

Seacoast Chief Fire Officers Mutual Aid District



STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2026





Mission Statement

The Seacoast Chief Fire Officers Mutual Aid District is dedicated to enhancing fire and life safety across a seacoast that spans three states, through strong partnerships, constant collaboration, and open honest communications.

Vision

As an industry leader, we work together to provide unmatched value to our members through professional development, shared resources, association assets, and unified practices and processes.

Progress Through Cooperation



Values

Regional Cooperation

We achieve regional cooperation through up-to-date mutual aid agreements, leveraging our diverse membership, and the cultivation of professional relationships where every member feels valued, supported, and appreciated.

Dedicated Members

Active participation by our dedicated members spawn collaboration and innovation that benefits the entire region. Our members are our most valuable asset.

Fiscal Responsibility

We maintain a favorable fiscal position through strong fundraising, proper short and long-term planning, and transparency in our business practices.

Progressive

Continuous improvement by staying up-to-date with the latest advancements in technology and industry-related information.

Integrity and Professionalism

Our actions reflect the highest ethical and professional standards.



Introduction

The Seacoast Chief Fire Officers Mutual Aid District (SCFOMAD) is a municipal corporation registered with the State of New Hampshire, comprised of fire and rescue departments of fifty-one (51) cities and towns across the Seacoast region of New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts. The membership includes full-time, on-call, combination, and volunteer fire departments as well as four (4) associate member agencies for a total of fifty-five (55) member agencies. The District provides mutual aid to any member requesting it in times of major emerge The District maintains and supports numerous valuable assets such as three SCBA support trailers capable of filling air cylinders, as well as a mobile command post that is often utilized by fire, EMS, and law enforcement agencies at large-scale events. The District also maintains a regional hazardous materials response team and a type two incident management team. The District is governed by its bylaws which are administered by a member-elected Board of Directors.

CURRENT MEMBERS

Maine

**Berwick
Eliot
Kittery
Lebanon
Ogunquit
North Berwick
Portsmouth Naval
Shipyards
Sanford
South Berwick
Wells
York**

Massachusetts

**Amesbury
Merrimac
Newbury
Newburyport
Salisbury
West Newbury**

New Hampshire

**Atkinson
Barrington
Brentwood
Deerfield
Dover
Durham
East Kingston
Epping
Exeter
Farmington
Fremont
Greenland
Hampton
Hampton Falls
Kensington
Kingston
Lee
Madbury
Milton
US Coast Guard -
Portsmouth**

**New Castle
Newfields
Newington
Newmarket
Newton
North Hampton
Nottingham
Pease Air National Guard
Plaistow
Portsmouth
Rochester
Rollinsford
Rye
Seabrook
Seabrook Station
Somersworth
South Hampton
Stratham**



Member-Driven Strategic Planning

From September through December 2022, the Seacoast Chief Fire Officers Mutual Aid District worked to complete a thorough member-driven strategic planning process that sought to identify a clear vision for the District as well as to outline the necessary goals and objectives needed to make the vision become a reality. The voice of our membership drives our



operations and charts the course for the future. As a "member-driven organization" we focus on the needs and expectations, both spoken and unspoken, of present and future members, in the creation and/or improvement of the programs and services provided.

Our Strategic Plan is a living management tool that provides short-term direction, builds a shared vision, documents goals and objectives, and optimizes the use of resources.

It is our desire to have a continuous and systematic process where members of the organization make decisions about our future, develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is measured.

Effective strategic planning benefits from a consistent, structured process that is continuously monitored, assessed, adjusted and in which progress is communicated across all levels of the organization. Most importantly, strategic planning can be an opportunity to unify our Board of Directors, committees, and membership through a common understanding of where the organization is going, how everyone involved can work toward that common purpose, and how progress and levels of success will be measured.





A Strategic Planning team was established consisting of the Board of Directors, committee leads, two members from the Seacoast Technical Assistance Response Team (START) Board as well as an additional member of the Finance Committee. The District's Executive Director facilitated the planning process.

At the conclusion of the planning process, the Planning Team grouped the goals and objectives into five (5) categories which will help facilitate the District's collective vision for the future:

1. Association Effectiveness
2. Regional Resources
3. Training
4. Website
5. Finance

Within each goal area, key objectives and action items were created to enable the effective implementation of our plan.



PLANNING TEAM

President

Chief Dave Emanuel, Durham

1st Vice President

Chief James Reinert, Farmington

2nd Vice President

Chief Mark Dupuis, Wells

Secretary

Division Chief Keith Irwin, Dover

Treasurer

Asst. Chief Patrick Moynihan,
Newington

Director, New Hampshire

Chief Ralph Cresta, Greenland

Director, Maine

Chief David O'Brien, Kittery

Director, Massachusetts

Chief Mike Dwyer, West Newbury

Director

Chief E.J. Hoyt, Newington

Director

Chief William McQuillen,
Portsmouth

Past President

Chief Don DeAngelis, Epping

START Board

Chief Marc Couteau, Rye

Chief Ed Warren, East Kingston

Finance Committee

Chief Steven Bennotti, Sanford

Training Committee

Perry Plummer

Executive Director



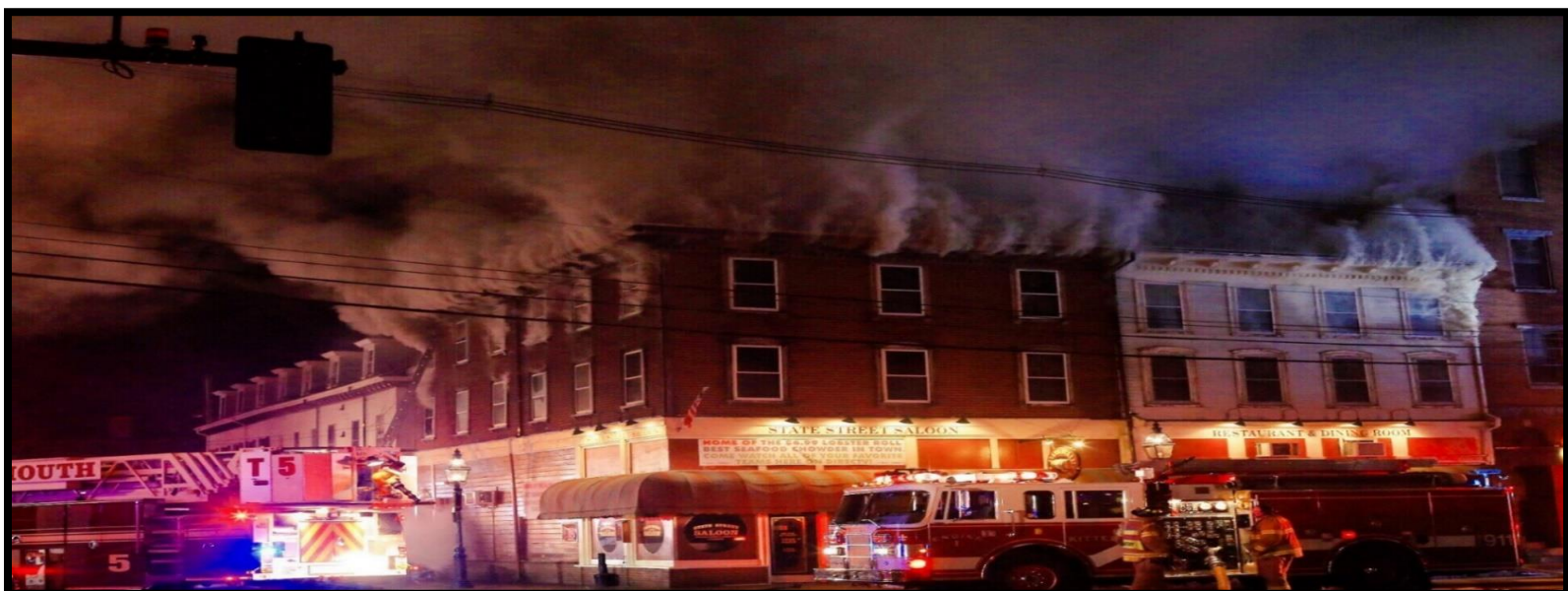
Survey

In October 2022, the Association released an electronic survey to all members in an effort to gather information on the perceptions and values of the organization. The survey garnered forty-five (45) responses from a possible fifty-five (55) member departments. The strong response clearly depicts the commitment of our members to improve the overall effectiveness of the organization. Overall, the gathered responses were extremely positive, and broadly reinforced the strengths of the District. The survey results also showed a clear desire for additional resources and training, both in traditional ways, as well as through new programs.

The full survey results can be found on the District's website.

KEY FINDINGS

- Most respondents felt the District made notable progress in the past year.
- Additional training leads the way in member requests and desired improvement.
- Members felt an informative, user-friendly website was important.
- There is strong support for the District to secure a training ground in the future.
- Meetings should be held practically year-round with varying locations around the District.





STRENGTHS – What do we do well?

WEAKNESSES – What do we not do well?

OPPORTUNITIES – Where are our opportunities to improve?

THREATS – What will get in our way of accomplishing our goals?

SWOT Analysis

After considering the results of the member survey, committee meetings and association planning efforts, the Planning Team finalized the District's SWOT analysis. The analysis, summarized below, provides the foundation for the formation of the Strategic Plan's goal areas and guiding objectives.

STRENGTHS

- Most members are happy
- Good progress this year
- Networking
- Information sharing
- Shared resources
- Support each other during incidents
- Strong fundraising history
- Organization history/experience
- Financially stable
- Strong Mutual Aid system
- Unified Mutual Aid agreement
- Extensive assets
- Good HAZMAT Team
- Training track record
- Decentralized leadership
- Progressive Board of Directors
- Collaborative nature of members

WEAKNESSES

- Some lack of follow-through
- Tends to be NH-centric – the District does not capitalize on our tri-state diversity
- Lack of specifically defined goals and measurable objectives
- Lack of new member orientation and indoctrination and new chief support
- Lack of forecasting as to where the fire service is headed
- Outdated Bylaws
- Outdated Website
- Outdated SOP's/SOG's
- Fire Ground Command could be strengthened
- Inconsistent training

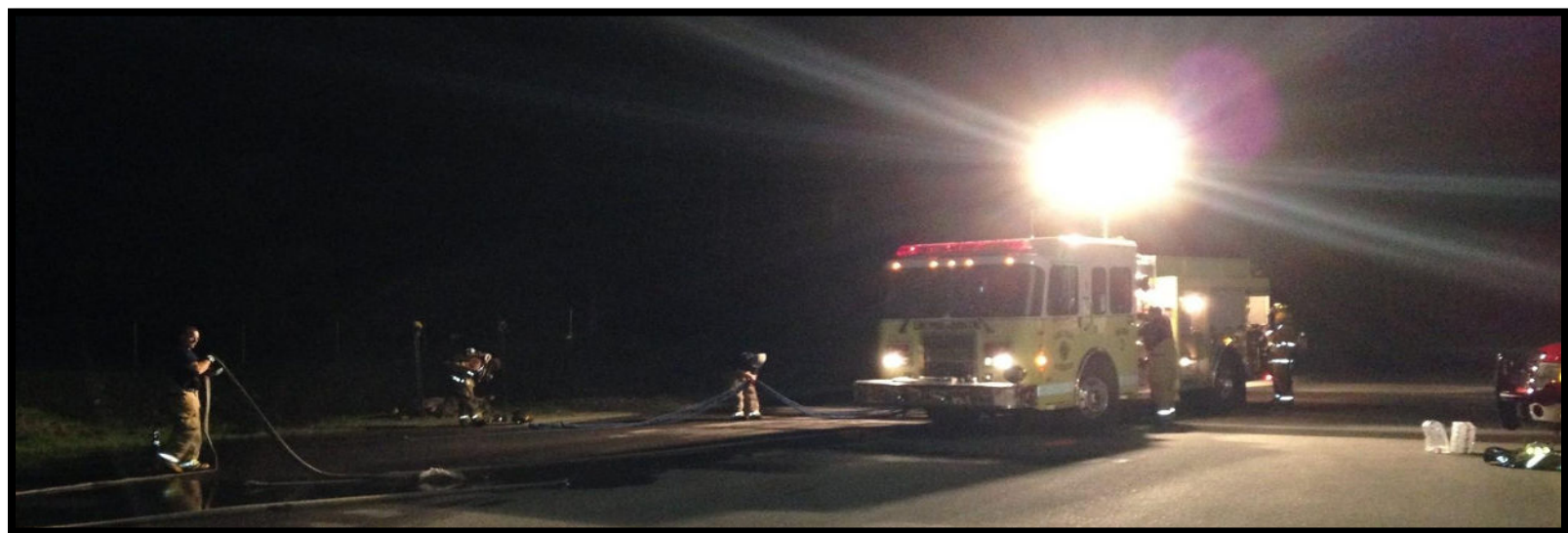


OPPORTUNITIES

- Be a leader in professional development
- Develop regional teams where appropriate (confined space, trench, high angle, water rescue, etc)
- Be an advocate/voice of members with state agencies from MA, ME, and NH (HHS, DOS, FMO, NHFSTEMS)
- Greater EMS footprint
- Provide additional regional training
- Develop own training ground
- Diversify fundraising
- Increase member association awareness
- Partnership enhancement (ME,NH,MA)
- Expand grant opportunities

THREATS

- Drifting from our Mission
- Personnel recruitment and retention (lack of first responders joining)
- District is too NH-centric
- Be too dependent on Grants
- Lack of financial planning
- Under-funding HAZMAT team
- Lack of communication with members (progress, value items)
- Lack of member participation
- Lack of follow-through
- No accountability
- Inconsistent oversight of committees
- Stagnation on committees





Implementing the Vision

Goals and Objectives

In keeping with the mission of the Seacoast Chief Fire Officers Mutual Aid District, realistic goals and objectives had to be established to enhance strengths, address identified weaknesses, provide clear direction, and address the concerns of our members. These goals and objectives will become the focus of the District's efforts, as they will direct the organization to our desired future while reducing obstacles and distractions along the way. The Board of Directors will monitor progress made toward accomplishing these goals and objectives and adjust timelines as the needs of the organization change. Regular reports of progress and changes will be shared with the membership. After conducting a full assessment including input from the membership survey, member discussions at previous meetings, as well as Planning Team work sessions, the Planning Team identified eight (8) primary strategic goals to achieve the District's vision for the future. Each goal area consists of objectives that we will work to achieve prior to the Strategic Plan's conclusion in 2026. While the achievement of these objectives is often intangible, they act as the target for progress as we move into the future.

District Effectiveness

GOAL 1: Enhance overall District efficiency and effectiveness.

OBJECTIVE 1A: Enhance meeting efficiency to ensure member's time is valued.

ACTION ITEMS

- Conduct meetings pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order, when appropriate.
- Establish an agenda that limits meeting duration to two hours or less.



OBJECTIVE 1B: Enhance committee structure to ensure efficiency, improve communication and sustainability.

ACTION ITEMS

- Provide Board direction to all committees and working groups.
- Establish a Board liaison for each committee.
- Establish working groups (as needed) within the committees to share the workload as appropriate.
- Post all committee meetings on the website.
- Ensure each committee provides meeting notes and posts all committee notes on the website for members to review.

OBJECTIVE 1C: Develop new and update existing policies, procedures, and Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG's) to assist District members.

ACTION ITEMS

- Establish a list of needed/desired policies, procedures, and Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG's).
- Develop a plan for prioritizing the rewrite and development of policies, procedures, and SOG's.
- Assign document development to members for draft creation.
- Establish a review and approval process for all new policies, procedures, and SOG's.
- Establish a process to ensure policies, procedures, and SOG'S are reviewed and updated at regular intervals.



OBJECTIVE 1D: Continue to ensure the organization recognizes member's value and needs across all three states.

ACTION ITEMS

- Conduct a study to identify tri-state differences that affect mutual aid responses.
- Identify and list differences that will enhance the mutual aid environment.

OBJECTIVE 1E: Develop, implement, and maintain new member and/or new chief support/orientation program.

ACTION ITEMS

- Develop an information/welcome packet for all new members and/or newly appointed chiefs.
- Schedule a meeting between the new member and District leadership within one (1) month of new appointments.





GOAL 2: Continue to build, strengthen, and maintain strategic connections with state leaders (ME, MA, and NH) and appropriate organizations.

OBJECTIVES 2A: Enhance and expand government partnerships, initiatives, and association influence.

ACTION ITEMS

- Meet with key government officials at least once a year to discuss District activities.
 - Bring all three states' key officials together to create a unified approach to problem-solving.
- Ensure all key officials have up-to-date contact information for District leaders.
- Hold an annual networking meeting (i.e. cookout) where association members and government officials can meet in an informal and friendly setting.
 - Provide speaking points to attending members to strengthen the unified message.
- Meet with officials from all three states to discuss funding opportunities.

GOAL 3: Expand the District's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) footprint to represent the modern fire service and District's community needs

OBJECTIVES 3A: Conduct an EMS needs assessment to identify how the association can add value for members.

ACTION ITEMS

- Develop and conduct a member survey to assess EMS gaps and or needs.
- Establish an EMS calendar of available training to post on the District's website.



GOAL 4: Support District members in safe and efficient Fire Ground Incident management.

OBJECTIVE 4A: Create an environment where the mutual aid agreements are the nucleus of the District.

ACTION ITEMS

- Ensure that up-to-date mutual aid agreements are signed and on file with the District.
- Educate all members as to the benefits and expectations of mutual scene management.
- Develop common operating guidelines for scene management.
- Develop strong accountability standards.
- Educate members on the importance and requirements of the accountability system.

Regional Resources

GOAL 5: Provide specialized regional services to support District members.

OBJECTIVE 5A: Maintain District-wide inventory of specialized resources.

ACTION ITEMS

- Develop and conduct a survey of available resources, including but not limited to, equipment and trained personnel.
- Develop a standardized procedure to access resources.
- Provide training to members to ensure awareness of all available resources.



OBJECTIVE 5B: Identify current gaps and future opportunities to develop and/or support specialized regional teams.

ACTION ITEMS

- Develop and conduct a survey that identifies response gaps that a specialized team could potentially fill.
- Establish a Specialized Team Working Group to:
 - Study the feasibility of specialized teams.
 - Identify key stakeholders and affected organizations.
 - Develop rules, regulations, policies, and procedures to be utilized, should a special response team be feasible.
 - Work with the Finance Committee to develop a funding strategy, as needed.

OBJECTIVE 5C: Continue to support START as a valuable resource.

ACTION ITEMS

- Participate in efforts to identify a long-term funding source.
- Provide awareness overview to all new members and newly appointed chiefs.
- Provide regular START updates to membership.
- Assist START Board in obtaining grants.
- Assist START in the development of a strategic plan.





Training

GOAL 6: Develop, implement, and maintain an innovative, comprehensive training program fostering excellence for all members of the Mutual Aid District.

OBJECTIVE 6A: Develop and maintain a training schedule that provides training at regular intervals.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Provide at least two (2) seminars by nationally recognized speakers annually, at a minimum one to be held in the spring and one in the fall.
- Provide a minimum of three (3) locally instructed programs annually.
- Provide a minimum of four (4) short training sessions prior to a regularly scheduled membership meetings.
- Host or provide at least two (2) Firefighter I Certification programs annually within the District.
- Host or provide at least one (1) Firefighter II Certification program annually within the District.

OBJECTIVE 6B: Provide flexible training opportunities that address the ongoing needs of the membership.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Develop and provide a command training program.
- Develop and/or provide a first-due command training program that incorporates practical training.
- Provide annual leadership training.



OBJECTIVE 6C: Provide training props, and resources that meet the evolving needs of the district.

ACTION ITEMS

- Design, fund, and build training props to support a command training program and the first-due command training program.
- Inventory and assess the condition of the District's audio-visual equipment to ensure it meets the needs of future training programs.
- Establish a tracking control system for all District training equipment.

OBJECTIVE 6D: Provide training facilities/training grounds that meet the evolving needs of the District.

ACTION ITEMS

- Establish a Training Facility/Training Ground Working Group to determine the feasibility and timeline of a SCFOMAD training facility.
- Establish a Training Facility/Training Ground Funding Committee under the Finance Committee to investigate funding opportunities, strategic partnerships. and develop a funding strategy.
- Direct the Training Facility Working Group to suggest potential locations and establish cost estimates.
- Establish a Training Facility Building Committee to manage the establishment of a new training ground and building of a new training facility.

OBJECTIVE 6E: Enhance mutual aid emergency response efficiency through training and exercises

ACTION ITEMS

- Conduct a minimum of one (1) multi-community exercise every 3 years.
- Secure state/federal exercise grants to fund an HSEEP exercise.



Website

GOAL 7: Provide an up-to-date, user-friendly website as a resource for District members

OBJECTIVE 7A: Provide a comprehensive resource for District information

ACTION ITEMS

- Post and maintain up-to-date Bylaws on the website.
- Post and maintain all current Policies, procedures, and SOG's.
- Post and maintain updated:
 - Run cards
 - Member contact information
 - Fire service contact information spanning ME, MA, and NH
- Provide a vehicle for user-friendly program registrations.
- Provide a system for online payments.
- Provide a forum for District-wide information sharing.
- Provide quick access to emergency response District-wide run cards.
- Develop and maintain up-to-date resource list on website.
- Provide resource list access for new members.



Finance

GOAL 8: Effectively manage District resources and plan for long-term sustainability and resiliency.

OBJECTIVE 8A: Develop and maintain a comprehensive Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

ACTION ITEMS

- Inventory all District assets.
- Establish life expectancy of all assets.
- Establish an estimated replacement cost for all assets.
- Layout replacement schedule.

OBJECTIVE 8B: Develop and maintain a fiscally-responsible balanced budget

ACTION ITEMS

- Propose an annual working budget with expenditures not to exceed revenues, to be reviewed and approved by the membership at the annual meeting.
- Establish an annual budget for all committees as appropriate.
- Provide transparency in all District financial activities.
 - Monthly Reports
 - Annual Report
 - Audit Reports



OBJECTIVE 8C: Continue to ensure the District has adequate financial resources to meet the approved goals and objectives

ACTION ITEMS

- Develop a three (3) year funding strategy.
- Diversify fundraising to ensure sustainability.
- Increase fundraising activities to ensure adequate funding for programs.
- Develop a cost/benefit analysis to evaluate securing the services of a grant writer.
- Secure the services of a grant writer if the cost/ benefit analysis indicates a benefit in doing so.

Continuous Progress

The Board of Directors views strategic planning as a continuous process.

To remain relevant, accurate, and actionable, and ensure our Strategic Plan meets the ongoing needs of the District and the membership as a whole, the Plan needs to be consistently reviewed and updated. While the overarching goal areas and strategic objectives remain in place, the Plan will need to be annually refreshed with new initiatives and action items.

An annual Progress Report and an update of the Strategic Plan will be presented to the membership at each annual meeting.

