



City Of Maplewood, Minnesota

# Maplewood Fire Department

## *Strategic Plan 2011-2016*

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Maplewood Fire Department  
1955 Clarence Street  
(Station Two)  
Maplewood, MN 55109

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## INTRODUCTION

The Maplewood Fire Department has a long-standing history of superior service to the community it serves. In order to preserve and continue that history, the department determined it's structure and strategic direction must change. As a consequence, this strategic plan was formulated.

In the spring of 2010, the Fire Chief, Steve Lukin, set out to determine what changes needed to be made, why and how. To do this, he pulled together a leadership team of firefighters to study the current situation within the department and outside of the department; the group, called the Quality Improvement Committee (QIC), looked at factors, forces, opportunities and threats affecting the department's promise of continuing to provide excellent, cost-effective services. *Sustainability* was the galvanizing principle that guided all discussions, research and conclusions.

The department hired an outside professional to guide and facilitate the development of the strategic plan, working with the QIC and others in the Maplewood community. Once the QIC researched staffing options, conducted a station study and analyzed best practices, they presented their suggestions to the City Council and the public in the form of open houses. Additionally, the leadership of the department discussed their approach with officials from 3M Corporation; as a result, an informal agreement was made between 3M and the fire department that would enable the City Maplewood to develop a new station on the 3M campus.

A number of local and national trends in recent history have spurred necessary changes in the fire department. Shifting demographics, firefighter recruitment challenges, reduced funding to local governments and increase costs of health care were among the factors taken into account as the plan evolved. The overarching goal was to ensure that the Maplewood's emergency response services continued to be consistent and sustainable. The fire department quality improvement committee (QIC) considers this plan to be a long-term solution.

This document contains that solution -- the 2011 - 2016 Maplewood Fire Department Strategic Plan, the process used to achieve it and the initial work plan needed to implement it.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategic Issue: In late 2009, the Maplewood Fire Department (MFD) set out to resolve this strategic issue:

*How can we achieve a sustainable fire department long into the future?*

Conclusion:

To achieve sustainability the City needed to:

1. Transition the current staffing configuration from a predominantly paid-per-call (PPC) configuration, to part-time (shift workers)
2. Reduce the number of fire stations from five to three
3. Remodel, rebuild or relocate the three stations to accommodate the new staffing model.
4. Continue to explore creating a fire district with neighboring departments for long-term sustainability.
5. Finance the new model using existing funds along with a combination of strategic partnership and prudent internal fiscal management decisions.

## VISION

In June of 2010 the City of Maplewood had not formally defined a long-term (10-20 year) Vision for Fire and EMS services. City officials and the Fire Department, however, identified criteria on which these services will evolve over time. Many of these criteria are also imbedded in fire's mission and values statements. They are:

1. Continue to provide a quick and safe response to meet all of the fire and medical needs of the community.
2. The highest quality services, personnel, equipment, and facilities affordable by the community.
3. Significant public interaction opportunities and educational programs.
4. Highly effective fire prevention and code enforcement programs.
5. To providing the highest level of fire and medical service by continuing to train and update the delivery and technology of the services we provide.
6. Leading initiatives to establish a regional training center for both fire and EMS.

## MISSION STATEMENT

- *We, the members of the Maplewood Fire Department, pledge the highest quality of service to meet our customer needs.*
- *We further commit to our customers, continued public and employee education, fire prevention, and emergency response.*
- *We will provide these services in a safe, professional, and effective manner.*
- *We are about neighbors helping neighbors. This is also our slogan.*



It is important to note that the Maplewood Fire Department is not only dedicated to serving its residents, but also those who visit our community. This full mission is posted on the walls of each fire station.

### VALUES

The strategic planning committee (QIC) reviewed and re-affirmed previously established value statements for the Fire Department. The Values Statement includes external, internal, and professional values and, like the mission, is posted in each fire station.

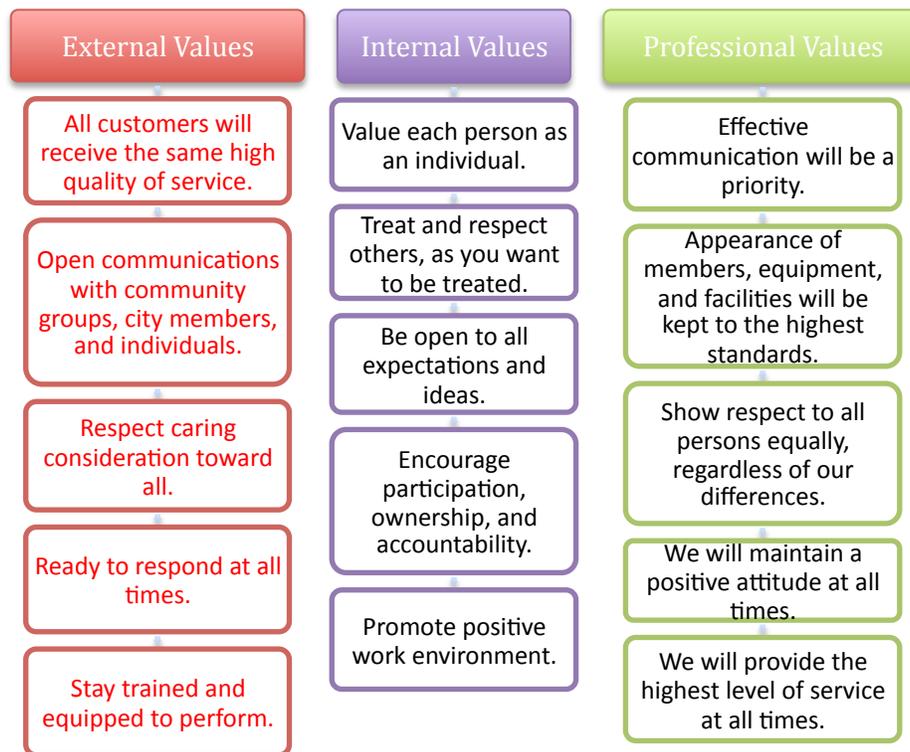


Figure 1: Values of the Maplewood Fire Department

## THE PROCESS

For over a year members of the Maplewood Fire Department (MFD) staff, including firefighters, developed this strategic plan.

It provides the residents of Maplewood with a five-year (2011 – 2016) roadmap for achieving long-term sustainability.

The cornerstone to developing the plan was using input and insight from various stakeholder groups, including residents, council members, city staff, department leadership and the fire department's Quality Improvement Committee (QIC). Interviews, focus groups, secondary research and questionnaires were methods used to conduct both the environmental scans (internal and external) and an departmental assessment.

The QIC used the feedback from others, along with an analysis of relevant trends, and information from recent studies to inform their strategic plan decisions. The environmental scans and organizational assessment helped MFD assess both the challenges and opportunities it is likely to face over the next five years, and set the context for the choices and priorities reflected herein.

Barbara Strandell of What Works Inc. facilitated the planning process and worked closely with the QIC and Chief Lukin throughout. The organized effort served many functions:

- Helped coordinate the process with MFD staff and QIC
- Arranged for the environmental scans
- Review of demographic and market data
- Review of other Fire Departments' best practices
- Provided important support and analysis to complete this plan

From the general goals, objectives and priorities established by the QIC, the MFD leadership team then created a Management Action Plan (MAP) that outlines specifically how the organization will go about accomplishing its objectives.

1. Now & Future; gaining insight to the changing socio-political and demographic trends of Maplewood.
2. QIC; representing all five stations firefighters guiding the process
3. SWOT: internal and external assessments of MFD environment
4. Strategic Issues: making sure the strategic issues were identified.
5. Create Work Plan: major aspects to implement; QIC assigned
6. Staffing & Facilities: Determining all operational aspects of plan.
7. Communicating to FD: Weekly up dates and departmental Q&A
8. Open houses: January 19 & 20 of 2011 in stations #3 and #4
9. City manager & city council reviews, providing direction.

The Maplewood City Council reviewed the strategic direction on November 8, 2010. The public was invited to two open houses in January 2011. These were held at two fire stations where members of QIC were available to discuss the new direction of the fire department.

Figure 2. The Process



### MAPLEWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT: HISTORY AND MILESTONES

The Maplewood Fire Department was created in 1997 when the city of Maplewood decided to no longer contract with the three private fire departments that previously served the city. Those three fire departments were East County Line, Gladstone and Parkside Fire Departments. These fire departments had contracted with the city for a number of years dating as far back as 1943.

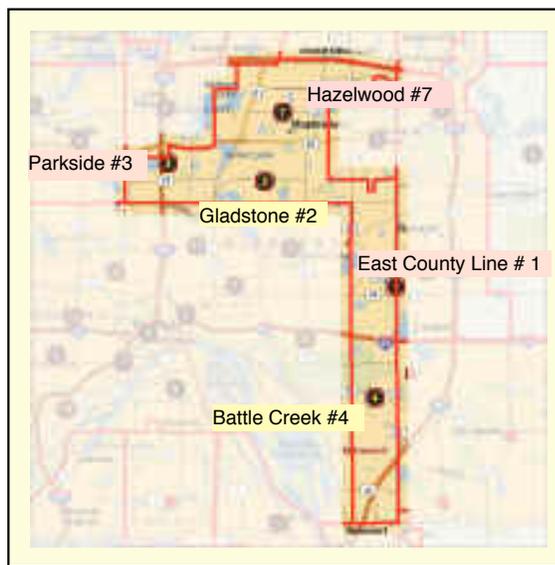


Figure 3. Station Locations: 2010

The infrastructure in place as of 2010 (beginning of planning process) was built by the three original fire departments, except for Fire Station #2 which was rebuilt in 2000. East County Line Fire Department used to serve both the most southern part of Maplewood and the southern part of the neighboring city of Oakdale using two fire stations (#1, #4), one of which was located on the border of Oakdale and Maplewood. Gladstone Fire Department served the central and northern parts of the city using two fire stations (#2, #7). Parkside Fire Department served the most western side of the city using one fire station.

The city of Maplewood built and owns two of the five fire stations along with the two aerial trucks. When the city decided to form a municipal department the three independent departments turned over the station and all of the apparatus and equipment to the new municipal department. A portion of the East County Line Fire Department's apparatus and equipment was retained by the city of Oakdale who had paid for it over the years when it was in a contract with the East County Line Fire Department.

In 1974, the Maplewood police department decided to offer medical service and sent its first set of police officers to paramedic school that then provided the advanced life support ambulance service to the city. Two years later the fire departments became a part of the medical services by providing the basic life support and housing and responding with the ambulances from the stations.

In the short tenure the municipal fire department has been in existence, the number of emergency calls the fire department responds to has increased dramatically. In 1999 the department responded to 2,600 calls to just over 3,800 calls in 2009 with 80% of the calls being medicals. Since the system has had to grow so rapidly a number of changes occurred. For two years the fire department operated a "day watch" program that allowed paid per call firefighters to staff a fire station during daytime hours and paid at an hourly rate. This "day watch" program was enacted to help ensure the consistency of response Monday to Friday during the day time hours when most of the paid per call firefighters are working their full-time jobs and the response is the most inconsistent. The "day watch" program lasted a little over two years until it was possible to find firefighters to fill the daytime shifts.

In 2002 six full-time firefighters /EMT's were hired from the paid-per-call ranks to help fill the gap during the day time hours. The addition of the full-time staff created a combination fire department that included not only full-time staff but also the paid-per-call firefighters / EMT's that have been used since the beginning of the fire department in Maplewood.

Initially the full-time firefighters worked Monday to Friday 12-hour shifts that were the most difficult for the paid-per-call firefighters to cover. In 2004 it became necessary to send two of full-time firefighters each year to paramedic school to help cover the medical calls because of the increase of police calls that the police paramedics need to cover.

Since then, it has been more difficult for the police department to hire trained police paramedics or find willing police officers that would like to become paramedics. Add that to the increasing medical call volumes and it was determined that the primary medical service responsibly should be move from the police department to the fire department. Additional full-time firefighter/paramedics were hired and the program has expanded to its current version of 24 hour coverage, seven days a week with up to five firefighters/paramedics on shift per day with back-up provided by the paid-per-call firefighters and the police paramedics.

Over the years it has become necessary to hire more full-time staff due to a steadily decreasing ability to recruit and retain paid-per-call firefighters/EMT's that live within a reasonable time from a station and who can commit to the hours necessary for training and responding to calls.

The need for the increased full-time staff has come from the increasing EMS call volumes that were becoming an excessive burden on the police department and paid-per-call fire staff. There also has been a steadily decreasing ability to recruit and retain paid-per-call firefighter/EMT's from our community.

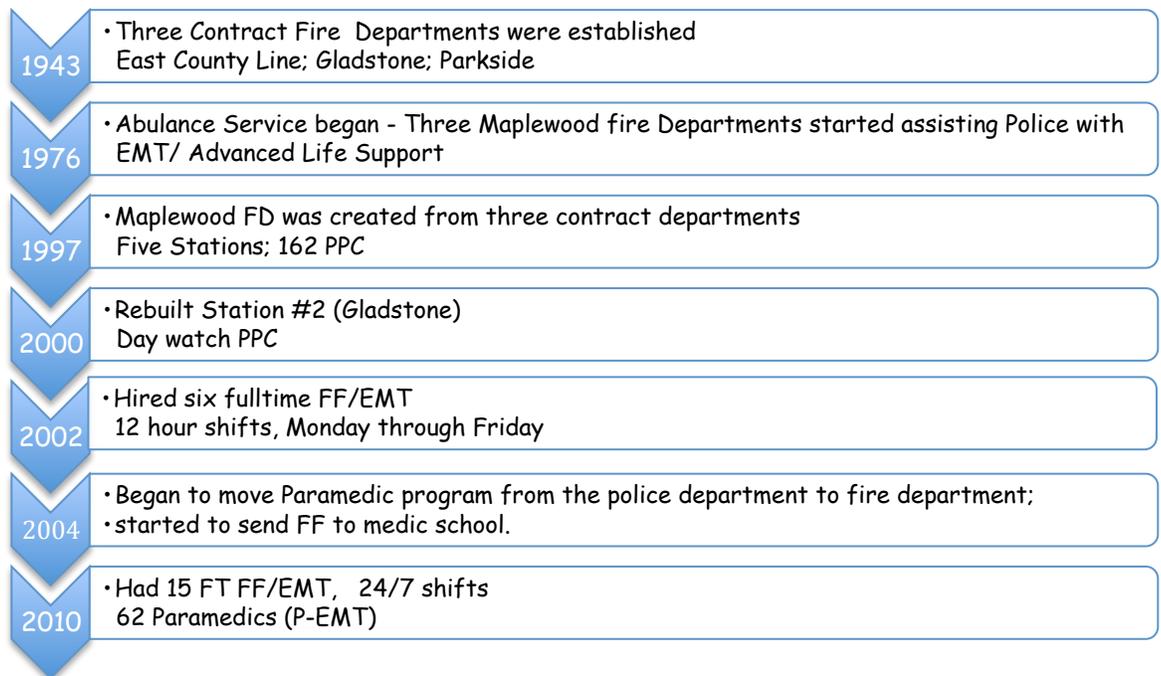


Figure 4 - Summary of History of Fire Department

## SERVICES PROVIDED BY MAPLEWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT:

**Fire Suppression:** The department's response to fire emergency with modern day firefighting equipment and firefighters trained with the knowledge to perform tactics and tasks on the fire scene necessary to achieve the final goals of extinguishing the fire and saving lives and property. This is accomplished in a high-risk environment that contains all types of hazards.

**Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** The department responds to all types of emergency medicals and provides both advanced life support (ALS) and basic life support (BLS) with trained paramedics and emergency medical technicians transporting patients to area hospitals.

**Emergency Management:** The city emergency management team is made up of police, fire and public works personnel working under the direction of the city's director of emergency management. Their function is to develop a comprehensive system that integrates and coordinates vital agencies and resources into a program of disaster mitigation, pre-preparedness, response and recovery.

Emergency Management program components include:

1. **Volunteers:** Emergency Management has several volunteer programs. Many of our volunteers are husband/wife or parent/child teams, and a number of them are also members of more than one unit such as the Ramsey County CERT program.
2. **Skywarn:** Members of our Skywarn Unit (Skywarn Spotters) are activated during severe thunderstorms. They monitor weather conditions in the field and report back to the Ramsey County Office. Information received by our Spotters is passed on to the National Weather Service. Maplewood Emergency Management holds Skywarn Spotter training each spring and members are required to attend the course every two years to remain active.
3. **Sirens:** The City of Maplewood has 13 outdoor warning sirens. Because we do not have the staff to monitor all the sirens when they are activated, Siren Monitors listen for the siren in their area during monthly testing and actual soundings. They report back to us using pre-stamped postcards we provide on whether the siren operated properly. Repairs can then be made to any sirens that did not operate properly.

### **Department Staffing** (as of November 2011):

Full Time Firefighters: 15

- 2 are EMTs
- 13 are Paramedics

Part-time FF/EMTs: 55

- 3 are paramedics
- 52 are EMTs

Police Department Medics: 10

- Backup, assisting the Firefighters
- Respond to about 4% of calls
- Transport about 1% of all calls per year

**Profile of Calls:**

**Volume:** *Approximately 3900 per year*

- 11 - 13 calls per day
- 85% Medical (65% are reimbursements Medicare)
- 11 AM – 5 PM is busiest time
- 6 PM – 1 AM is when most of the PPC staff available, prior to staffing changes recommended in this strategic plan.

**Types of Calls:**

Primary Service Area (PSA) 911 responders (must respond)

- Advanced Life Support (ALS) – 75% of medical calls
- Basic Life Support (BLS)– 25% of medical calls
- Fire and Rescue Calls - 10% of calls
- Hazardous Calls - 3% of calls
- “Good Intent” - 2%of calls

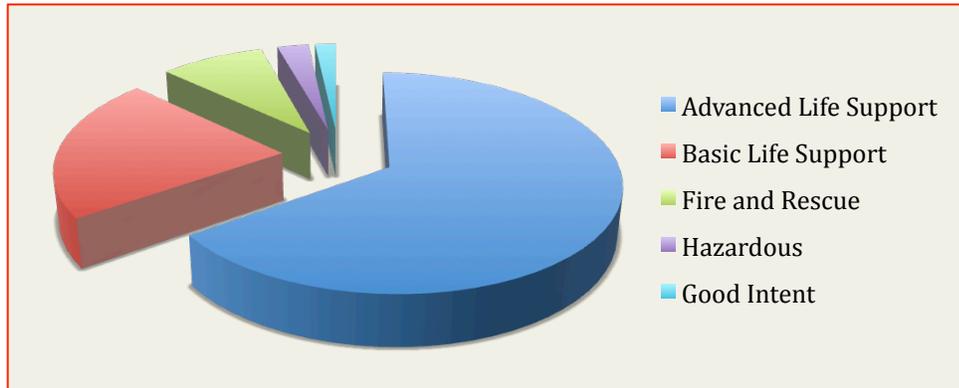


Figure 5: Types of Calls

**Fire Stations:**

**Call Volumes Per Station**

*(Average 2004-2009)*

Station #2 (Gladstone) - average 900 - 1,000 calls per year

Station #7 (Hazelwood) - average 900 - 1,000 calls per year

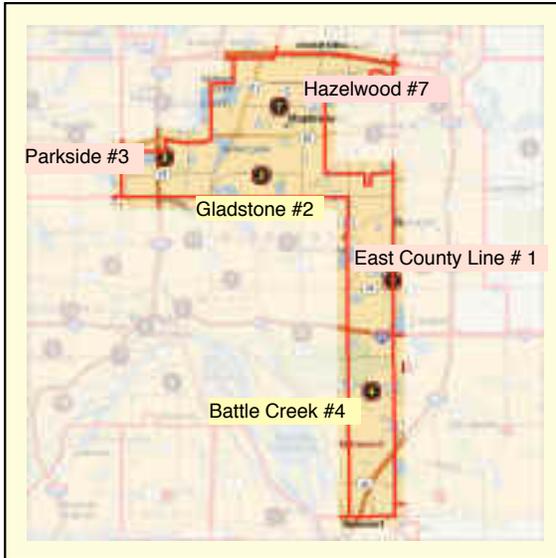
Station #1 (East County Line) - average 400 - 500 calls per year

Station #3 (Parkside) - average 400 - 500 calls per year

Station #4 (Battle Creek) - average 900 - 1,000 calls per year

**Station Locations:**

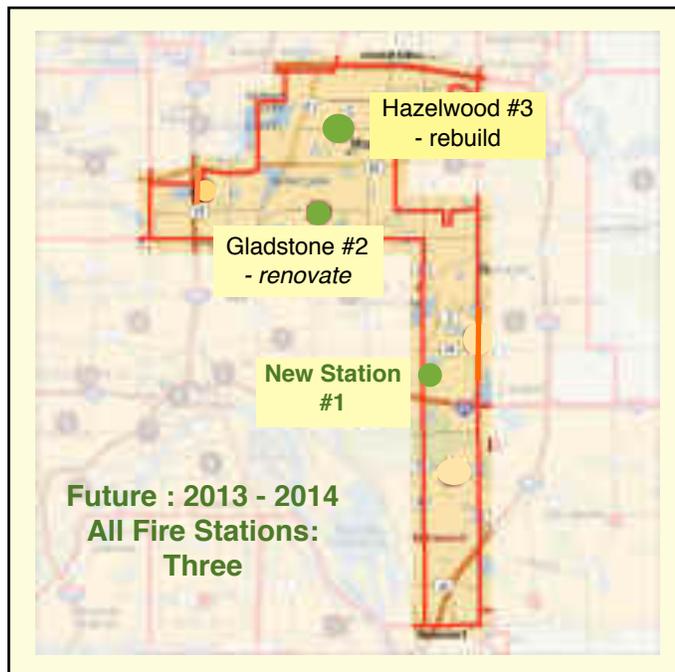
**UP UNTIL THE END OF 2010: Five Stations**



**MARCH 2011: Using Three Stations**



**FUTURE, STARTING IN 2013 - 2014: Three Stations**



Figures 6, 7, and 8: Past Present and Future Station Locations

## BUDGET SUMMARY

2010 Fire Budget: \$1.8 million

EMS budget: \$2.17 million

- PPC \$680,000 (personnel costs)
- FT \$1.4 million (personnel costs)
- PD \$50,000 (personnel costs)
- Enterprise funds: \$4.0 million (medical insurance payments etc.)
  - i. EMS = \$2.2 million
  - ii. FD = \$1.6 million

## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

The Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) convened throughout the planning process and provided direction and input to the Fire Chief and management team. The QIC members also took an active part in researching best practices, recommending policy changes regarding staffing and operations, communicating progress with the firefighters at large and assessing the SWOT facing the department.

The involvement and input of this group (QIC) makes this plan relevant, vital and sustainable. *See samples of the work performed by the QIC in the Appendices.*

**GOAL of the QIC:** Propose ways to ensure that the quality Fire and EMS service to Maplewood remains at the highest levels, while providing economical and sustainable facilities.

### Composition of QIC (2009 -2011)

Two paid-per-call firefighters from each of the (5) Stations:

Rick Herlund, Mike Lochen (Station 7)

Ron Bourquin, Joe White (Station 1)

Pat Heffernan, Bob Kane (Station 2)

Jon Melander, Dale Solheid (Station 4)

Mike Dittel, James Johnson (Station 3)

Two Full-time Firefighters:

Rich Dawson, Paul Everson

Two Assistant Chiefs: BJ Jungmann, Butch Gervais

Chief of the Department: Steve Lukin

Facilitator: Barbara Strandell

The QIC met formally on a regular (about once a month on week day evening) basis starting in late 2009. An outside consultant facilitated these meetings; agendas were prepared, and QIC work groups reported back to the full group with results and conclusions.

One important part of the QIC work was looking at **best practices**. Maplewood wanted to know what worked for other fire department when it came to major changes with staffing and how shifts were transitioned. Members of the group interviewed (on phone or in person) various fire department chiefs or leaders. Among other departments contacted were Lake Johanna, Roseville, Bloomington, St. Louis Park, Coon Rapids, and Plymouth. In the box below is a summary of what was reported to the QIC.

**Summary – What We Learned**  
**Best Practices**

*“We have learned a number of things from other departments. Even though we are different than all of these departments there are a number of lessons learned from their perspective that we will not have to repeat. It appears that the move to shift work is a local and national trend to ensure a quality response to the customers. The information we discovered as far as number of hours, shift length and shift bidding appear to fit into the mold of what many departments have or are going to implement. It appears most departments are using an electronic scheduling system and bidding their shifts quarterly. It appears that most departments have a similar pay scale compared to the scale we are looking at as well as pay differential by position/qualifications. This information that was gathered should be very valuable as we move forward to the implementation phase to ensure we learn from other agencies and not repeat some things that were not successful.*

**Things that were successful:**

- Keeping people informed of the process and expectations through email
- Not expecting everything to be right the first day
- Quarterly or Yearly shift bidding
- Bidding by seniority
- Having a supervisor or person responsible on each shift
- Expecting to have ill or emergency leave for personnel
- Using web based scheduling
- Having a way to alert people of shifts or events via text or email

**Things that did not go well:**

- Letting everyone bid at one time
- Having everyone in the same room to bid
- Letting everyone pick up extra shifts prior to less senior people bidding
- No supervisors on shift
- No expectations or shift assignments
- Having all training done on shift
- Hiring personnel with no area connection
- Paper Schedules
- Not having a maximum number of hours (people working FT hours)
- Paying people \$4/hr “

Prepared by QIC sub-group members:  
B.J. Jungmann, Rich Dawson, Paul Everson, Ron Bourquin, Pat Heffernan

Additionally, the group established nine major areas of exploration or research. Each of these was called an “Initiative”. The team established Objectives, Action Steps, Persons Responsible and target Timelines for each initiative. The summary of this work plan can be found in Appendices. The initiatives and respective objectives are listed below.



Figure 9: Initiatives and Objectives

The results of these planning efforts were enormous. The policy manual, procedures and protocols were upgraded, to accommodate the part-time staffing and reduction of the number of stations to three. Recruitment methods and processes were greatly improved. All Firefighter/EMTs were kept in the loop by their co-workers on the QIC.

In addition to the public open houses, the QIC made two presentations to the City Council and several to the firefighters (all staff) regarding these proposed changes. An in-depth FAQ (frequently asked questions) information document was prepared and discussed with the firefighters and the public.

It was concluded that the overall plan would benefit the firefighters in the following ways (Future Opportunities for YOUR Fire Department):

- ✚ Greater Capacity: for increasing number of Fire, EMS calls.
- ✚ Adequate and Flexible Staffing: for all three stations.

- ✦ Safer facilities: for personnel and citizens.
- ✦ Superior Recruitment: for part-time employment offer.
- ✦ Increased Efficiency: for better use of limited resources.
- ✦ Green: for modern, environmentally sustainable stations.
- ✦ Good Government: for shared resources, fire district.
- ✦ Partnerships: possible Emergency Operations Center and with local businesses

The staffing study and the station study done by the team is discussed in depth in the later sections of this plan. The involvement of and communication with the QIC was a constant throughout the process.

QIC members participated in a number of brainstorming exercises to get ideas and suggestions for setting the direction for the planning process. One topic the group addressed was: **What if we don't change?**

Each member of the QIC was asked the their opinion of what would happen in the near future to the Maplewood Fire Department if there is no change to the structure and staffing. Here are their answers, in random order:

- Reduction in services – inspections, fire alarm, education
- Response time will increase
- Residents might not like the level of service
- Change might be forced on us
- PPC will fold on its own
- Full-time Firefighters will have to pick up the slack
- PPC Firefighters' skills will decrease
- Equipment will deteriorate
- Budget is not sustainable
- Will not be able to cover calls – FT and will have to contract out ... might lose our PSA.
- Quality of care will go down
- Burnout will occur
- Citizens will lose faith in the Department
- FF safety will be compromised (not many PPC – FT too much)
- Problems will grow

One of the first exercises the QIC had was to participate in a SWOT analysis. This, along with identifying the key strategic issues, was performed prior to sub-groups reporting back on any of the initiatives.

### 'SWOT' ANALYSIS:

The department conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. The aim of this exercise is to identify the key internal and external factors that are important to achieving goals and objectives. The QIC gained a fresh perspective on what the department offers, what obstacles they face, what challenges they have to overcome, and what barriers to sustainability exist now and in the future.

This assessment came from within the fire department's unique configuration. SWOT analysis groups key pieces of information into two main categories:

- Internal factors – The *strengths* and *weaknesses* internal to the department.
- External factors – The *opportunities* and *threats* presented by the external environment to the department.

Suggestions and ideas came from a wide range of different viewpoints including firefighters, residents and city staff. The process itself enabled the department to engage its stakeholders in developing a plan, position itself to realistically address its primary strategic issue and to take the guess work out of how a transition will impact firefighters and citizens. The operations intelligence gained serviced as a foundation for the rest of the strategic plan.



Figure 10: Summary of SWOT: Maplewood Fire Department



**Strengths:** *Well- trained Staff, Public support, Service Quality (Fire and EMS), Reputation and Credibility, Public Safety training Facility, Leadership*

Key strengths include MFD's history (over 60 years) of delivering on its mission. The staff is seeking continuous improvement to MFD reputation and credibility by positively affecting the quality of life and safety for the residents and visitors of Maplewood.

Implications: How do we use these strengths?



**Weaknesses:** *Mix Full-time and Paid-per-Call staff, deteriorating facilities, recruiting, limited geographic focus (not regional), and aging workforce.*

Implications: How do we improve these weaknesses?

- Shift to part-time staff model
- Rebuild, renovate or relocate fire stations



**Opportunities:** *regional consolidation, higher quality recruit, aging population, good government practices, sustainability, and better positioning / utilization of resources.*

How do we exploit?

Implement a new staffing model that gives firefighters predictability that matches their lifestyle. Reposition fire stations to accommodate the shifting demographics of our city.



**Threats:** *uncertain government funding, recruitment, weak economy, public perception, and resistance to change.*

How do we mitigate?

- Education
- Transition plan
- Communicate with stakeholders
- Seek community partners and alternative funding methods

Once the analysis of SWOT and discussion took place the major challenges of the current (2010) situation were identified.

### WHY CHANGE? - THE SEVEN CHALLENGES

The QIC identified seven major conditions/challenges with the current system that needed to be addressed. If these factors were not reversed or the situation not improved, the fire department would not be able to guarantee Maplewood residents and visitors a continued high level of service. The fire department would not be sustainable under the current (2010) situation.

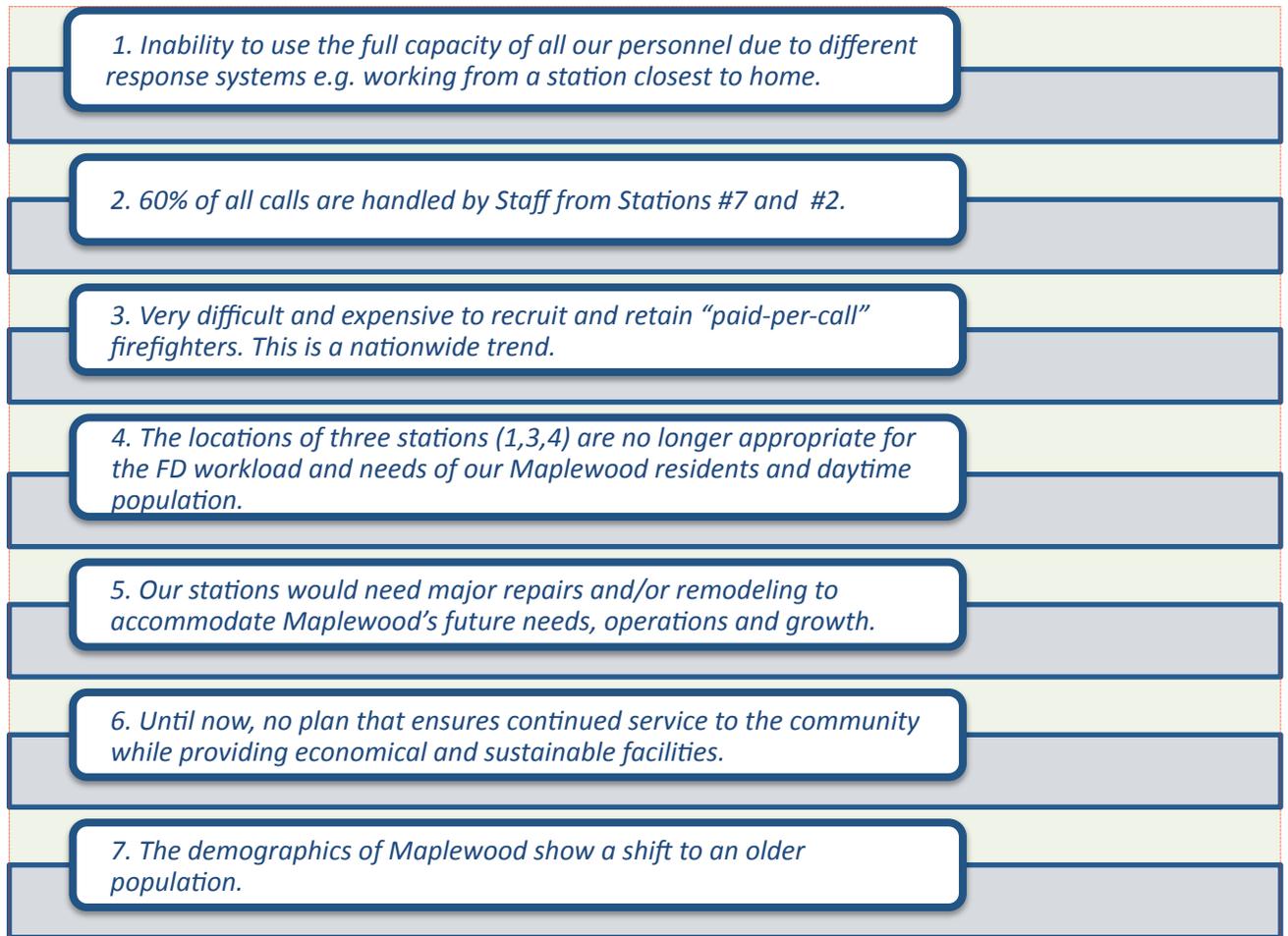


Figure 11: The Seven Challenges

### STAFFING:

Several key issues and trends prompted the Maplewood Fire Department to look at changing their staffing structure.

Minnesota trends are also part of a national movement. For example, volunteering (for firefighting/EMT) is down through the country, which makes it even more difficult to recruit and retain new paid- per – call firefighters.

Other dynamics considered and discussed by Maplewood:

- Due to the limited personnel that many fire departments are facing, "Auto Aid" has become a vital tool in providing those necessary resources more rapidly to the emergency. "Auto Aid" is a program where neighboring fire departments receive the call at the same time and send resources.
- Departments are merging together to form one department or to form fire district that are made up of more than one department. Economics and the best practices demand it in most cases.
- Many of the metro area (MN) fire departments have already gone to a staffing program that guarantees that personnel will be available to cover the calls.
- With the increasing number of departments going to a part-time (or "shift") staffing model they are able to use firefighters from other departments that are already trained. This also gives the firefighters that want to have more experience the ability to work for more than one department.
- Departments that have moved to a staffing model are no longer tied to how close a firefighters needs to live from a fire station. They have also seen a larger number of applicants applying for openings.
- Nationally, departments are moving away from "paid on call". That means departments have to set shifts and work hours. So, any time they come in they get paid for the hours.

Critical trends and factors specific to the City of Maplewood and its fire department staffing were identified by the QIC:

1. **Availability** - PPC Employees are declining due to attrition, retirement and recruiting limitations.
2. **Recruitment** - It is a major challenge to recruit 18-24 year olds:
  - a. Out of 20 applications, 14 return their background packages unfilled;
  - b. Lose 4 to 5 on backgrounds and criminal history
  - c. Lose 2 -3 in the testing process
  - d. Keep only 1 of 4 or 5 who start -- due to lifestyle changes, or not passing probation.
3. **Demographics** – Maplewood population is getting older. The younger population's (potential firefighters) lives are more mobile. They tend to live and work in different locations. This makes recruitment even more complex.
4. **Time Commitments** - In the 70's and 80's employers were offering three shifts, so firefighters were available around the clock. Call volumes went from 300 to 500 per year. Today call volumes are from 3,500 to 4,000 per year and training hours needed to support that volume has risen to 8 to 10 per month. Peak time for calls in now 9AM to 5 PM.

5. **Life Style** - With the prevalence of two-parent families (both working), time availability for firefighters is less than it was in previous generations.
6. **Aging Employee Base** - Out of 60 PPC – 20 have 20 + years in department and 30 have less than five years.
7. **Expectation** of Firefighters:
  - a. Must have 25% of total calls per quarter per station
  - b. If do not make, have to make it up the next quarter
  - c. FF is terminated when he/she has three occurrences of missing 25% calls per quarter.
  - d. Pay = \$16 per call regardless of how long it takes.
  - e. Training requirements have increased
  - f. Must live within five minutes from assigned station.
8. **Imbalance** - Making 25% of 1000 calls is harder than 25% of 400 call, but FF/EMT are paid the same (differences in station locations and staffing).

Given these facts and continued growing constraints, it had been nearly impossible to adequately and efficiently staff all five stations for the most effective use of its limited resources.

The highlights of the staffing plan can be found in the Appendices. This plan was presented to the entire staff in September of 2010.

### STATION STUDY

Maplewood could not solve its staffing issues without dealing with major issues around facilities. As mentioned earlier, Station #2 was rebuilt, and renovated. The other four stations have been in relative physical decline in the last twenty years.

As the need to change the staffing structure became apparent, the department had to look at how to maximize the use of the staff by locating them in stations that will guarantee the community the best possible service level. So, the QIC conducted a “station study”.

**The objectives** of the study was three-fold:

- ❖ Determine the feasibility and sustainment of fire stations within the city of Maplewood
- ❖ Propose ways to ensure the service to the community while providing economical and sustainable facilities
- ❖ Determine the need and locations of current and future fire stations

### Summary of Current (2010) Operations

- 17 hours per day, the city is serviced for most emergency calls primarily from two fire stations with full-time staffing
- 7 hours per day the city is serviced from all five fire stations using a combination of full-time and paid-per-call personnel living within 10 minutes of a fire station

### **EMS Run Volume By Area**

⇒ Stations 2 and 7 are the busiest areas in the city for both Fire and EMS

### **Summary of Challenges with Current Operations:**

1. Inconsistent response 7 hours of the day when using paid-per-call employees
2. Inability to use the full capacity of all our personnel due to different response systems
3. Major repairs are needed to several stations to keep them operational
4. Major remodeling will be needed to some stations in order to accommodate future needs and operations
5. The locations of the stations are no longer appropriate for the workload
6. The five stations were built when the community was serviced by 3 different fire departments
7. Majority of the calls are handled by staff responding from 2 fire stations
8. Difficulty recruiting and retaining paid-per-call employees (nation wide trend)
9. Current Operation 17 hours Per Day with 2 Fire Stations Staffed
10. Current Operation 7 hours Per Day with 5 Fire Stations Paid-Per-Call
11. Stations #2 and #7 are in good locations to handle call volume and provide good response times
12. Station #1 is preferred to move south near the 3M campus to provide a better response time to the southern end of the community

Based upon an analysis of the call data and studying the facilities, the following change was recommended, starting in 2011.

### **⇒ Staff three fire stations with Firefighter/EMTs and Firefighter/Paramedics**

- Close Stations #3 and #4
- Replace station #1 with a new facility in a superior location to better service the south end of the city
- Add-on to station #2 to provide adequate living quarters and apparatus space
- Replace station #7 in current location to provide living quarters and apparatus space

This would, in effect:

- ❖ Decreases the time to get the emergency vehicle en route
- ❖ May take longer to drive to some locations but due to the rapid in service time the response time will remain the same or decrease
- ❖ Increase our consistency of response to the community
- ❖ Decrease the time to get vehicle in service to an emergency
- ❖ Decrease our overhead costs by reducing fire stations and apparatus

More information was provided to answer concerns about the rationale for these changes.

**Question: Why Rebuild Station #7?**

- Station #7 would need an apparatus bay added on to accommodate for newer more modern apparatus
- A fire suppression system would need to be added in order to have firefighter sleeping there permanently
- Other expensive safety features such as egress windows and a safer hose tower would need to be added
- Sleeping rooms would need to be added in order to accommodate permanent sleeping at station 7

**Question: Why add on to Station #2?**

- Station #2 would need an additional apparatus bay to accommodate for new more modern apparatus
- Station #2 needs permanent sleeping rooms, the current rooms are make shift and we have lost administrative space that is needed
- Station #2 needs a back up generator for the Emergency Operations Center to be operable in a disaster
- Station #2 would need additional living and storage space to accommodate more firefighters staffing that station

**Question: Why Rebuild Station #1?**

- Station #1 is very high maintenance and has had numerous additions
- Station #1 has very high overhead costs due to it inefficiency
- Station #1 is in a less than ideal location for the new operational model for 2011
- Station #1 lacks many of the very basic and essential needs for a safe fire station

The fire department concluded that it could not justify renovating fire stations and replacing equipment at fire stations that are not sustainable from a service and economic standpoint.

## STRATEGIC ISSUE IN CONTEXT

How can we sustain the delivery of services to our citizens with the following limitations?

- Staff Recruitment/Turnover
- Antiquated Stations outside of high volume call areas
- Changing demographics of Maplewood

### Strategic direction needed:

- A. Create a more sustainable Fire Department, building capacity in our personnel, financial, physical and organizational infrastructures.
- B. Improve existing services that respond to a changing economy and the changing demographics of Maplewood.
- C. Consolidate with other communities to eventually create a Fire District.

## GOALS THE PROMISE OF THE PLAN

Once the challenges were identified and the strategic issues developed, the planning group established the following goals:

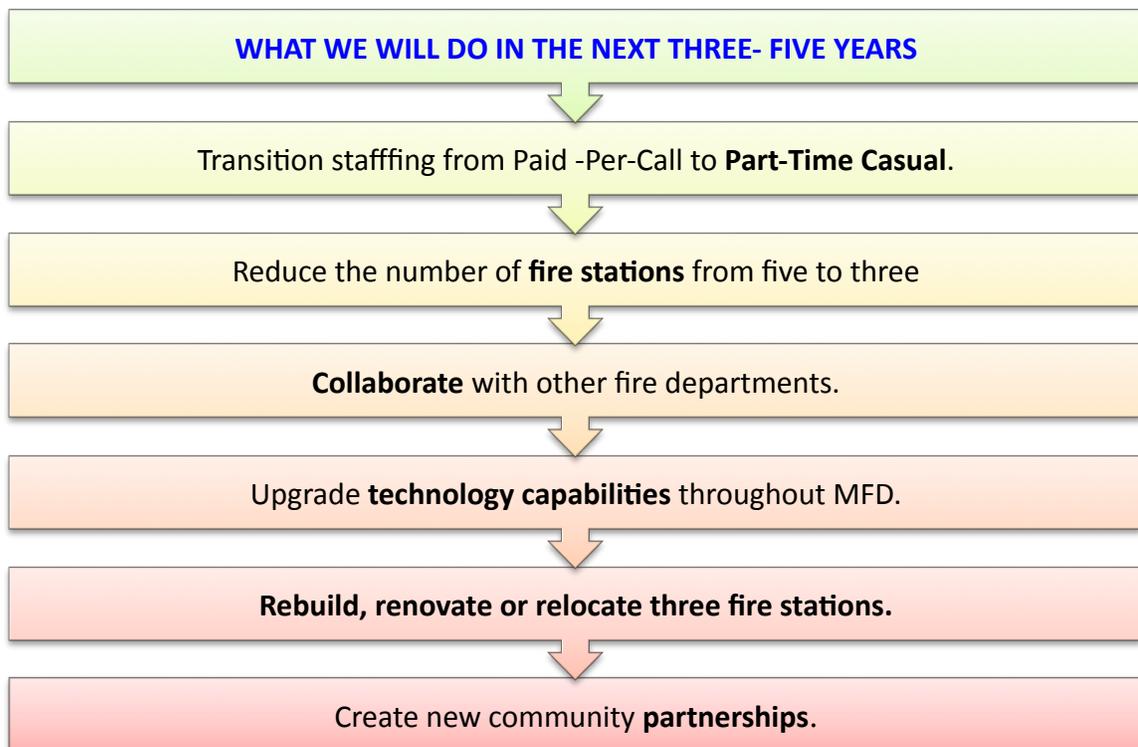


Figure 12: Promise of the Plan

## **FINANCING & FUNDING: ISSUES AND RESOLUTION**

Today, the building and remodeling of a fire station is costly. The purchase of land is a biggest factor in the overall cost. The department considered several financing/funding options to maximize costs in the long run and meet the current needs of the city.

- Referendum
- Selling of capital bounds
- Using reserve funds
- Grants
- Partnerships
- Selling of surplus stations
- Combination of one or more of the above

The Fire Chief has met with 3M Corporation to discuss the possibility of putting a station on their campus. They were open to the idea and found a place that would work for them and also meet Maplewood's needs. In 2012 the fire department will be obtaining appraisals of the surplus fire stations and working with the city finance department in putting a plan together for the financing of this project.

**MAPLEWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT (QIC)  
2010 -2011 DEPARTMENT TRANSITION WORK PLAN (MAP)**

QIC: The quality improvement committee is responsible for evaluating and implementing initiatives to ensure the quality of service we provide to the community.

Purpose Statement: The purpose of this work plan is to identify initiatives that must be accomplished to complete a transition to a part-time/full-time fire department from a combination department. This plan will identify objectives and action steps needed to make the transition as successful as possible. The plan will also identify those responsible for the initiatives and place a timeline to complete those initiatives.

<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Persons Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Station Study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify factors/criteria for decision-making: keep, close, replace</li> <li>- Identify ideal station locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review current station locations and how the change in operation will affect those stations</li> <li>- Identify possible station locations for best response and operation</li> </ul>	Jungmann, Lochen, Everson, Bourquin, Heffernan	Initial Report August 11, 2010
<b>Forces &amp; Trends of external environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify factors that may affect our transition to a new operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify Social Factors (including demographics)</li> <li>- Economic Factors</li> <li>- Political Factors</li> <li>- Technological and Educational</li> <li>- Geographical</li> </ul>	Lukin, Herlund, Gervais, White, Kane, Dawson, Dittel, Jones	Initial Report August 11, 2010
<b>Station Transition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify needs to allow a staffing program to operate in the stations that will be staffed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify sleeping quarter needs</li> <li>- Identify safety needs</li> <li>- Identify restroom/shower facility needs</li> <li>- Identify Storage Needs (gear, EMS supplies, etc.)</li> <li>- Identify vehicle storage capabilities</li> <li>- Identify Costs associated with the needs</li> </ul>	Paul Rick Mike L. Steve	For Sept QIC 9/13/10

<p><b>Vehicle Transition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the needs to allow the department to shift apparatus</li> <li>- Identify the process of having comparable apparatus throughout the system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify costs associated with moving apparatus (CAD, lettering, air/electric connections)</li> <li>- Identify needs to ensure vehicles are similarly equipped</li> <li>- Identify costs associated with making vehicles alike (mounts, shelves, etc.)</li> <li>- Identify basic equipment to be carried based on the mission of the vehicle.</li> </ul>	<p>Ron Rich BJ Joel</p>	<p>For Sept QIC 9/13/10</p>
<p><b>Policies &amp; Guidelines</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify changes that need to be made in the policy and guideline manuals to outline the new operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft updated policies to reflect changes</li> <li>- Draft operating guidelines to reflect changes</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Job Descriptions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify changes that need to be made to Job Descriptions to correctly fit the new operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft updated job descriptions</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Training</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify training needs that should be accomplished during the transition to the new operation</li> <li>- Identify basic competencies that should be a standard expectation for all personnel working shifts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify training needs in all categories (admin., general operations, fire, ems, etc.)</li> <li>- Identify a set of basic competencies that all personnel should be able to accomplish in all categories</li> </ul>	<p>Jon M Mike D John Jones</p>	<p>For Sept QIC 9/13/10</p>
<p><b>Expectations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify expectations for all personnel working shifts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify daily, bi-daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually and annual duties and expectations</li> <li>- Identify roles and responsibilities and communication methods for each shift to ensure</li> </ul>	<p>Management Team</p>	<p>For Sept QIC 9/13/10</p>

		continuity of operations between shifts.		
<b>Roles &amp; Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify a Organizational Chart that will allow the department to address all areas of responsibility effectively</li> <li>- Identify areas of responsibility that need to be addressed for a successful operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create organizational chart</li> <li>- Create a roles and responsibilities list and assignments</li> </ul>	<p>BJ Paul Steve Butch</p>	<p>Finalize December 2010</p>

**APPENDICES:**

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## Initiatives of QIC

Maplewood MN Fire Department 2010 - 2011

1. **SWOT** - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis
2. **Best Practices** - what other stations have done; what worked and what didn't.
3. **Station Study**
  - a. Identify factors/criteria for decision-making: keep, close, replace
  - b. Identify ideal station locations
4. **Forces/Trends of external environment**
  - a. Identify factors that may affect our transition to a new operation
5. **Station Transition**
  - a. Identify needs to allow a staffing program to operate in the stations that will be staffed
6. **Vehicle Transition**
  - a. Identify the needs to allow the department to shift apparatus
  - b. Identify the process of having comparable apparatus throughout the system
7. **Policies/Guidelines**
  - a. Identify changes that need to be made in the policy and guideline manuals to outline the new operation
8. **Job Descriptions**
  - a. Identify changes that need to be made to Job Descriptions to correctly fit the new operation
9. **Training**
  - a. Identify training needs that should be accomplished during the transition to the new operation
  - b. Identify basic competencies that should be a standard expectation for all personnel working shifts
10. **Expectations**
  - a. Identify expectations for all personnel working shifts
11. **Roles/Responsibilities**
  - a. Identify an Organizational Chart that will allow the department to address all areas of responsibility effectively
  - b. Identify areas of responsibility that need to be addressed for a successful operation

## **Staffing Research Done by QIC**

### *Best Practices – Other Departments (7/7/10)*

QIC Committee members:

B.J. Jungmann, Rich Dawson, Paul Everson, Ron Bourquin, Pat Heffernan

#### **Lake Johanna Fire Department**

- 32 Square Miles
- Have been doing day shifts for more than 10 years
- Currently cover M-F 0800-1700hrs and F-Sat 1700-0100
- It was difficult for members to look at the improvement of service and not their personal preferences
- Plan to implement to 24/7 coverage over the next 6 years
- Increase coverage 20 hours per year for next 6 years
- Staff 2 stations 1 officer and 2 firefighters per station
- Rumor mill caused a lot of misinformation, improved when all personnel were told information was only to come from committee members.
- Helped by emailing minutes
- Use fire manager for scheduling
- Currently have 4 fire stations. Once staffing 24 hours they may look at the need for 4 stations.
- Will run 2800 medicals and 700 fires once staffed 24/7
- Require 16 hours per quarter with current coverage will require around 36-48 hrs per month once covering 24/7
  - Will have personnel sign up for 48 hours and allow them to trade 1 – 12 hour shift per month
- Have found it has increased their PT personnel's experience level
- Still require 25% of the calls at their station per quarter
- Auto-aid with Roseville, send 1 engine with 4-6 people. If auto-aid occurs while staffed, they send the 1 – 3 person engine and follow up with 3 PT personnel responding to call back with a utility vehicle
- \$10/hr for FF, \$12/hr for Officer. Would like to get to \$14/hr for FF and \$16/hr for Officer.
- \$2/hr less for probationary members and only 1 probationary member per shift.
- Have seen increase in fuel/maintenance cost
- Bid shifts by groups. 5 Groups established by seniority. Allow 2 days to pick shifts, then move to next group for 2 days, etc. Do second round bid to pick up extra shifts.
- Bid quarterly.
- Able to trade shifts amongst same job class.
- Able to make up hours next quarter without losing good time service credit.
- No more than 180 hours per month
- Continue to train normal schedule on Tuesday nights.
- Kept department meeting.
- Duties – Truck Checks, Clean Stations, Pub Ed, Wax Trucks, Cut Grass, Station Maint.
- Must live within 2 minutes of response area.
- No change to relief assoc.
- No one left during or after change, some retirees have come back since the change.
- Are going to create lead FF positions to fill officer shifts as needed
- Officers not limited to only officer shifts but only get paid FF wage if they pick up a FF shift.

- Use Paper Time Cards
- Had to crease training for drivers and officers
- Have briefing every morning and check vehicle operations daily

### Roseville

- Since the 70's have had overnight staffing that was inconsistent. 2 people at 2 stations for a total of 4 on shift.
- Daytime population increases to 80-100 thousand
- Daytime staffing started 0900-1600 for 2-3 years prior to 24/7
  - Day staffing did not help consistency of responses
- Did 720 calls prior to staffing due to no medical responses
- Initially under paid at \$4/hr
  - Now \$13.32/hr for FF, \$15.47/hr Lt., \$17.80/hr Capt.
- 12 hour shifts have worked best
- Initially all personnel were in a room and bid by seniority. Recommend not to bid that way.
  - Use online software that was created internally.
  - Bid by seniority
  - Initially no supervisor on shift and stated definitely need one
  - Capt and Lt. on each shift
  - 5 Person crew on (2 in medic 3 and 3 in Engine 3)
  - Annual Bidding
- Star Response is set to staff station when duty crew is out. Usually get about 5 people on a star response
- All call – 1 hour minimum pay
- Minimally must work over approximately ½ your scheduled shifts (30)
- Can trade up to 48 hours prior, other must get supervisor approval within 48 hours.
- Expanded response area to 10 minutes from city limits and then removed time requirement as an experiment.
  - Those from outside came trained which saved training money, do not come back for call backs, have no investment in the community, do not participate in anything other than their shifts
  - Reinstated the 10 minute requirement
  - Want to be able to handle room of contents fire without call back
  - Require 25-30% call back response
- 99.6% of calls handled by on duty shift
- Page out all calls by cell phone/text message
- 98% of training on shift, alternate fire/EMS every week (60-90 minute training per shift)
- 8-12 off duty multi-company trainings per year
- Captain does fire training and Lieutenant conducts EMS training
- Average response time 3:30. Prior 8-10 minutes
- After 6 years 92,000 miles on primary engine with 4,000 calls
- Able to sleep 2200-0600hrs
- Full time employees are in PERA and PT are in relief association. Looking at the state PT PERA program instead of relief. PT PERA lump sum with a defined contribution.
- Night shift – check trucks and conduct training
- Day shift – truck checks, training, equipment maintenance, lawn care, building maint, etc.
- Full-time work days 4 – 12 hour shifts
- Increased budget to have shift coverage
- Stabilized response

- Costs about \$530,000 in PT salaries
- Increased PT employees lifestyle
- Increased competency and training of personnel.
- Create an annual and monthly report to update city council and manager.
- A few employees worked 4-5 shifts per week which created overtime over 53 hrs a week.
- If you don't bid you go to the bottom of the seniority list for that bid
- Published seniority list.

June 18, 2010

[Other Fire Departments to check into:](#)

Minnetonka (called chief with no response yet)

Golden, CO

Brooklyn Center (left chief with card, no response yet)

[Since June 18<sup>th</sup>, information BJ discovered via phone conversations:](#)

- Bloomington
  - Daytime duty crews during the week
  - Voluntary
  - No change to % or dispatching
- St. Louis Park
  - Don't do duty crew with PPC
  - PPC come in for all calls
  - PPC work 20 hours a month
  - FT 18 - minimum 5 per shift. 3 at south station, 2 at north station
  - Auto-aid - work together and train together. Joint operations training.
- Coon Rapids
  - Combination department
  - No PT working only come in on all calls
- Plymouth
  - 0600-2100hrs Mon-Sat
  - 3 hour shifts
  - Can work up to 9 hours straight
  - Decreases your required call % after working a prescribed amount of hours. (i.e. you may only have to make 20% of your calls if you work 9 hours)

[Summary - What we learned from Other Fire Departments:](#)

We have learned a number of things from other departments. Even though we are different than all of these departments there are a number of lessons learned from their perspective that we will not have to repeat. It appears that the move to shift work is a local and national trend to ensure a quality response to the customers. The information we discovered as far as number of hours, shift length and shift bidding appear to fit into the mold of what many departments have or are going to implement. It appears most departments are using an electronic scheduling system and bidding their shifts quarterly. It appears that most departments have a similar pay scale compared to the scale we are looking at as well as pay differential by position/qualifications. This information that was gathered should be very valuable as we move forward to the implementation phase to ensure we learn from other agencies and not repeat some things that were not successful.

Things that were successful

- Keeping people informed of the process and expectations through email
- Not expecting everything to be right the first day
- Quarterly or Yearly shift bidding
- Bidding by seniority
- Having a supervisor or person responsible on each shift
- Expecting to have ill or emergency leave for personnel
- Using web based scheduling
- Having a way to alert people of shifts or events via text or email

Things that did not go well

- Letting everyone bid at one time
- Having everyone in the same room to bid
- Letting everyone pick up extra shifts prior to less senior people bidding
- No supervisors on shift
- No expectations or shift assignments
- Having all training done on shift
- Hiring personnel with no area connection
- Paper Schedules
- Not having a maximum number of hours (people working FT hours)
- Paying people \$4/hr

## NOTES FROM QIC MEETING 9/13/10

1. Meeting was lead by Chief Lukin. Review Department Meeting that was held on 9/7/10.
2. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): The originally FAQ (regarding the transition) were amended to include questions that were brought up at the Department Meeting (9/7/10) and a couple that were discussed at the QIC meeting (see *attached*).
  - The engineer position was discussed; the role will not go away – it is a safety issue that needs to be addressed under the new staffing. The Department will need to come up with some training to address this.
  - Rich commented that the training should start sooner than later.
  - BJ added that they would have to come up with some job performance requirements.

*The rest of the meeting focused on the work plan elements and QIC assignments:*

3. Station Transition: Steve Lukin presented the work accomplished on this topic. There was discussion about the configuration of station 7, how it might change. (a map was displayed to show the call levels, etc historically).
  - Identify needs to allow a staffing program to operate in the stations that will be staffed
  - Identify sleeping quarter needs
  - Identify safety needs
  - Identify restroom/shower facility needs
  - Identify Storage Needs (gear, EMS supplies, etc.)
  - Identify vehicle storage capabilities
  - Identify Costs associated with the needsWork Group: Paul Rick Mike L. Steve
4. Vehicle Transition: A handout was provided to the group showing the proposed vehicle changes. New nomenclature for the vehicles was also discussed.
  - Identify the needs to allow the department to shift apparatus
  - Identify the process of having comparable apparatus throughout the system
  - Identify costs associated with moving apparatus (CAD, lettering, air/electric connections)
  - Identify needs to ensure vehicles are similarly equipped
  - Identify costs associated with making vehicles alike (mounts, shelves, etc.)
  - Identify basic equipment to be carried based on the mission of the vehicle.

Work Group: Ron Rich BJ Joel

5. Training: Butch led the discussion about training and suggested that they will set training for Tuesday nights on shift time. There will be a lot of training and maybe delivered through different media i.e. webinar. Rick suggested that the most important thing is how the training is delivered. Steve Lukin mentioned that it will

be important not take employees away from home more than absolutely necessary. BJ talked about how important performance requirements will be (same as EMT), like pumping – evaluate and check off list on a quarterly basis. “Critical skills” will be identified in the performance requirements. A training plan will be put together *before* the transition begins.

- Identify training needs that should be accomplished during the transition to the new operation
- Identify basic competencies that should be a standard expectation for all personnel working shift
- Identify training needs in all categories (admin., general operations, fire, ems, etc.)
- Identify a set of basic competencies that all personnel should be able to accomplish in all categories

Work Group: Jon M Mike D John Jones

6. Expectations

- Identify expectations for all personnel working shifts
- Identify daily, bi-daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually and annual duties and expectations
- Identify roles and responsibilities and communication methods for each shift to ensure continuity of operations between shifts.

Work Group: Management Team

7. Roles/Responsibilities: BJ presented the proposed organizational charge tot the group. Questions and discussion ensued.

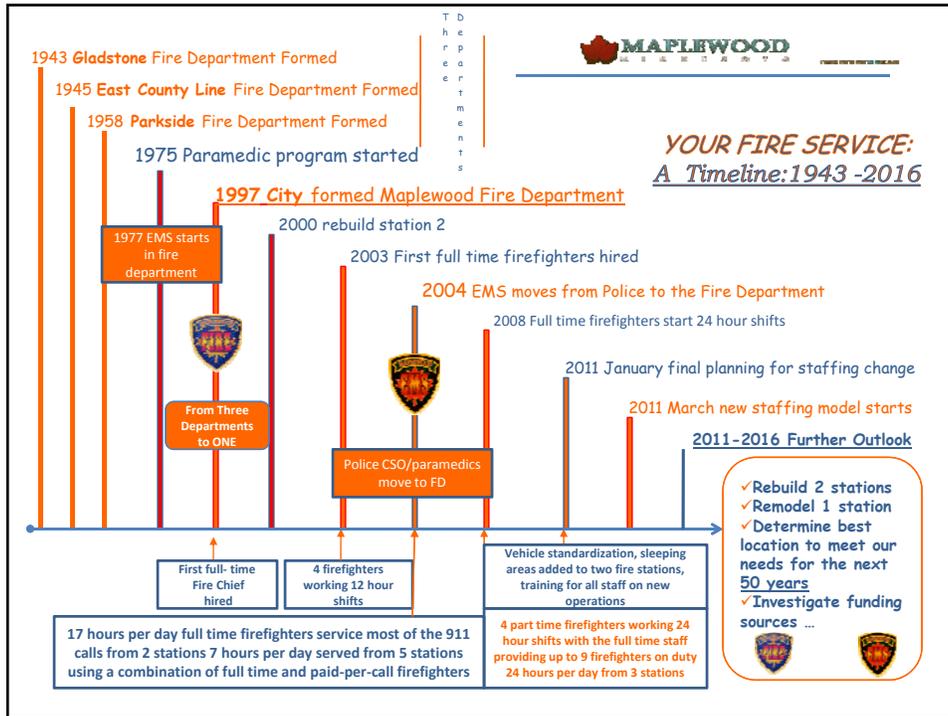
- Identify an Organizational Chart that will allow the department to address all areas of responsibility effectively
- Identify areas of responsibility that need to be addressed for a successful operation
- Create organizational chart
- Create a roles and responsibilities list and assignments

Work Group: BJ Paul Steve Butch

Future QIC meetings will focus on Policy, operations and training development.

Next meeting will be held on 9-29-10 (Barb will not be attending)

On November 8, the Maplewood City Council will discuss the new FD strategy in a work session.





## WHY CHANGE?



### Challenges with CURRENT SYSTEM:

- Inability to use the full capacity of all our personnel due to *different response systems* e.g. working from one station closest to home.
- 60% of all calls are handled by Staff from Stations #7 and #2.
- Very difficult and *expensive to recruit and retain* "paid-per-call" firefighters. This is a nationwide trend.
- The *locations of three stations (1,3,4)* are no longer appropriate for the FD workload and needs of our Maplewood residents and daytime population.
- Our stations would *need major repairs and/or remodeling* to accommodate Maplewood's future needs, operations and growth.
- Until now, *no plan* that ensures continued service to the community while providing economical and sustainable facilities.
- The demographics of Maplewood show a shift to an *older population*.



## Quality Improvement Committee Who are we?



**Two paid-per-call firefighters from each of the (5) Stations:**

Rick Herlund, Mike Lochen (Station 7)      Ron Bourquin , Joe White (Station 1)  
Pat Heffernan, Bob Kane (Station 2)      Jon Melander, Dale Solheid (Station 4)  
Mike Dittel, James Johnson (Station 3)

**Two Full-time Firefighters:**                      Rich Dawson, Paul Everson

**Two Assistant Chiefs:**                      BJ Jungmann, Butch Gervais  
**Chief of the Department:** Steve Lukin

**Facilitator:** Barbara Strandell

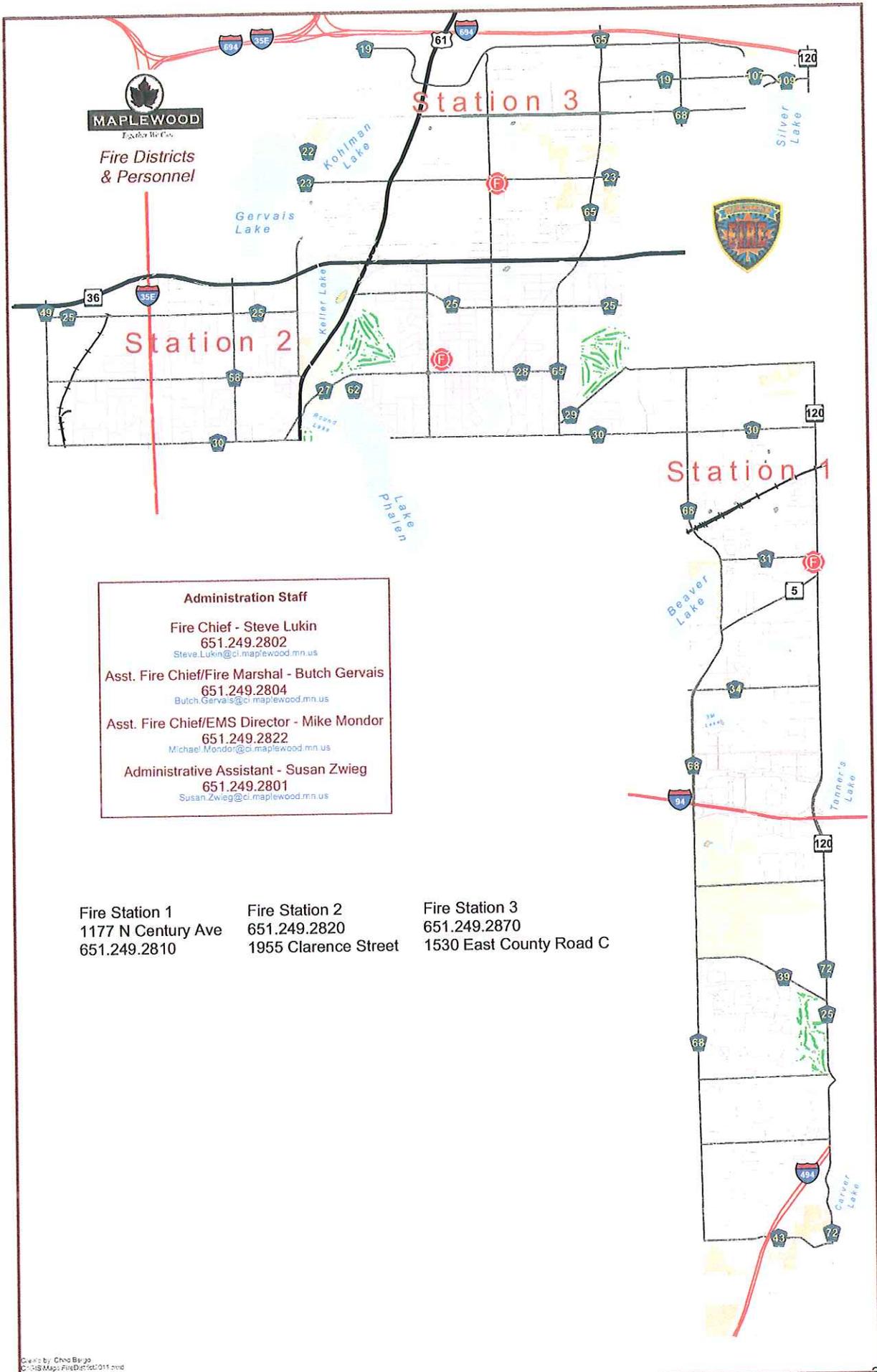
### GOAL OF COMMITTEE:

Propose ways to ensure the Fire and EMS service to Maplewood while providing economical and sustainable facilities.



## Future Opportunities for YOUR Fire Department

-  **Greater Capacity:** for increasing number of Fire, EMS calls.
-  **Adequate and Flexible Staffing:** for all three stations.
-  **Safer facilities:** for personnel and citizens.
-  **Superior Recruitment:** for part-time employment offer.
-  **Increased Efficiency:** for better use of limited resources.
-  **Green:** for modern, environmentally sustainable stations.
-  **Good Government:** for shared resources, fire district.
-  **Partnerships:** possible Emergency Operations Center and with local businesses



**MAPLEWOOD**  
 Explorer No. Co.  
 Fire Districts  
 & Personnel

**Administration Staff**

Fire Chief - Steve Lukin  
 651.249.2802  
[Steve.Lukin@ci.maplewood.mn.us](mailto:Steve.Lukin@ci.maplewood.mn.us)

Asst. Fire Chief/Fire Marshal - Butch Gervais  
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Administrative Assistant - Susan Zwiag  
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Fire Station 2  
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 1955 Clarence Street

Fire Station 3  
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