff is approximately $1.14 million, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 33: Potential Additional Staff for Regional Department

Position	Average Salary	Estimated Benefit Contribution (25%)	Total Compensation	#	Total
Company Officers	$80,000	$20,000	$100,000	3	$300,000
Firefighter	$75,000	$18,750	$93,750	9	$843,750
Total					**$1,143,750**

The estimated net increase in staff costs based on consolidating command and fire prevention staff and hiring new full-time firefighters and company officers is $578,750. This amount could be reduced based on any additional full-time Firefighters added prior to consolidation.

Facility Improvements

St. Louis Park currently operates out of two fire stations. However, neither is in a location that would allow for response times to meet industry benchmarks with an effective response force if responding to calls within the City of Hopkins. Therefore, either the existing Hopkins Fire Station would have to be continued to be utilized by the new Fire District, or a new station would need to be constructed to serve the whole consolidated district.

The most cost-effective approach would be to make the previously discussed facility improvements at the Hopkins Fire Station to provide additional dorm space, meeting space, and offices to house a full-time company. According to the previously detailed analysis of recent fire station projects and the cost estimate received by the City, the improvements to the station could cost between $1.57 million and $3.96 million.

Equipment and Technology

Under this scenario, since the Hopkins Fire Station would need to remain in service, there is likely no significant amount of equipment or apparatus sharing that could occur under the Regional Department; therefore, there is no cost savings in this area. However, there is the opportunity to consolidate software systems such as ImageTrend, FirstDue, or another similar program. The costs associated with this switch could include any early opt-out payments needed based on existing contracts, new user licenses under the consolidated system, and a one-time data transfer

fee to combine the data from the two jurisdictions. These costs would need to be negotiated and identified through the specific vendor selected to use for the Regional Department.

The pursuit a regional department with a consolidated operational model would require the City to engage with neighboring communities to gage their interest and ensure that such a model would be mutually beneficial to the jurisdictions involved in terms of resources and response capabilities/response times.

If a partner jurisdiction is found, forming a regional department comes with the added challenges of merging two distinct cultures, sets of operational processes/procedures, and administrative systems. Therefore, if the City chooses to pursue this option, it will be vital that consolidation is carefully planned, executed, and implemented to ensure a successful transition to maintain high-quality service delivery to the impacted communities.

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER MODEL

The project team was also asked to assess the feasibility of utilizing the public safety officer model or training public works employees to assist with larger, complex incidents. Neither of these options is recommended as a part of this assessment.

The public safety officer approach combines police and fire response forces into a single, hybrid department where staff are cross-trained and can respond to all types of calls for service, from criminal activity to structure fires and EMS calls.

In several ways, this transition is feasible for the City of Hopkins. According to the project fieldwork, the Hopkins Police Department already has several officers who are also firefighters, and the police are already assisting the Fire Department on medical calls. Additionally, this model does allow for increased staffing for initial response to single-need calls, such as a lift assist after a fall or another medical emergency. However, if the incident is more complex, police and fire personnel have unique responsibilities. For example, if there is a car accident, police officers are responsible for investigating the accident, following up with any citations or arrests, controlling traffic, and returning a scene to normal. On the other hand, firefighters are tasked with stabilizing the vehicle, knowing the hazards of modern safety features in vehicles (airbags), patient removal, medical treatment of those patients, and mitigating environmental safety hazards such as fuel and other material spillage. Due to the different responsibilities of police and fire at the scene of a complex incident, there is a need to separate the administration of the different functions wherein one person oversees the operations of the police personnel, and another oversees the operations of the fire personnel.

Furthermore, according to a report from the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), several issues can arise under the hybrid public safety officer model, including:

Fire safety programs may become neglected: Merging departments and downsizing resources can reduce the frequency and effectiveness of safety inspections, fire prevention planning activities, public engagement/education, in-service training, and emergency medical services.

Increased costs: A public safety officer model can have increased costs, including higher wages per employee due to the dual responsibilities each staff member has, increased pension costs, additional costs associated with cross-training personnel, and higher insurance costs due to not meeting International Organization for Standardization (ISO) requirements.

Lowered morale: Merging police and fire departments together can include priority shifts, personnel cuts, and other disruptive events, resulting in low morale and high turnover.

Difficult and Inadequate Training: Serving as law enforcement officers and firefighters would require significant training to stay current with best practices for two distinct and very different roles. Additionally, due to the demand for services, public safety officers may experience lapses in training, resulting in decreased skills and loss of ability for individuals to fulfill their dual roles.

Insufficient on-the-job experience: Cross-trained public service officer personnel often fail to get experience in their secondary field, which, according to the IAFF/IAFC, usually is firefighting.

Loss of firefighting team concept: Insufficient on-the-job experience, particularly with firefighting, reduces group cohesion and efficiency in operations.

Role conflicts: Serving a dual role of a law enforcement officer and a firefighter may lead to confusion and conflict with staff as they constantly switch between those roles.

Reduced planning and goal setting: According to the IAFF/IAFC, planning and goal setting within public service officer hybrid departments is often inadequate or non-existent. Planning and goal setting are key components of proper management and should be prioritized.

Inability to meet demand: A unified approach combining police and fire into a hybrid department may work in smaller communities with low call volumes. However, in larger communities or communities with higher call volumes, the public safety officer hybrid department is often too lean to adequately keep up with the demand and meet community expectations for service.

Furthermore, if a department has simultaneous incidents, it could make deploying public safety officers difficult. If staff and personnel are engaged in one event and therefore delayed in responding to a second or third event, it could result in increased loss of life and property. The difficulty in deploying public safety officers could also impact the mutual aid agreements the City of Hopkins has in place, wherein the Fire Department can respond to incidents in neighboring communities. According to call data from 2018-2022 provided by the Department, the City of Hopkins provides mutual aid to neighboring communities on average 31 times a year. Under a hybrid public safety officer model, the Department's ability to respond to those calls could be impacted.

Many of the same considerations apply to training public works employees to assist with complex incidents. Training costs and logistics associated with ensuring public works employees can assist in those incidents would be extremely difficult. Firefighting is very technical and requires significant training and desire to perform. Like police officers, public works staff have different roles in some incidents, such as ensuring an adequate water supply, mitigating fire stream run-off, assisting with clean-up after weather emergencies, and more. Instead of spending the resources to train public works employees, the City should continue to utilize its mutual aid agreements to call on fire companies from neighboring jurisdictions to assist with complex incidents as needed.

Overall, instead of pursuing the hybrid public safety officer model or utilizing public works employees to assist on larger incidents, it is recommended that the City continue its current use of police officers to assist with some EMS calls and provide 24-hour station coverage with a separate Fire Department. With a 24-hour staffed Fire Department, there would be little or no benefit in terms of response time compared to a hybrid department due to the smaller community size. The police department's first response is beneficial; however, as stated above, separating roles on incidents allows each entity to assume their roles appropriately. It also ensures that each department maintains

adequate training, enhances fire safety programs, prioritizes planning and goal setting, and gives the City the best possible opportunity to meet the service demands of the community.

Recommendation 15: Pursue a full-time staffing model with consideration of regional consolidation opportunities within 10 years.

The analysis and recommendations detailed above offer a constructive and attainable path to strengthen the existing paid-on-call operating model. However, this model will not be sustainable in the long-term. Fully addressing these issues will require that the City move toward an operating model that consistently provides coverage from the existing fire station 24 hours per day, seven days per week, using part-time and full-time firefighters. This will require that City implement a new service model.

The comparative analysis detailed above regarding alternative service models outlines the advantages, disadvantages and estimated costs associated with each service model alternative. That analysis demonstrates that there are two viable options, including transitioning to a full-time model within the City of Hopkins and partnering with one or more neighboring jurisdictions to share the cost of a regional fire department.

Both of these options serve a similar purpose by creating a consistent full-time firefighting compliment. The City of Hopkins full-time model is a more expensive alternative but provides for unilateral control of Department operations, service level, policy, budget, and response protocols. The regional models offer cost savings at the expense of departmental autonomy and are contingent upon the willing participation of neighboring communities. Fortunately, the existing paid-on-call model is still functioning and, with the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report, will be strengthened. This will allow the City policy makers to take a thoughtful, long-term approach to evaluating and implementing a full-time operating model. It will also allow the City to engage with its neighbors in discussion regarding the interest, viability, and timing of regional partnership opportunities that can add service value to each community. To that end, it is recommended that the City initially focus on enhancing the current paid-on-call model while strategically pursuing, over a 10+-year horizon, the goal of creating more full-time firefighting capacity in Hopkins.

Over the 10+ year horizon, the Department can continue to make incremental adjustments to the paid-on-call model by hiring additional full-time firefighters as resources allow and facility improvements are made. The new full-time staff could then be inserted into the shift schedule as the Department continues to utilize paid-on-call and part-time firefighters to fill scheduling gaps and cover leave time (vacations, sick time, etc.) The following organizational chart illustrates what an incremental adjustment could look like.

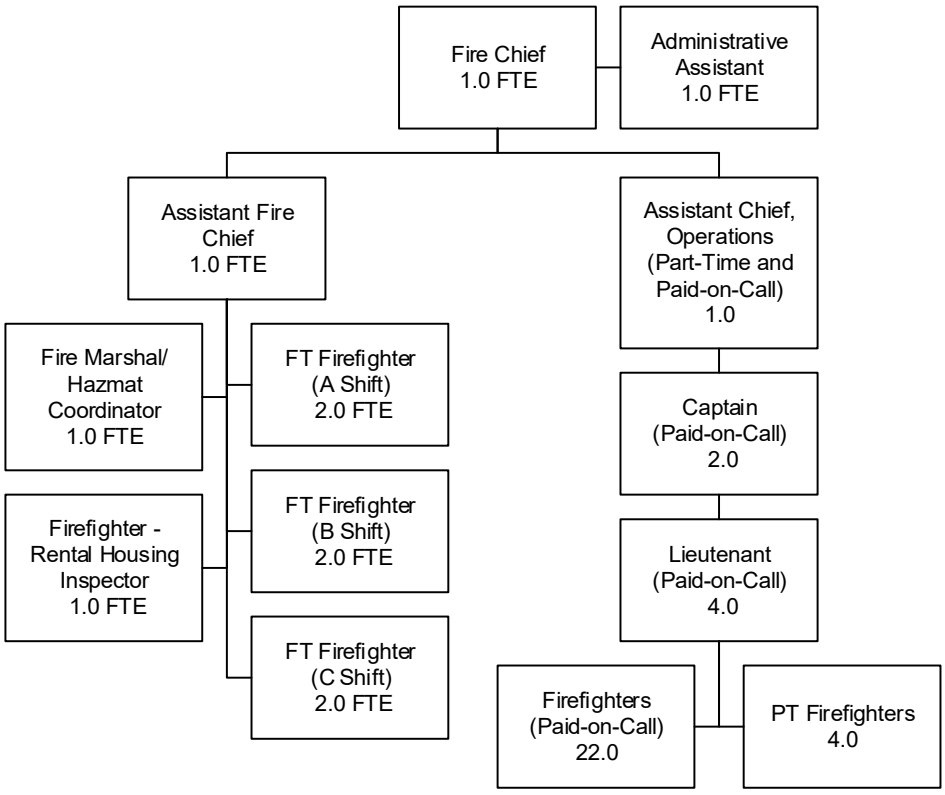
Fire Chief
1.0 FTE
Administrative Assistant
1.0 FTE
Assistant Fire Chief
1.0 FTE
Assistant Chief, Operations (Part-Time and Paid-on-Call)
1.0
Fire Marshal/ Hazmat Coordinator
1.0 FTE
FT Firefighter (A Shift)
2.0 FTE
Captain
(Paid-on-Call)
2.0
Firefighter - Rental Housing Inspector
1.0 FTE
FT Firefighter (B Shift)
2.0 FTE
Lieutenant
(Paid-on-Call)
4.0
FT Firefighter (C Shift)
2.0 FTE
Firefighters
(Paid-on-Call)
22.0
PT Firefighters
4.0

Figure 8: Organizational Chart Illustrating Incremental Adjustment to Department Staffing

The incremental adjustments to the staffing model enable the City to work towards the ultimate goal of a consistent full-time firefighting compliment while minimizing the budgetary impacts and spreading costs over multiple years.

Conclusion

The primary goal of this staffing study was to analyze operations, service demands, organizational structure, and processes to provide recommendations for improving efficiency and effectiveness. The fact that the City of Hopkins chose to pursue this study shows a commitment to change and improvement. Staff throughout the Fire Department were very forthcoming and helpful to the project team throughout the process.

The recommendations offered by the project team are intended to aid the organization in its alignment of staffing levels, operations, and policies with community expectations and industry best practices. A total of five additional full-time positions are recommended to meet this goal, as well as additional equipment and enhancements to existing technology. The report also includes a recommendation to reassess, after a period, the need to make enhancements to the existing facility based on the potential future needs of the Department.

The Department's leadership under the Fire Chief and workforce are a solid foundation by which to implement the process improvements and recommendations contained in this report. Implementation will take investment, time, and hard work to be successful. Given the City's limited resources, implementation will likely need to take place over five to 10 years with the Department prioritizing them in a thoughtful and planned manner to ensure the limited resources are utilized to have the greatest impact to the Hopkins Fire Department. The following table outlines general implementation timelines and a critical path for both optimizing the current paid-on-call model and moving toward a full-time and/or regional operating model.

Table 34: Implementation Timeline

Recommendation	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10
Optimization of Current Model Recommendations										
Review and discuss long-term alternatives with policy makers and other communities										
Perform facility improvements.										
Add full-time staff to move to a full-time staffing model (8 additional firefighters and 4 company officers)										
Procure bunker gear for new firefighters										

APPENDIX A:

Sample Amortization Table for Facility Improvements

Table 35: Sample Amortization Table of General Obligation Bond for Facility Improvements

Year	Beginning Balance	Principal	Interest	Annual Payment	Ending Balance
1	$3,200,000.00	$113,155.45	$112,000.00	$225,155.45	$3,086,844.55
2	$3,086,844.55	$117,115.89	$108,039.56	$225,155.45	$2,969,728.67
3	$2,969,728.67	$121,214.94	$103,940.50	$225,155.45	$2,848,513.73
4	$2,848,513.73	$125,457.47	$99,697.98	$225,155.45	$2,723,056.26
5	$2,723,056.26	$129,848.48	$95,306.97	$225,155.45	$2,593,207.78
6	$2,593,207.78	$134,393.17	$90,762.27	$225,155.45	$2,458,814.61
7	$2,458,814.61	$139,096.93	$86,058.51	$225,155.45	$2,319,717.68
8	$2,319,717.68	$143,965.33	$81,190.12	$225,155.45	$2,175,752.35
9	$2,175,752.35	$149,004.11	$76,151.33	$225,155.45	$2,026,748.24
10	$2,026,748.24	$154,219.26	$70,936.19	$225,155.45	$1,872,528.98
11	$1,872,528.98	$159,616.93	$65,538.51	$225,155.45	$1,712,912.05
12	$1,712,912.05	$165,203.52	$59,951.92	$225,155.45	$1,547,708.52
13	$1,547,708.52	$170,985.65	$54,169.80	$225,155.45	$1,376,722.88
14	$1,376,722.88	$176,970.15	$48,185.30	$225,155.45	$1,199,752.73
15	$1,199,752.73	$183,164.10	$41,991.35	$225,155.45	$1,016,588.63
16	$1,016,588.63	$189,574.84	$35,580.60	$225,155.45	$827,013.79
17	$827,013.79	$196,209.96	$28,945.48	$225,155.45	$630,803.82
18	$630,803.82	$203,077.31	$22,078.13	$225,155.45	$427,726.51
19	$427,726.51	$210,185.02	$14,970.43	$225,155.45	$217,541.49
20	$217,541.49	$209,927.54	$7,613.95	$217,541.49	$0.00