

COLUMBIA RIVER FIRE & RESCUE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 to 2028



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Columbia River Fire & Rescue

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Dear CRFR Board of Directors and Residents:

13 June 2023

The following Strategic Plan is intended to outline CRFR's process for defining our strategy, priorities, direction, and decision matrix in allocating the needed resources to attain growth and fiscal stability.

Furthermore, this plan elaborates the control mechanisms for guiding the implementation of our actions and management strategies during a set timeline. Coupled with an effective budgetary process, this strategic plan's purpose is to aid CRFR in mobilizing the resources necessary to achieve successful action. Our process throughout the formulation of this plan is directly related to a plausible attainment of our goals. Focusing on the development of our standards and methodology, that if repeated and adhered to, will result in high probability of successfully achieving our project objectives.

CRFR's administration is committed to adhering to this plan, continually monitoring progress, and following through the evaluation process throughout the scope of this plan. During the course of this plan, we will do our utmost to reduce resistance to change, ensure acceptance, and avoid common pitfalls that can arise from an organization lacking a specific direction.

National best practices identify that simply extending financial forecasting and statement projections, without consideration of available funding resources is insufficient in achieving the goals and objectives of any organization. Therefore, we strongly believe that the key to a material manifestation of our organizational strategies must promote our values and the needs of our communities, while maintaining cognition, significant discipline, and commitment to fiduciary responsibility. As we progress through 2023-2028 any decision or actions must be conducted in collaboration with an investment in our infrastructure, equipment, staffing, high level of wildland/structural fire protection, as well as emergency medical services.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to have a clearly identifiable path for our organization. We present to you the 2023-2028 Five Year Strategic Plan for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Columbia River Fire and Rescue

Joel Medina
Fire Chief

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Plan Maintenance and Revision Record

Revision Number	Date of Revision	Date Entered	Revision Made by

Letter of Promulgation

If approved by Columbia County Fire & Rescue Board in Columbia County OR, May 2023

To: All Officials within Columbia County, citizens, and employees within the County, no matter the city you work in.

While working together with our planning team and its members, we have put our citizens first to protect their lives, property, and the environment. This Strategic Plan has been developed in collaboration with Columbia County Fire & Rescue, Columbia County's Fire Board, and other stakeholders to address various issues within Columbia County, OR.

CRFR and the planning team that developed this plan will never cover every possible scenario for our response capabilities in an all-hazard environment. Still, our plan, in conjunction with a unified command structure developed, has considerably improved our community's resiliency. This plan clearly delineates roles and responsibilities among our County, cities, and multiple first responder agencies within our jurisdictions. It addresses specific policies of best practices within our County while providing the services our constituents require. The explicit following of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), Incident Command System (ICS), and Emergency Support Function (ESFs) will be adhered to push CRFR into the future.

This plan aims to integrate and coordinate our county officials, multiple first-responder agencies, private and public partnerships, the school board, and stakeholders into an effective team. A unified command and collaboration capable of seamlessly scaling up and down to address any emergency within our County, no matter the city or its origin.

This Strategic Plan for Columbia County does not supersede Local, State, and Federal but supplements its provision for our local jurisdiction. This plan will be reviewed at a minimum of every two years and make any necessary changes to the unified command structure, future financial changes, or other elements whenever there is a change in our CRFR Board or stakeholder's leadership, revenue streams, and tax turnover rates set forth by Columbia County, Oregon.

The Columbia River Fire & Rescue Board of Directors, CRFR, and other stakeholders give this strategic plan support and approval.

This letter declares the adoption of the Strategic Plan for all-hazards and the future of CRFR for Columbia County. All the stakeholders in this plan have adopted NIMS, ICS systems, and details surrounding this plan.

Vision Statement

The strategic plan for Columbia River Fire & Rescue aims to further the following organizational vision:

To serve the needs of our community promptly and professionally with honor, commitment, and distinction, never failing to deliver quality emergency life safety services with the highest level of dignity, dedication, teamwork, and community engagement. We are and accept being a responsive and progressive part of the Columbia River Fire District.

Mission Statement

The mission of Columbia River Fire & Rescue is to it is our number one priority to provide the best fire and emergency medical service to all citizens and visitors of the Columbia River fire district. service excellence, efficacy, and caring are paramount objectives of CRFR. adherence to the highest possible level of professional standards and recognized "best practices" in the service disciplines of, structural and wildland fire protection, fire prevention, emergency medical response, rescue, and other community needs. firefighters may risk their lives to save a life. firefighters may put themselves at a moderate risk to save property. firefighters will risk nothing to save life or property that is already lost or destroyed.

Considerations

Public and private land management within Columbia County, Oregon is also significant and affects the fires' size, speed, and damage potential. Considering what is at risk, “In the West, 12.3 million more homes projected to be built in the WUI by 2030; in the Southeast, 4.6 million” (Edwards, 2019, p. 31)—restricting natural wildfires from burning for decades created “catastrophic wildfires that burned across the western U.S. and inspired a national approach for reducing wildfire risk” (Ray, Kolden, & Chapin, 2012, p. 2). The human element and population density that coincides with this create a future where the cost of these wildfires continues growing exponentially in Oregon, especially in our growing response area as we become a commuter community to Portland.

The WUI is the transition zone where undeveloped natural land meets manufactured structures. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, “the WUI area continues to grow by approximately 2 million acres per year,” In Oregon, 30.1 to 45 percent of our resident’s homes are in the wildland-urban interface (What Is the WUI? 2022). As this interface impact increases, human impact remains the leading cause of wildfires in the United States. Humans are “responsible for starting 84 percent of all wildfires between 1992 and 2012” (Edwards, 2019, p. 32). While weather and other natural causes create large wildfires, our greatest success with mitigation efforts can come from hardening the WUI. Columbia County, Oregon, is a prime example of this growth and has a long-standing history of wildfires.

Columbia County, Oregon’s presence has been growing in the last decade, and due to this expansion, it is now more than ever facing an increased threat of wildfires. Thus, the WUI is increasing within Columbia County. The most recent large-scale fire that affected Columbia County was the Eagle Creek fire in September 2017 in the Columbia River Gorge. Though indirect, the effects still reached Columbia County and its residents. This Fire consumed 48,861 acres from September 2 until November 30th, 2017, when it was 100% contained (Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area - Fire Management, 2018). Due to most of this fire occupying state land, the loss of structures remained at three, but its effects spread into the major metropolitan areas. According to the United States Forest

Service, the latest cost estimate was around 20 million (2018). The investigation into the fire’s origin revealed that a teenager threw a firecracker in that area and was subsequently ordered to pay “36 million in restitution, mostly to the State of Oregon and Forest Service” (Edwards, 2019, p. 32). The human element continues to encroach on this WUI across the U.S.

Columbia County is about to face the most significant population boost it has experienced in decades, from the new 238-unit affordable housing apartments located on Columbia River Highway-30 and Gable Rd to the new housing developments just off Columbia River Highway-30, in conjunction with the redevelopment project of 276 acres in the city of St. Helens on the Columbia River (Arden, 2022). Since 2010, Columbia County’s population has grown by 8.53%, which is expected to jump significantly with the influx of a 150-million-dollar revitalization riverfront project (Columbia County, Oregon Population, 2023). The population over the last decade has remained relatively neutral, but Columbia County is now rapidly becoming a commuter community for Portland, Oregon. Coupled with an estimated population of 52,117 residents, the WUI risk only increases annually (Columbia County, OR, 2020).

Figure 1

WUI relative to total houses in the state (%)

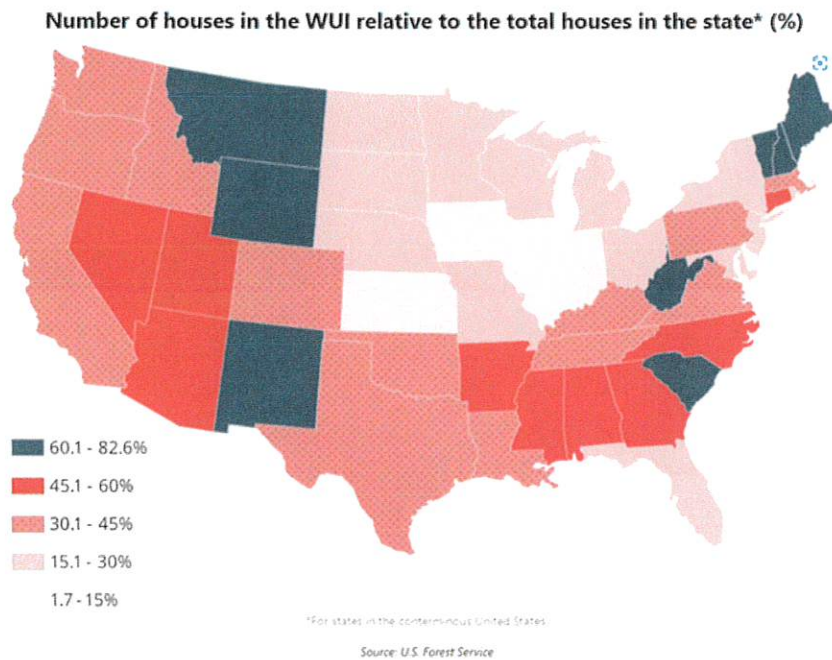


Table 4
Columbia County's Demographics Chart and Pertinent Info

Columbia County's Demographics & Pertinent Info	
Population 53,000+	
Race percentage in each category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White- 92.1% • Black- 0.53% • Asian- 1.12% • American Indian and Alaska Native- 1.6% • Persons reporting two or more races- 3.4%
Ethnicity percentage in each category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic or Latino 6.2% • White alone, not Hispanic, or Latino 87%
Poverty level percentage in each category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons below the poverty level- 12.3% • Homeless estimate- 150 to 160- 0.003%
Educational level for adults: persons age 25+ percentage in each category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 9th grade- 2.19% • 9th to 12th grade, no diploma – 4.16% • High school graduate (includes equivalency) 47.48% • Some college, no degree 18.57% • Associate degree 10.06% • Bachelor's degree- 21.99% • Graduate or professional degree 7.8%
High and low incomes: Household percentage in each category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Median household income – \$73,909 • Less than 25,000 19.05% • \$25,00 to \$49,999- 19.05% • \$50,000 to \$74,999-17.82% • \$75,000 to \$99,999- 15.44% • \$100,000 to \$149,999- 20.05% • \$150,000 to \$199,999- 8.30% • \$200,000 or more- 5.35% • Per capita money income in the past 12 months \$ 34,347
Occupations: Civilian Population 16 years and over percentage in each category	<p>Employs: 43,200</p> <p>Retail Trade: 6,355</p> <p>Health Care and social assistance: 5,959</p> <p>Accommodation and Food services: 4,399</p>

<p>Industry: Civilian Population 16 years and over percentage in each category</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining- 2.7% • Construction- 2.8% • Manufacturing- 4.0% • Retail trade- 9.3% • Transportation and warehousing, and utilities-4.0% • Wholesale retail- Not listed. • Information- Not listed. • Professional, scientific, management, and administrative and waste management services- 3.0% • Educational services- 7.0% • health care and social assistance- 15.1% • Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services- 4.0% • Other services, except public administration-14.1% • Public administration-8.6%
<p>Seniors and other vulnerable populations percentage in each category</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons 65 years and over (Seniors)- 31.2% (33,985) • 5,874 of our senior citizens have vision and hearing disabilities. • 4,000 plus have Alzheimer's or Dementia • Persons under 18 years 16.6% • Persons under five years- 3.8% • Language other than English spoken at home- 7.2% • Population with a disability (non-institutionalized)- 14.8% (16,194) • Non-institutionalized population with no health insurance coverage 15.8%
<p>Households with a computer Households with a broadband internet connection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to a computer- 93.9% • Households with Broadband subscriptions- 89.7%
<p>Building Permits in 2020 Home value in Columbia County, OR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 291 new building permits. • \$312,700 is the median home value.

Figure 3
Map of Columbia County, Oregon



- Columbia County's land area encompasses 657.4 square miles of most WUI, except the larger cities that skirt the Columbia River.

Executive Summary

The strategic plan for Columbia River Fire & Rescue consists of the following high-level objectives and action steps:

Objectives:

This is a five (5) year plan projected from 2023-28. The goal of this strategic plan is to maintain the highest level of fire and EMS while paralleling the growth and expansion of coverage areas belonging to Columbia River Fire and Rescue District. The priority objective shall be to continue the highest level of fiscal responsibility and efficacy possible.

Action Steps:

This shall be achieved through a clear and concise budgeting process that includes:

- * Adherence to budgetary limitation
- * Fiscal responsibility
- * Financial foreseeability

The process will be achieved by a constant evaluation and mitigation of reasonably foreseen consequences and circumstances as they are identified.

Business and Team Summary

1. Joel Medina
Fire Chief
Will provide Management, Review, and Collaboration to include cooperative participation across all administrative divisional disciplines. Including but not limited to review, update, and maintenance of this strategic plan.
2. Eric Smythe
Deputy Chief
Having extensive experience in management and mitigation of operational readiness and incident command. Assist in management, review, and collaboration across all administrative divisional disciplines. Including but not limited to review, update, and maintenance of administrative policies and procedures.
3. Jimmy Sanchez
Division Chief of Administration / Logistics
Municipal finance forecasting and budgeting along with but not limited to insuring adherence to budgetary constraints and procurement procedures.

4. Randolph (Tad) Pedersen
Fire Marshal

Having complete command of local and State policies and procedures in the discipline of Fire prevention and investigation, the Fire Marshal will monitor and advise pending or purposed plans of growth and construction that may impact this strategic plan.

Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Strength	Opportunities
Emergency Medical Service Provider.	Combination Fire and EMS Department.
Wildland and Structural Fire Protection.	Provide contractual fleet maintenance services.
Fire Prevention.	Provide Full Service Comprehensive Fire training facility.
Volunteer Services.	Construction and population growth.
Self-sufficient Administrative Management.	Seek available increase taxable revenue.

Weakness	Threats
Paramedic staffing recruitment.	Unpredictable population growth.
Antiquated infrastructure.	High milage and worn vehicles/apparatus.
Limited revenue	Increase in supply and equipment cost.
Large coverage area.	Lack of County Hospital and definitive care Receiving facilities.
Water supply in rural and urban environments.	long transport times to receiving facilities.
Inclement weather	Terrain and narrow access roadways.

Analysis of Marketing Strategy and Target Customers

The marketing strategy of Columbia River Fire & Rescue must include securing an increase exposure to our stakeholders. Increase exposure in print media, television, and social media outreach to inform our visitors, citizens, and constituents of the services, emergency response and coverage capabilities of the district.

Input from our residents identify the need to redesign our Volunteer Service Corp program to allow for a diverse category of physical abilities. Coupled with increased exposure through social media and special events outreach programs is essential to enhance our volunteer membership.

Target customers include:

Visitors, constituents, business stakeholders, and residents of Columbia River Fire District, Columbia County, Oregon.

Year One Goals

Adhere to a regimented fiscal and procurement plan and procedure.

Strategy: To achieve a sufficient unappropriated ending fund balance (UEFB) by adherence to an established and adopted savings plan.

Financial Projections: The UEFB must be a priority every budgetary year in an effort for CRFR to achieve financial stability. Every effort must be made to maintain total personnel service cost below the annual tax revenue received by Columbia River Fire and Rescue.

Person(s) charged with execution: Columbia River Fire Board of Directors / Division Chief Sanchez

Person charged with evaluation: Fire Chief Joel Medina, Deputy Fire Chief Eric Smythe

Evaluation criteria: Balance budget, accountability of logistical resources, decrease encumbered operations costs, and \$500,000 for UEFB by the end of the first fiscal year.

Establish and Unappropriated Ending Fund Balance (UEFB)

Strategy: Establish a procedural driven purchase and procurement strategy while curbing expenditures.

Financial Projections: Planning of regimented initiatives to set aside funds to establish a two million five hundred-thousand-dollar UEFB.

Person(s) charged with execution: Columbia River Fire Board of Directors / Division Chief Sanchez

Person charged with evaluation: Fire Chief Joel Medina, Deputy Fire Chief Eric Smythe

Evaluation Criteria: By fiscal year 2027/28 the district should have two million five hundred thousand dollars in UEFB.

Policies and Procedures

Strategy: Maintain and update our Lexipol initiative.

Financial Projections: Collaborate with Finance to secure funding for our Lexipol policies and procedure platform.

Person(s) charged with execution: Deputy Fire Chief Eric Smythe

Person charged with evaluation: Fire Chief Joel Medina

Evaluation Criteria: Update and consolidate all identifiable abstract, patchy, and random departmental policies, and procedures.

Increase membership to CRFR Volunteer Service Corp

Strategy: Create a year-round autonomous and dynamic training regimen that enables volunteer to operate as an emergency responder quickly and effectively for the district. While accommodating any physical limitations that may exist or are prevalent.

Financial Projections: Grant funding.

Person(s) charged with execution: Deputy Fire Chief Eric Smythe

Person charged with evaluation: Fire Chief Joel Medina

Evaluation Criteria: Increase the volunteer recruitment by 100% with the current benchmark being participating numbers of 12.

Year Five Goals

Establish additional fire stations.

Strategy: Evaluate the feasibility of a tax levy or grants for funding, secure Training Grounds Property for development

Financial Projections: Search out possible grant funding and research revenue acquisition

Person(s) charged with execution: Deputy Fire Chief Eric Smythe

Person charged with evaluation: Fire Chief Joel Medina

Evaluation Criteria: Establishment of increase housing for emergency response personnel.

Vehicle Replacement Schedule

Strategy: Establish a "life span" of current apparatus and review process for downgrading response apparatus

Financial Projections: Budget for anticipate procurement.

Person(s) charged with execution: Administrative Officer

Person charged with evaluation: Fire Chief Joel Medina

Evaluation Criteria: Vehicles identified for replacement and budgetary allocation to accomplish replacement.

Increase Response Units

Strategy: Research coverage area requiring overlap responses, land acquisition, and funding allocation

Financial Projections: coordinate budget projections and funding

Person(s) charged with execution: Division Chief Gerald Cole

Person charged with evaluation: Deputy Fire Chief Eric Smythe

Evaluation Criteria: increase available units and decrease response times.

Six Month Reserve (UEFB)

Strategy: Adhere to a saving schedule and budgeting schedule.

Financial Projections: collaborate with the budgetary process to achieve.

Person(s) charged with execution: Division Chief Jim Sanchez

Person charged with evaluation: Fire Chief Joel Medina, Deputy Fire Chief Eric Smythe

Evaluation Criteria: Capital Revenue Reserve Fund equal to six (6) months of total capital expenditures.

Update Informational and Communication Technology

Strategy: Research and establish a "Live span" for our IT and Communications Systems, accountability, and allocation of all District Equipment as they pertain to IT and COMO

Financial Projections: collaborate with the budgetary process to achieve.

Person(s) charged with execution: Administrative Staff Officer

Person charged with evaluation: Fire Chief Joel Medina, Deputy Fire Chief Eric Smythe

Evaluation Criteria: Regimented replacement and update and allocation of all District Equipment as they pertain to IT and COMO.

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