

**CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

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FIRE AND EMS STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING OVERVIEW

Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI) was engaged by the Chester County responder organizations in cooperation with Chester County to develop a strategic plan / responder tool kit based on the recommendations of the county-wide Fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) delivery system analysis that was completed in August 2020. The study was performed in partnership with the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County Emergency Medical Services Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, and was funded through a grant. The development of this strategic plan provides the Chester County Fire and EMS agencies, the municipalities that they serve, along with their leadership including fire chiefs, EMS chiefs, municipal managers, and elected officials with a tool to chart the future direction of the fire and EMS delivery systems and a strategy to meet emerging challenges that will ensure the continued delivery of effective and efficient services to a growing community.

Once an organizational analysis has been completed, implementation often stalls as the client is overwhelmed with the amount of change necessary for substantive implementation. The process of introducing change into a public-sector organization needs to be carefully developed and monitored. Implementing a strategy needs to involve stakeholders, contain established priorities for action, and realistically pace change. It is our belief that through considering and implementing the recommendations outlined within this document, that the effectiveness of the fire and EMS delivery system, and efficiency related to the use of resources throughout Chester County will be enhanced for years to come.

This document will prioritize and pace the implementation of the recommendations that were contained within the organizational analysis that was completed in August 2020. Each recommendation will be assigned to a task group of stakeholders that has the responsibility to move the assigned recommendations forward considering the pace of change that can be tolerated by the various stakeholder organizations.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic planning is an organization's process of defining its direction and making decisions relative to the optimization of limited resources. A strategic plan also contains tools that can guide the implementation of the strategy. Strategic planning became prominent in corporations during the 1960s and remains an important aspect of organizational planning. In this case, the Chester County responder organizations and their stakeholder partners will need to consider 139 recommendations that were defined within the recently completed fire and EMS delivery system analysis and involve as many stakeholders as possible in developing paced action that will lead toward successful implementation of these recommendations.

Strategy has many definitions, but generally involves setting goals, determining actions to achieve the goals, and mobilizing resources to execute the actions. A strategy describes how the ends (goals) will be achieved by the means (resources). For the fire and EMS agencies that serve Chester County, there are a wide array of organizational structures and stakeholders who may have, or should have, a role in determining strategy. Strategy can be planned (intended) or can be observed as a pattern of activity (emergent) as the organization adapts to its environment or competes. The strategies in place in individual organizations and municipalities in Chester County range from very proactive, to strictly reactive, to totally unengaged. It is our observation that the strategy currently in place in the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association is a progressive and forward thinking one, at least from the perspective of the organizations themselves. A rapidly declining volunteer base and significant uncertainties regarding the appropriate and adequate financial support from municipalities throughout the County and their implications for the continued delivery of fire and EMS services provided the catalyst for an independent review of the overall county-wide emergency service delivery system, along with the development of a recommended strategic plan. Through this document, it is our goal to assist the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., the Chester County Fire Police Association, their respective member organizations, and the municipalities they serve in moving forward in a planned, intended strategic manner.

Strategic implementation is analytical in nature and involves identifying how to best reach a goal or desired outcome. The recommendations contained in this document, and in the recently completed organizational analysis, form the framework for action and indicate where change is necessary. This document provides guidance relative to how to pace and implement those recommendations. The strategic implementation process considers the intricacies of the organizational environment including the following:

- **Inputs** – information utilized to formulate recommendations
- **Outputs** – development of a plan of implementation
- **Outcomes** – that require evaluation

Inputs

Data is gathered from a variety of sources, such as interviews with key Chester County responders, review of pertinent data and documents on the community, service demand and desired service level, standard of cover selected, organizational performance, and observations gathered through field visits. Inputs are then collected to help support an understanding of the environment and its opportunities and risks. Other inputs include an understanding of the values of stakeholders. These values may be captured in an organization's mission statement, and in the observed organizational culture which provides an emergent perspective on the actual values present within an organization. The input gathered during the organizational analysis form the basis for each of the recommendations that have been developed.

Outputs

The output of strategic planning includes documentation and communication describing the organization's strategy and how it should be implemented, sometimes referred to as the strategic plan. The strategy may include a diagnosis of the competitive situation, a guiding policy for achieving the organization's goals, and specific action plans to be used for the implementation of the recommendations listed. A strategic plan may cover multiple years and is a flexible document that should be updated periodically.

Outcomes

The strategic planning process produces outputs, as described above, the implementation of the strategic plan produces outcomes. Ultimately, the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report will produce significant change and place the organization on an intended path. Change within an emergency services organization typically produces some level of initial skepticism, discomfort, and places personnel in a situation that is unfamiliar. As the process of implementing change moves forward, each action often elicits a reaction. Therefore, the team working to implement desired organizational change should be ready to address unanticipated outcomes, which often manifest themselves as barriers to continued progress and change. The process of implementing change should be considered a learning one.

In an effort to assist responders within Chester County, we have developed fifteen task groups to allow the responder organizations and their membership to take prioritized and paced doses of change. Perhaps the best analogy is to consider each recommendation as a small wave that will reverberate through the organizations and the County's fire and EMS delivery system. If all of the recommendations were pursued at one time, they would amount to a tidal wave of change that would create a level of chaos. Instead, we suggest that change be monitored and paced by the teams or task groups that are charged with implementation of a manageable set of recommendations.

CHAPTER II

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Chester County is protected by forty-five (45) separate and primarily autonomous fire companies/departments all of whom have a long and proud heritage and history of service to the community. Many of these organizations are totally independent; however, some are municipally controlled, although often to a limited extent. The fire departments/companies are still primarily utilizing volunteer personnel to provide fire protection; however, some agencies, often with municipal government support or sponsorship, are beginning to hire a limited number of full-time career firefighters to supplement the volunteer staff, primarily during the workday.

As volunteer organizations most fire company personnel generally do not staff their stations on regular shifts or on a consistent basis, although some companies do maintain in-station duty crews. In many cases, fire personnel respond to emergency calls from wherever they may be when an incident is dispatched.

Chester County is also protected by thirty-two (32) EMS agencies providing response to 9-1-1 medical emergencies. Chester County utilizes a tiered EMS system, consisting of Quick Response Service (QRS), Basic Life Support (BLS), and both transport and non-transport Advanced Life Support (ALS) levels. All 27 of Chester County's BLS and ALS EMS agencies utilize career staff to cover most of their responses, and are comprised of fire department affiliated, hospital affiliated, and independent organizations. Quick Response Service (QRS) providers remain largely volunteer and fire service based.

The management, organization, and sophistication of the emergency services providers vary widely. However, due to state regulations and oversight, the organizations that provide EMS services tend to be at the higher end regarding management and operations. The study team noted, that unlike in most places MRI has completed studies, the boundaries of municipalities and fire and EMS service providers are, for the most part, not the same in Chester County. As a result, the emergency services leadership and municipal governing bodies must often deal with multiple entities within their respective geographic areas of responsibility. In addition, except in a few cases, the municipal governing bodies have virtually no direct oversight, administrative, or command authority over the individual fire and EMS organizations and/or their operations. Funding for the fire and EMS organizations are as varied as the organizations and municipalities themselves. In some cases, there is an annual allocation of funds from the municipality, but even when that occurs, a significant portion of the budget often consists of individual fundraising activities undertaken by the fire companies and EMS organizations.

The individual organizations that comprise the fire and EMS services have been recognized for their accomplishments by various training, certification and oversight agencies including the Office of the Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner, Pennsylvania Department of Health, and Chester County Department of Emergency Services. The following are the organizations that provide primary fire and EMS services to Chester County, including those that are in adjacent counties but provide primary response to portions of the County.

- Alert Fire Company (Downingtown Fire Department)
- Avondale Fire Company
- Berwyn Fire Company
- Brandywine Hospital Medic 93 (ALS)
- Christiana Community Ambulance Association (Lancaster County)
- Christiana Fire Company (Lancaster County)
- Cochranville Fire Company
- Concordville Fire Company (Delaware County)
- East Brandywine Fire Company
- East Whiteland Fire Company
- Elverson-Honey Brook EMS
- Fame Fire Company (West Chester Fire Department)
- First West Chester Fire Company (West Chester Fire Department)
- Glenmoore Fire Company
- Good Fellowship Ambulance Club
- Goodwill Fire Company (West Chester Fire Department)
- Goodwill Steam Ambulance of Pottstown
- Goshen Fire Company
- Honey Brook Fire Company
- Kennett Fire Company
- Keystone Valley Fire Department
- Kimberton Fire Company
- Liberty Stream Fire Company (Spring City)
- Lionville Fire Company
- Longwood Fire Company
- Ludwigs Corner Fire Company
- Malvern Fire Company
- Minquas Fire Company (Downingtown Fire Department)
- Modena Fire Company
- Newtown Square Fire Company (Delaware County)
- Norco Fire Company
- Paoli Fire Company
- Phoenixville Fire Department
- Po-Mar-Lin Fire Company
- Radnor Fire Company (Delaware County)
- Ridge Fire Company
- Royersford Hose, Hook and Ladder (Montgomery County)
- Sadsburyville Fire Company
- Southern Chester County EMS (ALS)
- Thorndale Fire Company
- Trappe EMS (Montgomery County)
- Twin Valley Fire Department
- Union Fire Company No.1 (Oxford)
- Uwchlan Ambulance Corps
- Valley Forge Fire Company
- Wagontown Fire Company
- Washington Hose Company (Coatesville Fire Department)
- West Bradford Fire Company
- West Chester University QRS
- West End EMS (Phoenixville)
- West End Fire Company (Coatesville Fire Department)
- West Grove Fire Company
- West Whiteland Fire Company



- Westwood Fire Company
- Westwood Fire Company - Wagontown Division

In addition to the fire departments and EMS providers listed above, there are also three facility-based emergency services providers located in the County that can provide mutual aid when requested. These providers are:

1. ArcelorMittal Steel (Coatesville) Emergency Services.
2. Coatesville VA Hospital Fire Department (Coatesville). Provides frequent automatic and mutual aid for fire and EMS incidents to the City of Coatesville and surrounding townships.
3. Lockheed Martin (Sikorsky) Helicopter Fire Department (Sadsbury Township).

Figure 1 illustrates the location of all Chester County fire stations. Figure 2 shows the location of all EMS stations. The blue, yellow, and green colors on each map designate the geographic areas that the County utilizes for primary radio communications channels for fire and EMS incidents. These include East (blue), Central (yellow), and West (green).

It should be noted that that all maps included in this report reflect conditions and deployments as they existed on January 1, 2020. Any additional deployments that took effect after that date will not be reflected.

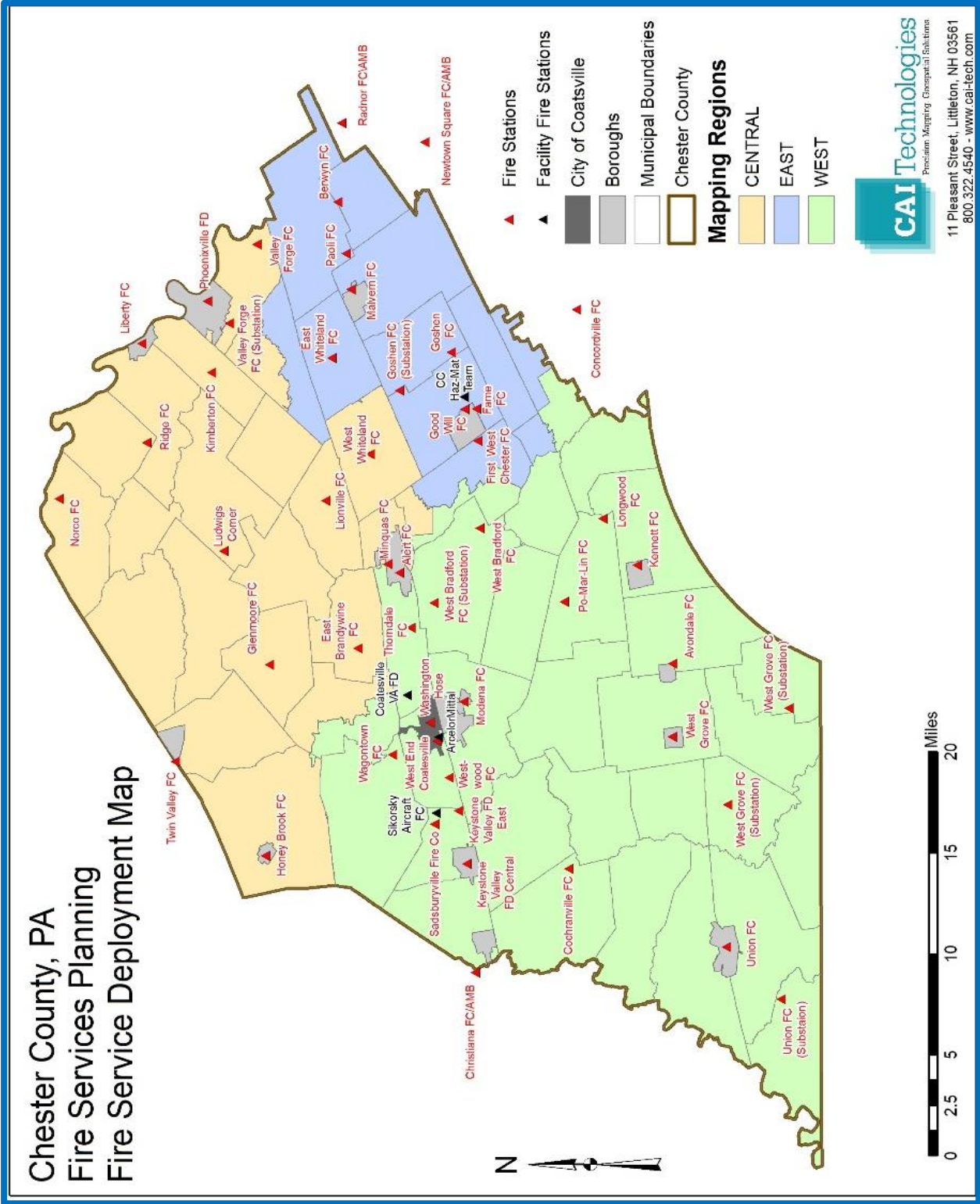


Figure 1: Chester County Fire Service Deployment Map



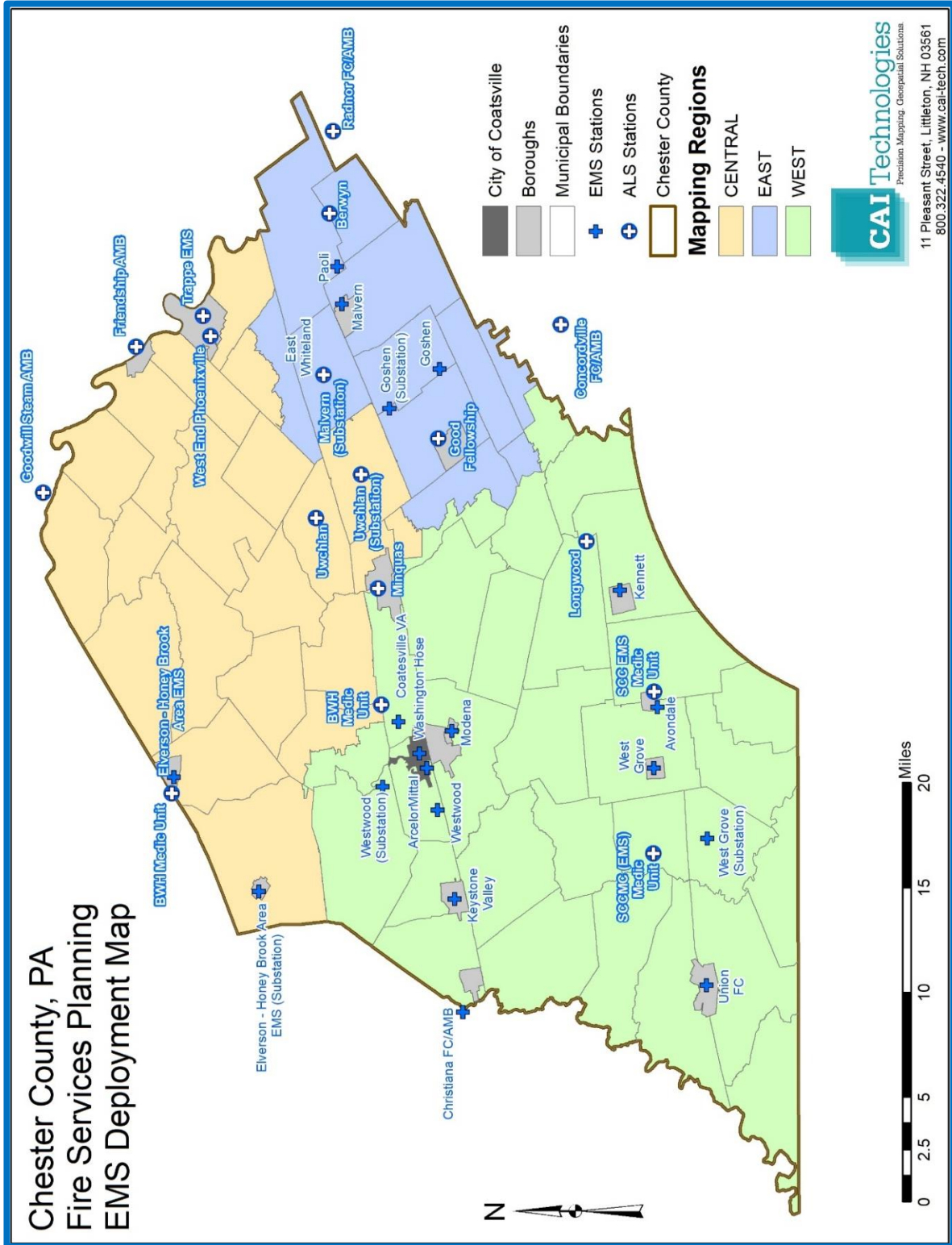


Figure 2: Chester County EMS Deployment Map

CHESTER COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association was formed in 1974 to serve as an advisory board and means of networking for the chiefs of each of the fire departments/companies that serve Chester County. According to its bylaws, the purpose of the Chief's Association is to:

1. Promote better fire prevention, fire protection, and firefighter safety among the members.
2. Serve as a central point to share information among the members and to resolve matters of disagreement between stations.
3. Act as a liaison between the County Commissioners, the County Department of Emergency Services, and the fire, rescue and Haz-Mat service providers within Chester County.
4. Coordinate the radio operations of the County 911 Center with the County fire and rescue companies and the Emergency Medical Services stations.



Figure 3
Chester County Fire Chiefs
Association Seal

There are also regional Fire Chief's Associations in the County including the Eastern Chester County (Main Line) Fire Chiefs, Central Chester County Fire Chiefs, Southern Chester County Fire Chiefs, Northern Chester County Fire Chiefs, and Western Chester County Fire Chiefs. These groups have varying levels of engagement with most meeting on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

CHESTER COUNTY EMS COUNCIL, INC.



**CHESTER
COUNTY EMS
COUNCIL, INC.**

Figure 4
Chester County EMS Council, Inc. Logo

The Chester County EMS Council, Inc. is comprised of EMS agencies, EMS consumers, hospitals, and allied health and public safety agencies having a vested interest in the provision of EMS; and is established to bring together the various elements of EMS serving Chester County, PA. The purpose of the Council, Inc. is to serve as a unified voice of EMS in providing advice and recommendations to local and county

governments, EMS agencies, consumers, and other emergency services entities to promote the maintenance and improvement of the EMS system and public safety in Chester County, PA.

CHESTER COUNTY FIRE POLICE ASSOCIATION

Fire Police serve as an important component of the overall emergency services delivery system. Fire Police members respond to a wide range of emergencies to provide traffic and scene control; in order to protect responders from the growing threats that highway traffic exposes them to. They also often respond to large planned events to assist local law enforcement with the same functions.



Figure 5
Chester County Fire Police Association Logo

The Chester County Fire Police Association which was organized in 1949, and formally chartered in 1965 exists to: promote the general improvement of the Fire Police service to the Chester County fire companies and communities they serve, gather and share information beneficial to all Fire Police, promote the welfare of the Fire Police through legislative enactments, and promote interest in improving the Fire Police service of the fire companies and to create a feeling of good-will and fellowship among members.

DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



Figure 6
Chester County Department of Emergency Services Seal

The Chester County Department of Emergency Services (DES) provides support and to some degree, coordination of the fire and EMS delivery system throughout the County. Operating under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, it also serves in an administrative oversight role as the regional EMS council. DES operates a fully interoperable 800 MHz radio system, along with mobile data computers, paging, station printers, WebCad, and third-party dispatch services from its emergency communications/ 9-1-1 Center. Chester County provides radio communication equipment and dispatch services to all the County's fire and EMS agencies at no cost.

DES is comprised of an Operations Group which consists of the 9-1-1 center, Fire Services, EMS Services, and Law Enforcement Services; a Planning and Logistics Group which is comprised of Emergency Management and Technical Services; and a Training and Development Group which oversees 9-1-1 training, fire training, EMS training, law enforcement training, training and exercises, and the Public Safety Training Campus. Additionally, Chester County operates a state-certified Hazardous Materials Response Team, and supports fire, EMS and technical rescue task forces including an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team.

CHAPTER III

STRENGTH, WEAKNESS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREAT (SWOT) ANALYSIS



Figure 7: SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a business term utilized to identify the *Strengths*, *Weaknesses*, *Opportunities*, and *Threats* present within an agency’s operating environment. This type of analysis involves specifying the objective or mission of an organization and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective.

Strengths: Characteristics of the agency that allows it to meet its mission, work toward achieving its vision, or provide exceptional service to a community.

Weaknesses: Characteristics of the agency that may create internal conflict, dysfunction, and/or frustrate organizational performance, thus creating a disadvantage to the organization in its efforts to meet the goals established by its mission statement.

Opportunities: Elements that the organization could pursue or develop to its advantage.

Threats: Elements in the environment that could create organizational instability or reduce the ability of an agency to fulfill its mission and/or achieve its vision.

A SWOT analysis aims to identify the key internal and external factors seen as important to achieving an organizational objective. Users of SWOT analysis must ask and answer questions that generate meaningful information for each category (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to make the analysis useful. SWOT analysis generally groups key pieces of information into two main categories:

1. **Internal factors:** The *strengths* and *weaknesses* internal to the organization.
2. **External factors:** The *opportunities* and *threats* presented by the environment external to the organization.

Analysis may view the internal factors as strengths or as weaknesses depending upon their effect on the organization's objectives. What may represent strengths with respect to one objective may be weaknesses (distractions) for another objective.

The use of a SWOT analysis by the responder organizations can be to organize data, enhance communications between divergent groups, provide insight into barriers that may be present

while engaging in organizational change processes, and identify strengths available that can be activated to counteract these barriers. A SWOT analysis can be used to:

- Explore new solutions to problems.
- Identify barriers that will limit goals/objectives.
- Decide on direction that will be most effective.
- Reveal possibilities and limitations for change.
- To revise plans to refocus on an organization's mission statement.
- As a brainstorming and recording device as a means of communication.
- Creating a series of recommendations in the context of an organizational study.

A SWOT analysis was originally developed as a reflective tool for profit seeking companies. However, the usefulness of SWOT analysis can apply to all types of organizations and is particularly applicable to public sector functions. The SWOT analysis in a public safety framework is beneficial because it helps organizations decide whether an objective is obtainable, and therefore enables agencies to set achievable goals, objectives, and steps to further the change or enhance organizational development. It enables organizers to take visions and produce practical and efficient outcomes that effect long-lasting change. It also helps organizations gather meaningful information to maximize their potential. Completing a SWOT analysis is a useful process regarding the consideration of key organizational priorities.

A SWOT analysis can be used effectively to build or focus an organization's intended strategy. The steps necessary to execute strategy-oriented analysis involve identification of internal and external factors, selection and evaluation of the most important factors, and identification of relations existing between internal and external features. A SWOT analysis may also be used in pre-crisis planning and preventive crisis management. SWOT analysis may also be used in creating a series of recommendations in the context of an organizational study.

This process undertaken by MRI, included an evaluation of both the external environment, as well as, the Chester County fire and EMS services internal factors, and the interrelationship between the two. This was accomplished through more than 75 in-person and virtual interviews, stakeholder input obtained from multiple group meetings, along with analysis of data obtained from various sources, including online surveys and questionnaires, which were distributed to every municipality and fire and EMS agency in Chester County. By approaching the SWOT analysis in this way, the process continues to reinforce a primarily; but not entirely; stakeholder-driven perspective.

Strengths:

- *Passion and dedication of Chester County fire and EMS personnel – they care and strive to provide excellent service.*
- A high regard for the customer.
- High-quality apparatus and equipment that is well distributed throughout the county.
- Strong support from the County Commissioners.
- Strong support from the public.
- Strong County Department of Emergency Services support for communities.
- State of the art training facility.
- Excellent training programs in many companies.
- Exceptional centralized resources for training and coordination of efforts.
- Best practice centralized resource coordination and deployment dispatch system.
- The County employs a high level of technology to coordinate service delivery.
- Some companies have excellent recruitment and retention programs.
- Recognition of current and potential challenges.
- Recognition that there is no one solution.
- High level of engagement in this study.
- Development of interagency coalition to address challenges.
- A curiosity to explore regionalization (not necessarily a direct interest yet).

Weaknesses:

- Societal change, and generational differences have changed the value of volunteer participation.
- Many active members are aging out.
- An overall reduction in active personnel and response staffing.
- The American fire and EMS services have an increased risk profile such as cancer, active shooter incidents, and more recently, COVID-19, which may change the level of interest of traditional candidates.
- Increasing training requirements consumes more leisure time.
- Increasing economic pressure on potential responders.
- Shifting concepts of who is responsible for cost.
- Political change in an increasingly divisive society.
- A large gap by the municipal governments in developing a thorough knowledge of what emergency services are truly delivered to their community.
- Lack of adequate financial support from municipalities relative to the true costs of providing services.

- Although well-intentioned, a county-wide recruitment and retention effort that has had only marginal success.
- Suspicion level from individual companies as to what the County can offer and deliver and what the cost may be (County take over).
- Increasing response metrics.
- Lack of standardized operational procedures.
- Not using AVL to its maximum capability.
- Continued use of resources that are not closest geographically.
- Lack of education of the public and local officials regarding all facets – including financial – of the fire and EMS delivery systems.
- Unnecessary redundancy in some types of apparatus.
- No established Standards of Response Cover (SOC) for responses.
- Continued primary use of traditional response practices for volunteer fire response.

Opportunities:

- Getting legislation enacted that was recommended in SR-6.
- Lobbying for legislation that will allow Chester County to take a more active role in assisting municipalities and fire and EMS agencies with continuing to provide a high level of service.
- Use of legislative processes to secure funding at both the local, regional, state, and federal levels.
- The ability to work with the community to identify the current level of service and set realistic service level/cost expectations.
- Development of an enhanced Department of Emergency Services that delivers more than the current support services.
- Development of a more county-wide focused fire and EMS delivery system that would bring additional standardization and continuity to emergency operations throughout the County.
- Increase in regional collaborations and endeavors within the County.
- Implementation of a Mobile Integrated Health Care program at the County level.
- County undertaking a role as an employer for fire and EMS personnel to assist with staffing issues and more favorable pay and benefits.
- Create a QRF (quick reaction force) model with regional deployment staffed by volunteers paid as per diems as an interim staffing measure.
- Address recruitment and retention county-wide by the consolidation of efforts.
- Demonstrate problem-solving abilities through programs and by providing a model approach to the declining volunteer crisis.

- Explore new forms of outreach and marketing to inform the community of the challenges ahead.
- Marketing and communicating the social identity and benefits of volunteering in Chester County.
- Harness best practices from across the nation relative to the further development of recruitment and retention strategies.
- Develop new support roles for volunteers (tech, social media, marketing, etc.).
- Education and strategize on how to bridge cultural and generational differences to attract younger and more diverse personnel to better reflect the County.

Threats:

- The fire and EMS services' ability to improvise and get a mission accomplished despite the absence of appropriate financial resources.
- The projection of a problem that does not exist, described as "*a crisis without evidence*". The fire and EMS providers see the service gaps, but the public sees and accepts a level of service continuity that goes against the description of the problem.
- Continued decline of volunteers across the County; part of an overall nationwide reduction in volunteerism.
- Continued exodus of younger trained volunteer personnel to career job opportunities outside of Chester County.
- Legal battles between volunteer fire organizations and "auxiliary" parts of organizations over control of funding.
- Declining reimbursement for EMS services placing multiple organizations in financial difficulty.
- Lack of support and engagement from a significant number of municipalities and governing bodies.
- Potential closing of fire companies because of a lack of financial support from municipalities and failed fundraising attempts.
- The financial costs to communities who will be required to take over the delivery of fire and/or EMS delivery in municipalities due to the closing of providers.
- Fire and EMS agencies that resist being transparent about their finances even as they request additional public funding.
- Reduction in operational safety based on staffing trends.
- Aging volunteers who in many cases, keep the lights on and the apparatus responding.
- Generational and cultural differences in the emergency services that are not always as inclusive as they should be.

- Cost of housing in Chester County making it prohibitive for many young people to purchase homes.

Looking ahead, the Chester County stakeholders should use the SWOT analysis to further define the most critical issues and service gaps facing the Chester County fire and EMS services. These service gaps and critical issues will then be utilized as the framework for establishing the priority for implementation of goals and recommendations in this strategic planning document.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The organizational analysis completed in September 2020 offered 139 recommendations which are summarized on the following pages:

CHAPTER IV: FIRE AND EMS SERVICES GOVERNANCE, OVERSIGHT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- IV-1:** *The SR 60, HR 148, and SR 6 Final Reports should continue to be the referenced reports from which the recommendations regarding legislative changes to expand governance for fire and EMS delivery systems are based.*
- IV-2:** *The Chester County Commissioners working collaboratively with the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., the Chester County Fire Police Association, the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should work with members of the Chester County legislative delegation to introduce and enact legislation as recommended in SR 6 and which will serve to expand the permissible role of County Government in the delivery of fire and EMS services.*
- IV-3:** *Chester County Commissioners working in partnership with the stakeholders listed in recommendation IV-2, above, should explore ways to take a more active role in advancing regionalization and/or supporting the fire/EMS service delivery system.*
- IV-4:** *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., the Chester County Fire Police Association, the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials, with support from the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should establish a joint strategic plan working group to serve as a facilitator that could assist the communities of Chester County to address the fiscal and operational challenges associated with the continued delivery of high-quality fire and EMS services.*
- IV-5:** *The governing bodies of ALL Chester County municipalities MUST become engaged in the provision of fire and EMS services to their respective municipalities. By law it is ultimately their responsibility to determine the level of risk and the level of emergency services protection for their communities.*
- IV-6:** *Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association, with support from the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, and input from the Chester*

County Municipal Managers Consortium, the Chester County Association of Township Officials, and the citizens of Chester County should develop a compelling education program including videos and in-person workshops to educate local officials and governing bodies on the operations of the fire and EMS services, the challenges they are facing, and the need for increased funding. This would be consistent with Recommendation 16 in SR 6 “Educate Municipal Officials About Fire & EMS Crisis and Needs”.

CHAPTER V: SERVICE DEMAND AND RESPONSE METRICS

- V-1:** ***The Chester County Department of Emergency Services should continue to work internally with the 9-1-1 center leadership to identify any potential ways to reduce call processing time (from receipt of the call to dispatch of the incident) with the goal to achieve a 90th percentile time of not more than 64 seconds as recommended in NFPA 1710. Reducing call processing time can assist with leading to improved overall response times.***
- V-2:** ***Working collaboratively with the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association, the Chester County Department of Emergency Services 9-1-1 Center should consider making evaluation of the 80th and 90th percentile turnout and travel times as recommended in NFPA 1710 and 1720 part of its routine data analysis and statistical reporting. Having these more conservative times available will provide a more accurate response assessment and allow for better long- range master planning.***
- V-3:** ***Working collaboratively with the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association, the 9-1-1 center should implement a procedure to document the number of times that each fire and EMS agency is unable to respond to a dispatched incident or “scratches” a call.***
- V-4:** ***Working collaboratively with the 9-1-1 center to analyze their specific data, the leadership of Chester County’s EMS agencies should work to identify potential ways to reduce incident turnout time with the goal to achieve a 90th percentile time of not more than 60 seconds as recommended in NFPA 1710. Turnout time is the response time component that the agencies have the most direct control over which can lead to reduced overall response times.***

CHAPTER VI - FIRE OPERATIONS

- VI-1:** ***The fire companies of Chester County should work collaboratively with the municipalities they serve to conduct a community risk assessment and develop a community fire and EMS risk management plan as recommended in NFPA 1720,***

Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments.

- VI-2:** *To the extent possible with their respective staffing availability, every fire company in Chester County should attempt to start a pre-fire/incident planning program. While the goal of the program should be to have an up to date pre-plan for every business, commercial, and industrial occupancy in their response area, initial efforts should focus on the most serious target hazards. Pre-planning will improve the firefighter's knowledge of the specific tactics needed to handle a fire or other emergency at a facility and will alert them to on-site hazards and risks. Pre-fire/incident plans should be reviewed regularly and tested by periodic table-top exercises and on-site drills.*
- VI-3:** *The Chester County Department of Emergency Services should continue to provide and facilitate the purchase of all equipment such as communications and other technology. This should continue to assist to control costs utilizing bulk purchasing and provide consistency and standardization throughout the County.*
- VI-4:** *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association, working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should update their standardized responses for various types of incidents, and standardized run cards county-wide. Once developed the standardized responses should be adopted as the Chester County standard.*
- VI-5:** *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association, working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a county-wide procedure of dispatching the closest available station(s) with necessary apparatus/resources, and qualified personnel as determined by automatic vehicle location (AVL) or GPS, rather than permitting the selection of specific companies which may have longer travel distance and response times. Once developed, the standardized responses should be adopted as the Chester County standard response procedure for all agencies.*
- VI-6:** *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, should develop a procedure for documenting the number of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) qualified interior structural firefighters are on each unit. Whenever possible, this information should be entered into the CAD system by the apparatus officer allowing all responding personnel, particularly chief officers, to track the number of responding personnel in real time.*

- VI-7: *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association, working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a procedure for the 9-1-1 center to track and analyze full-first alarm assignment on location times as recommended by NFPA 1720, and, any standards of cover responses (SOC) that are established.***
- VI-8: *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a plan to deploy several daytime quick response units; fire apparatus staffed with an officer and three firefighters, positioned strategically around the county in fire stations that wish to host them.***
- *These units should initially be staffed with qualified volunteer personnel being paid a per diem.*
 - *Units should be in service from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM.*
 - *Initially, staff one unit in each geographic region of the County and adjust deployment based upon data analysis.*
 - *Because these units will provide wide area coverage throughout the entire county during times of reduced volunteer availability, the MRI study team believes that again, as part of a pilot program, these personnel should be funded through the County. If the personnel are paid \$20.00 per hour, and personnel provide a total 720 staff hours per week (3 units x 4 personnel each x 60 hours per week), the first-year cost for salary would be approximately \$750,000.00. There is currently no funding stream established to fund this need.*
 - *Future consideration should be given to the County applying for a FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant as a county-wide endeavor to improve compliance with NFPA 1720. Currently, SAFER eligibility requirements do not allow for Chester County to apply.*
- VI-9: *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should work toward having Chester County begin to hire full-time, career firefighters to be assigned to fire stations throughout Chester County that wish to utilize them. Fire companies that need/wish to have career staff assigned moving forward would need to notify the County at least 24 months prior to any requested deployment. Fire companies that do not want career personnel would not be forced to have them deployed from their station.***
- The addition of career personnel would provide a guaranteed, timely, and qualified, response to daytime emergency incidents. With these personnel available for*

immediate response, the fire companies should begin to improve initial unit on scene response times, and more frequently be able to comply with the initial fire attack requirements recommended by NFPA and required by OSHA.

Some of the other benefits to having the career staff in place, particularly during the day when most of the volunteer force are at their primary jobs, include, but would certainly not be limited to:

- *Quicker and guaranteed compliance with the OSHA Two in-Two Out requirement for initial fire attack.*
- *Guaranteed, and usually immediate, EMS response by trained first responders to get lifesaving help to the 9-1-1 caller quicker if nearby ambulances are committed, or on high priority incidents.*
- *Performing fire prevention inspections and other fire prevention activities.*
- *Developing pre-fire/incident plans.*
- *Performing fire apparatus, tool, and equipment inspections, testing, and maintenance.*
- *Performing basic station maintenance in all stations.*
- *Performing fire hydrant testing, maintenance, and flow testing.*
- *Assisting the fire companies with special projects.*

VI-10: *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should encourage their members to consider starting to utilize volunteer personnel to provide in-station staffing, whenever possible, but primarily between 6:00 PM and 6:00 AM daily, and, all day on the weekends. Personnel who pull at least one duty shift per week would maintain their member in good standing status with the fire company. When on duty personnel could also complete their required training, participate in various department/station projects, pre-fire planning, etc., and possibly even membership recruitment activities.*

Under the duty crew system, calls of less severe acuity would be handled by the duty crew alone. Multiple stations and units would still be dispatched and respond to potentially serious incidents such as any type of reported structure fire, rescue incidents, etc., based upon the run card protocols. All personnel would be encouraged to respond to these types of incidents.

VI-11: *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should form a committee to begin development of a comprehensive county-wide Standard Operations Procedures/Guidelines (SOP/SOG) manual utilizing existing SOPs/SOGs as a starting point. They should also consider the development of county-wide operational manuals based upon the Northern Virginia Regional Fire Services manuals. This could even be pursued as a regional endeavor with the other counties in Southeastern*

Pennsylvania. The committee should be comprised of members of various companies and ranks.

VI-12: *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should adopt a standardized SOP/SOG form that includes the following information:*

- *Title of the SOP/SOG*
- *Number of the SOP/SOG*
- *Category of the SOP/SOG (EMS Operations, Training, Administration, etc.)*
- *Page number and total number of pages*
- *Effective date*
- *Revision date (if applicable)*
- *Approval/signature*

Each SOP/SOG should, at a minimum, contain the following sections:

- *Purpose*
- *Scope (If necessary and/or appropriate)*
- *Definitions of terms (If necessary and/or appropriate)*
- *Procedure(s)/Main body*
- *References (If necessary and/or appropriate)*

CHAPTER VII - EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE (EMS) OPERATIONS

VII-1: *The Chester County Department of Emergency Services (DES) should continue to provide and facilitate the purchase of all equipment such as communications, EMS report writing software, and the health data exchange link for all services. This should continue to assist to control costs utilizing bulk purchasing and provide consistency and standardization throughout the County.*

VII-2: *Working collaboratively the Chester County EMS Council, Inc., the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should explore the feasibility of developing a pilot program to implement a County-based Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) response. The purchase of needed equipment could be done as a lease in arrears, so delivery of vehicles and equipment could occur, and the first payment for them would be one year after delivery enabling revenue to be generated from transports throughout the year. This program should initially consist of one unit in each of the County's three geographic operations regions. It can then incrementally be expanded based on the proven success of the pilot program.*

- VII-3:** *Initial staffing of this MIH unit should be Monday to Friday from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM during peak hours. It should be staffed with one fulltime Basic EMT and one fulltime Paramedic. Hours when this unit is not staffed will default to current local protocols and procedures until the system is more fully developed.*
- VII-4:** *Working collaboratively with the Chester County EMS Council, Inc. and the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with fire or EMS organizations to strategically locate the MIH units in each geographic area of the County.*
- VII-5:** *The current emergency responders are dedicated individuals who have provided an immeasurable service to their communities. This resource should not be overlooked. Any response from a county resource should still incorporate the tiered response from local responders to begin initial assessment, treatment, and care prior to the arrival of any MIH units.*
- VII-6:** *The Chester County 9-1-1 Communications Center should meet with the Medical Director and review all Computer Aided Dispatch cards. All emergency medical calls for service into the Communications Center are vetted through Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD). If appropriate, based on the triage through the EMD process, DES should have their MIH ambulance(s) respond to appropriate calls.*
- VII-7:** *Chester County should establish a fund for collection of revenue for any response by DES for emergency medical services. These funds for service should be available to be put towards future operations of a possible County-based EMS system and not back into the general fund of the County. Based on recently passed legislation for treat-no-transport, DES should be able to bill for each response with an MIH unit.*
- VII-8:** *Working in conjunction with its member agencies, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc. should explore the feasibility of implementing an alternative destination program for certain non-critical EMS patients modeled after the Montgomery County, Maryland program, once permitted by the Commonwealth.*
- VII-9** *The Chester County EMS Council, Inc. in conjunction with the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should work with their local legislative partners to introduce and support the adoption of legislation that addresses the EMS issues that were identified in SR 6.*

VII-10: *The Chester County EMS Council, Inc. in conjunction with the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should work with their local legislative partners, to introduce and support the adoption of legislation to enable EMS services in Pennsylvania to participate in the Federal regulations, 42 CFR 447.3000, Section 1902(a)(30) of the Social Security Act that allows states to establish alternative payment methodologies including supplemental payment and certified public expenditures (CPE) methodologies. Once passed, this process will allow services to submit expenditures for services and apply for reimbursements that more accurately reflect the true cost for delivery.*

VII-11: *Any EMS providers who are not doing third party billing for EMS transports should implement a policy to do so ASAP in order to provide a revenue offset to their operating expenses.*

VII-12: *Once enabling legislation is adopted, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, working in conjunction with the municipal governing bodies, should explore the feasibility of, and interest in, the establishment of a county-wide EMS system. Participation would be voluntary, but long term; could result in improved consistency, increased efficiencies, enhanced service levels along with a consistent level of funding, as well as improved compensation and benefits for personnel.*

CHAPTER VIII - STANDARDS OF RESPONSE COVERAGE

VIII-1: *Working collaboratively with their memberships, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should continue to explore ways to reduce all aspects of response time, but particularly turnout time as this the aspect that the fire and EMS providers have the most direct control over.*

VIII-2: *Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should establish fire demand zones throughout the County, based upon the urban, suburban, and rural components of the diverse fire service coverage area. They should then work to develop a Standard of Response Cover based upon the recommendations contained in NFPA 1720 for the established fire demand zones, with adjustments as appropriate for Chester County's unique needs.*

VIII-3: *Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should adopt Standards of Response Cover*

benchmarks to have the first unit responding to each fire type incident within 90 seconds (slightly higher than NFPA recommendation) of dispatch (when the station is staffed by career personnel or a volunteer duty crew), 90% of the time.

VIII-4: Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and its membership, and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, and based upon the GIS mapping, consideration should be given to part of the Standards of Response Cover benchmarks seeking to have the first unit on scene within 10 minutes after responding to all fire type incidents, county-wide, 90% of the time.

VIII-5: Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and its membership, and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, and based upon the GIS mapping, consideration should be given to part of the Standards of Response Cover benchmarks seeking to have the entire first alarm assignment for reported structure fires; even the rural areas of the County, with at least 15 personnel, on scene within 15 minutes from dispatch, 80% of the time. For the more urban and suburban areas of the County the more conservative benchmark of 10 minutes, 80% of the time should be considered.

VIII-6: The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should consider the development of a “performance improvement” process for fire suppression operations. The process should include the adoption of performance standards such as NFPA 1720, including on-scene performance indicators such as:

- On-scene to the charged line at the front door of a structure fire: two minutes or less, 90% of the time.**
- Water from the hydrant to supply engine: three minutes or less, 90% of the time.**

The point of the performance measures is to identify the community’s expectations in a quantifiable way and to use the measurement of the fire company’s performance, against these objectives to identify areas which may need improvement or additional resources.

VIII-7: Working collaboratively, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc. and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, should establish EMS demand zones throughout the County based upon the urban, suburban, and rural components of the diverse EMS coverage area.

VIII-8: Working collaboratively, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc. and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a Standard of Response Cover for BLS level response, based upon the established EMS demand zones and response/travel time recommendations contained in NFPA 1710 and/or the CAAS standards, with adjustments as appropriate for Chester County's unique needs. The SOC adopted should attempt to have benchmark achievement rates of 90% for urban and suburban areas and 80% for rural and remote areas.

VIII-9: Working collaboratively, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc. and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a Standard of Response Cover for ALS level response, based upon the established EMS demand zones and response/travel time recommendations contained in NFPA 1710 and/or the CAAS standards, with adjustments as appropriate for Chester County's unique needs. The SOC adopted should attempt to have benchmark achievement rates of 90% for urban and suburban areas and 80% for rural and remote areas.

CHAPTER IX - FIRE POLICE OPERATIONS

IX-1: Working in conjunction with the stakeholders who comprised the Traffic Incident Operating Guidelines Advisory Committee, the Chester County Fire Police Association should work to obtain commitments from PennDOT, as well as local municipalities with DPWs, to have necessary traffic control personnel and equipment on the scene of major traffic/roadway incidents within two hours of being requested. Part of this process could include the development of a short educational video about Fire Police operations and why the partnership with PennDOT and local DPWs is important for long duration incidents.

IX-2: All Chester County Fire Police units should discontinue the practice of allowing members to respond in their personal vehicles to incidents on high-speed limited access highways. The second sentence in paragraph 5.3 Incident Response in the Highway Traffic Incident Management Operating Guidelines should be deleted.

IX-3: Due to declining numbers, some Fire Police units may be forced to explore alternative methods to ensure adequate response to incidents. This may include forming MOU's with neighboring jurisdictions to permit fire police from multiple companies to mutually respond to incidents without the need to dispatch a full Fire Police Task Force. The Chester County Fire Police Association should explore the feasibility of creating some mutual response agreements.

IX-4: The Chester County Fire Police Association should continue to monitor its member organizations for continued viability. In the future, if conditions warrant, and working

collaboratively with the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association they should help to facilitate discussions on a more regional approach to Fire Police operations.

IX-5: *Because many motorists are driving more aggressively and more distracted, Chester County Fire Police Officers are encouraged to continually improve their traffic management and scene safety skills. ResponderSafety.com offers 38 free online one-hour training modules. These excellent modules would benefit all Fire Police. Below are some of the modules that may be most beneficial for the Fire Police Officers:*

- *Advanced Warning*
- *Blocking Procedures at Roadway Incidents*
- *The First 15 Minutes at Highway Incidents*
- *See and Be Seen Emergency Lighting Awareness*
- *Traffic Incident Management: Model Practices and Procedures*
- *Planning for the Long-Term Event*
- *Traffic Incident Management on Rural Roads*
- *Termination*
- *Traffic Incident Management Requirements in NFPA 1500*
- *Understanding NFPA 1091*

IX-6: *To improve roadway scene safety for all emergency responders, all fire companies and EMS agencies follow the guidelines established by the Chester County Highway Traffic Incident Management Operating Guidelines.*

CHAPTER X - DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

X-1: *Working collaboratively with the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, Chester County Association of Township Officials, and other interested stakeholders, the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should provide as much support as possible to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.*

CHAPTER XI - VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

XI-1: *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should establish a uniform application and screening process for all new members of the fire and EMS services throughout Chester County. Although these personnel are volunteers, they still enjoy all the rights of full-time public safety personnel and should possess the same high ethical and moral character. At a minimum, the screening process should include:*

- *Possession of a valid driver's license (all personnel should have their driver's licenses checked on an annual basis)*
- *State and federal criminal background check including fingerprinting*
- *Drug testing*
- *Credit, employment, and reference checks*

- XI-2:** *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should create a "New Member Guide" for both the member AND their family with various checklists, progression information, copies of primary response maps, key forms, and other critical details they'll need to know as a member of a fire company.*
- XI-3:** *Working collaboratively, the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., the Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should lobby their legislative delegation, particularly members of the state Senate to get House Bill 1786, which would forgive up to \$16,000.00 in student loan debt for qualifying volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel, passed and enacted into law.*
- XI-4:** *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should convene focus groups to determine what concepts and recruitment and retention strategies are feasible and most attractive to both current members and potential candidates. SR 6 contains some suggested benefits.*
- XI-5:** *Chester County's fire and EMS providers should make a concerted effort to reach out to inactive and former members and attempt to recruit/motivate them back to active status.*
- XI-6:** *Chester County's fire and EMS providers should consider the implementation of an incentive program for members that attain a level of more than 25% of emergency responses, or other designated level of participation for non-emergency or administrative members. An example would be to provide gift certificates for local restaurants, concerts, or other entertainment as a reward for attaining a high level of response.*
- XI-7:** *Chester County's fire and EMS providers should attempt to enter partnerships with local businesses to allow their personnel to respond, when needed, to emergency incidents during working hours, without any financial penalty.*

- XI-8:** *Chester County’s fire and EMS providers, in cooperation with their participating municipalities, should explore the feasibility of utilizing, and in fact encouraging, borough and township employees to perform “dual roles” by serving not only in their full-time positions but also serving the fire company as volunteer firefighters, or administrative support personnel.*
- XI-9:** *Chester County’s fire and EMS providers, in cooperation with their participating municipalities, should explore the feasibility of entering into shared services agreements for certain areas of administrative support such as accounting services, or administrative assistant type assistance.*
- XI-10:** *Chester County’s fire and EMS providers, in cooperation with their participating municipalities, should encourage giving priority attention for hiring to selected borough and township positions, such as public works, to personnel who are currently serving as active volunteer firefighters.*
- XI-11:** *Chester County’s fire and EMS providers, in cooperation with their participating municipalities, should consider the development of a program that would provide active responders with the opportunity to obtain health insurance. The municipality should pay a graduated percentage of this program based upon participation levels suggested in Figure 106 (of the main report) including that a minimum number of hours of training be completed.*
- XI-12:** *With support from the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association, the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should hire a full-time volunteer Recruitment and Retention Coordinator to coordinate and organize efforts throughout the County.*
- XI-13:** *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should approach the colleges in Chester County, as well as areas of nearby counties that are within a reasonable distance, to explore the possibility of implementing live-in firefighter programs with fire companies that have adequate facilities and wish to participate. This program could also be extended to young new residents of Chester County who have relocated to the area for work.*
- XI-14:** *Chester County fire and EMS providers who can afford to do so should consider offering premium benefits for their highest performing members who make long-term commitments to the company and meet stringent eligibility criteria such as college scholarships and/or low- or no-interest student loans, and low-interest mortgages.*

XI-15: *Chester County fire and EMS providers who implement in station duty crew programs should explore ways to incentivize those personnel and the program as a whole, such as purchasing dinner for the on-duty personnel, with the goal of maximizing buy-in and participation of company members while simultaneously easing the emergency response burden on all members of the company.*

XI-16: *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should develop a “Welcome Wagon” program that can be used county-wide by the fire and EMS providers to welcome new residents to their area (even if they are relocating from elsewhere in the County) and provide information on, and recruiting information for, the volunteer fire and EMS delivery system.*

CHAPTER XII - EMERGENCY SERVICES FACILITIES AND APPARATUS

XII-1: *Chester County fire and EMS agencies should consider applying for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to attempt to obtain funding to assist with the installation of automatic fire alarm and carbon monoxide detection systems in all fire and EMS stations where personnel may sleep. These systems should not only be equipped with both audible and visible warning devices, they should automatically transmit an alarm to an approved central monitoring station.*

XII-2: *Chester County fire and EMS agencies should consider applying for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to attempt to obtain funding to assist with the installation of direct capture vehicle exhaust extraction systems in all fire and EMS stations.*

XII-3: *Chester County fire and EMS agencies should consider applying for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to attempt to obtain funding to assist with the installation of emergency back-up generators in all fire and EMS stations.*

XII-4: *Working collaboratively, the appropriate stakeholders involved in any proposals for new and/or replacement fire or EMS stations should include a thorough needs assessment including whether multiple stations could be consolidated at a single more operationally appropriate location. When possible, new stations should be smaller but still functional facilities that meet the organization’s operational needs.*

XII-5: *Inspections of all fire and EMS stations and facilities should be conducted on a regular basis. These inspections can be used to identify potential maintenance, as well as safety issues, and allow them to be addressed before they become problematic.*

XII-6: *As part of a pro-active preventative maintenance program that can assist with reducing maintenance costs, all fire and EMS vehicles should be thoroughly inspected by a certified emergency vehicle technician (EVT) on a periodic basis, but no less than annually.*

XII-7: *Working collaboratively the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association should consider ways that the fire and EMS agencies in the County can better address the service and maintenance of the large emergency vehicle fleet. This can include the development of standard preventative maintenance and repair protocols. Some ideas that might be considered and result in potential improvements in consistency in quality and efficiency while providing cost savings, include, but are certainly not limited to:*

- *Sharing a fully trained and EVT certified mechanic between several area fire companies and/or municipalities.*
- *Develop several vendor contracts for County-wide maintenance and repair services for all the fire companies and EMS agencies.*
- *Chester County providing repair and maintenance services to the fire and EMS agencies either as a service, or on a cost basis.*

XII-8: *As required by various NFPA and ISO standards, annual testing of the following apparatus components and equipment should continue to be a high maintenance priority including for fire companies who do not currently have these tests performed:*

- Fire pumps
- Fire hose
- Aerial ladders
- Ground ladders
- Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)
- Hydraulic rescue tools
- Thermal imaging cameras
- Combustible gas meters

XII-9: *Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and Chester County EMS Council, Inc. should consider developing several vendor contracts for County-wide inspection and testing services for the all the fire companies and EMS agencies for the apparatus components and equipment listed in Recommendation XIII-8, above.*

XII-10: *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and Chester County Fire Police Association should attempt to develop a standardized set of specifications for apparatus such as engines, rescue engines, engine tankers, brush trucks, command vehicles, and traffic units. The apparatus should have similar compartmentation and equipment (even if*

different manufacturers are selected) which will improve efficiency in emergency operations.

XII-11: *During the development of the standardized apparatus specifications, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should consider equipping new pumping apparatus with Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) capability to improve fire knock down capabilities, especially in limited staffing conditions.*

XII-12: *The Chester County EMS Council, Inc. should attempt to develop a standardized set of specifications for ambulances. The ambulances should have similar compartmentation and equipment (even if different manufacturers are selected) which will improve efficiency in emergency operations.*

XII-13: *Working collaboratively with their partners at Chester County, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and Chester County EMS Council, Inc. should explore the feasibility of advertising a County-wide bid specification annually, for units such as engines, rescue engines, ambulances, and command vehicles where the economy often provided by purchasing multiple very similar units can result in significant cost savings for the companies making the purchases.*

XII-14: *Since most major apparatus and vehicle purchases involve at least some public funding, and in consideration of potential cost savings that could be realized even if they are funded otherwise, all major purchases should be publicly advertised as part of a fair and open competitive bidding process.*

XII-15: *When making capital purchases such as apparatus any entity, whether an individual fire company or EMS agency, up to a County-wide process should explore the significant cost savings benefits that may be obtained by participating in cooperative purchasing consortiums such as Pennsylvania's COSTARS program, or, the Houston Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) Buy program (HGACBuy).*

XII-16: *Working collaboratively with their partners at Chester County, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, and Chester County EMS Council, Inc. should explore the feasibility of standardizing many of the tools and equipment utilized by the County's fire and EMS providers to allow for cost savings generated by group purchasing arrangements.*

- *Fire hose*
- *Nozzles and appliances*
- *Ground ladders*
- *Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)*
- *Hydraulic rescue tools*
- *Thermal imaging cameras*
- *Combustible gas meters*
- *Various hand tools and equipment*
- *Firefighter PPE*
- *Ventilation fans*
- *Saws*

- *Fire Extinguishers*
- *Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs)*
- *Portable suction units*
- *Oxygen equipment*
- *EMS disposable equipment*
- *EMS PPE*
- *EMS patient moving equipment (stair chairs, Reeves stretchers, etc.)*
- *Fire Police PPE*
- *Fire Police supplies*

XII-17: The overall size of the fire apparatus and vehicle fleet in Chester County, particularly high cost specialty vehicles such as aerial ladders and rescues, should be right sized to make it appropriate for the community, as well as, provide increased efficiency in operations.

XII-18: When practical, EMS agencies should explore the less costly option to replace the chassis, and remount and refurbish as needed, their ambulance boxes rather than always purchasing brand new units.

CHAPTER XIII - TRAINING AND OFFICER DEVELOPMENT

XIII-1: In order to continue to increase the quantity of high-quality training being provided to the County’s fire and rescue personnel, the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should conduct a formal needs assessment focused on increasing the number of full-time training personnel.

XIII-2: To the extent possible, fire and rescue training should be delivered and/or conducted utilizing formal, standardized lesson plans that include objectives and performance criterion. The Chester County Department of Emergency Services fire rescue training section should develop an inventory of lesson plans and training outlines covering a wide range of topics that can be utilized by the fire companies to conduct their in-house training.

XIII-3: The fire rescue training section of the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should continue its emphasis on officer training and development. Additional officer training opportunities such as Fire Officer II, Fire Instructor II, and Incident Safety Officer should be developed with NBFSPQ and IFSAC certifications sought.

XIII-4: The Chester County Department of Emergency Services should consider providing each fire and EMS agency in the County the opportunity to access an on-line training program or platform that would allow certain training to be conducted by personnel at their convenience. There are multiple vendors available to provide this type of platform including Target Solutions whose inventory is comprised of more than 1,000 on-line courses.

- XIII-5:** *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should work to develop minimum training standards for Chester County that are consistent with the recommendations found in NFPA Standard 1001, Standard for Firefighter Professional Qualifications for Firefighter I and II for all “active” members of fire companies who have PPE and respond to emergencies. A reasonable time frame would be to require Firefighter I within one year of joining the company and Firefighter II within two years, or, prior to the completion of the probationary process.*
- XIII-6:** *The Chester County Fire Chief’s Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association should formalize the requirements for remaining an active “qualified” firefighting, care providing (for EMS) member, or Fire Police Officer of the company, including response percentages and training requirements. The requirements should include a remediation process that members are required to complete when they fail to meet the provisions of the policy, particularly from a training perspective.*
- XIII-7:** *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should work to develop a county-wide policy that sets a realistic goal that all fire company members who respond to emergency incidents receive a minimum of 72 hours of training annually (an average of six hours per month).*
- XIII-8:** *All Chester County fire companies and EMS agencies should ensure that appropriate refreshers of all training areas that are mandated are completed annually/periodically as required. This is another area where the Chester County Department of Emergency Services fire rescue training section could assist.*
- XIII-9:** *All Chester County fire companies should implement a policy regarding the minimum number of weekly drills/training sessions/hours each member must participate in, to remain an active member permitted to respond to emergency incidents. Personnel who fail to attend a minimum number of drills each quarter, should be suspended from response activity until they have been brought up to date with their training.*
- XIII-10:** *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should develop a county-wide policy that personnel who staff fire and rescue units that respond within the County possess minimum specified levels of training such as Firefighter I and II.*
- XIII-11:** *The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should develop an updated formal automatic/mutual aid agreement for use by all Chester County Fire Companies. The agreement should stipulate the minimum required training standards for personnel who may respond to emergencies. The agreements should also stipulate that the ranking officer of each entity must certify in writing on an annual basis that his/her personnel comply.*

XIII-12: Although not mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should develop a policy for minimum officer training and certification requirements that personnel should possess to be recognized as a fire officer County-wide. Suggested requirements include:

- **Lieutenant and Captain – Fire Instructor I, Fire Officer I, ICS-300, and Managing Company Tactical Operations (or similar tactics class)**
- **Chief Officer – Fire Instructor II, Fire Officer II, ICS-400, and Incident Safety Officer**

XIII-13: The Chester County Fire Chiefs should develop a policy that stipulates that all officers must participate in additional officer related training each year to be eligible to retain their position. A reasonable requirement might be 32 hours of training consisting of:

- **Firefighting strategy and tactics, incident management, or safety training (16 hours)**
- **Leadership or management training (16 hours)**

XIII-14: All Chester County fire companies should implement periodic training on fire ground tactics and training for both fire officers and firefighters. Part of this training should include tabletop and simulation training exercises for fire officers to enhance their strategic and tactical knowledge, skills, and abilities. The latter is an area where both the Chester County Department of Emergency Services and Chester County Fire Chiefs Association can provide support and assistance.

CHAPTER XIV - FIRE PREVENTION

XIV-1: With Chester County poised to experience significant growth over the next several decades, the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should work collaboratively with the County's state legislative delegation to attempt to get legislation approved that would allow the County to be the pilot for a County-wide requirement that all new one- and two-family dwellings be equipped with a residential automatic fire suppression (sprinkler) system in accordance with the provisions of the International Residential Code.

XIV-2: Working in conjunction with the Department of Emergency Services, and with support from the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium and the Chester County Association of Township Officials, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should

develop a compelling public education program that includes discussing the benefits of installing residential fire sprinklers in new one- and two-family dwellings. Although Pennsylvania's construction codes do not currently allow residential fire sprinkler systems to be mandated, there is no prohibition for property owners to install them if they determine that it is in their best interest.

XIV-3: *Working in conjunction with, and with support from the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium and the Chester County Association of Township Officials, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should strongly encourage municipalities throughout the County that are not fully served by a municipal water supply system, to consider adopting a municipal ordinance requiring the installation of a fire water supply cistern in any new development consisting of three or more homes, or for any individual home of larger than a designated square footage. Part of this process could also include working in conjunction with the Department of Emergency Services on development of a compelling public education program that explains the significant benefits to residents and property owners of installing cisterns for the storage of fire suppression system water supplies.*

XIV-4: *Since proactive fire prevention programs are shown to reduce fire incidence and loss, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should work collaboratively with the County's state legislative delegation, to attempt to get legislation approved that would allow Chester County to be the pilot for a county-wide fire prevention code and periodic inspection requirement utilizing the International Fire Code for occupancies other than one- and two- family dwellings.*

XIV-5: *Chester County should explore the feasibility of increasing staffing in the Department of Emergency Services to include offering fire prevention inspection services to any municipality in the County, which would like to adopt a more proactive approach to ongoing fire prevention activities. A fee-based program of this type would not only serve to reduce fire loss in participating municipalities, but could also assist them with improving their ISO ratings by earning them additional community risk reduction points, thus potentially lowering fire insurance premiums for residents and businesses. These personnel could also be utilized throughout the County to provide additional staffing for fires and other significant incidents, particularly during the day, when volunteer availability is often at a premium.*

XIV-6: *In order to fund the expanded fire prevention activities, Chester County should explore the feasibility of adopting registration, inspection and/or permit fees to help offset the costs of providing these services throughout the County.*

- XIV-7: Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, and representatives of the County’s Municipal Fire Marshals, with assistance from the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, should work to develop an aggressive public relations campaign to raise public awareness and educate business owners and residents on the importance of having their fire alarm systems serviced and properly maintained. This campaign should utilize whatever media outlets are available including local newspapers, radio, public access television, municipal and fire company web sites, etc.**
- XIV-8: All municipalities in Chester County should ensure, that if it is not already required, plans for all fire alarm systems, including residential systems, be thoroughly reviewed prior to installation. Once a system is installed, an acceptance inspection and test should be conducted prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Approval, which will allow the system to be placed on-line. The focus of this initiative should be to ensure that new systems are being installed, utilizing properly specified, quality components, and, that they meet the requirements of NFPA and the International Building Code or International Residential Code.**
- XIV-9: Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, the Chester County Association of Township Officials, and representatives of the County’s Municipal Fire Marshals, should work to develop a model ordinance that can then be adopted by municipalities throughout Chester County to require the registration of all fire alarm systems, including those in one- and two- family dwellings. Part of the registration process should include a stipulation that the provisions found in NFPA 72 – National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code are adhered to. Registration renewal should occur on a periodic basis (one year for commercial, three years for residential), and be contingent upon the business or homeowner providing adequate documentation that the system has been properly serviced and maintained.**
- XIV-10: The ordinance recommended in XIV-9, above, should include provisions to issue fines or penalties for repeated alarm malfunctions, or unnecessary alarms. The fines or penalties should increase incrementally as the number of responses increases. Municipalities might want to consider, for first time offenders, a provision that would abate most of the fine or penalty if they provided documentation that repairs have been made to the problem system. However, this option should not be available to repeat offenders.**
- XIV-11: Any municipality that is performing fire prevention inspections should explore the feasibility of utilizing Remote Video Inspections (RIV) to assist with managing the inspection workload.**

CHAPTER XV - RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

- XV-1:** *The Chief of every fire and EMS agency in Chester County should provide regular briefings and reports to the Manager/Administrator and/or governing body of every municipality they serve concerning the operations of their organization. The Chief should communicate regularly with the Manager/Administrator and/or governing body to receive feedback on the performance of the department.*
- XV-2:** *The Manager/Administrator and/or governing body of each municipality should take an active role in setting appropriate goals and a vision for the fire and EMS providers that serve them. Municipal officials should include residents and the emergency services in an open and honest discussion within the goal setting process.*
- XV-3:** *Every fire and EMS agency should consider offering building tours and ride-a-longs to the members of their local governing bodies and other municipal officials to further familiarize them with fire and EMS operations. Officials could also be encouraged to participate in or observe training activities.*
- XV-4:** *Fire and EMS agency leadership and the municipal governing bodies should publicly recognize the achievements of the organizations and its members in reaching the various established goals as they are accomplished.*
- XV-5:** *Based upon the recommendations contained in this report, the Chester County Commissioners, the governing bodies of the County's municipalities, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, Chester County Association of Township Officials, and other interested stakeholders assisted by the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should begin discussions ASAP on the direction that the County's fire and EMS delivery system will take moving to the future. It will be imperative that all stakeholders speak with a unified voice when lobbying local legislators to introduce or support enabling legislation that will be necessary for multiple recommendations to be implemented.*

CHAPTER XVI - FUNDING AND FINANCE

- XVI-1:** *The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County should continue to attempt to negotiate for increased levels of funding, for fire operations, EMS operations, and capital projects, from the municipalities they serve in order to adequately fund long-term operational, and capital funding needs of their organizations. Increased funding levels will be critical to the continued success of every fire and EMS organization.*

- XVI-2: *The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County should, with their member municipalities, explore the feasibility of developing and implementing more equitable funding formulas to better balance overall funding between municipalities. One possible formula could use assessed value, population, and call volume, or a per capita cost, to determine funding. This is an area where the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium and the Chester County Association of Township Officials can provide assistance and support.***
- XVI-3: *The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County should continue to explore alternative sources of funding for the company such as grants, public/private partnerships, etc. stressing the increasing costs of their operations.***
- XVI-4: *The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County should continue to actively search for grant opportunities. Grants for fire protection, fire safety, fire prevention, domestic and emergency preparedness, and homeland security may be available from federal, state, corporate, and foundation sources. Whenever possible, and with the support and assistance of the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, Chester County Association of Township Officials, and The Chester County Department of Emergency Services, the grant applications should be submitted collaboratively, if applicable, to increase the chances of success.***
- XVI-5 *The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County should actively seek out businesses in their response areas that may be interested in establishing public/private partnerships that could provide, or assist with, funding for various programs, projects, or initiatives.***
- XVI-6: *The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County and the governing bodies of the municipalities they serve should explore potential ways to generate additional revenue to offset both fire company and ambulance operating costs. Consideration could be given to billing insurance companies for response to motor vehicle accidents, registration fees for fire alarm systems, the aggressive pursuit of non-residents who have been billed for ambulance transportation, and, the implementation of a fee for ambulance responses that do not result in a transport.***
- XVI-7: *Working collaboratively the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and Chester County Association of Township Officials, with support from the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should conduct a review of the various funding resources from the federal, state, county, and local municipalities that are provided for the delivery of fire and EMS services. A per capita cost should be developed from this***

information to assist with strategic planning efforts towards future service delivery models.

- XVI-8:** *Working collaboratively the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and Chester County Association of Township Officials, with support from Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop strategic options to encourage regional service delivery and support local staffing needs during the low availability of personnel. Based upon the level of support needed, a financial cost analysis can be used to develop financial resource identification and if necessary seek an increase in revenue to support fire companies and EMS agencies that are forced to change their emergency service delivery models due to the inability to continue providing the services currently in place.*
- XVI-9:** *If future legislation allows, the County of Chester should explore the feasibility of enacting a Fire and EMS tax to provide centralized support for Chester County fire and EMS operations.*
- XVI-10:** *If future legislation allows, the County of Chester should explore the feasibility of enacting a fire and EMS assessment on people that work in Chester County. This would produce a revenue stream to support Chester County fire and EMS operations.*
- XVI-11:** *If permitted, Chester County fire and EMS organizations should work with local municipalities to consider the adoption fees, for large new developments, that would be directed toward the fire and EMS delivery system.*
- XVI-12:** *As a best practice, Chester County fire companies and EMS agencies should ensure the transparency of their financial records to stakeholders and funders.*
- XVI-13:** *Chester County fire companies and EMS agencies should implement internal procedures and controls to ensure they are making the most effective and efficient use of the taxpayer generated funds they are provided. This includes seeking multiple quotes for purchases, preparing open specifications for major purchases, and requiring a fair and open competitive bidding process for major capital expenditures. This is an area where the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium and the Chester County Association of Township Officials can provide assistance and support.*

CHAPTER XVIII - REGIONAL FIRE AND EMS SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

XVIII-1: *Working collaboratively, the Chester County Commissioners, Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester Council EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police*

Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and Chester County Association of Township Officials should lobby their commonwealth legislative delegation to introduce and aggressively pursue legislation to implement Recommendation 6 of SR 6: “Simplify Process to Regionalize Fire & EMS Services”.

XVIII-2: Working collaboratively, the Chester County Commissioners, Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester Council EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and Chester County Association of Township Officials should engage in further discussions regarding the feasibility and potential benefits to seeking the introduction of legislation that would allow the creation of Public Safety Authorities.

XVIII-3: The municipalities of Chester County and fire and EMS organizations that serve them should try to identify potential partners, and then attempt to enter in discussions on more regional approaches, including shared services, to the provision of fire and EMS services.

XVIII-4: Any municipalities and/or fire and EMS organizations that are interested in exploring consolidations and/or shared services should engage the services and resources of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and the Governor’s Center for Local Government Services to seek to identify additional potential partners/opportunities for regionalization and/or shared services and then work collaboratively with them to attempt to move them from vision to reality.

XVIII-5: Any discussions regarding opportunities to regionalize or share services by the fire and EMS services MUST involve fire company and EMS stakeholders in every aspect of the process and must get their buy-in for there to be any realistic chance of success.

XVIII-6: The potential formation of any regional fire and/or EMS delivery system in Chester County, even eventually a possible county-wide configuration, should allow the individual fire companies and EMS agencies to maintain their own unique identities as part of the overall system.

XVIII-7: Any potential consolidation of multiple fire and EMS entities into new regional fire and EMS organizations should be handled as a merger of equals rather than an acquisition.

CHAPTER XIX - STRATEGIC PLANNING ON A LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND COUNTY LEVEL

XIX-1: Each fire and EMS organization in Chester County should consider the development of a strategic plan to guide their organization for the next three to five years and assist them with planning for future needs and meeting the challenges they may confront.

The development of these plans should include input from a wide range of both internal and external stakeholders.

- XIX-2:** *As part of the strategic planning process, and working collaboratively with their member organizations, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association, assisted and supported as appropriate by other stakeholders such as the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, Chester County Association of Township Officials, and the local governing bodies of municipalities that are interested, should explore areas where more regional systems for the delivery of emergency services can be developed. These opportunities should then be included in the strategic plans of the potential partners/participants.*
- XIX-3:** *Working collaboratively the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and Chester County Association of Township Officials, supported by Chester County Department of Emergency Services, should begin the development of a longer range strategic plan that provides for the County to assume a greater role in the provision of fire and emergency medical services such as implementation of a County-wide EMS system, and hiring career firefighters to staff the stations of fire companies that need and request them.*
- XIX-4:** *Every strategic plan should be considered a living – not static – and flexible document that should be reviewed on an annual basis to evaluate progress toward established goals. The plan should also be revised periodically to remain both current and forward looking.*
- XIX-5:** *Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association, with support from the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, and with involvement of the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, Chester County Association of Township Officials, and other interested stakeholders should form a strategic planning task force to bring forth and implement recommendations that have been made throughout this report including elements of Senate Resolution 60 from 2004 and Senate Resolution 6 from 2018. The task force should identify and prioritize elements of this initiative that can be implemented immediately, and those elements which must seek legislative changes to provide higher levels of service to communities. It should also include task groups that will be assigned the implementation of various recommendations. The recommendations of the task force with a plan of action should be presented by December 31, 2021.*

CHAPTER V TASK GROUPS

In an effort to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations contained in this document, we suggest that multiple groups of stakeholders be assembled and assigned to initiate change. Each task group should be composed of a least five to ten individuals and include at least one stakeholder representative from each of the responder organizations and the external stakeholders that the change may/will impact. Task groups are responsible for working toward implementation of their specific assigned recommendations. However, they must recognize that the policy decisions relative to organizational direction will be made by the appropriate governing bodies and/or leadership.

The fifteen task groups selected for Chester County include:

1. Legislative
2. Municipal Liaison
3. Fire Operations
4. Emergency Medical Services
5. Fire Police Operations
6. Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment
7. Communications
8. Fire Prevention
9. Performance Analysis
10. Policy and Procedure Development
11. Recruitment and Retention of Personnel
12. Resources and Finance
13. Training and Professional Development
14. Regionalization and Shared Service
15. Technology

The primary task group (or groups) for each recommendation is noted here. Many recommendations will require collaboration between groups, or the primary group will require assistance from others. The primary stakeholders may also determine it is best to involve multiple task groups in the process to implement the most significant recommendations. ALL recommendations are listed in this section based upon the primary task group(s) that would oversee implementation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK GROUPS

TASK GROUP	ASSIGNED RECOMMENDATIONS
Legislative	IV-1, IV-2, VII-9, VII-10, VII-12, X-1, XI-3, XIV-1, XIV-4, XV-5, XVI-9, XVI-10, XVI-11, XVIII-1, XVIII-2, XIX-5
Municipal Liaison	IV-1, IV-2, IV-3, IV-4, IV-5, IV-6, VI-1, VI-8, VI-9, VII-2, VII-3, VII-4, VII-5, VII-9, VII-10, VII-11, VII-12, VIII-2, VIII-7, IX-1, IX-3, IX-4, X-1, XI-1, XI-3, XI-4, XI-8, XI-9, XI-10, XI-11, XII-1, XII-2, XII-3, XII-4, XII-14, XIV-1, XIV-2, XIV-3, XIV-4, XIV-5, XIV-6, XIV-7, XIV-8, XIV-9, XIV-10, XV-1, XV-2, XV-3, XV-4, XV-5, XVI-1, XVI-2, XVI-3, XVI-4, XVI-6, XVI-7, XVI-8, XVI-11, XVI-12, XVI-13, XVIII-1, XVIII-2, XVIII-3, XVIII-4, XIX-2, XIX-3, XIX-5, CFAI
Fire Operations	IV-1, IV-3, IV-4, IV-5, IV-6, V-1, V-2, V-3, VI-1, VI-2, VI-4, VI-5, VI-6, VI-7, VI-8, VI-9, VI-10, VI-11, VIII-1, VIII-2, VIII-3, VIII-4, VIII-5, VIII-6, IX-1, IX-6, X-1, XI-15, XII-4, XII-10, XII-11, XII-13, XII-16, XII-17, XIII-5, XIII-6, XIII-7, XIII-10, XIII-11, XIII-12, XIII-13, XIII-14, XIV-2, XIV-3, XIV-7, XV-3, XV-4, XV-5, XVIII-1, XVIII-2, XIX-1, XIX-2, XIX-3, XIX-4, XIX-5, CFAI
Emergency Medical Services	IV-1, IV-3, IV-4, IV-5, IV-6, V-1, V-2, V-3, V-4, VI-4, VI-5, VI-11, VII-1, VII-2, VII-3, VII-4, VII-5, VII-6, VII-7, VII-8, VII-9, VII-10, VII-11, VII-12, VIII-1, VIII-7, VIII-8, VIII-9, IX-6, X-1, XI-15, XII-4, XII-12, XII-13, XII-16, XII-18, XIII-6, XV-3, XV-4, XV-5, XVIII-1, XVIII-2, XIX-1, XIX-2, XIX-3, XIX-4, XIX-5, CFAI
Fire Police Operations	IV-3, IV-4, IV-5, IV-6, V-1, V-2, V-3, VI-4, VI-5, VI-11, IX-1, IX-2, IX-3, IX-4, IX-5, IX-6, X-1, XII-4, XII-10, XII-13, XII-16, XIII-6, XV-3, XV-4, XV-5, XIX-1, XIX-3, XIX-4, XIX-5
Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment	X-1, XII-1, XII-2, XII-3, XII-4, XII-5, XII-6, XII-7, XII-8, XII-9, XII-10, XII-11, XII-12, XII-13, XI-15, XII-16, XII-17, XII-18, XIX-5
Communications	V-1, V-2, V-3, VI-3, VI-4, VI-6, VII-1, VII-6, X-1, XIX-5
Fire Prevention	VI-1, VI-2, X-1, XIV-1, XIV-2, XIV-3, XIV-4, XIV-5, XIV-6, XIV-7, XIV-8, XIV-9, XIV-10, XIV-11, XIX-5

Performance Analysis	V-1, V-2, V-3, V-4, VI-5, VI-7, VI-10, VII-2, VII-3, VIII-1, VIII-2, VIII-3, VIII-4, VIII-5, VIII-6, VIII-7, VIII-8, VIII-9, X-1, XII-17, XIX-5, CFAI
Policy and Procedure Development	V-2, V-3, V-4, VI-4, VI-5, VI-6, VI-8, VI-9, VI-10, VI-11, VI-12, VII-2, VII-5, VII-6, VII-8, IX-2, X-1, XI-1, XI-13, XI-14, XIX-5, CFAI
Recruitment and Retention of Personnel	IV-1, X-1, XI-1, XI-2, XI-3, XI-4, XI-5, XI-6, XI-7, XI-8, XI-10, XI-11, XI-12, XI-13, XI-14, XI-15, XI-16, XIX-5
Resources and Finance	IV-1, IV-4, VI-3, VI-8, VI-9, VII-1, VII-2, VII-3, VII-7, VII-9, VII-10, VII-11, VII-12, X-1, XI-11, XI-12, XI-13, XI-14, XI-15, XII-1, XII-2, XII-3, XII-11, XII-13, XII-14, XI-15, XII-17, XIII-4, XIV-6, XV-5, XVI-1, XVI-2, XVI-3, XVI-4, XVI-5, XVI-6, XVI-7, XVI-8, XVI-9, XVI-10, XVI-11, XVI-12, XVI-13, XVIII-2, XIX-3, XIX-5
Training and Professional Development	VII-6, VIII-6, IX-5, IX-6, X-1, XI-2, XIII-1, XIII-2, XIII-3, XIII-4, XIII-5, XIII-6, XIII-7, XIII-8, XIII-9, XIII-10, XIII-11, XIII-12, XIII-13, XIII-14, XIX-5, CFAI
Regionalization and Shared Service	IV-1, IV-2, IV-3, VI-8, VI-9, VII-2, VII-3, VII-4, VII-5, IX-3, IX-4, X-1, XI-9, XII-4, XII-7, XII-8, XII-9, XV-5, XVI-4, XVIII-3, XVIII-4, XVIII-5, XVIII-6, XVIII-7, XIX-2, XIX-3, XIX-5
Technology	V-1, V-2, V-3, V-4, VI-2, VI-3, VI-5, VI-6, VI-7, VI-8, VII-1, VIII-4, VIII-5, VIII-8, VIII-9, X-1, XIX-5



CHAPTER VI IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following tables identify the recommendation, assigned task group(s), timelines for implementation, potential barriers to implementation, and critical tasks. All recommendations have been assigned to one or more task groups in Chapter V, above.

CHAPTER IV: FIRE AND EMS SERVICES GOVERNANCE, OVERSIGHT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Recommendation IV-1	The SR 60, HR 148, and SR 6 Final Reports should continue to be the referenced reports from which the recommendations regarding legislative changes to expand governance for fire and EMS delivery systems are based.
Task Group(s)	Legislative, Municipal Liaison, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Recruitment and Retention of Personnel, Resources and Finance, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ Lack of municipal and or County support ➤ Cost ➤ Failure to arrive at consensus on legislative priorities ➤ Opposition by out of county stakeholders or special interests
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conducting meetings with stakeholders ➤ Developing consensus on legislative priorities ➤ Development of a legislative agenda endorsed by all participating organizations ➤ Gaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Attempting to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative

Recommendation IV-2	The Chester County Commissioners working collaboratively with the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., the Chester County Fire Police Association, the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should work with members of the Chester County legislative delegation to introduce and enact legislation as recommended in SR 6 and which will serve to expand the permissible role of County Government in the delivery of fire and EMS services.
Task Group(s)	Legislative, Municipal Liaison, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	2021-2022 Legislative session (optimistic) 2023-2024 Legislative session (realistic)
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of engagement on the municipal level ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus ➤ Inconsistent messaging ➤ Shifting legislative priorities ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ Concern relative to enhancing the County role in the delivery of emergency services ➤ Concern relative to a loss of local control ➤ Opposition by out of county stakeholders or special interests
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint meetings to identify action items and priorities ➤ Buy-in of all stakeholders ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Gaining support of the local legislative delegation ➤ Attempting to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent) ➤ Delivering a consistent message ➤ Management of Change



Recommendation IV-3	
Chester County Commissioners working in partnership with the stakeholders listed in Recommendation IV-2, above, should explore ways to take a more active role in advancing regionalization and/or supporting the fire/EMS service delivery system.	
Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison, Fire Operations; Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Concern relative to a loss of local control ➤ Perceived loss of local command structure ➤ Loss of direct control over costs and budgeting ➤ Concern relative to local resource assignment to a larger area
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of a phased in approach ➤ Clear communication to stakeholders ➤ Provide a process to hear concerns



Recommendation IV-4	The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., the Chester County Fire Police Association, the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials, with support from the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should establish a joint strategic plan working group to serve as a facilitator that could assist the communities of Chester County to address the fiscal and operational challenges associated with the continued delivery of high-quality fire and EMS services.
Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Resources and Finance
Timeline	In Place by December 2021, Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of stakeholder participation ➤ Lack of communication ➤ Lack of municipal engagement and support
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of a group that represents all stakeholders ➤ Communication of one message to all stakeholders



Recommendation IV-5		The governing bodies of <u>ALL</u> Chester County municipalities <u>MUST</u> become engaged in the provision of fire and EMS services to their respective municipalities. By law it is ultimately their responsibility to determine the level of risk and the level of emergency services protection for their communities.
Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations	
Timeline	January 1, 2021, Ongoing/Continuous	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of municipal response and support ➤ Lack of engagement ➤ Micro-focus exclusively on their community ➤ Lack of agreement relative to the level of service 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establishing a high level of communication ➤ Messaging relative to the importance of engagement ➤ Identifying tangible consequences of failing to engage 	



<p>Recommendation IV-6</p>	<p>Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association, with support from the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, and input from the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, the Chester County Association of Township Officials, and the citizens of Chester County should develop a compelling education program including videos and in-person workshops to educate local officials and governing bodies on the operations of the fire and EMS services, the challenges they are facing, and the need for increased funding. This would be consistent with Recommendation 16 in SR 6 “Educate Municipal Officials About Fire & EMS Crisis and Needs”.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Municipal Liaison, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>6 - 12 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of stakeholder agreement ➤ Lack of resources ➤ Lack of interest by municipal officials ➤ Lack of technical support
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a consensus-based message ➤ Develop and assign resources ➤ Develop marketing strategy ➤ Development of virtual/video program ➤ Deployment of messaging ➤ Schedule workshops ➤ Evaluation of impact ➤ Program adjustment



CHAPTER V: SERVICE DEMAND AND RESPONSE METRICS

<p>Recommendation V-1</p>	<p>The Chester County Department of Emergency Services should continue to work internally with the 9-1-1 center leadership to identify any potential ways to reduce call processing time (from receipt of the call to dispatch of the incident) with the goal to achieve a 90th percentile time of not more than 64 seconds as recommended in NFPA 1710. Reducing call processing time can assist with leading to improved overall response times.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Communications, Performance Analysis, Technology</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>6 - 12 Months, periodic performance reporting</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Existing policy and procedures ➤ Technological parameters ➤ Staff training ➤ Resistance to change
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify best practices from agencies that meet the time standard ➤ Identification of action items ➤ Revise policies and procedures as necessary ➤ Provide staff training ➤ Evaluation of the impact of each change



Recommendation V-2	Working collaboratively with the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association, the Chester County Department of Emergency Services 9-1-1 Center should consider making evaluation of the 80 th and 90 th percentile turnout and travel times as recommended in NFPA 1710 and 1720 part of its routine data analysis and statistical reporting. Having these more conservative times available will provide a more accurate response assessment and allow for better long- range master planning.
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Communications, Performance Analysis, Policy and Procedure Development, Technology
Timeline	6 – 12 Months, periodic performance reporting
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of consistent application of policy ➤ Lack of knowledge of technology ➤ Technological limitations ➤ Resistance to change
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of clear and consistent policy for reporting unit status ➤ Training of personnel ➤ Provide feedback with policy deviation ➤ Provide periodic reporting ➤ Provide recommendations relative to improvement to fire and EMS agencies



Recommendation V-3	
Working collaboratively with the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association, the 9-1-1 center should implement a procedure to document the number of times that each fire and EMS agency is unable to respond to a dispatched incident or “scratches” a call.	
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Communications, Policy and Procedure Development, Performance Analysis, Technology
Timeline	6 – 12 Months, Rreport provided every six months to emergency service organizations and annually to municipalities
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Internal resistance from responders ➤ Technological limitations ➤ Concern relative to indicating that community expectations are not being met ➤ Potential disagreement over the value of this strategy
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop policy ➤ Initiate technology/data collection changes ➤ Staff training ➤ Generate reporting and distribute to each agency every six months ➤ Provide an opportunity to adjust any disputes ➤ Provide an annual report to municipalities



<p>Recommendation V-4</p> <p>Working collaboratively with the 9-1-1 center to analyze their specific data, the leadership of Chester County’s EMS agencies should work to identify potential ways to reduce incident turnout time with the goal to achieve a 90th percentile time of not more than 60 seconds as recommended in NFPA 1710. Turnout time is the response time component that the agencies have the most direct control over which can lead to reduced overall response times.</p>	
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Emergency Medical Services, Performance Analysis, Policy and Procedure Development, Technology</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>6 – 12 Months, Ongoing</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of clear turnout and response policies or procedures ➤ Internal resistance from poorly performing agencies ➤ Resistance from EMS personnel ➤ Personnel working around the system ➤ Station configurations that hamper quick turnout
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consideration of crew-based strategies ➤ Engaging personnel to improve response performance ➤ Recognition of exceptional response ➤ Identification of goals and acceptable parameters



CHAPTER VI - FIRE OPERATIONS

<p>Recommendation VI-1</p> <p>The fire companies of Chester County should work collaboratively with the municipalities they serve to conduct a community risk assessment and develop a community fire and EMS risk management plan as recommended in NFPA 1720, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments.</p>	
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Municipal Liaison, Fire Prevention
Timeline	12 – 24 Months, Update periodically
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of engagement by municipality and/or fire company ➤ Lack of follow-through ➤ Lack of personnel to complete tasks ➤ Time commitment required ➤ Technological challenges
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meet with municipal liaisons ➤ Develop a process plan ➤ Develop a written risk assessment



<p>Recommendation VI-2</p>	<p>To the extent possible with their respective staffing availability, every fire company in Chester County should attempt to start a pre-fire/incident planning program. While the goal of the program should be to have an up to date pre-plan for every business, commercial, and industrial occupancy in their response area, initial efforts should focus on the most serious target hazards. Pre-planning will improve the firefighter’s knowledge of the specific tactics needed to handle a fire or other emergency at a facility and will alert them to on-site hazards and risks. Pre-fire/incident plans should be reviewed regularly and tested by periodic table-top exercises and on-site drills.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Operations, Fire Prevention, Technology</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Started within 12 months, Ongoing</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of technology ➤ Use of incompatible or inconsistent technology ➤ Lack of personnel to complete tasks ➤ Lack of interest by personnel ➤ Lack of available time ➤ Lack of consistent data input ➤ Lack of cooperation from other stakeholders
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identification of most significant hazards ➤ Selection of software ➤ Development of format ➤ Training of personnel ➤ Data input ➤ Multiple company access



Recommendation VI-3	
<p>The Chester County Department of Emergency Services should continue to provide and facilitate the purchase of all equipment such as communications and other technology. This should continue to assist to control costs utilizing bulk purchasing and provide consistency and standardization throughout the County.</p>	
Task Group(s)	Communications, Technology, Resources and Finance
Timeline	Continual/Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Change in priorities ➤ Lack of funding ➤ Loss of political support ➤ Lack of consensus on what is needed
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educating county officials on needs ➤ Securing funding when needed ➤ Document benefits of equipment provided



Recommendation VI - 4	The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association, working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should update their standardized responses for various types of incidents, and standardized run cards county-wide. Once developed the standardized responses should be adopted as the Chester County standard.
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Policy and Procedure Development, Communications
Timeline	6 – 12 Months, Revisited annually
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance from fire companies ➤ Local preference for certain responders/companies ➤ Inability to develop strong consensus ➤ Political pressure ➤ Cancellation of “unwanted” response resources
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identification of appropriate response resources ➤ Determination of response qualifications and capability ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Support from County to implement changes ➤ Update of Computer Aided Dispatch system



Recommendation VI-5	The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association, working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a county-wide procedure of dispatching the closest available station(s) with necessary apparatus/resources, and qualified personnel as determined by automatic vehicle location (AVL) or GPS, rather than permitting the selection of specific companies which may have longer travel distance and response times. Once developed, the standardized responses should be adopted as the Chester County standard response procedure for all agencies.
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Policy and Procedure Development, Technology, Performance Analysis
Timeline	6 – 12 Months, Revisited annually
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance from fire companies ➤ Local preference for certain responders/companies ➤ Inability to develop strong consensus ➤ Political pressure ➤ Cancellation of “unwanted” response resources
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identification of appropriate response resources ➤ Determination of response qualifications and capability ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Support from County to implement changes ➤ Update of Computer Aided Dispatch system



Recommendation VI-6	The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, should develop a procedure for documenting the number of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) qualified interior structural firefighters are on each unit. Whenever possible, this information should be entered into the CAD system by the apparatus officer allowing all responding personnel, particularly chief officers, to track the number of responding personnel in real time.
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Policy and Procedure Development, Technology, Communications
Timeline	6 – 12 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance from fire companies ➤ Officers not recording information ➤ Technology challenges ➤ Concern relative to indicating that community expectations are not being met ➤ Potential disagreement over the value of this procedure
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Obtaining buy-in from operations personnel ➤ Development of a clear procedure ➤ Support from County to implement changes ➤ Provide appropriate training



Recommendation VI-7	The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association, working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a procedure for the 9-1-1 center to track and analyze full-first alarm assignment on location times as recommended by NFPA 1720, and, any standards of cover responses (SOC) that are established.
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Performance Analysis, Technology
Timeline	6 – 12 Months, Periodic performance reporting
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Technological limitations ➤ Management of change ➤ Resistance from responders ➤ Concern relative to how individual companies will compare ➤ Concern relative to indicating that community expectations are not being met ➤ Potential disagreement over the value of this procedure
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Develop reporting capability ➤ Management of change & development of buy-in ➤ Development of operational procedures ➤ Provide a listing of best practices to improve response times ➤ Implementation of companion recommendations



The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a plan to deploy several daytime quick response units; fire apparatus staffed with an officer and three firefighters, positioned strategically around the county in fire stations that wish to host them.

Recommendation VI -8

- These units should initially be staffed with qualified volunteer personnel being paid a per diem.
- Units should be in service from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM.
- Initially, staff one unit in each geographic region of the County and adjust deployment based upon data analysis.
- Because these units will provide wide area coverage throughout the entire county during times of reduced volunteer availability, the MRI study team believes that again, as part of a pilot program, these personnel should be funded through the County. If the personnel are paid \$20.00 per hour, and personnel provide a total 720 staff hours per week (3 units x 4 personnel each x 60 hours per week), the first-year cost for salary would be approximately \$750,000.00. There is currently no funding stream established to fund this need.
- Future consideration should be given to the County applying for a FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant as a county-wide endeavor to improve compliance with NFPA 1720. Currently, SAFER eligibility requirements do not allow for Chester County to apply.

Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Municipal Liaison, Regionalization and Shared Services, Policy and Procedure Development, Resources and Finance, Technology
Timeline	2 – 4 Years



<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of fiscal resources ➤ Lack of deployment strategy ➤ Resistance of volunteers ➤ Failure to get enabling legislation approved ➤ Lack of municipal and/or county support ➤ Failure to obtain a SAFER Grant
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain buy-in from fire companies and volunteers ➤ Obtain buy-in from municipalities ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Identify funding sources ➤ Development of revenue stream ➤ Apply for a SAFER grant(s) ➤ Identification of strategic deployment points ➤ Establish minimum qualification of personnel ➤ Training and orientation of personnel on specific equipment ➤ Development of procedures for operations ➤ Implementation of a scheduling mechanism ➤ Integration into responses ➤ Review of utilization and value



Recommendation VI -9

The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association working collaboratively with the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should work toward having Chester County begin to hire full-time, career firefighters to be assigned to fire stations throughout Chester County that wish to utilize them. Fire companies that need/wish to have career staff assigned moving forward would need to notify the County at least 24 months prior to any requested deployment. No fire company that does not want career personnel would be forced to have them deployed from their station.

The addition of career personnel would provide a guaranteed, timely, and qualified, response to daytime emergency incidents. With these personnel available for immediate response, the fire companies should begin to improve initial unit on scene response times, and more frequently be able to comply with the initial fire attack requirements recommended by NFPA and required by OSHA.

Some of the other benefits have having the career staff in place, particularly during the day when most of the volunteer force are at their primary jobs, include, but would certainly not be limited to:

- Quicker and guaranteed compliance with the OSHA Two in-Two Out requirement for initial fire attack.
- Guaranteed, and usually immediate, EMS response by trained first responders to get lifesaving help to the 9-1-1 caller quicker if nearby ambulances are committed, or on high priority incidents.
- Performing fire prevention inspections and other fire prevention activities.
- Developing pre-fire/incident plans.
- Performing fire apparatus, tool, and equipment inspections, testing, and maintenance.
- Performing basic station maintenance in all stations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Performing fire hydrant testing, maintenance, and flow testing. ➤ Assisting the fire companies with special projects.
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Municipal Liaison, Policy and Procedure Development, Resources and Finance, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	5 – 8 years
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of fiscal resources ➤ Lack of deployment strategy ➤ Resistance of volunteers ➤ Failure to get enabling legislation approved ➤ Lack of municipal and/or county support ➤ Failure to obtain a SAFER grant ➤ Development of volunteer vs. career rivalry/culture clash
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain buy-in from fire companies and volunteers ➤ Obtain buy-in from municipalities ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Identify funding sources ➤ Apply for a SAFER grant(s) ➤ Identification of strategic deployment points ➤ Establish minimum qualification of personnel ➤ Development of hiring criterion and process ➤ Priority hiring of current career firefighters employed in Chester County ➤ Implementation of recruit firefighter academy ➤ Training and orientation of personnel on specific equipment ➤ Development of procedures for operations ➤ Implementation of a scheduling mechanism ➤ Integration into responses ➤ Review of utilization and value ➤ Continuation of primary response role of volunteer personnel



Recommendation VI-10

The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should encourage their members to consider starting to utilize volunteer personnel to provide in-station staffing, whenever possible, but primarily between 6:00 PM and 6:00 AM daily, and, all day on the weekends. Personnel who pull at least one duty shift per week would maintain their member in good standing status with the fire company. When on duty personnel could also complete their required training, participate in various department/station projects, pre-fire planning, etc., and possibly even membership recruitment activities.

Under the duty crew system, calls of less severe acuity would be handled by the duty crew alone. Multiple stations and units would still be dispatched and respond to potentially serious incidents such as any type of reported structure fire, rescue incidents, etc., based upon the run card protocols. All personnel would be encouraged to respond to these types of incidents.

Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Performance Analysis, Policy and Procedure Development
Timeline	6 – 12 Months, Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Internal resistance ➤ Organizational culture ➤ Shifting role of the volunteer toward a secondary provider at times
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain buy-in on the multiple benefits of program ➤ Development of a plan and operational guidance ➤ Development of dispatch policies and procedures ➤ Internal communication of expectations ➤ Consideration of various stipends for participation ➤ Evaluation of data regarding response time improvement



<p>Recommendation VI -11</p>	<p>The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should form a committee to begin development of a comprehensive county-wide Standard Operations Procedures/Guidelines (SOP/SOG) manual utilizing existing SOPs/SOGs as a starting point. They should also consider the development of county-wide operational manuals based upon the Northern Virginia Regional Fire Services manuals. This could even be pursued as a regional endeavor with the other counties in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The committee should be comprised of members of various companies and ranks.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Policy and Procedure Development</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 – 24 Months, Update every two years, Ongoing process for development of manuals</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of acceptance or buy-in ➤ Lack of input ➤ Difficulty developing consensus ➤ Political pressure ➤ Overall integration of a single set of SOPs/SOGs for entire county ➤ Conflicts with current practice and/or the rules of a fire company ➤ Training personnel ➤ Accountability for compliance
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participative development involving cross section of members ➤ Development of a process that includes a high level of internal communication and involvement ➤ Allow for firefighter comments and input ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Ensure full distribution including electronic posting ➤ Providing the SOP/SOG manual access to all members



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Development of training for each SOP/SOG➤ Development of a process to address concerns and deviations
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The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should adopt a standardized SOP/SOG form that includes the following information:

Recommendation VI-12

- Title of the SOP/SOG
- Number of the SOP/SOG
- Category of the SOP/SOG (EMS Operations, Training, Administration, etc.)
- Page number and total number of pages
- Effective date
- Revision date (if applicable)
- Approval/signature

Each SOP/SOG should, at a minimum, contain the following sections:

- Purpose
- Scope (If necessary and/or appropriate)
- Definitions of terms (If necessary and/or appropriate)
- Procedure(s)/Main body
- References (If necessary and/or appropriate)

Task Group(s)	Policy and Procedure Development
Timeline	6 – 12 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of acceptance or buy-in ➤ Lack of input ➤ Difficulty developing consensus
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participative development involving cross section of members ➤ Development of a process that includes a high level of internal communication and involvement ➤ Allow for firefighter comments and input ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations



CHAPTER VII - EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE (EMS) OPERATIONS

<p>Recommendation VII-1</p>	<p>The Chester County Department of Emergency Services (DES) should continue to provide and facilitate the purchase of all equipment such as communications, EMS report writing software, and the health data exchange link for all services. This should continue to assist to control costs utilizing bulk purchasing and provide consistency and standardization throughout the County.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Emergency Medical Services, Communications, Technology, Resources and Finance</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Continual/Ongoing</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Change in priorities ➤ Lack of funding ➤ Loss of political support ➤ Lack of consensus on what is needed ➤ Skill retention relative to technology ➤ Quality of data input
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educating county officials on needs ➤ Securing funding when needed ➤ Document benefits of equipment provided ➤ Provide on-line and ongoing training and orientation to these systems ➤ Identify and develop a short operations guide to each system provided ➤ Provide technical support and 24/7 support

<p>Recommendation VII-2</p>	<p>Working collaboratively the Chester County EMS Council, Inc., the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should explore the feasibility of developing a pilot program to implement a County-based Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) response. The purchase of needed equipment could be done as a lease in arrears, so delivery of vehicles and equipment could occur, and the first payment for them would be one year after delivery enabling revenue to be generated from transports throughout the year. This program should initially consist of one unit in each of the County’s three geographic operations regions. It can then incrementally be expanded based on the proven success of the pilot program.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Emergency Medical Services, Municipal Liaison, Performance Analysis, Policy and Procedure Development, Resources and Finance, Regionalization and Shared Services</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>3 to 5 years</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of sufficient planning and analysis ➤ Lack of fiscal resources ➤ Lack of deployment strategy ➤ Failure to get enabling legislation approved ➤ Lack of municipal and/or county support ➤ Resistance to regional services ➤ Concern over loss of local control
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain buy-in from EMS agencies ➤ Obtain buy-in from municipalities ➤ Interest of the County providing service ➤ Communication with stakeholders ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Obtain pilot program approval ➤ Identify funding sources ➤ Development of revenue stream ➤ Apply for a SAFER grant, if applicable ➤ Identification of strategic deployment points ➤ Acquire equipment



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of selection and hiring criterion and process ➤ Integration into responses ➤ Development of clear operational policies ➤ Evaluation of program utilization, value, revenue, and service demand
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Recommendation VII-3	Initial staffing of this MIH unit should be Monday to Friday from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM during peak hours. It should be staffed with one fulltime Basic EMT and one fulltime Paramedic. Hours when this unit is not staffed will default to current local protocols and procedures until the system is more fully developed.
Task Group(s)	Emergency Medical Services, Municipal Liaison, Performance Analysis, Regionalization and Shared Services, Resources and Finance
Timeline	3 to 5 years
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of sufficient planning and analysis ➤ Lack of fiscal resources ➤ Lack of deployment strategy ➤ Failure to get enabling legislation approved ➤ Lack of municipal and/or county support ➤ Resistance to regional services ➤ Concern over loss of local control
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain pilot program approval ➤ Identification of strategic deployment points ➤ Acquire equipment ➤ Development of selection and hiring criterion and process ➤ Integration into responses ➤ Development of clear operational policies ➤ Evaluation of program utilization, value, revenue, and service demand ➤ Evaluation of unit deployment

Recommendation VII-4	Working collaboratively with the Chester County EMS Council, Inc. and the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with fire or EMS organizations to strategically locate the MIH units in each geographic area of the County.
Task Group(s)	Emergency Medical Services, Municipal Liaison, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	3 to 5 years
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Failure to get enabling legislation approved ➤ Lack of municipal and/or county support ➤ Resistance to regional services ➤ Concern over loss of local control ➤ Inability to negotiate reasonable MOUs for unit deployment ➤ Use of less than optimal deployment points
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Determination of optimal deployment points ➤ Negotiating lease agreements or MOUs for deployment



Recommendation VII-5	The current emergency responders are dedicated individuals who have provided an immeasurable service to their communities. This resource should not be overlooked. Any response from a county resource should still incorporate the tiered response from local responders to begin initial assessment, treatment, and care prior to the arrival of any MIH units.
Task Group(s)	Emergency Medical Services, Municipal Liaison, Regionalization and Shared Services, Policy and Procedure Development
Timeline	Ongoing once program is implemented
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of buy-in from EMS field providers ➤ Cancelling responses by MIH units resulting in under utilization ➤ Personnel not responding because MIH unit will handle the incident
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clear communication to local responders ➤ Documentation of MIH unit utilization



Recommendation VII-6	
<p>The Chester County 9-1-1 Communications Center should meet with the Medical Director and review all Computer Aided Dispatch cards. All emergency medical calls for service into the Communications Center are vetted through Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD). If appropriate, based on the triage through the EMD process, DES should have their MIH ambulance(s) respond to appropriate calls.</p>	
Task Group(s)	Emergency Medical Services, Communications, Policy and Procedure Development, Training and Professional Development
Timeline	Ongoing once program is implemented
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Internal resistance to tiered response ➤ Lack of consensus between first responder groups ➤ Training required for effective EMD delivery ➤ Quality assurance concerns among Telecommunicators and/or first responders
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with Medical Director to define EMD protocols ➤ Train and or update telecommunications personnel ➤ Development of policy and procedure ➤ Communication system value to first responders ➤ Train first responders on the value of tiered response ➤ Train personnel on system terminology and EMD levels



Recommendation VII-7	
Chester County should establish a fund for collection of revenue for any response by DES for emergency medical services. These funds for service should be available to be put towards future operations of a possible County-based EMS system and not back into the general fund of the County. Based on recently passed legislation for treat-no-transport, DES should be able to bill for each response with an MIH unit.	
Task Group(s)	Emergency Medical Services, Resources and Finance
Timeline	Upon program implementation
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Failure to obtain legislative approval ➤ Delay in obtaining licensure or pilot program approval ➤ Delay in completing appropriate contracts and agreements for billing and collection of revenue ➤ Local resistance and failure to provide required information ➤ Lack of local support for payment of County resource utilization
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish revenue account ➤ Select billing methodology ➤ Complete provider agreements ➤ Training on billing for field personnel ➤ Review and quality assurance relating to billing ➤ Establish billing hardship review process ➤ Develop methodology for adjustments and writing off of bad debt



Recommendation VII-8		Working in conjunction with its member agencies, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc. should explore the feasibility of implementing an alternative destination program for certain non-critical EMS patients modeled after the Montgomery County, Maryland program, once permitted by the Commonwealth.
Task Group(s)	Emergency Medical Services, Policy and Procedure Development	
Timeline	2 – 4 Years	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Failure to obtain legislative and/or regulatory approval ➤ Resistance of EMS providers to take patients to alternative destinations ➤ Resistance by urgent care facilities to accept EMS patients ➤ Public push back 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development and approval of pilot program ➤ Request pilot program approval ➤ Evaluation of pilot program use, effectiveness, and patient outcome ➤ Review use and outcomes ➤ Considering outcomes apply for approval to expand program utilization ➤ Comprehensive program evaluation one year after County-wide utilization 	



Recommendation VII-9	The Chester County EMS Council, Inc. in conjunction with the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should work with their local legislative partners to introduce and support the adoption of legislation that addresses the EMS issues that were identified in SR 6.
Task Group(s)	Legislative, Municipal Liaison, Emergency Medical Services, Resources and Finance
Timeline	2021-2022 Legislative session (optimistic) 2023-2024 Legislative session (realistic)
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of engagement on the municipal level ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus and support ➤ Inconsistent messaging ➤ Shifting legislative priorities ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ Opposition by out of county stakeholders or special interests
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint meetings to identify action items and priorities ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Identification of consensus agenda ➤ Host legislative breakfast to bring responders, municipal officials, and legislators together to discuss the priority agenda items ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Development of ongoing legislative marketing relative to this agenda ➤ Attempting to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent) ➤ Delivering a consistent message



<p>Recommendation VII-10</p>	<p>The Chester County EMS Council, Inc. in conjunction with the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should work with their local legislative partners, to introduce and support the adoption of legislation to enable EMS services in Pennsylvania to participate in the Federal regulations, 42 CFR 447.3000, Section 1902(a)(30) of the Social Security Act that allows states to establish alternative payment methodologies including supplemental payment and certified public expenditures (CPE) methodologies. Once passed, this process will allow services to submit expenditures for services and apply for reimbursements that more accurately reflect the true cost for delivery.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Legislative, Municipal Liaison, Emergency Medical Services, Resources and Finance</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>2021-2022 Legislative session (optimistic) 2023-2024 Legislative session (realistic)</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of engagement on the municipal level ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus and support ➤ Inconsistent messaging ➤ Shifting legislative priorities ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ Opposition by out of county stakeholders or special interests
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint meetings to identify action items and priorities ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Identification of consensus agenda ➤ Host legislative breakfast to bring responders, municipal officials and legislators together to discuss the priority agenda items ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of ongoing legislative marketing relative to this agenda ➤ Attempting to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent) ➤ Delivering a consistent message
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Recommendation VII-11	Any EMS providers who are not doing third party billing for EMS transports should implement a policy to do so ASAP in order to provide a revenue offset to their operating expenses.
Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison, Emergency Medical Services, Resources and Finance
Timeline	6 - 12 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance to billing for service ➤ Political and public opposition ➤ Resistance to the adoption of a single rate structure ➤ Diversion of revenue stream to fund non-EMS operations ➤ Misconception that billing will fully fund the service ➤ Conflict with other fundraising programs
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish a process for rate review and approval ➤ Adopt rate ➤ Contract third party medical billing services ➤ Enter into agreement with insurance providers ➤ Develop a policy for hardship and bad debt ➤ Provide reporting to municipalities served ➤ Develop process for payment adjustment and bad debt write offs

Recommendation VII-12	Once enabling legislation is adopted, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, working in conjunction with the municipal governing bodies, should explore the feasibility of, and interest in, the establishment of a county-wide EMS system. Participation would be voluntary, but long term; could result in improved consistency, increased efficiencies, enhanced service levels along with a consistent level of funding, as well as improved compensation and benefits for personnel.
Task Group(s)	Legislative, Municipal Liaison, Emergency Medical Services, Resources and Finance
Timeline	5 Years
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of sufficient planning and analysis ➤ Lack of fiscal resources ➤ Lack of deployment strategy ➤ Failure to get enabling legislation approved ➤ Lack of municipal and/or county interest or support ➤ Resistance by existing EMS agencies ➤ Resistance to regional services ➤ Concern over loss of local control
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain buy-in from EMS agencies ➤ Obtain buy-in from municipalities ➤ Interest of the County in providing the service ➤ Communication with stakeholders ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Obtain pilot program approval ➤ Identify funding sources ➤ Development of revenue stream ➤ Apply for a SAFER grant, if applicable ➤ Identification of strategic deployment points ➤ Acquire equipment ➤ Development of selection and hiring criterion and process



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Priority hiring for personnel who are currently employed by agencies joining the county system➤ Integration into responses➤ Development of clear operational policies➤ Evaluation of program utilization, value, revenue, and service demand➤ Stress voluntary nature of county system
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CHAPTER VIII - STANDARDS OF RESPONSE COVERAGE

<p>Recommendation VIII-1</p>	<p>Working collaboratively with their memberships, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should continue to explore ways to reduce all aspects of response time, but particularly turnout time as this the aspect that the fire and EMS providers have the most direct control over.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services Performance Analysis</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Ongoing/Continuous</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of clear turnout and response policies or procedures ➤ Internal resistance from poorly performing agencies ➤ Resistance from personnel ➤ Personnel perceiving call is minor in nature ➤ Personnel working around the system ➤ Station configurations that hamper quick turnout ➤ Continued home response of volunteer personnel to unstaffed stations
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consideration of crew-based strategies ➤ Implementation of in station staffing ➤ Engaging personnel to improve response performance ➤ Recognition of exceptional response ➤ Identification of goals and acceptable parameters



<p>Recommendation VIII-2</p> <p>Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should establish fire demand zones throughout the County, based upon the urban, suburban, and rural components of the diverse fire service coverage area. They should then work to develop a Standard of Response Cover based upon the recommendations contained in NFPA 1720 for the established fire demand zones, with adjustments as appropriate for Chester County’s unique needs.</p>	
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Municipal Liaison, Performance Analysis
Timeline	12 – 24 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance from internal stakeholders ➤ Desire to retain traditional response districts and response procedures ➤ Reluctance to adopt more stringent response standards for volunteer personnel ➤ Failure to acknowledge need for improvement ➤ Failure to implement enabling recommendations ➤ Political reluctance
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Obtaining buy-in from all stakeholders ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Use NFPA 1720 as a guide and starting benchmark ➤ Determining strategies for reducing dispatch to response and response to on scene times ➤ Implementing enabling recommendations ➤ Ongoing monitoring and analysis



Recommendation VIII-3		Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should adopt Standards of Response Cover benchmarks to have the first unit responding to each fire type incident within 90 seconds (slightly higher than NFPA recommendation) of dispatch (when the station is staffed by career personnel or a volunteer duty crew), 90% of the time.
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Performance Analysis	
Timeline	12 – 24 Months	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of clear turnout and response policies or procedures ➤ Internal resistance from poorly performing agencies ➤ Resistance from personnel ➤ Personnel perceiving call is minor in nature ➤ Personnel working around the system ➤ Station configurations that hamper quick turnout 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Engaging personnel to improve response performance ➤ Lack of clear turnout and response policies or procedures ➤ Recognition of exceptional response ➤ Identification of goals and acceptable parameters ➤ Improving flow paths in stations, if feasible and practical 	



Recommendation VIII-4		Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and its membership, and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, and based upon the GIS mapping, consideration should be given to part of the Standards of Response Cover benchmarks seeking to have the first unit on scene within 10 minutes after responding to all fire type incidents, county-wide, 90% of the time.
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Technology, Performance Analysis	
Timeline	12 – 24 Months	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance from internal stakeholders ➤ Desire to retain traditional response districts and response procedures ➤ Reluctance to adopt more stringent response standards for volunteer personnel ➤ Internal resistance from poorly performing agencies ➤ Failure to acknowledge need for improvement ➤ Failure to implement enabling recommendations ➤ Political reluctance 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Obtaining buy-in from all stakeholders ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Explain relevance of NFPA 1720 as a guide and starting benchmark ➤ Determining strategies for reducing response to on scene times ➤ Implementing enabling recommendations ➤ Ongoing monitoring and analysis 	



<p>Recommendation VIII-5</p>	<p>Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and its membership, and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, and based upon the GIS mapping, consideration should be given to part of the Standards of Response Cover benchmarks seeking to have the entire first alarm assignment for reported structure fires; even the rural areas of the County, with at least 15 personnel, on scene within 15 minutes from dispatch, 80% of the time. For the more urban and suburban areas of the County the more conservative benchmark of 10 minutes, 80% of the time should be considered.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Operations, Technology, Performance Analysis</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 – 24 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance from internal stakeholders ➤ Desire to retain traditional response districts and response procedures ➤ Reluctance to adopt more stringent response standards for volunteer personnel ➤ Internal resistance from poorly performing agencies ➤ Failure to acknowledge need for improvement ➤ Failure to implement enabling recommendations ➤ Political reluctance ➤ Continued home response of volunteer personnel to unstaffed stations ➤ Declining number of responders ➤ Lack of an adequate number of qualified drivers in some companies
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Obtaining buy-in from all stakeholders ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Explain relevance of NFPA 1720 as a guide and starting benchmark ➤ Determining strategies for reducing dispatch to response and response to on scene times ➤ Consideration of crew-based strategies



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Implementation of in station staffing➤ Engaging personnel to improve response performance➤ Implementing enabling recommendations➤ Ongoing monitoring and analysis
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The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should consider the development of a “performance improvement” process for fire suppression operations. The process should include the adoption of performance standards such as NFPA 1720, including on-scene performance indicators such as:

Recommendation VIII-6

- On-scene to the charged line at the front door of a structure fire: two minutes or less, 90% of the time.
- Water from the hydrant to supply engine: three minutes or less, 90% of the time.

The point of the performance measures is to identify the community’s expectations in a quantifiable way and to use the measurement of the fire company’s performance, against these objectives to identify areas which may need improvement or additional resources.

Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Training and Professional Development, Performance Analysis
Timeline	14 – 36 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance from internal stakeholders ➤ Reluctance to adopt more stringent response standards for volunteer personnel ➤ Internal resistance from poorly performing agencies ➤ Lack of adequate training ➤ Failure to acknowledge need for improvement ➤ Failure to implement enabling recommendations particularly those related to training standards
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Engaging personnel to improve skill proficiency ➤ Implementation of related training recommendations ➤ Ongoing monitoring and analysis



Recommendation VIII-7	
Working collaboratively, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc. and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, should establish EMS demand zones throughout the County based upon the urban, suburban, and rural components of the diverse EMS coverage area.	
Task Group(s)	Emergency Medical Services, Municipal Liaison, Performance Analysis
Timeline	12 – 24 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance from internal stakeholders ➤ Desire to retain traditional response districts and response procedures ➤ Reluctance to adopt more stringent response standards ➤ Failure to acknowledge need for improvement ➤ Failure to implement enabling recommendations ➤ Political reluctance
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Obtaining buy-in from all stakeholders ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Use NFPA 1710 and CAAS standards as a guide and starting benchmark ➤ Determining strategies for reducing dispatch to response and response to on scene times ➤ Implementing enabling recommendations ➤ Ongoing monitoring and analysis



<p>Recommendation VIII-8</p>	<p>Working collaboratively, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc. and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a Standard of Response Cover for BLS level response, based upon the established EMS demand zones and response/travel time recommendations contained in NFPA 1710 and/or the CAAS standards, with adjustments as appropriate for Chester County’s unique needs. The SOC adopted should attempt to have benchmark achievement rates of 90% for urban and suburban areas and 80% for rural and remote areas.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Emergency Medical Services, Technology, Performance Analysis</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 – 24 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance from internal stakeholders ➤ Desire to retain traditional response districts and response procedures ➤ Reluctance to adopt more stringent response standards ➤ Internal resistance from poorly performing agencies ➤ Failure to acknowledge need for improvement ➤ Failure to implement enabling recommendations ➤ Political reluctance
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Obtaining buy-in from all stakeholders ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Explain relevance of NFPA 1710 and CAAS standards as a guide and starting benchmark ➤ Determining strategies for reducing response to on scene times ➤ Implementing enabling recommendations ➤ Ongoing monitoring and analysis



<p>Recommendation VIII-9</p>	<p>Working collaboratively, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc. and the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop a Standard of Response Cover for ALS level response, based upon the established EMS demand zones and response/travel time recommendations contained in NFPA 1710 and/or the CAAS standards, with adjustments as appropriate for Chester County’s unique needs. The SOC adopted should attempt to have benchmark achievement rates of 90% for urban and suburban areas and 80% for rural and remote areas.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Emergency Medical Services, Technology, Performance Analysis</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 – 24 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance from internal stakeholders ➤ Desire to retain traditional response districts and response procedures ➤ Reluctance to adopt more stringent response standards ➤ Internal resistance from poorly performing agencies ➤ Failure to acknowledge need for improvement ➤ Failure to implement enabling recommendations ➤ Political reluctance
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Obtaining buy-in from all stakeholders ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Explain relevance of NFPA 1710 and CAAS standards as a guide and starting benchmark ➤ Determining strategies for reducing response to on scene times ➤ Implementing enabling recommendations ➤ Ongoing monitoring and analysis



CHAPTER IX - FIRE POLICE OPERATIONS

<p>Recommendation IX-1</p>	<p>Working in conjunction with the stakeholders who comprised the Traffic Incident Operating Guidelines Advisory Committee, the Chester County Fire Police Association should work to obtain commitments from PennDOT, as well as local municipalities with DPWs, to have necessary traffic control personnel and equipment on the scene of major traffic/roadway incidents within two hours of being requested. Part of this process could include the development of a short educational video about Fire Police operations and why the partnership with PennDOT and local DPWs is important for long duration incidents.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Operations, Fire Police Operations, Municipal Liaison</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 – 24 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of cooperation by PennDOT ➤ Lack of interest by municipalities ➤ Lack of available personnel to respond nights and weekends
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Engage PennDOT and local municipalities and their DPWs in discussions regarding needs ➤ Development of educational program on fire police operations ➤ Monitor effectiveness of agreements



Recommendation IX-2	All Chester County Fire Police units should discontinue the practice of allowing members to respond in their personal vehicles to incidents on high-speed limited access highways. The second sentence in paragraph 5.3 Incident Response in the Highway Traffic Incident Management Operating Guidelines should be deleted.
Task Group(s)	Fire Police Operations, Policy and Procedure Development
Timeline	6 – 12 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance from internal stakeholders ➤ Desire to retain traditional response procedures ➤ Reluctance to adopt more stringent response standards ➤ Failure to recognize safety issues associated with current procedure
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Revise Highway Traffic Incident Management Operating Guidelines



Recommendation IX-3	Due to declining numbers, some Fire Police units may be forced to explore alternative methods to ensure adequate response to incidents. This may include forming MOU's with neighboring jurisdictions to permit fire police from multiple companies to mutually respond to incidents without the need to dispatch a full Fire Police Task Force. The Chester County Fire Police Association should explore the feasibility of creating some mutual response agreements.
Task Group(s)	Fire Police Operations, Municipal Liaison, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	Ongoing/Continuous
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reluctance of organizations to acknowledge challenges ➤ Lack of municipal support or engagement
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Open and honest dialogue between stakeholders ➤ Negotiation of MOU ➤ Obtaining municipal support ➤ Open dialogue with local law enforcement



Recommendation IX-4	The Chester County Fire Police Association should continue to monitor its member organizations for continued viability. In the future, if conditions warrant, and working collaboratively with the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association they should help to facilitate discussions on a more regional approach to Fire Police operations.
Task Group(s)	Fire Police Operations, Regionalization and Shared Services, Municipal Liaison
Timeline	Ongoing/Continuous
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reluctance of organizations to acknowledge challenges ➤ Lack of municipal support or engagement ➤ Lack of understanding among external stakeholders regarding the value of the Fire Police ➤ Resistance to regionalization ➤ Concern over acquisition versus a merger of equals
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Open and honest dialogue between stakeholders ➤ Stress that consolidations or regionalization is a merger of equals ➤ Consider allowing individual units to maintain their identity ➤ Negotiating agreement ➤ Obtaining municipal support and approval



Because many motorists are driving more aggressively and more distracted, Chester County Fire Police Officers are encouraged to continually improve their traffic management and scene safety skills.

ResponderSafety.com offers 38 free online one-hour training modules. These excellent modules would benefit all Fire Police. Below are some of the modules that may be most beneficial for the Fire Police Officers:

Recommendation IX-5

- Advanced Warning
- Blocking Procedures at Roadway Incidents
- The First 15 Minutes at Highway Incidents
- See and Be Seen Emergency Lighting Awareness
- Traffic Incident Management: Model Practices and Procedures
- Planning for the Long-Term Event
- Traffic Incident Management on Rural Roads
- Termination
- Traffic Incident Management Requirements in NFPA 1500
- Understanding NFPA 1091

Task Group(s)	Fire Police Operations, Training and Professional Development
Timeline	12 – 24 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personnel not seeing the value in the training ➤ Time commitment necessary ➤ Technological challenges for members who are not computer savvy
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress importance of completing all training for safe operations ➤ Provide opportunities to complete training in alternative forums for those who are not tech savvy



Recommendation IX-6	To improve roadway scene safety for all emergency responders, all fire companies and EMS agencies follow the guidelines established by the Chester County Highway Traffic Incident Management Operating Guidelines.
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Training and Professional Development
Timeline	Ongoing/Continuous
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of full understanding of the risk of highway incidents ➤ Responder complacency ➤ Lack of accountability
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide education to all responders on Highway Safety and Traffic Incident Management Guidelines ➤ Officers ensure accountability for members following guidelines



CHAPTER X - DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Recommendation X-1	Working collaboratively with the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, Chester County Association of Township Officials, and other interested stakeholders, the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should provide as much support as possible to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.
Task Group(s)	All task groups as necessary
Timeline	Ongoing/Continuous
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limited staff availability ➤ Current limits to services Chester County can provide
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prioritizing needs and objectives ➤ Development of consensus of implementation of recommendations ➤ Maintain County support for initiative ➤ Set reasonable timelines for task completion



CHAPTER XI - VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

<p>Recommendation XI-1</p>	<p>The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should establish a uniform application and screening process for all new members of the fire and EMS services throughout Chester County. Although these personnel are volunteers, they still enjoy all the rights of full-time public safety personnel and should possess the same high ethical and moral character. At a minimum, the screening process should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Possession of a valid driver’s license (all personnel should have their driver’s licenses checked on an annual basis) ➤ State and federal criminal background check including fingerprinting ➤ Drug testing ➤ Credit, employment, and reference checks
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Recruitment and Retention, Policy and Procedure Development, Municipal Liaison</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>18 – 30 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reluctance of agencies to standardize application process ➤ Reluctance of agencies to conduct background investigations on potential volunteers ➤ Agencies circumventing established procedures ➤ Lack of cooperation with local law enforcement to assist with various aspects of the screen process ➤ Cost involved
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain buy-in from fire and EMS agencies ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Obtain support from municipal officials ➤ Developing consensus procedures ➤ Development of standard application



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work collaboratively with local law enforcement of background checks ➤ Selection of vendors and awarding of contracts for certain components such as drug testing
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Recommendation XI-2	<p>The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should create a “New Member Guide” for both the member AND their family with various checklists, progression information, copies of primary response maps, key forms, and other critical details they’ll need to know as a member of a fire company.</p>
Task Group(s)	Recruitment and Retention, Training and Professional Development
Timeline	18 – 30 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Perception among members that it is not needed ➤ Time necessary to develop guide ➤ Lack of involvement by organizations
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtaining buy-in on need from fire and EMS agencies ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Research existing guides to use as a foundation ➤ Need for organizations to possibly develop and add their own addendums

Recommendation XI-3	Working collaboratively, the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., the Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should lobby their legislative delegation, particularly members of the state Senate to get House Bill 1786, which would forgive up to \$16,000.00 in student loan debt for qualifying volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel, passed and enacted into law.
Task Group(s)	Legislative, Municipal Liaison, Recruitment and Retention
Timeline	2021-2022 Legislative session (optimistic) 2023-2024 Legislative session (realistic)
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of engagement on the municipal level ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus and support ➤ Shifting legislative priorities ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ Opposition by out of county stakeholders or special interests
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Host legislative breakfast to bring responders, municipal officials, and legislators together to discuss the priority agenda items ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Development of ongoing legislative marketing relative to this agenda ➤ Attempting to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent) ➤ Delivering a consistent message



<p>Recommendation XI-4</p>	<p>The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should convene focus groups to determine what concepts and recruitment and retention strategies are feasible and most attractive to both current members and potential candidates.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Recruitment and Retention, Municipal Liaison</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 – 24 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest and engagement at various levels ➤ Inability to develop consensus ➤ Development of unrealistic proposals ➤ Inequality between the levels of the benefits that agencies can provide ➤ Cost factors ➤ Time commitment associated with recruitment efforts ➤ Motivational differences between municipalities and agencies
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understanding what works in one fire company or municipality may not work in the one next door ➤ Developing reasonable proposals ➤ Development of a cafeteria style menu of options ➤ Recognition of the need for diversity in the fire and EMS services including in the recruitment and retention area ➤ Working with municipal leaders to obtain necessary funding ➤ Ongoing evaluation of program success



Recommendation XI-5		Chester County’s fire and EMS providers should make a concerted effort to reach out to inactive and former members and attempt to recruit/motivate them back to active status.
Task Group(s)	Recruitment and Retention	
Timeline	Ongoing	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest at the agency level ➤ Time commitment required ➤ Lack of leadership or negative atmosphere in the agency ➤ Total loss of contact with member 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understanding reasons members left ➤ Timely follow-up regarding questions or concerns ➤ Setting reasonable expectations for return 	

Recommendation XI-6		Chester County’s fire and EMS providers should consider the implementation of an incentive program for members that attain a level of more than 25% of emergency responses, or other designated level of participation for non-emergency or administrative members. An example would be to provide gift certificates for local restaurants, concerts, or other entertainment as a reward for attaining a high level of response.
Task Group(s)	Recruitment and Retention	
Timeline	Ongoing	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest ➤ Perception of favoritism toward certain members ➤ Cost 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop policy and clearly articulate ➤ Identify benefits of interest to members ➤ Maintain good participation records ➤ Acknowledge achievements publicly ➤ Track success of program 	



Recommendation XI-7	Chester County’s fire and EMS providers should attempt to enter partnerships with local businesses to allow their personnel to respond, when needed, to emergency incidents during working hours, without any financial penalty.
Task Group(s)	Recruitment and Retention
Timeline	24 - 36 months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ongoing training requirements ➤ Documentation of external relationships ➤ Monitoring system to prevent abuse
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of contacts ➤ Identification of potential partners ➤ Presentation and communication of need and benefit to the community ➤ Public recognition of partners



Recommendation XI-8		Chester County’s fire and EMS providers, in cooperation with their participating municipalities, should explore the feasibility of utilizing, and in fact encouraging, borough and township employees to perform “dual roles” by serving not only in their full-time positions but also serving the fire company as volunteer firefighters, or administrative support personnel.
Task Group(s)	Recruitment and Retention, Municipal Liaison	
Timeline	18 – 30 Months	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of desire by employees ➤ Lack of training and potential training time commitment ➤ Resistance from other busy agencies that need their personnel ➤ Union opposition 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong endorsement of the program by the governing bodies and/or managers in those municipalities ➤ Meetings with individual departments to explain program benefits ➤ Recruitment of interested personnel ➤ Development of procedures on use of personnel 	



Recommendation XI-9	
Chester County’s fire and EMS providers, in cooperation with their participating municipalities, should explore the feasibility of entering into shared services agreements for certain areas of administrative support such as accounting services, or administrative assistant type assistance.	
Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	24 – 36 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by stakeholders ➤ Concerns over confidentiality ➤ Lack of available municipal staff ➤ Cost ➤ Inability to reach agreement over terms and conditions of assistance
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify needs to local governing body and municipal officials ➤ Obtain municipal support ➤ Obtain internal stakeholder support ➤ Negotiate and approve MOU



Recommendation XI-10	Chester County’s fire and EMS providers, in cooperation with their participating municipalities, should encourage giving priority attention for hiring to selected borough and township positions, such as public works, to personnel who are currently serving as active volunteer firefighters.
Task Group(s)	Recruitment and Retention, Municipal Liaison
Timeline	18 – 30 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by fire and EMS personnel ➤ Lack of buy-in or support from municipal officials ➤ Municipal hiring policies or civil service regulations ➤ Politics
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong endorsement of the program by the governing bodies and/or managers in those municipalities ➤ Meetings with individual departments to explain program benefits ➤ Recruitment of interested personnel ➤ Development of procedures on use of personnel



Recommendation XI-11	Chester County’s fire and EMS providers, in cooperation with their participating municipalities, should consider the development of a program that would provide active responders with the opportunity to obtain health insurance. The municipality should pay a graduated percentage of this program based upon participation levels including that a minimum number of hours of training be completed.
Task Group(s)	Recruitment and Retention, Municipal Liaison, Resources and Finance
Timeline	3 – 5 Years
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance to providing public benefits ➤ Lack of support by municipal officials and governing bodies ➤ Concern over providing benefits to personnel in an independent entity ➤ Cost ➤ Implications of taking away benefits due to not meeting criterion of receipt
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain cost versus benefit of program ➤ Gain support of municipal officials and governing board ➤ Development of eligibility criterion ➤ Identify eligible members ➤ Prepare cost and budget estimates ➤ Gain approval MOU or shared services agreement ➤ Monitor participation closely to prevent abuse ➤ Annual independent audit of program



<p>Recommendation XI-12</p>	<p>With support from the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association, the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should hire a full-time volunteer Recruitment and Retention Coordinator to coordinate and organize efforts throughout the County.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Recruitment and Retention, Resources and Finance</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>24 – 36 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest among stakeholders ➤ Perception position is not needed ➤ Lack of support at the County level to hiring personnel ➤ Cost
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain support from the fire and EMS agencies that position is needed and will be beneficial ➤ Explain cost versus benefit ➤ Strong support from responder organizations ➤ Gain support of Department of Emergency Services and County Commissioners ➤ Develop position description and job duties ➤ Obtain funding ➤ Advertise for and recruit qualified coordinator ➤ Monitor program success



<p>Recommendation XI-13</p>	<p>The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should approach the colleges in Chester County, as well as areas of nearby counties that are within a reasonable distance, to explore the possibility of implementing live-in firefighter programs with fire companies that have adequate facilities and wish to participate. This program could also be extended to young new residents of Chester County who have relocated to the area for work.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Recruitment and Retention, Resources and Finance, Policy and Procedure Development</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>24-36 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by fire companies and EMS agencies ➤ Lack of interest by colleges ➤ Lack of interest by students ➤ Liability concerns ➤ Accountability concerns ➤ Lack of adequate living space in fire stations ➤ Opposition of fire company members to giving up space
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commitment to program by fire and EMS agencies ➤ Identification of interested college partners ➤ Develop program parameters and criterion ➤ Obtain funding and insurance ➤ Modify stations/living quarters if necessary ➤ Formally adopt MOUs or agreements ➤ Develop live-in program manual ➤ Screen and select applicants ➤ Assign each student a fire company mentor ➤ Closely monitor program



Recommendation XI-14	Chester County fire and EMS providers who can afford to do so should consider offering premium benefits for their highest performing members who make long-term commitments to the company and meet stringent eligibility criteria such as college scholarships and/or low- or no-interest student loans, and low-interest mortgages.
Task Group(s)	Recruitment and Retention, Policy and Procedure Development, Resources and Finance
Timeline	Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cost ➤ Limited to only certain fire and EMS agencies ➤ Maintaining long-term viability of program ➤ Ensuring long-term compliance with program parameters ➤ Potential issues with non-activity of members during program participation
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluation of cost versus benefit ➤ Determine financial viability ➤ Ensuring long-term financial health of company ➤ Determine program eligibility ➤ Establishment of application, review, and approval process ➤ Establishment of repayment policies



Recommendation XI-15	Chester County fire and EMS providers who implement in station duty crew programs should explore ways to incentivize those personnel and the program as a whole, such as purchasing dinner for the on-duty personnel, with the goal of maximizing buy-in and participation of company members while simultaneously easing the emergency response burden on all members of the company.
Task Group(s)	Recruitment and Retention, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Resources and Finance
Timeline	18 – 30 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of support for duty crew program ➤ Perception duty crew is not necessary ➤ Organizational culture ➤ Shifting role of the volunteer toward a secondary provider at times ➤ Cost
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain buy-in on the multiple benefits of program ➤ Determine appropriate incentives ➤ Consideration of various stipends for participation ➤ Budget for costs



Recommendation XI-16	The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association should develop a “Welcome Wagon” program that can be used county-wide by the fire and EMS providers to welcome new residents to their area (even if they are relocating from elsewhere in the County) and provide information on, and recruiting information for, the volunteer fire and EMS delivery system.
Task Group(s)	Recruitment and Retention
Timeline	18 – 36 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Perception program may not be worth the effort ➤ Time commitment necessary ➤ Obtaining information on new residents ➤ Varying levels of support by municipalities and fire and EMS agencies
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtaining buy-in from stakeholders on potential program benefits ➤ Identifying members willing to participate and make the time commitment ➤ Identifying parameters of the program ➤ Ensuring timely follow-up with any potential new volunteer members



CHAPTER XII - EMERGENCY SERVICES FACILITIES AND APPARATUS

Recommendation XII-1	Chester County fire and EMS agencies should consider applying for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to attempt to obtain funding to assist with the installation of automatic fire alarm and carbon monoxide detection systems in all fire and EMS stations where personnel may sleep. These systems should not only be equipped with both audible and visible warning devices, they should automatically transmit an alarm to an approved central monitoring station.
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Resource and Finance, Municipal Liaison
Timeline	12 – 24 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of urgency over life safety concerns ➤ Cost ➤ Lack of funding ➤ Design challenges with older stations
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop cost projections for system installation ➤ Seek funding for project ➤ Determine if municipal assistance may be possible ➤ Apply for AFG grant ➤ Award contract for system installation



Recommendation XII-2		Chester County fire and EMS agencies should consider applying for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to attempt to obtain funding to assist with the installation of direct capture vehicle exhaust extraction systems in all fire and EMS stations.
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Resource and Finance, Municipal Liaison	
Timeline	< 5 Years	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of understanding over hazards of prolonged inhalation of exhaust fumes ➤ Cost ➤ Lack of funding ➤ Design challenges with older stations 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop cost projections for system installation ➤ Seek funding for project ➤ Determine if municipal assistance may be possible ➤ Apply for AFG grant ➤ Award contract for system installation 	



Recommendation XII-3	Chester County fire and EMS agencies should consider applying for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to attempt to obtain funding to assist with the installation of emergency back-up generators in all fire and EMS stations.
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Resource and Finance, Municipal Liaison
Timeline	< 5 Years
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cost ➤ Lack of funding ➤ Design challenges with older stations
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop cost projections for system installation ➤ Seek funding for project ➤ Determine if municipal assistance may be possible ➤ Apply for AFG grant ➤ Award contract for system installation



<p>Recommendation XII-4 Working collaboratively, the appropriate stakeholders involved in any proposals for new and/or replacement fire or EMS stations should include a thorough needs assessment including whether multiple stations could be consolidated at a single more operationally appropriate location. When possible, new stations should be smaller but still functional facilities that meet the organization’s operational needs.</p>	
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Municipal Liaison, Regionalization and Shared Services</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>As required</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fire and EMS agency independence ➤ Organizational competition ➤ Lack of available, suitable land for stations ➤ Community opposition ➤ Opposition from within fire companies that may be relocated and/or combined ➤ Uncertainty regarding regionalization of services ➤ Availability of funding ➤ Tradition ➤ Political reluctance
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct professional space needs assessment ➤ Determine if relocation of station is possible ➤ Determine priority regarding station relocations/consolidations ➤ Determine feasibility and rank each option regarding preference ➤ Identify potential suitable station locations ➤ Obtain buy-in from station members ➤ Meet with community groups to explain needs and answer questions ➤ Obtain funding for land purchase ➤ Develop preliminary designs and cost estimates ➤ Seek funding for construction of stations



Recommendation XII-5	Inspections of all fire and EMS stations and facilities should be conducted on a regular basis. These inspections can be used to identify potential maintenance, as well as safety issues, and allow them to be addressed before they become problematic.
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus, and Equipment
Timeline	Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of buy-in by fire and EMS agency leadership ➤ Concern over uncovering costly maintenance issues ➤ Lack of follow-up to address issues identified ➤ Lack of adequate funding to properly maintain some stations
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain benefits of proactive inspection and maintenance programs ➤ Obtain buy-in on program benefits ➤ Develop standardized inspection form for use by fire and EMS agencies ➤ Assist agencies with post-inspection follow-ups



Recommendation XII-6	As part of a pro-active preventative maintenance program that can assist with reducing maintenance costs, all fire and EMS vehicles should be thoroughly inspected by a certified emergency vehicle technician (EVT) on a periodic basis, but no less than annually.
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus, and Equipment
Timeline	Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of buy-in by fire and EMS agency leadership ➤ Concern over uncovering costly maintenance issues ➤ Lack of follow-up to address issues identified ➤ Lack of adequate funding to properly maintain and/or repair apparatus ➤ Cost associated with inspections
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain benefits of proactive inspection and maintenance programs ➤ Obtain buy-in on program benefits ➤ Develop standardized inspection form for use by fire and EMS agencies ➤ Assist agencies with post-inspection follow-ups



Recommendation XII-7

Working collaboratively the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association should consider ways that the fire and EMS agencies in the County can better address the service and maintenance of the large emergency vehicle fleet. This can include the development of standard preventative maintenance and repair protocols. Some ideas that might be considered and result in potential improvements in consistency in quality and efficiency while providing cost savings, include, but are certainly not limited to:

- Sharing a fully trained and EVT certified mechanic between several area fire companies and/or municipalities.
- Develop several vendor contracts for County-wide maintenance and repair services for all the fire companies and EMS agencies.
- Chester County providing repair and maintenance services to the fire and EMS agencies either as a service, or on a cost basis.

Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus, and Equipment, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	18 – 36 Months then ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of buy-in by fire and EMS agency leadership ➤ Concern over loss of control over process ➤ Concern over the loss of long-time vendor relationships ➤ Liability concerns by municipalities ➤ Cost of new position(s) ➤ Time necessary to take vehicles to designated facilities ➤ Lack of interest in regional or shared services endeavors ➤ Lack of interest or support at county or municipal level ➤ Determining a suitable location



Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Perform cost/benefit analysis➤ Determine overall feasibility➤ Explain benefits of economies of scale for cost savings➤ Explain potential liabilities associated with not performing inspections and tests on a regular basis➤ Explain cost benefit from an ISO evaluation➤ Obtain buy-in on program benefits➤ Determine scope of services to be performed➤ Develop specifications and advertise, if applicable➤ Develop MOUs or shared services agreements, if appropriate➤ Identify suitable location, if appropriate
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As required by various NFPA and ISO standards, annual testing of the following apparatus components and equipment should continue to be a high maintenance priority including for fire companies who do not currently have these tests performed:

Recommendation XII-8

- Fire pumps
- Fire hose
- Aerial ladders
- Ground ladders
- Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)
- Hydraulic rescue tools
- Thermal imaging cameras
- Combustible gas meters

Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus, and Equipment, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	12 - 24 Months then ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of buy-in by fire and EMS agency leadership ➤ Time necessary to take vehicles or equipment to designated facilities ➤ Cost of having tests and inspections performed ➤ Concern over tests and inspections uncovering costly maintenance issues
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain potential liabilities associated with not performing inspections and tests on a regular basis ➤ Explain cost benefit from an ISO evaluation ➤ Arrange to have tests and inspections performed at various locations throughout the county ➤ Obtain buy-in on program benefits ➤ Obtain funding if necessary ➤ Determine scope of services to be performed ➤ Develop specifications and advertise, if applicable ➤ Develop MOUs or shared services agreements, if appropriate



Recommendation XII-9	Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and Chester County EMS Council, Inc. should consider developing several vendor contracts for County-wide inspection and testing services for the all the fire companies and EMS agencies for the apparatus components and equipment listed in Recommendation XIII-8.
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus, and Equipment, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	18 – 36 Months then ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of buy-in by fire and EMS agency leadership ➤ Concern over loss of control over process ➤ Concern over the loss of long-time vendor relationships ➤ Time necessary to take vehicles or equipment to designated facilities ➤ Lack of interest in regional or shared services endeavors
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain benefits of economies of scale for cost savings ➤ Explain potential liabilities associated with not performing inspections and tests on a regular basis ➤ Explain cost benefit from an ISO evaluation ➤ Arrange to have tests and inspections performed at various locations throughout the county ➤ Obtain buy-in on program benefits ➤ Determine scope of services to be performed ➤ Develop specifications and advertise, if applicable ➤ Develop MOUs or shared services agreements, if appropriate

Recommendation XII-10	The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and Chester County Fire Police Association should attempt to develop a standardized set of specifications for apparatus such as engines, rescue engines, engine tankers, brush trucks, command vehicles, and traffic units. The apparatus should have similar compartmentation and equipment (even if different manufacturers are selected) which will improve efficiency in emergency operations.
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Fire Operations, Fire Police Operations
Timeline	3 – 5 Years, then as needed
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance to changing current system ➤ Concern over loss of control over process ➤ Concern over the loss of long-time vendor relationships ➤ Obtaining consensus on specifications ➤ Pace of technology quickly making specifications more than a few years old obsolete
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek input from a wide cross section of internal stakeholders ➤ Seek technical assistance as needed ➤ Research latest trends and innovations ➤ Target specifications to Chester County specific needs and operational procedures ➤ Development of standardized specifications ➤ Allow company identity to be maintained



Recommendation XII-11	During the development of the standardized apparatus specifications, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should consider equipping new pumping apparatus with Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) capability to improve fire knock down capabilities, especially in limited staffing conditions.
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Fire Operations, Resources and Finance
Timeline	3 – 5 Years, then as needed
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance of personnel to try new techniques ➤ Potential cost ➤ Feasibility of retrofitting existing apparatus ➤ Reliability problems with systems
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Thoroughly research concept ➤ Perform field tests at PSTC ➤ Obtain personnel buy-in ➤ Determine feasibility of retrofitting existing engines ➤ Determine costs ➤ Obtain funding



Recommendation XII-12	The Chester County EMS Council, Inc. should attempt to develop a standardized set of specifications for ambulances. The ambulances should have similar compartmentation and equipment (even if different manufacturers are selected) which will improve efficiency in emergency operations.
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Emergency Medical Services
Timeline	3 – 5 Years, then as needed
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance to changing current system ➤ Concern over loss of control over process ➤ Concern over the loss of long-time vendor relationships ➤ Obtaining consensus on specifications ➤ Pace of technology quickly making specifications obsolete
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek input from a wide cross section of internal stakeholders ➤ Seek technical assistance as needed ➤ Research latest trends and innovations ➤ Target specifications to Chester County specific needs and operational procedures ➤ Development of standard specifications ➤ Allow agency identity to be maintained



<p>Recommendation XII-13</p>	<p>Working collaboratively with their partners at Chester County, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and Chester County EMS Council, Inc. should explore the feasibility of advertising a County-wide bid specification annually, for units such as engines, rescue engines, ambulances, and command vehicles where the economy often provided by purchasing multiple very similar units can result in significant cost savings for the companies making the purchases.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Resources and Finance</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>3 – 5 Years, then annually</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance to changing current system ➤ Independence of fire and EMS agencies ➤ Concern over loss of control over process ➤ Concern over the loss of long-time vendor relationships ➤ Obtaining consensus on specifications ➤ Lack of understanding of public bidding laws ➤ Lack of support from municipalities ➤ Use of proprietary specifications
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek input from a wide cross section of internal stakeholders ➤ Obtain technical support for bid process from start to finish ➤ Obtain municipal support ➤ Support from responder organizations



Recommendation XII-14	Since most major apparatus and vehicle purchases involve at least some public funding, and in consideration of potential cost savings that could be realized even if they are funded otherwise, all major purchases should be publicly advertised as part of a fair and open competitive bidding process.
Task Group(s)	Resources and Finance, Municipal Liaison
Timeline	12 – 24 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance to changing current system ➤ Lack of understanding of public bidding laws ➤ Lack of support from municipalities ➤ Use of proprietary specifications
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of standardized specifications ➤ Obtain technical support for bid process from start to finish ➤ Obtain municipal support ➤ Support from responder organizations



Recommendation XI-15	When making capital purchases such as apparatus any entity, whether an individual fire company or EMS agency, up to a County-wide process should explore the significant cost savings benefits that may be obtained by participating in cooperative purchasing consortiums such as Pennsylvania’s COSTARS program, or, the Houston Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) Buy program (HGACBuy).
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Resources and Finance
Timeline	ASAP
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance to changing current system ➤ Independence of fire and EMS agencies ➤ Concern over loss of control over process ➤ Concern over the loss of long-time vendor relationships ➤ Lack of understanding of the benefits of group purchasing systems ➤ Lack of support from municipalities
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educate agencies on the benefits of group purchasing systems ➤ Determine if anticipated purchase qualifies under system ➤ Perform cost benefit analysis on specific purchase



Working collaboratively with their partners at Chester County, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, and Chester County EMS Council, Inc. should explore the feasibility of standardizing many of the tools and equipment utilized by the County’s fire and EMS providers to allow for cost savings generated by group purchasing arrangements.

Recommendation XII-16

- Fire hose
- Nozzles and appliances
- Ground ladders
- Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)
- Hydraulic rescue tools
- Thermal imaging cameras
- Combustible gas meters
- Various hand tools and equipment
- Firefighter PPE
- Ventilation fans
- Saws
- Fire Extinguishers
- Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs)
- Portable suction units
- Oxygen equipment
- EMS disposable equipment
- EMS PPE
- EMS patient moving equipment (stair chairs, Reeves stretchers, etc.)
- Fire Police PPE
- Fire Police supplies

Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations
Timeline	24 – 36 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance to changing current system ➤ Concern over loss of control over process ➤ Concern over the loss of long-time vendor relationships



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtaining consensus on specifications ➤ Lack of understanding of the benefits of group purchasing systems
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek input from a wide cross section of internal stakeholders ➤ Seek technical assistance as needed ➤ Research latest trends and innovations ➤ Target specifications to Chester County specific needs and operational procedures ➤ Development of standardized specifications ➤ Determine entity that will make purchases

Recommendation XII-17	
The overall size of the fire apparatus and vehicle fleet in Chester County, particularly high cost specialty vehicles such as aerial ladders and rescues, should be right sized to make it appropriate for the community, as well as, provide increased efficiency in operations.	
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Fire Operations, Performance Analysis, Resources and Finance
Timeline	Ongoing based upon apparatus replacement needs
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong resistance from personnel ➤ Tradition ➤ Political reluctance ➤ Fire companies able to self-fund
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop plan for right sizing fleet ➤ Base deployments strategically on community risk assessment ➤ Develop SOP/SOG on use of reserve apparatus ➤ Promote cost savings to the community

Recommendation XII-18		When practical, EMS agencies should explore the less costly option to replace the chassis, and remount and refurbish as needed, their ambulance boxes rather than always purchasing brand new units.
Task Group(s)	Facilities, Apparatus and Equipment, Emergency Medical services	
Timeline	ASAP	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance to changing current system ➤ Perception that remounts are not equal to purchasing new ➤ Pace of technology quickly making specifications obsolete 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek input from a wide cross section of internal stakeholders ➤ Seek technical assistance as needed ➤ Research latest trends and innovations ➤ Perform cost benefit analysis ➤ Compare options 	



CHAPTER XIII - TRAINING AND OFFICER DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation XIII-1	In order to continue to increase the quantity of high-quality training being provided to the County’s fire and rescue personnel, the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should conduct a formal needs assessment focused on increasing the number of full-time training personnel.
Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development
Timeline	12 – 18 Month
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of perceived need ➤ Lack of support at county level for additional position(s) ➤ Cost
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct inventory of current training ➤ Develop list of training enhancements that could be accomplished with additional staffing ➤ Seek input from a wide cross section of internal stakeholders ➤ Perform cost/benefit analysis ➤ Strong support from responder organizations ➤ Obtain support at county level

Recommendation XIII-2		To the extent possible, fire and rescue training should be delivered and/or conducted utilizing formal, standardized lesson plans that include objectives and performance criterion. The Chester County Department of Emergency Services fire rescue training section should develop an inventory of lesson plans and training outlines covering a wide range of topics that can be utilized by the fire companies to conduct their in-house training.
Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development	
Timeline	Ongoing	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Time requirements necessary to develop lesson plans ➤ Resistance to formal performance criterion ➤ Ease of access to lesson plans ➤ 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of lesson plans based on Chester County standardized operational procedures ➤ Monitoring compliance ➤ Ensure ease of access to training materials 	



Recommendation XIII-3		The fire rescue training section of the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should continue its emphasis on officer training and development. Additional officer training opportunities such as Fire Officer II, Fire Instructor II, and Incident Safety Officer should be developed with NBFSPQ and IFSAC certifications sought.
Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development	
Timeline	18 – 36 Months, Ongoing	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Time requirements necessary to develop new courses ➤ State and National testing and certification requirements and processes ➤ Insufficient staff to develop and present ➤ Lack of perceived need or interest by some fire service personnel ➤ Cost associated with course development and delivery 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Determine need and interest ➤ Strong support from responder organizations ➤ Hire additional staff to assist with development and presentation ➤ Apply for NBFSPQ and IFSAC approvals and certification ➤ Offer classes regionally throughout the county 	



Recommendation XIII-4	The Chester County Department of Emergency Services should consider providing each fire and EMS agency in the County the opportunity to access an on-line training program or platform that would allow certain training to be conducted by personnel at their convenience. There are multiple vendors available to provide this type of platform including Target Solutions whose inventory is comprised of more than 1,000 on-line courses.
Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development, Resources and Finance
Timeline	12 – 18 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by members ➤ Technological issues/challenges ➤ Cost
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek input from a wide cross section of internal stakeholders ➤ Determine need and interest ➤ Evaluate various programs ➤ Address technology issues ➤ Obtain funding ➤ Ensure ease of access to training materials



Recommendation XIII-5	The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should work to develop minimum training standards for Chester County that are consistent with the recommendations found in NFPA Standard 1001, Standard for Firefighter Professional Qualifications for Firefighter I and II for all “active” members of fire companies who have PPE and respond to emergencies. A reasonable time frame would be to require Firefighter I within one year of joining the company and Firefighter II within two years, or, prior to the completion of the probationary process.
Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development, Fire Operations
Timeline	24 – 36 months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance of older non-certified members to obtain training ➤ Inability of certain members to successfully complete training ➤ Opposition to mandatory training and certifications ➤ Perception volunteers are being forced out
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress liability of utilizing uncertified personnel ➤ Offer remedial training to assist those who are struggling ➤ Explore alternative certification options such as grandfathering



Recommendation XIII-6	The Chester County Fire Chief’s Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester Country Fire Police Association should formalize the requirements for remaining an active “qualified” firefighting, care providing (for EMS) member, or Fire Police Officer of the company, including response percentages and training requirements. The requirements should include a remediation process that members are required to complete when they fail to meet the provisions of the policy, particularly from a training perspective.
Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations
Timeline	24 – 36 months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance of older members to continue training ➤ Lack of consensus regarding need ➤ Time commitments required of volunteer personnel ➤ Inability of certain members to successfully complete training ➤ Perception volunteers are being forced out ➤ Potential staffing impact on certain companies ➤ Political pressure
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress liability of personnel not being trained ➤ Develop consensus on minimum requirements ➤ Offer training at various times to accommodate diverse schedules ➤ Offer remedial training/process to assist those who are struggling ➤ Encourage senior members to get involved in training delivery ➤ Clearly identify minimum training requirements ➤ Strong support from responder organizations



Recommendation XIII-7 The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should work to develop a county-wide policy that sets a realistic goal that all fire company members who respond to emergency incidents receive a minimum of 72 hours of training annually (an average of six hours per month).	
Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development, Fire Operations
Timeline	24 – 36 months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance of older members to continue training ➤ Lack of consensus regarding need ➤ Time commitments required of volunteer personnel ➤ Inability of certain members to successfully complete training ➤ Perception volunteers are being forced out ➤ Potential staffing impact on certain companies ➤ Political pressure
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress liability of personnel not being trained ➤ Develop consensus on minimum requirements ➤ Offer training at various times to accommodate diverse schedules ➤ Offer remedial training/process to assist those who are struggling ➤ Encourage senior members to get involved in training delivery ➤ Clearly identify minimum training requirements ➤ Strong support from responder organizations ➤ Include a certain percentage of training that can be completed on-line ➤ Provide flexibility on where and how training is acquired

Recommendation XIII-8	
All Chester County fire companies and EMS agencies should ensure that appropriate refreshers of all training areas that are mandated are completed annually/periodically as required. This is another area where the Chester County Department of Emergency Services fire rescue training section could assist.	
Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development
Timeline	24 – 36 months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance of older members to continue training ➤ Lack of consensus regarding need ➤ Lack of understanding regarding requirements ➤ Time commitments required of volunteer personnel ➤ Lack of qualified instructors
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Determine required annual/periodic training ➤ Stress liability of personnel not being trained ➤ Offer training at various times to accommodate diverse schedules ➤ Clearly identify mandatory training requirements ➤ Provide flexibility on where and how training is acquired



Recommendation XIII-9 All Chester County fire companies should implement a policy regarding the minimum number of weekly drills/training sessions/hours each member must participate in, to remain an active member permitted to respond to emergency incidents. Personnel who fail to attend a minimum number of drills each quarter, should be suspended from response activity until they have been brought up to date with their training.	
Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development
Timeline	24 – 36 months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance of older members to continue training ➤ Lack of consensus regarding need ➤ Time commitments required of volunteer personnel ➤ Inability of certain members to successfully complete training ➤ Perception volunteers are being forced out ➤ Potential staffing impact on certain companies ➤ Political pressure
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress liability of personnel not being trained ➤ Develop consensus on minimum requirements ➤ Offer training at various times to accommodate diverse schedules ➤ Offer remedial training/process to assist those who are struggling ➤ Encourage senior members to get involved in training delivery ➤ Clearly identify minimum training requirements ➤ Strong support from responder organizations ➤ Include a certain percentage of training that can be completed on-line ➤ Provide flexibility on where and how training is acquired



Recommendation XIII-10	The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should develop a county-wide policy that personnel who staff fire and rescue units that respond within the County possess minimum specified levels of training such as Firefighter I and II.
Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development, Fire Operations
Timeline	24 – 36 months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance of older non-certified members to obtain training to be able to continue responding ➤ Inability of certain members to successfully complete training ➤ Opposition to mandatory training requirements ➤ Perception volunteers are being forced out
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress liability of personnel not being trained ➤ Develop consensus on minimum requirements ➤ Offer training at various times to accommodate diverse schedules ➤ Offer remedial training/process to assist those who are struggling ➤ Encourage senior members to get involved in training delivery ➤ Clearly identify minimum training requirements ➤ Strong support from responder organizations ➤ Include a certain percentage of training that can be completed on-line ➤ Provide flexibility on where and how training is acquired



Recommendation XIII-11	The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should develop an updated formal automatic/mutual aid agreement for use by all Chester County Fire Companies. The agreement should stipulate the minimum required training standards for personnel who may respond to emergencies. The agreements should also stipulate that the ranking officer of each entity must certify in writing on an annual basis that his/her personnel comply.
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Training and Professional Development
Timeline	24 – 36 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of consensus regarding need ➤ Time commitments required of volunteer personnel ➤ Inability of certain members to successfully complete training ➤ Perception volunteers are being forced out ➤ Potential staffing impact on certain companies ➤ Personnel not being honest in their certification
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress liability of personnel not being trained ➤ Develop consensus on minimum requirements ➤ Offer training at various times to accommodate diverse schedules ➤ Offer remedial training/process to assist those who are struggling ➤ Clearly identify minimum training requirements ➤ Strong support from responder organizations



Recommendation XIII-12

Although not mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should develop a policy for minimum officer training and certification requirements that personnel should possess to be recognized as a fire officer County-wide. Suggested requirements include:

- Lieutenant and Captain – Fire Instructor I, Fire Officer I, ICS-300, and Managing Company Tactical Operations (or similar tactics class)
- Chief Officer – Fire Instructor II, Fire Officer II, ICS-400, and Incident Safety Officer

Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development, Fire Operations
Timeline	24 – 48 months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of consensus regarding need ➤ Opposition to mandatory training requirements ➤ Time commitments required of volunteer personnel for training and certification ➤ Resistance of personnel to obtain additional certifications ➤ Perception this is something for career personnel not volunteers
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress professionalization of entire organization ➤ Offer training at various times to accommodate diverse schedules ➤ Offer training at locations throughout the County ➤ Strong support from responder organizations ➤ Include a certain percentage of training that can be completed on-line ➤ Provide flexibility on where and how training is acquired ➤ Publicly recognize achievements



<p>Recommendation XIII-13</p>	<p>The Chester County Fire Chiefs should develop a policy that stipulates that all officers must participate in additional officer related training each year to be eligible to retain their position. A reasonable requirement might be 32 hours of training consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Firefighting strategy and tactics, incident management, or safety training (16 hours) ➤ Leadership or management training (16 hours)
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Training and Professional Development, Fire Operations</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>24 – 48 months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of consensus regarding need ➤ Opposition to mandatory training requirements ➤ Time commitments required of volunteer personnel for training and certification ➤ Perception this is something for career personnel not volunteers
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress professionalization of entire organization ➤ Offer training at various times to accommodate diverse schedules ➤ Offer training at locations throughout the County ➤ Strong support from responder organizations ➤ Include a certain percentage of training that can be completed on-line ➤ Provide flexibility on where and how training is acquired



Recommendation XIII-14	All Chester County fire companies should implement periodic training on fire ground tactics and training for both fire officers and firefighters. Part of this training should include tabletop and simulation training exercises for fire officers to enhance their strategic and tactical knowledge, skills, and abilities. The latter is an area where both the Chester County Department of Emergency Services and Chester County Fire Chiefs Association can provide support and assistance.
Task Group(s)	Training and Professional Development, Fire Operations
Timeline	24 – 48 months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of consensus regarding need ➤ Time commitment required to develop and conduct realistic training ➤ Time commitments required of volunteer personnel to participate ➤ Reluctance to participate due to a lack of confidence ➤ Cost of obtaining necessary props and equipment ➤ Perception this is something for career personnel not volunteers ➤ Technological challenges
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress professionalization of entire organization ➤ Offer training at various times to accommodate diverse schedules ➤ Offer training at locations throughout the County ➤ Strong support from responder organizations ➤ Obtain funding for props and equipment ➤ Make training realistic ➤ Make use of technology when possible



CHAPTER XIV - FIRE PREVENTION

<p>Recommendation XIV-1</p>	<p>With Chester County poised to experience significant growth over the next several decades, the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should work collaboratively with the County’s state legislative delegation to attempt to get legislation approved that would allow the County to be the pilot for a County-wide requirement that all new one- and two-family dwellings be equipped with a residential automatic fire suppression (sprinkler) system in accordance with the provisions of the International Residential Code.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Legislative, Municipal Liaison, Fire Prevention</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>2021-2022 Legislative session (optimistic) 2023-2024 Legislative session (realistic)</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of engagement on the municipal level ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus and support ➤ Inconsistent messaging ➤ Shifting legislative priorities ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ Opposition by out of county stakeholders or special interests
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint meetings to identify issue as a priority ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Host legislative breakfast to bring responders, municipal officials, and legislators together to discuss this priority life safety issue ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Development of ongoing legislative marketing relative to this agenda ➤ Attempt to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative



<p>Recommendation XIV-2</p>	<p>Working in conjunction with the Department of Emergency Services, and with support from the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium and the Chester County Association of Township Officials, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should develop a compelling public education program that includes discussing the benefits of installing residential fire sprinklers in new one- and two-family dwellings. Although Pennsylvania’s construction codes do not currently allow residential fire sprinkler systems to be mandated, there is no prohibition for property owners to install them if they determine that it is in their best interest.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Prevention, Fire Operations, Municipal Liaison</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 – 24 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest at the municipal level ➤ Perception in the fire companies that this is not an important issue ➤ Cost of developing program ➤ Time requirement to develop and deliver program ➤ Lack of technical support
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop message ➤ Develop and assign resources ➤ Develop marketing strategy ➤ Development of virtual/video program ➤ Deployment of messaging ➤ Evaluation of impact ➤ Program adjustment



<p>Recommendation XIV-3</p>	<p>Working in conjunction with, and with support from the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium and the Chester County Association of Township Officials, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association should strongly encourage municipalities throughout the County that are not fully served by a municipal water supply system, to consider adopting a municipal ordinance requiring the installation of a fire water supply cistern in any new development consisting of three or more homes, or for any individual home of larger than a designated square footage. Part of this process could also include working in conjunction with the Department of Emergency Services on development of a compelling public education program that explains the significant benefits to residents and property owners of installing cisterns for the storage of fire suppression system water supplies.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Prevention, Municipal Liaison, Fire Operations</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>18 to 30 Months, Ongoing</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of perceived need ➤ Political resistance ➤ Opposition from developers and builders ➤ Potential cost ➤ Environmental concerns
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of a compelling education program to explain the benefits of installations ➤ Convincing governing bodies and local officials of the need ➤ Seek voluntary public/private partnerships to install cisterns



<p>Recommendation XIV-4</p>	<p>Since proactive fire prevention programs are shown to reduce fire incidence and loss, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and the Chester County Association of Township Officials should work collaboratively with the County’s state legislative delegation, to attempt to get legislation approved that would allow Chester County to be the pilot for a county-wide fire prevention code and periodic inspection requirement utilizing the International Fire Code for occupancies other than one- and two- family dwellings.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Legislative, Municipal Liaison, Fire Prevention</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>2021-2022 Legislative session (optimistic) 2023-2024 Legislative session (realistic)</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest at the municipal level ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus and support ➤ Inconsistent messaging ➤ Shifting legislative priorities ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ Opposition by out of county stakeholders or special interests
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint meetings to identify action items and priorities ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Identification of agenda ➤ Host legislative breakfast to bring responders, municipal officials, and legislators together to discuss the priority agenda items ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Development of ongoing legislative marketing relative to this agenda ➤ Attempting to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent)



	➤ Delivering a consistent message
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Recommendation XIV-5

Chester County should explore the feasibility of increasing staffing in the Department of Emergency Services to include offering fire prevention inspection services to any municipality in the County, which would like to adopt a more proactive approach to ongoing fire prevention activities. A fee-based program of this type would not only serve to reduce fire loss in participating municipalities, but could also assist them with improving their ISO ratings by earning them additional community risk reduction points, thus potentially lowering fire insurance premiums for residents and businesses. These personnel could also be utilized throughout the County to provide additional staffing for fires and other significant incidents, particularly during the day, when volunteer availability is often at a premium.

Task Group(s)	Fire Prevention, Municipal Liaison
Timeline	5 – 7 Years
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by County in taking on service ➤ Lack of legislative approval ➤ Political opposition in municipalities ➤ Opposition from incumbent personnel ➤ Opposition from businesses ➤ Reluctance of stakeholders to appropriate funding and/or implement fees ➤ Expected development fails to occur
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop compelling presentation explaining the benefits of a community risk reduction program to the community ➤ Stress education rather than enforcement ➤ Cultivate political support ➤ Meet with businesses to explain program and seek support ➤ Develop cost benefit analysis ➤ Develop job description



Recommendation XIV-6		In order to fund the expanded fire prevention activities, Chester County should explore the feasibility of adopting registration, inspection and/or permit fees to help offset the costs of providing these services throughout the County.
Task Group(s)	Fire Prevention, Municipal Liaison, Resources and Finance	
Timeline	5 – 7 Years	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by County in taking on service ➤ Lack of legislative approval ➤ Political opposition in municipalities ➤ Opposition from businesses ➤ Reluctance of Chester County to appropriate funding and/or implement fees 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop compelling presentation explaining benefits to community including improved ISO rating ➤ Stress education rather than enforcement ➤ Cultivate political support ➤ Meet with businesses to explain program and seek support ➤ Develop cost benefit analysis 	



<p>Recommendation XIV-7</p>	<p>Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, and representatives of the County’s Municipal Fire Marshals, with assistance from the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should work to develop an aggressive public relations campaign to raise public awareness and educate business owners and residents on the importance of having their fire alarm systems serviced and properly maintained. This campaign should utilize whatever media outlets are available including local newspapers, radio, public access television, municipal and fire company web sites, etc.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Prevention, Fire Operations, Municipal Liaison</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 – 24 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest at the municipal level ➤ Perception in the fire companies that this is not an important issue ➤ Cost of developing and distributing program ➤ Time requirement to develop and deliver program ➤ Lack of technical support
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop message ➤ Develop and assign resources ➤ Develop message distribution strategy ➤ Development of virtual/video program ➤ Deployment of messaging through Public Service Announcements ➤ Evaluation of impact



Recommendation XIV-8	All municipalities in Chester County should ensure, that if it is not already required, plans for all fire alarm systems including residential systems, be thoroughly reviewed prior to installation. Once a system is installed, an acceptance inspection and test should be conducted prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Approval, which will allow the system to be placed on-line. The focus of this initiative should be to ensure that new systems are being installed, utilizing properly specified, quality components, and, that they meet the requirements of NFPA and the International Building Code or International Residential Code.
Task Group(s)	Fire Prevention, Municipal Liaison
Timeline	12 – 24 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest in municipalities ➤ Political opposition in municipalities to additional regulations and increased workload for fire marshals/inspectors ➤ Opposition from businesses ➤ Reluctance of stakeholders to appropriate funding and/or implement fees ➤ Lack of technical expertise
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress education rather than enforcement ➤ Analyze anticipated workload increase ➤ Cultivate political support ➤ Adoption of appropriate local ordinances ➤ Develop cost benefit analysis ➤ Develop procedures for application, plan review and final inspection ➤ Evaluate impact



Recommendation XIV-9

Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, the Chester County Association of Township Officials, and representatives of the County’s Municipal Fire Marshals, should work to develop a model ordinance that can then be adopted by municipalities throughout Chester County to require the registration of all fire alarm systems, including those in one- and two- family dwellings. Part of the registration process should include a stipulation that the provisions found in NFPA 72 – National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code are adhered to. Registration renewal should occur on a periodic basis (one year for commercial, three years for residential), and be contingent upon the business or homeowner providing adequate documentation that the system has been properly serviced and maintained.

Task Group(s)	Fire Prevention, Municipal Liaison
Timeline	12 – 24 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest in municipalities ➤ Lack of engagement by municipal fire marshals ➤ Reluctance of stakeholders to appropriate funding and/or implement fees
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluate existing model ordinances that have been successful ➤ Stress education rather than enforcement ➤ Develop consensus document



Recommendation XIV-10	The ordinance recommended in XIV-9, above, should include provisions to issue fines or penalties for repeated alarm malfunctions, or unnecessary alarms. The fines or penalties should increase incrementally as the number of responses increases. Municipalities might want to consider, for first time offenders, a provision that would abate most of the fine or penalty if they provided documentation that repairs have been made to the problem system. However, this option should not be available to repeat offenders.
Task Group(s)	Fire Prevention, Municipal Liaison
Timeline	12 – 24 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest in municipalities ➤ Political opposition in municipalities to additional regulations and issuance of penalties ➤ Opposition from businesses ➤ Reluctance of stakeholders to implement penalties ➤ Inability to reach consensus on what constitutes an unnecessary alarm
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stress education rather than enforcement ➤ Cultivate political support ➤ Adoption of appropriate graduated penalty scale ➤ Develop procedures enforcement ➤ Consider waiving first penalty if documented system maintenance is performed ➤ Evaluate impact



Recommendation XIV-11	Any municipality that is performing fire prevention inspections should explore the feasibility of utilizing Remote Video Inspections (RIV) to assist with managing the inspection workload.
Task Group(s)	Fire Prevention
Timeline	When desired
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest from municipalities or inspectors ➤ Lack of familiarity with system ➤ Technical challenges ➤ Cost of system ➤ Concerns over fraudulent inspections
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Research new technology ➤ Perform cost/benefit analysis ➤ Determine system pros and cons ➤ Obtain funding for pilot program ➤ Develop program parameters including mechanism for spot checking to determine accuracy of RIVs



CHAPTER XV - RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

<p>Recommendation XV-1</p>	<p>The Chief of every fire and EMS agency in Chester County should provide regular briefings and reports to the Manager/Administrator and/or governing body of every municipality they serve concerning the operations of their organization. The Chief should communicate regularly with the Manager/Administrator and/or governing body to receive feedback on the performance of the department.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Municipal Liaison</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Immediate/Ongoing</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Time commitment required for Chiefs who protect multiple municipalities ➤ Lack of engagement by municipal officials and governing bodies ➤ Strained relationships
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of monthly and annual reports on agency operations to each municipality highlighting that specific municipality ➤ Appearing in person at municipal governing body a minimum of four times per year ➤ Regular, open and honest dialogue with Manager/Administrator and the local governing body



Recommendation XV-2	The Manager/Administrator and/or governing body of each municipality should take an active role in setting appropriate goals and a vision for the fire and EMS providers that serve them. Municipal officials should include residents and the emergency services in an open and honest discussion within the goal setting process.
Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison
Timeline	12 – 24 Months
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by participating municipalities ➤ Strained relationships between fire company and municipalities ➤ Political opposition ➤ Either side unwilling to compromise or being unreasonable with demands for the other
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Open and honest dialogue between parties ➤ Highlight benefits of fire company and cooperative approach to providing emergency services ➤ Stress need to have long-term partnership to continue to provide highest level of service



Recommendation XV-3		Every fire and EMS agency should consider offering building tours and ride-a-longs to the members of their local governing bodies and other municipal officials to further familiarize them with fire and EMS operations. Officials could also be encouraged to participate in or observe training activities.
Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations	
Timeline	12 – 24 Months	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by participating municipalities ➤ Time required to develop compelling program ➤ Lack of interest by fire and EMS personnel 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop message ➤ Highlight benefits of fire company or EMS agency and approach to providing emergency services ➤ Development of virtual/video program if possible to provide an orientation ➤ Evaluation of impact 	

Recommendation XV-4		Fire and EMS agency leadership and the municipal governing bodies should publicly recognize the achievements of the organizations and its members in reaching the various established goals as they are accomplished.
Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations	
Timeline	12 – 24 Months	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by participating municipalities ➤ Lack of interest by fire and EMS personnel ➤ Lack of any goals established and/or accomplished 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop consensus over what will be recognized ➤ Recognition should occur at a public meeting ➤ Invite community and press 	



<p>Recommendation XV-5</p>	<p>Based upon the recommendations contained in this report, the Chester County Commissioners, the governing bodies of the County’s municipalities, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, Chester County Association of Township Officials, and other interested stakeholders assisted by the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should begin discussions ASAP on the direction that the County’s fire and EMS delivery system will take moving to the future. It will be imperative that all stakeholders speak with a unified voice when lobbying local legislators to introduce or support enabling legislation that will be necessary for multiple recommendations to be implemented.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Legislative, Municipal Liaison, Fire Operations Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Regionalization and Shared Services, Resources and Finance</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 – 18 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of engagement on the municipal level ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus and support ➤ Inconsistent messaging ➤ Shifting legislative priorities
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint meetings to identify action items and priorities ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Identification of consensus agenda ➤ Host legislative breakfast to bring responders, municipal officials, and legislators together to discuss the priority agenda items ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Development of ongoing legislative marketing relative to fire and EMS agenda



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent)➤ Delivering a consistent message
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CHAPTER XVI - FUNDING AND FINANCE

<p>Recommendation XVI-1</p>	<p>The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County should continue to attempt to negotiate for increased levels of funding, for fire operations, EMS operations, and capital projects, from the municipalities they serve in order to adequately fund long-term operational, and capital funding needs of their organizations. Increased funding levels will be critical to the continued success of every fire and EMS organization.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Municipal Liaison, Resources and Finance</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>2 – 15 Years</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of willingness by municipalities ➤ Political opposition ➤ Perception that fire company may not be fiscally prudent ➤ Fiscal inability of municipalities
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Open and honest dialogue between parties ➤ Attempt to improve relations between fire company and municipality ➤ Highlight proven value of the fire company and the value it provides ➤ Lobby governing bodies to make possibly unpopular decisions



<p>Recommendation XVI-2</p>	<p>The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County should, with their member municipalities, explore the feasibility of developing and implementing more equitable funding formulas to better balance overall funding between municipalities. One possible formula could use assessed value, population, and call volume, or a per capita cost, to determine funding. This is an area where the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium and the Chester County Association of Township Officials can provide assistance and support.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Municipal Liaison, Resources and Finance</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>3 – 5 Years</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by participating municipalities ➤ Reluctance to changing any type of funding formula ➤ Political opposition ➤ Outdated belief that fire and EMS agencies should self-fund
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Open and honest dialogue between parties ➤ Highlight proven value of the fire company or EMS agency and the value it provides ➤ Demonstrate financial need based upon long-range plan ➤ Prepare comparative fiscal projections



Recommendation XVI-3	The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County should continue to explore alternative sources of funding for the company such as grants, public/private partnerships, etc. stressing the increasing costs of their operations.
Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison, Resources and Finance
Timeline	Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by participating municipalities ➤ Lack of interest within agency ➤ Time commitment necessary to seek funds ➤ Lack of expertise at preparing grant applications ➤ Lack of funds for grant matching
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Research grant opportunities ➤ Ensure eligibility ➤ Obtain commitment for grant matching funds, if required ➤ Seek professional grant writing assistance ➤ Network to seek out potential partners ➤ Publicly recognize receipt of grants or formation of public/private partnerships



Recommendation XVI-4

The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County should continue to actively search for grant opportunities. Grants for fire protection, fire safety, fire prevention, domestic and emergency preparedness, and homeland security may be available from federal, state, corporate, and foundation sources. Whenever possible, and with the support and assistance of the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, Chester County Association of Township Officials, and The Chester County Department of Emergency Services, the grant applications should be submitted collaboratively, if applicable, to increase the chances of success.

Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison, Resources and Finance, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by participating municipalities ➤ Lack of interest within agency ➤ Time commitment necessary to seek funds ➤ Lack of expertise at preparing grant applications ➤ Lack of funds for grant matching
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Research grant opportunities ➤ Ensure eligibility ➤ Obtain commitment for grant matching funds, if required ➤ Seek professional grant writing assistance ➤ Network to seek out potential partners ➤ Publicly recognize receipt of grants or formation of public/private partnerships ➤ Seek out partners for collaborative or regional applications to increase chances of success



Recommendation XVI -5		The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County should actively seek out businesses in their response areas that may be interested in establishing public/ private partnerships that could provide, or assist with, funding for various programs, projects, or initiatives.
Task Group(s)	Resources and Finance	
Timeline	Ongoing	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest within agency ➤ Time commitment necessary to network with business community ➤ Lack of expertise at preparing grant applications or requests for funding 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Network to seek out potential partners ➤ Publicly recognize receipt of grants or formation of public/private partnerships 	



<p>Recommendation XVI-6</p>	<p>The fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County and the governing bodies of the municipalities they serve should explore potential ways to generate additional revenue to offset both fire company and ambulance operating costs. Consideration could be given to billing insurance companies for response to motor vehicle accidents, registration fees for fire alarm systems, the aggressive pursuit of non-residents who have been billed for ambulance transportation, and, the implementation of a fee for ambulance responses that do not result in a transport.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Municipal Liaison, Resources and Financing</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>3 – 5 Years</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by participating municipalities ➤ Reluctance to implementing or increasing any type of fee for service ➤ Political opposition
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Open and honest dialogue between parties ➤ Highlight proven value of the fire company and the value it provides ➤ Demonstrate financial need based upon long-range plan ➤ Provide examples from other similar fire companies ➤ Prepare comparative fiscal projections



<p>Recommendation XVI-7</p>	<p>Working collaboratively the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and Chester County Association of Township Officials, with support from the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should conduct a review of the various funding resources from the federal, state, county, and local municipalities that are provided for the delivery of fire and EMS services. A per capita cost should be developed from this information to assist with strategic planning efforts towards future service delivery models.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Municipal Liaison, Resources and Finance</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by participating municipalities ➤ Lack of interest within fire and EMS agencies ➤ Time commitment necessary to research potential funding sources
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collaborative effort ➤ Compile all information obtained from various sources and participants ➤ Evaluate best options to be pursued in Chester County ➤ Prepare cafeteria style listing of funding resources



<p>Recommendation XVI-8</p>	<p>Working collaboratively the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and Chester County Association of Township Officials, with support from the Chester County Department of Emergency Services should develop strategic options to encourage regional service delivery and support local staffing needs during the low availability of personnel. Based upon the level of support needed, a financial cost analysis can be used to develop financial resource identification and if necessary seek an increase in tax revenue to support fire companies and EMS agencies that are forced to change their emergency service delivery models due to the inability to continue providing the services currently in place.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Municipal Liaison, Resources and Finance</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 – 24 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by participating municipalities ➤ Lack of interest within fire and EMS agencies ➤ Lack of a perceived crises ➤ Time commitment necessary to develop strategic plan ➤ Fiscal uncertainty in difficult economic times
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collaborative effort ➤ Compile all information obtained from various sources and participants ➤ Evaluate best options to be pursued in Chester County



Recommendation XVI-9		If future legislation allows, the County of Chester should explore the feasibility of enacting a Fire and EMS tax to provide centralized support for Chester County fire and EMS operations.
Task Group(s)	Legislative, Resources and Finance	
Timeline	2021-2022 Legislative session (optimistic) 2023-2024 Legislative session (realistic)	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus and support ➤ Inconsistent messaging ➤ Shifting legislative priorities ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ General reluctance to approve new taxes ➤ Opposition to increased taxes and assessments 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint meetings to identify action items and priorities ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Identification of consensus agenda ➤ Host legislative breakfast to bring responders, municipal officials, and legislators together to discuss the priority agenda items ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Development of ongoing legislative marketing relative to this agenda ➤ Attempting to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent) ➤ Delivering a consistent message ➤ Obtaining support for enactment if permitted by legislation 	



Recommendation XVI-10	If future legislation allows, the County of Chester should explore the feasibility of enacting a fire and EMS assessment on people that work in Chester County. This would produce a revenue stream to support Chester County fire and EMS operations.
Task Group(s)	Legislative, Resources and Finance
Timeline	2021-2022 Legislative session (optimistic) 2023-2024 Legislative session (realistic)
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus and support ➤ Inconsistent messaging ➤ Shifting legislative priorities ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ General reluctance to approve new taxes ➤ Opposition to increased taxes and assessments
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint meetings to identify action items and priorities ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Identification of consensus agenda ➤ Host legislative breakfast to bring responders, municipal officials, and legislators together to discuss the priority agenda items ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Development of ongoing legislative marketing relative to this agenda ➤ Attempting to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent) ➤ Delivering a consistent message ➤ Obtaining support for enactment if permitted by legislation



Recommendation XVI-11	If permitted, Chester County fire and EMS organizations should work with local municipalities to consider the adoption fees, for large new developments, that would be directed toward the fire and EMS delivery system.
Task Group(s)	Legislative, Resources and Finance, Municipal Liaison
Timeline	2021-2022 Legislative session (optimistic) 2023-2024 Legislative session (realistic)
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest from municipalities ➤ Political opposition at the municipal level ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus and support ➤ Inconsistent messaging ➤ Shifting legislative priorities ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ General reluctance to approve new taxes ➤ Opposition to increased taxes and assessments ➤ Fire and EMS needs considered a low priority
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint meetings to identify action items and priorities ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Identification of consensus agenda ➤ Host legislative breakfast to bring responders, municipal officials, and legislators together to discuss the priority agenda items ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Development of ongoing legislative marketing relative to this agenda ➤ Attempting to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent) ➤ Delivering a consistent message ➤ Obtaining support for enactment if permitted by legislation



Recommendation XVI-12		As a best practice, Chester County fire companies and EMS agencies should ensure the transparency of their financial records to stakeholders and funders.
Task Group(s)	Resources and Finance, Municipal Liaison	
Timeline	Ongoing	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reluctance of fire and EMS agencies to open their books to outside review ➤ Incomplete recordkeeping ➤ Antiquated record keeping and purchasing systems ➤ Lack of true accountability for funds ➤ Perception it is not necessary 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Annual independent audits of all fire and EMS agency financial records ➤ Annual audit results submitted to local governing bodies ➤ Update fiscal management, purchasing and record keeping polices to current day best practices ➤ Prepare RFP with assistance of legal counsel for independent audit ➤ Issue and advertise RFP ➤ Conduct fair and open process to select vendor ➤ Transparency regarding results ➤ Implement recommendations and/or correct deficiencies. 	



<p>Recommendation XVI-13</p>	<p>Chester County fire companies and EMS agencies should implement internal procedures and controls to ensure they are making the most effective and efficient use of the taxpayer generated funds they are provided. This includes seeking multiple quotes for purchases, preparing open specifications for major purchases, and requiring a fair and open competitive bidding process for major capital expenditures. This is an area where the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium and the Chester County Association of Township Officials can provide assistance and support.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Resources and Finance, Municipal Liaison</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>12 – 24 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resistance to changing current system ➤ Concern over loss of control over process ➤ Concern over the loss of long-time vendor relationships ➤ Obtaining consensus on specifications ➤ Lack of understanding of public bidding laws ➤ Lack of support from municipalities ➤ Use of proprietary specifications
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek input from a wide cross section of internal stakeholders ➤ Seek technical assistance as needed ➤ Research latest trends and innovations ➤ Development of standardized specifications ➤ Obtain technical support for bid process from start to finish ➤ Obtain municipal support ➤ Support from responder organizations ➤ Target specifications to Chester County specific needs and operational procedures ➤ Development of standardized specifications ➤ Allow company identity to be maintained



CHAPTER XVIII - REGIONAL FIRE AND EMS SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

<p>Recommendation XVIII-1</p>	<p>Working collaboratively, the Chester County Commissioners, Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester Council EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and Chester County Association of Township Officials should lobby their commonwealth legislative delegation to introduce and aggressively pursue legislation to implement Recommendation 6 of SR 6: “Simplify Process to Regionalize Fire & EMS Services”.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Legislative, Municipal Liaison, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>2021-2022 Legislative session (optimistic) 2023-2024 Legislative session (realistic)</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest from municipalities ➤ Political opposition at the municipal level ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus and support ➤ Inconsistent messaging ➤ Shifting legislative priorities ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ Opposition to consolidations, mergers, and regionalization
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint meetings to identify priority issues ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Identification of consensus agenda ➤ Host legislative breakfast to bring responders, municipal officials, and legislators together to discuss the priority agenda items ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Development of ongoing legislative marketing relative to this agenda ➤ Attempting to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Delivering a consistent message➤ Obtaining support for enactment if permitted by legislation
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Recommendation XVIII-2	Working collaboratively, the Chester County Commissioners, Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester Council EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and Chester County Association of Township Officials should engage in further discussions regarding the feasibility and potential benefits to seeking the introduction of legislation that would allow the creation of Public Safety Authorities.
Task Group(s)	Legislative, Municipal Liaison, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Resources and Finance
Timeline	Ongoing with potential introduction in 2023-2024 legislative session
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Political opposition at the municipal level ➤ Inability to develop stakeholder consensus and support ➤ Inconsistent messaging ➤ Shifting legislative priorities ➤ Lack of legislative action ➤ Opposition to creation of new government entities with ability to tax ➤ Opposition to consolidations, mergers, and regionalization ➤ Negative experiences from other places
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint meetings to discuss feasibility and potential benefits ➤ Communication and involvement of stakeholders ➤ Evaluate pros and cons ➤ Educating and obtaining support from the local legislative delegation ➤ Development of ongoing legislative marketing relative to this agenda ➤ Attempting to develop additional statewide support for this legislative initiative ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent) ➤ Delivering a consistent message



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtaining support for enactment if permitted by legislation
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Recommendation XVIII-3 The municipalities of Chester County and fire and EMS organizations that serve them should try to identify potential partners, and then attempt to enter in discussions on more regional approaches, including shared services, to the provision of fire and EMS services.	
Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by other communities or fire and EMS agencies ➤ Lack of real commitment by initiating municipality or fire and EMS agencies ➤ Fear of loss of control ➤ Strong internal resistance ➤ Fear of loss of identity and history ➤ Inability to negotiate an agreement acceptable to all ➤ Funding issues ➤ Competing priorities
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of proposal as starting point ➤ Involvement of all levels of stakeholders throughout process ➤ Determine level of consolidation ➤ Establish expectations ➤ Address membership concerns ➤ Determine funding formula

<p>Recommendation XVIII-4</p> <p>Any municipalities and/or fire and EMS organizations that are interested in exploring consolidations and/or shared services should engage the services and resources of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and the Governor’s Center for Local Government Services to seek to identify additional potential partners/opportunities for regionalization and/or shared services and then work collaboratively with them to attempt to move them from vision to reality.</p>	
Task Group(s)	Municipal Liaison, Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	As needed
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest by other communities or fire and EMS agencies ➤ Lack of real commitment by initiating municipality or fire and EMS agencies ➤ Fear of loss of control ➤ Strong internal resistance ➤ Fear of loss of identity and history ➤ Inability to negotiate an agreement acceptable to all ➤ Funding issues ➤ Competing priorities
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of proposal as starting point ➤ Involvement of all levels of stakeholders throughout process ➤ Determine level of consolidation ➤ Establish expectations ➤ Address membership concerns ➤ Determine funding formula



Recommendation XVIII-5		Any discussions regarding opportunities to regionalize or share services by the fire and EMS services MUST involve fire company and EMS stakeholders in every aspect of the process and must get their buy-in for there to be any realistic chance of success.
Task Group(s)	Regionalization and Shared Services	
Timeline	As needed	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fear of loss of control ➤ Strong internal resistance ➤ Fear of loss of identity and history ➤ Inability to negotiate an agreement acceptable to all ➤ Potential litigation ➤ Funding issues ➤ Competing priorities 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involvement of all levels of stakeholders throughout process ➤ Carefully evaluate pros and cons ➤ Address membership concerns ➤ Assure that company identity can be maintained ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent) ➤ Deliver a consistent message ➤ Obtain membership buy-in and support 	



Recommendation XVIII-6	The potential formation of any regional fire and/or EMS delivery system in Chester County, even eventually a possible county-wide configuration, should allow the individual fire companies and EMS agencies to maintain their own unique identities as part of the overall system.
Task Group(s)	Regionalization and Shared Services
Timeline	As needed
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fear of loss of control ➤ Strong internal resistance ➤ Fear of loss of identity and history ➤ Competing priorities
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involvement of all levels of stakeholders throughout process ➤ Address membership concerns ➤ Assure that company identity can be maintained ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent) ➤ Deliver a consistent message



Recommendation XVIII-7		Any potential consolidation of multiple fire and EMS entities into new regional fire and EMS organizations should be handled as a merger of equals rather than an acquisition.
Task Group(s)	Regionalization and Shared Services	
Timeline	As needed	
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fear of loss of control ➤ Strong internal resistance ➤ Fear of loss of identity and history ➤ Inability to negotiate an agreement acceptable to all ➤ Potential litigation ➤ Competing priorities 	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involvement of all levels of stakeholders throughout process ➤ Address membership concerns ➤ Assure that company identity can be maintained ➤ Internal communication (clear and frequent) ➤ Deliver a consistent message ➤ Obtain membership buy-in and support 	



CHAPTER XIX - STRATEGIC PLANNING ON A LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND COUNTY LEVEL

<p>Recommendation XIX-1</p>	<p>Each fire and EMS organization in Chester County should consider the development of a strategic plan to guide their organization for the next three to five years and assist them with planning for future needs and meeting the challenges they may confront. The development of these plans should include input from a wide range of both internal and external stakeholders.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>18 – 36 Months</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of engagement at the municipal level ➤ Lack of interest by fire and EMS personnel ➤ Perception it is not necessary ➤ Time commitment and personnel required to complete
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Determine priorities ➤ Realistic goal setting ➤ Involvement of all levels of stakeholders including external ➤ Consider funding availability ➤ Acknowledge accomplishments ➤ Annual review and update



<p>Recommendation XIX-2</p>	<p>As part of the strategic planning process, and working collaboratively with their member organizations, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and Chester County Fire Police Association, assisted and supported as appropriate by other stakeholders such as the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, Chester County Association of Township Officials, and the local governing bodies of municipalities that are interested, should explore areas where more regional systems for the delivery of emergency services can be developed. These opportunities should then be included in the strategic plans of the potential partners/participants.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Municipal Liaison, Regionalization and Shared Services, Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of engagement at the municipal level ➤ Lack of interest by fire and EMS personnel ➤ Strong internal resistance ➤ Fear of loss of identity and history ➤ Competing priorities ➤ Perception it is not necessary ➤ Time commitment and personnel required to complete
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involvement of all levels of stakeholders throughout process ➤ Determine level of consolidation ➤ Establish expectations ➤ Address membership concerns ➤ Determine priorities ➤ Realistic goal setting ➤ Consider funding availability ➤ Acknowledge accomplishments ➤ Annual review and update



<p>Recommendation XIX-3</p>	<p>Working collaboratively the Chester County Commissioners, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, Chester County EMS Council, Inc., Chester County Fire Police Association, Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, and Chester County Association of Township Officials, supported by Chester County Department of Emergency Services, should begin the development of a longer range strategic plan that provides for the County to assume a greater role in the provision of fire and emergency medical services such as implementation of a County-wide EMS system, and hiring career firefighters to staff the stations of fire companies that need and request them.</p>
<p>Task Group(s)</p>	<p>Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations, Municipal Liaison, Regionalization and Shared Services, Resources and Finance</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>3 -5 Years depending upon legislative approvals with potential implementation beginning in 5 – 10 Years</p>
<p>Potential Barriers to Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of engagement by stakeholders ➤ Loss of momentum from fire and EMS study ➤ Failure to get enabling legislation approved ➤ Lack of municipal and/or county support
<p>Critical Tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain buy-in from fire companies and volunteers ➤ Obtain buy-in from municipalities ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Involvement of all levels of stakeholders throughout process ➤ Determine priorities ➤ Realistic goal setting ➤ Consider funding availability ➤ Annual review and update



Recommendation XIX-4	
Every strategic plan should be considered a living – not static – and flexible document that should be reviewed on an annual basis to evaluate progress toward established goals. The plan should also be revised periodically to remain both current and forward looking.	
Task Group(s)	Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Police Operations
Timeline	Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest in updating plan ➤ Not an accurate reflection of realistic goals ➤ Time commitment required to update
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review and update annually ➤ Continued involvement of a wide range of stakeholders



Recommendation XIX-5

Working collaboratively, the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, the Chester County EMS Council, Inc., and the Chester County Fire Police Association, with support from the Chester County Department of Emergency Services, and with involvement of the Chester County Municipal Managers Consortium, Chester County Association of Township Officials, and other interested stakeholders should form a strategic planning task force to bring forth and implement recommendations that have been made throughout this report including elements of Senate Resolution 60 from 2004 and Senate Resolution 6 from 2018. The task force should identify and prioritize elements of this initiative that can be implemented immediately, and those elements which must seek legislative changes to provide higher levels of service to communities. It should also include task groups that will be assigned the implementation of various recommendations. The recommendations of the task force with a plan of action should be presented by December 31, 2021.

Task Group(s)	All task groups as necessary
Timeline	Ongoing
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of engagement by stakeholders ➤ Loss of momentum from fire and EMS study ➤ Failure to get enabling legislation approved ➤ Lack of municipal and/or county support
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain buy-in from fire companies and volunteers ➤ Obtain buy-in from municipalities ➤ Strong support and approval of responder organizations ➤ Involvement of all levels of stakeholders throughout process ➤ Determine priorities ➤ Realistic goal setting ➤ Consider funding availability ➤ Annual review and update



CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The missions performed by the fire and EMS services are some of the most basic and fundamental functions of government; to ensure the safety and protection of its residents and visitors. The expectations for the quality and quantity of fire and EMS services must come from its residents and other taxpayers. There is no “right” amount of fire protection and EMS delivery. It is a constantly changing level based on the expressed needs of the community. It is the responsibility of the elected officials to translate community needs into reality through direction, oversight, and the budgetary process. It is their unenviable task to maximize fire, EMS, and other services within the reality of the community’s ability and willingness to pay, particularly in today’s economic environment.

It is our sincere hope that this report and the accompanying strategic plan will be used by the fire companies and EMS agencies of Chester County, the governing bodies of the County’s municipalities, and where appropriate, particularly in the future, the County of Chester, as a road map for improving the delivery of fire and emergency medical services throughout Chester County. The citizens who are protected by the Chester County fire and EMS delivery system should feel greatly confident that these are professional public safety organizations that are providing a high-quality level of service to the community. We continue to be impressed with the dedication and commitment of the entirety of the Chester County Fire and EMS delivery system and its proactive responder organizations. The MRI study team further believes that most of the fire companies and EMS agencies in Chester County have the skills, capabilities, and motivation to become effective, highly trained, and motivated organizations that meet or exceeds nationally recognized standards for operational readiness. There are challenges to be sure, but we are also quite confident the membership of the various organizations will rise to the occasion.

Although we have prioritized recommendations as we see them and developed the strategic plan and its implementation timetable based upon that perspective, the responder organizations who requested this study, and the other stakeholders who are involved in the process may decide to develop their own priorities or modify our recommendations or timelines based on the ever-changing needs of Chester County; and coordinate solutions based on time, personnel, and fiscal realities.

In order to address the recommendations that have been identified in this report, and implement the strategic plan, the Chester County Fire and EMS agencies should:

1. Approach them strategically and systematically.
2. Break them down to reasonably sized components.

3. Categorize them as short-term and long-term goals, i.e., items that can be accomplished within existing resources and items that will require additional funding and/or time to accomplish in the coming years.
4. Refer to them when making recommendations, check them off as they are accomplished, and most importantly, recognize the positive achievements publicly.

One final recommendation that we make that is separate from the other recommendations that are contained in the study report and are implemented through the strategic plan is that some fire companies who serve Chester County may want to eventually pursue accreditation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI).

Accreditation is a comprehensive self-assessment and evaluation model that enables organizations to examine past, current, and future service levels, and internal performance, and compare them to industry best practices. This process leads to improved service delivery. Accreditation allows fire and emergency service agencies to compare their performance to industry best practices in order to:

1. Determine community risk and safety needs and develop community-specific Standards of Cover.
2. Evaluate the performance of the department.
3. Establish a method for achieving continuous organizational improvement.

The accreditation process provides a well-defined, internationally-recognized benchmark system to measure the quality of fire and emergency services¹.

The CFAI comprehensive self-assessment process promotes excellence and encourages quality improvement by enabling fire and EMS agencies to:

1. Assure colleagues and the public that they have definite missions and objectives that are appropriate for the jurisdictions they serve.
2. Provide a detailed evaluation of the services they provide to the community.
3. Identify areas of strength and weakness within the department.

¹ <http://www.cpse.org/agency-accreditation/about-accreditation-cfai.aspx>

4. Create methods or systems for addressing deficiencies while building organizational success.
5. Encourage professional growth for both the department and its personnel.
6. Provide a forum for the communication of organizational priorities.
7. Foster national recognition by colleagues and the public.
8. Create a mechanism for developing strategic and program action plans².

Seeking accreditation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI).	
Task Groups	Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Performance Analysis, Policy and Procedure Development, Training and Professional Development, Municipal Liaison
Timeline	As Appropriate
Potential Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of interest or buy-in from various components of the fire company ➤ Lack of support from municipal, and/or fire company leadership ➤ Failure to implement key recommendations found in the strategic plan ➤ Time commitment necessary to complete the process
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement strategic plan recommendations ➤ Designation of a project leader and coordinator ➤ Gain full support of internal and external stakeholders ➤ Approach project systematically ➤ Development of data, benchmarks and procedures ➤ Ongoing analysis of data and compliance with benchmarks ➤ Commitment to continual system improvement

² <http://www.cpse.org/agency-accreditation/the-benefits.aspx>

