

# OKOTOKS FIRE & RESCUE

## 2026-2031 Strategic Plan



Okotoks



## Executive Summary

The Okotoks Fire & Rescue (OFR) 2026-2031 Strategic Plan sets a clear path for strengthening emergency services, enhancing community resilience, and preparing the organization for the demands of a steadily growing and increasingly complex municipality. Leveraging extensive analysis, including the Community Risk Assessment, Standards of Cover, Workplace Assessment, internal surveys and community feedback, this plan provides a coordinated, evidence-based approach that aligns with the Town of Okotoks' Corporate Business Plan and long-term planning frameworks.

Over the next six years, OFR will focus on six strategic priorities:

1. Deliver Exceptional Emergency Services,
2. Strengthen Workforce Capacity and Culture,
3. Community Risk Reduction,
4. Infrastructure, Resources and Performance Measures,
5. Foster Robust Partnerships and Regional Collaboration, and
6. Continuous Improvement

Each priority includes clearly defined goals, and objectives, supported by an annual operational planning process that translates strategic direction into actionable, measurable outcomes.

Key initiatives include meeting Council approved staffing and deployment levels, expanding training and prevention programs, upgrading critical infrastructure, advancing accreditation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), and expanding community engagement/feedback. These efforts will help ensure that OFR remains prepared, adaptable, and community focused as service demands increase.

The Strategic Plan serves as both a roadmap and a commitment, to safety, professionalism, accountability, and excellence. Through coordinated planning, transparent performance reporting, and strong partnerships with Town leadership and the community, OFR is positioned to continue delivering trusted, high-quality service today and into the future.

## Approval and Authorization

This Strategic Plan was reviewed and approved by the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town of Okotoks and establishes the organizational direction, priorities, and implementation framework for Okotoks Fire & Rescue for the 2026 - 2031 planning period.

Approval of this Strategic Plan confirms alignment with municipal priorities and authorizes Okotoks Fire & Rescue to proceed with plan implementation, performance monitoring, and reporting.

Approved by:



**Elaine Vincent**

Chief Administrative Officer  
Town of Okotoks

13 April 2026

## Message from the Fire Chief

It is my privilege to introduce the OFR 2026–2031 Strategic Plan. This plan reflects our commitment to delivering safe, effective, and accountable fire and rescue services as our community continues to grow and change. It builds on the progress we have made over the past several years such as strengthening our culture, enhancing mental health supports, modernizing equipment, and grounding our decisions in data and risk-based planning.

Looking ahead, this plan outlines clear priorities to enhance emergency response, invest in our people, expand community risk reduction, and strengthen regional collaboration. It also guides our path toward CFAI accreditation, reinforcing our commitment to data-informed decisions and continuous improvement. These efforts ensure we remain ready, resilient, and responsive to the needs of the community we proudly serve.

I am grateful for the dedication of our staff and the support of Council, Town leadership, and our residents. Together, we will continue advancing our mission of keeping our community safe.

### **Trevor Brice**

Fire Chief and Director of Emergency Management  
Okotoks Fire & Rescue

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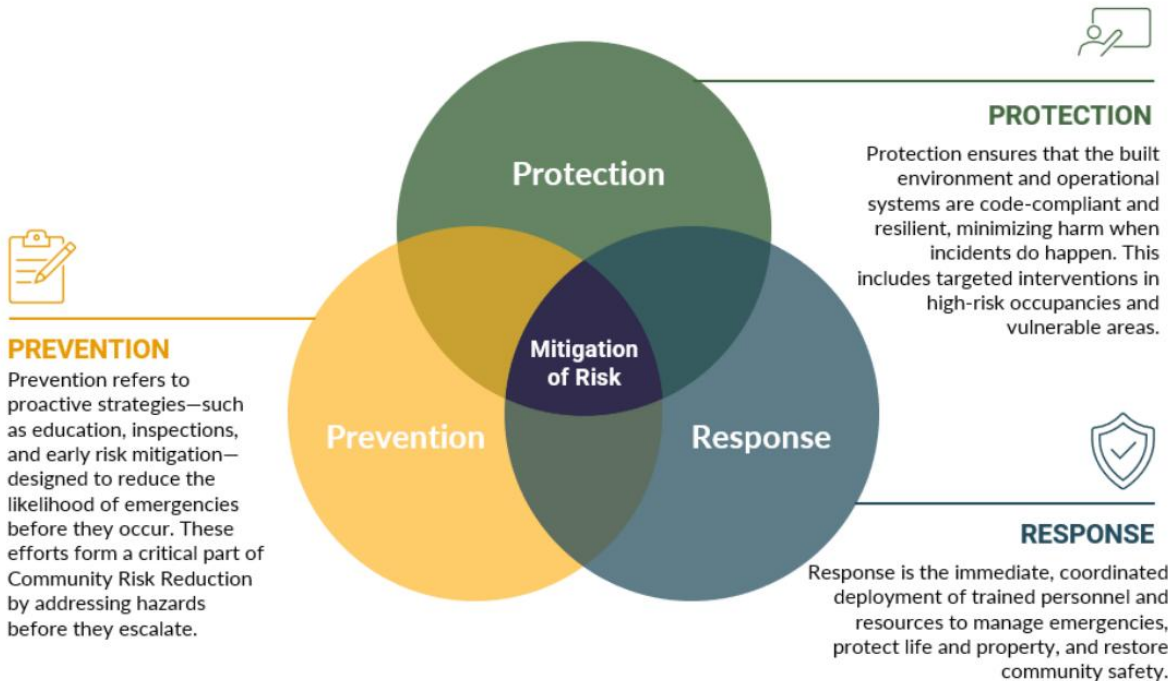
## Introduction

OFR's 2026-2031 Strategic Plan sets a clear direction for how the department will continue to protect, serve, and support a rapidly growing and evolving community. Grounded in ongoing risk assessments, organizational reviews, workplace evaluations, and extensive engagement, this plan builds on the progress made between 2020 and 2025 and positions OFR to meet emerging risks with professionalism, innovation, and accountability

This plan aligns closely with the Town of Okotoks' Corporate Business Plan and Municipal Development Plan, ensuring that fire and emergency services planning is fully integrated with the Town's growth, infrastructure, and community priorities. It also supports OFR's ongoing efforts toward CFAI accreditation, a commitment to excellence that reinforces transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous improvement.

## Services Provided for the Community

OFR delivers a comprehensive range of emergency response, prevention, and public education services designed to protect life, property, and the environment. Through a balanced approach that emphasizes community risk reduction, operational readiness, and continuous improvement, OFR serves as a critical component of the Town's public safety framework.



OFR's services are provided by a team of trained firefighters, officers, and support staff who are committed to excellence in service delivery and to upholding the department's mission and values. The following programs represent the key functions through which OFR supports the community:

### **1. Emergency Response Services**

- Fire Suppression: Structural, vehicle, and outdoor fires.
- Emergency Medical Response (First Responder): All firefighters trained to the Primary Care Paramedic (PCP) level, responding to medical and trauma emergencies in coordination with AHS EMS.
- Technical Rescue Operations:
  - Motor Vehicle Extrication
  - Rope / Low Angle Rescue
  - Water and Ice Rescue
  - Confined Space Rescue
- Hazardous Materials Response: Awareness and Operations-level HazMat response for aerosol, water and ground-based incidents.
- Wildland/Urban Interface Firefighting: Suppression and mitigation of grass, brush, and interface fires.

### **2. Community Risk Reduction Programs**

- Fire Inspections and Code Enforcement: Inspection of commercial, industrial, and multi-family occupancies for Fire Code compliance.
- Fire Investigations: Determining origin and cause for non-incendiary fires
- Public Education and Awareness Campaigns:
  - Fire prevention week activities
  - Smoke and CO alarm awareness
  - Fire extinguisher training (community and business groups)
- Community Risk Assessment: Ongoing evaluation of local hazards, , and demographic changes.
- Targeted Risk Reduction Initiatives: Focused on vulnerable populations (seniors, schools, multifamily housing, etc.).

### **3. Training and Professional Development**

- Recruit and Probationary Training Programs
- Career Firefighter Training and Skills Maintenance
- Officer Development and Leadership Programs
- Live Fire, Technical Rescue, and EMS Continuing Education
- Joint Training with Mutual Aid Partners

#### 4. Emergency Management and Preparedness

- Municipal Emergency Management Support
- Disaster Response and Recovery Planning
- Community Preparedness Education (e.g., Ready Okotoks programs, business continuity support).
- Incident Command System (ICS) participation and training.
- Emergency Social Services (ESS)
- All Hazards Incident Management Training (AHIMT)

#### 5. Community Engagement and Public Support

- Community Events and Outreach: Station tours, open houses, parades, and school visits.
- Youth Engagement: Firefighter for a Day, preschool, elementary and high school programs, and.
- Public Information during Emergencies: Real-time updates via media and social channels.
- Community Connect platform for residents and business owners.



#### 6. Administration and Support Services

- Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement (including CFAI Accreditation process).
- Asset and Equipment Management (fleet, facilities, PPE, and technology).
- Data Analytics and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) for performance tracking.
- Mutual Aid and Regional Collaboration: Partnership with Foothills County, High River, Diamond Valley and Calgary for shared response.

## Strategic Planning Process

This plan is grounded in a collaborative and evidence-informed approach from both internal and external interested parties. Internally, it draws on recommendations from the 2023 Fire Master Plan, the 2023 Workplace Assessment, and input gathered from internal staff, Town leadership, and Council. OFR staff are canvassed for feedback regularly with one-on-one meetings and weekly Fire Chief meetings with on-duty crews.

This plan is closely aligned with the Town of Okotoks' broader strategic frameworks, including the 2025–2028 Corporate Business Plan, the Municipal Development Plan (MDP), various Area Structure Plans, the 2025 Growth Strategy and long-range capital planning cycles. Together, these documents guide municipal services, land use, infrastructure, and community development, thereby ensuring that OFR's priorities reflect both operational needs and Council's long-term vision.

OFR also values strong relationships with residents of Okotoks. Through open houses, school visits, community events, social media and public demonstrations, firefighters help build awareness and trust while encouraging residents to take an active role in safety. Members of the public provided regular feedback via the Community Priorities Surveys that have been conducted regularly since 2020.

This integrated approach positions OFR to adapt to future challenges, allocate resources effectively, and enhance the delivery of fire and emergency services that matter to the residents of Okotoks.

## Community Feedback

Understanding community expectations is vital to ensuring that OFR continues to provide the right level of service for a growing and evolving town. Regular community engagement, through surveys, open houses, and ongoing dialogue, provides valuable insight into how residents perceive the department's performance, the importance of its services, and areas for future focus.

### Community Priorities Survey (2025)

The 2025 *Community Priorities Survey* engaged 1,213 residents - a 72.6% increase in participation over 2022 - reflecting strong public interest in shaping the Town's future. Overall, 99% of residents rated their quality of life in Okotoks as good or better, far exceeding the provincial benchmark of 82%.

When asked how well Town services meet their needs, 83% of residents reported that Fire & Rescue services fully or mostly meet their needs, ranking OFR among the highest-performing and most trusted municipal services.

In a key driver analysis, Fire & Rescue was identified as a "moderate-impact, high-performing service" - meaning it plays a meaningful role in residents' quality of life and is performing at a level that meets or exceeds expectations.

Residents consistently express confidence in OFR's ability to deliver reliable, professional, and responsive emergency services. Broader feedback emphasized the importance of maintaining service levels as Okotoks grows, alongside strong communication and transparency about how emergency response evolves with the community.

### **Budget Engagement Surveys (2022–2025)**

Public input through the Town's budget engagement process reinforces the community's trust in OFR and satisfaction with current service levels.

- **2025 Budget Survey:** Conducted in May–June 2024, this survey received 925 responses - a 62% increase over 2021. Fire & Rescue ranked as the top service residents want to maintain, with 81% supporting current service levels.
- **2022–2025 Budget Survey:** Conducted during the first term of the previous Council, this survey found that 96% of residents considered fire services important and 76% were satisfied or very satisfied with the department's performance. Only 1.7% expressed dissatisfaction.

Together, these results confirm broad public confidence in OFR's service delivery and recognition of its essential role in community safety.

### **Citizen Satisfaction Survey (2022)**

The 2022 *Citizen Satisfaction Survey* conducted by Pivotal Research found that 93% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with fire services — among the highest-rated departments in the Town. This long-term trend highlights consistent public trust and reinforces the department's reputation for excellence.

### **Community Outreach and Engagement**

Beyond formal surveys, OFR engages directly with the public through annual events and educational initiatives such as:

- **Fire Prevention Week** – Station open houses, school visits, and safety demonstrations.
- **Emergency Preparedness Week** – Public displays and preparedness resources to help residents plan for emergencies.
- **School programs and local events** – Presentations, community displays, and social media safety campaigns that encourage fire prevention and awareness.

These efforts help strengthen the department's connection with residents and promote a culture of safety and preparedness throughout the community.

Across multiple years of engagement and thousands of resident responses, the message is clear: Okotoks residents have exceptional trust and satisfaction in the town’s fire and rescue services.

<b>Engagement Source</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Satisfaction/Key Findings</b>
Community Priorities Survey	2025	83% say Fire & Rescue services “fully or mostly meet their needs”
Budget Engagement Survey	2025	81% support maintaining current Fire & Rescue service levels
Budget Engagement Survey	2022-2025	96% rate Fire Services important; 76% satisfied
Citizen Satisfaction Survey	2022	93% satisfied or very satisfied
Community Outreach	Ongoing	Annual Fire Prevention & Emergency Preparedness events

Key insights include:

- Sustained satisfaction: Between 81% and 93% of residents report being satisfied with OFR.
- High importance: Fire services are viewed as essential to safety and quality of life.
- Stable expectations: Most residents support maintaining current service levels.
- Community connection: Ongoing education and visibility strengthen trust and awareness.

As Okotoks continues to grow, OFR remains committed to maintaining these strong relationships through transparent communication, continuous improvement, and proactive engagement that ensures the department continues to meet and exceed the expectations of the community it serves.

**Planning Assumptions**

The following planning assumptions were made in the development of the OFR Strategic Plan (2026-2031):

- Community growth is expected to move to 3-4% per year – up from an average of 1.4% (2015-2024).
- Funding levels will remain consistent with historical trends.
- Technological advancements will be integrated into operational practices.
- Staffing levels will be increased to meet projected service demands.
- Inflation rate of 2.5%.

## Shared Vision and Guiding Values

This 2026–2031 Strategic Plan aligns closely with the Town of Okotoks’ Mission, Vision, and Values. At the heart of both our past achievements and our future direction are the core principles that guide everything we do.

### Town of Okotoks Vision, Mission and Values

**Responsibly Managed Growth**  
*We have flourishing spaces for all*

- › Improve diverse housing options for individuals and families
- › Achieve a supplemental water supply
- › Review additional revenue generation opportunities to meet the needs of a growing community

**Strong Local Economy**  
*We are the easiest place to do business in Alberta*

- › Focus on arts and culture as economic drivers
- › Enhance the diversification of the tax base
- › Review and update processes that may be barriers to businesses choosing Okotoks
- › Develop downtown to attract new business

**Enhanced Culture & Community Health**  
*We are ready to welcome everyone*

- › Enhance community dialogue and engagement with residents and organizations
- › Take meaningful steps to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action
- › Increase sport and recreational opportunities
- › Provide timely access to relevant programs and services that support health and well-being

**Demonstrated Environmental Leadership**  
*We do things differently to thrive tomorrow*

Work towards achieving Municipal Development and Climate Action Plan targets for:

- › Climate Change Resilience
- › Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- › Water Conservation
- › Energy Efficiency
- › Land and Biodiversity

**Organizational Excellence**  
*We lead with passion and are focused on multidisciplinary collaboration, fostering creativity and innovation, allowing us to be agile and creative in serving our vibrant Town*

- › Become the Employer of Choice
- › Operationalize Asset Management
- › Create a technology roadmap to advance access to data and information, improve client experience and decision-making

**VALUES**

- A Citizen Focus
- A Committed Town Team
- A Regional Focus
- Partnering for Success
- Transparency & Accountability
- Financial Responsibility
- Excellence and Prosperity
- Respect for the Planet
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusiveness and Accessibility

**Town Vision:** A vibrant, resilient, and connected community that fosters the wellbeing of land and people; a community to call home

**Town Mission:** The Town of Okotoks strives to create and nurture an environment in which people are able to pursue the fulfillment of their values, in harmony with the community

### Town Values

- A Citizen Focus
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- A Regional Focus
- Partnering for Success
- Transparency & Accountability
- Financial Responsibility
- Excellence and Prosperity
- Respect for the Planet
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusiveness and Accessibility

## OFR

Our Vision, Mission, and Values reflect the identity of OFR; who we are, what we stand for, and how we serve our community. These principles have shaped our progress over the past five years and continue to drive our strategic priorities as we plan for the future. They ensure that our efforts support not only a safer community but also the Town's broader goals of sustainability, collaboration, and excellence in public service.

**Vision:** Protect, serve and keep our community safe through prevention, protection and response with a dedicated, professional and highly trained team.

**Mission:** Keeping our community safe.

### Values

1. **Safety** – I will protect myself and others from danger.
2. **Professionalism** – I will be professional in my duties, appearance and attitude.
3. **Integrity** – I will act with honesty, honour and truthfulness.
4. **Accountability** – I will own my actions and decisions.
5. **Teamwork** – We are one team.
6. **Excellence** – We strive to provide outstanding service.



Together, the Town's and OFR's vision, mission, and values form the common foundation that anchors this strategic plan. They articulate not only who we are as a service, but the principles that shape every decision, action, and interaction - both within the department and throughout the community we serve. As OFR continues to evolve to meet growing demands and emerging risks, these guiding statements provide clarity of purpose and a shared sense of direction. They ensure our commitment to safety, professionalism, integrity, teamwork, and excellence remains at the centre of how we protect, support, and serve the people of Okotoks today and into the future.

## Planning for 2026 - 2031

This section outlines the strategic foundation for OFR's 2026–2031 planning cycle. The SWOT and gap analysis presented here are rooted in evidence drawn from both internal and external inputs. Internally, the department undertook a comprehensive Workplace Assessment in 2023, engaging staff at all levels through structured interviews and an in-depth review of organizational culture. Externally, the Town of Okotoks' 2025 Community Priorities Survey provided insights into resident expectations for emergency

services, while alignment was maintained with municipal frameworks such as the Municipal Development Plan and Corporate Business Plan.

<b>Internal Inputs</b>	<b>External Inputs</b>
2023 Workplace Assessment	2025 Community Priorities Survey
Staff interviews and regular feedback	Municipal Development Plan (MDP)
OFR performance and response data	Town of Okotoks Corporate Business Plan
Internal planning workshops	Community Risk Assessment & Master Plan
2025 Standards of Cover	

Together, these inputs informed a realistic yet forward-looking assessment of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; setting the stage for targeted actions that will guide our service delivery, workforce development, and community risk reduction efforts over the next six years.

## SWOC Analysis

To support informed strategic planning, OFR conducted a comprehensive SWOC analysis to assess the department’s internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as the external opportunities and threats that influence its performance. The resulting insights provide a balanced view of where the department currently excels, where challenges persist, and where targeted action will yield the greatest operational and organizational benefit.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Improving leadership culture	System and procedures - SOPs/SOGs in development
High staff engagement and mental health support programs (e.g., BOS, Wayfound, Peer On-Call App)	Meeting the Council-approved service level – capacity, station location, traffic light pre-emption.
Master Plan and comprehensive Community Risk Assessment/Standards of Cover completed	Dispatch inefficiencies, inconsistent communication and dispatching stations not apparatus
Strong municipal support and alignment with Town’s Corporate Plan	Inconsistent code enforcement
Strong background of community support	Isolation from other municipal business centres’ decisions that influence community safety
Equipment and apparatus suitable for program delivery	Capacity to support the development of OFR and its staff – training and community safety
Investment in data integrity	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
CFAI accreditation and continuous improvement process	Population growth, increased traffic volume, higher density residential developments and increase in commercial/industrial units which all lead to an increased number of incidents and higher complexity incidents
NG911 and dispatch modernization	Wildland-urban interface (WUI) and flood risks
Leveraging technology such as AI and traffic light preemption	Changing culture in society and OFR to ‘Me First’
Utilizing other municipal resources	Workforce and labour cost variability may impact long-term planning and deployment
Enhanced community education	Water supply constraints and aging infrastructure
Community engagement and surveys for feedback on service delivery expectations	Legal and reputational risks from SOP gaps
Regional collaboration and mutual aid optimization	Provincial and federal removal of grant funding and changing regulations
Data-driven performance dashboards and KPI tracking	

## Gap Analysis

Building on the SWOC findings, and to support strategic planning and evidence-based decision-making, OFR conducted a thorough gap analysis to identify areas where current operations fall short of community expectations, industry standards, or internal goals. This analysis was grounded in the findings of the 2023 Workplace Assessment, the 2025 Standards of Cover/Community Risk Assessment, and operational data tracked through OFR’s internal reporting systems.

Key service areas, including staffing, training, procedural consistency, dispatch performance, and community risk management, were evaluated against benchmarks such as industry best practices, internal performance data, and Council-approved service levels.

For example, in June 2025, Council approved the establishment of an Effective Response Force (ERF) based on Moderate Structure Fire which requires 12 firefighters on scene at such events. However, OFR currently maintains 10 on-duty personnel per shift and call in overtime when below 6 staff.

Similarly, dispatch metrics show inconsistent alarm handling and chute times due to the absence of formal KPIs with Foothills 9-1-1. Additionally, specialist training and fire prevention resources are needed to keep up with the needs of a growing community and staff development.

The actions outlined in the following table are targeted interventions aimed at closing these critical gaps during the 2026–2031 planning horizon, enhancing reliability, firefighter safety, and risk reduction across the community.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Gap</b>	<b>Action</b>
Staffing	Unable to assemble the required number of staff to complete the ERF within 15 minutes	Increase to 15 firefighters per platoon by 2031
Fire Stations	Ability to meet service level and ERF within an expanding community	Investigate optimal locations for additional fire halls based on forecasting model
Training	No dedicated staff	Hire Training staff and enhance structured calendar
Meeting Approved Service Level Benchmarks	Dispatch: Reduce alarm handling OFR: Chute time and travel time	Transition to closest apparatus dispatch Traffic light pre-emption
Fire Prevention	Limited capacity	Establish specialist positions for Community Safety

## Strategic Priorities

The strategic priorities outlined below reflect the key themes that emerged from OFR's internal assessments, external stakeholder input, and operational performance review.

These six priorities represent the most critical areas for investment and improvement over the next six years:

1. Deliver Exceptional Emergency Services,
2. Strengthen Workforce Capacity and Culture,
3. Community Risk Reduction,
4. Infrastructure, Resources and Performance Measures
5. Foster Robust Partnerships and Regional Collaboration, and
6. Continuous Improvement

Each priority includes clear objectives to ensure progress is measurable, transparent, and aligned with community needs and Council direction.



### Priority 1: Deliver Exceptional Emergency Services

As the Town of Okotoks continues to grow in population, complexity, and risk, the ability of OFR to provide timely, effective emergency response must evolve in step. This priority focuses on strengthening core operations - ensuring adequate resources (staffing and equipment), clear procedures, efficient dispatch, and enhanced specialty capabilities to meet the increase in service demands and community expectations.

Goal 1A	Continue striving to meet our Council-approved service level	Planned Start	Expected Duration
Objectives	<i>To ensure timely and effective emergency response, OFR will institute changes to meet the service level more often.</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track when ERF of 12 firefighters is achieved on moderate structure fire incidents. Interim measure for ERF assembly is 15 minutes in 2026 moving to 12 minutes in 2031 while we bring on additional staff.</li> </ul>	Q1 2027	180 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce chute times based on current information</li> </ul>	Q1 2026	180 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce travel times while maintaining safe response</li> </ul>	Q4 2026	180 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update dispatch protocol to ensure deployment of resources is based on risk and closest unit</li> </ul>	Q3 2026	180 days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand full-time operational staffing to meet SOC ERF standards. Add one firefighter per platoon per year from 2027 to 2031 for a total of 20 FTEs.</li> </ul>	2027 – 4 FTE 2028 – 4 FTE 2029 – 4 FTE 2030 – 4 FTE 2031 – 4 FTE	180 days 180 days 180 days 180 days 180 days	
Resources	Traffic light preemption system, NFPA, Council funding for FTEs		
Lead	Fire Chief		
Key Personnel	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery Deputy Chief – Service Support		

<b>Goal 1B</b>	<b>Monitor medical incident responses</b>	<b>Planned Start</b>	<b>Expected Duration</b>
	<i>OFR will continue to provide and enhance the medical capabilities provided to the community in partnership with Alberta Health Services (AHS).</i>		
Objectives	• Track number of incidents where OFR provides first arrival medical services	Q1 2026	Completed
	• Track moderate and severe medical responses (Delta/Echo/Multi patient)	Q4 2026	90 days
	• Create an internal Medical Committee	Q2 2026	90 days
	• Develop a system to ensure all FTEs maintain PCP certification registered with ACOP.	Q1 2026	90 days
	• Formalize the process to maintain status as a Medical First Response provider	Q1 2026	90 days
Resources	Darkhorse Analytics, Alberta College of Paramedics, Alberta MFR program		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Support		
Key Personnel	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery		

<b>Goal 1C</b>	<b>Enhance special operations response capabilities</b>	<b>Planned Start</b>	<b>Expected Duration</b>
	<i>Expand specialty training in areas such as wildland-urban interface (WUI), water, MVC and ice rescue will ensure the department is equipped to manage evolving community risks.</i>		
Objectives	• Formalize internal special response teams with terms of reference, training schedules, meeting schedule		
	• Water/Ice Rescue	Q1 2027	90 days
	• Hazmat	Q3 2028	90 days
	• MVC	Q4 2026	90 days
	• Trapped/Slope	Q2 2029	90 days
Resources	Budget, trained instructors		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery		
Key Personnel	Deputy Chief – Service Support		

Goal 1D	Finalize SOPs/SOGs	Planned Start	Expected Duration
	<i>Formalizing and enforcing SOPs/SOGs will improve consistency, accountability, and operational safety.</i>		
Objectives	• Complete remainder of SOGs for FC and CAO approval	Q1 2026	180 days
	• All staff to review and sign off on current SOPs	Q3 2026	90 days
	• Design a process to annually review SOGs	Q1 2027	90 days
Resources	Teams Channel/List		
Lead	Fire Chief		
Key Personnel	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery Special Assignment Captain		

Goal 1E	Measure and Monitor Dispatch Capabilities and Performance Measures	Planned Start	Expected Duration
	<i>By tracking key performance indicators, OFR aims to reduce response times and improve situational awareness from the moment a call is received.</i>		
Objectives	• Establish current and future needs for dispatch	Q2 2026	90 days
	• Monitor results and provide regular feedback to Foothills Regional 9-1-1	Q2 2026	90 days
	• Determine OFR needs and best means to achieve outcomes	Q2 2026	180 days
Resources	Foothills Regional 9-1-1, OME		
Lead	Fire Chief		
Key Personnel	Deputy Chief – Service Support Project Specialist		

Goal 1F	Refine Training Program	Planned Start	Expected Duration
Objectives	• Establish system to communicate Department training priorities	Q2 2026	90 days
	• Work with regional partners and outside agencies for additional training opportunities	Q1 2027	180 days
Resources	First Due		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery		
Key Personnel	Captains		



## Priority 2: Strengthen Workforce Capacity and Culture

OFR’s ability to deliver high-quality service depends on a supported, skilled, and engaged workforce. This priority invests in the people behind the service—ensuring that members have the tools, training, leadership, and wellness support needed to thrive in a demanding environment. A strong internal culture also reinforces accountability, professional development, and alignment with the department’s values.

Goal 2A	Establish Training, Staff and Community Safety Officers Positions	Planned Start	Expected Duration
	<i>Creating dedicated roles for training, community risk reduction and staff officer will improve skill development, meet code adherence, and expand OFR’s capacity to engage in public education and fire safety initiatives.</i>		
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build business cases to address personnel gaps in Fire Leadership team due to the increased workload and growth. To be integrated into the Town’s operating budget process.</li> </ul>	Q1 2028	90 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Officer</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Safety staff</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training staff</li> </ul>		
Resources	Council-approved Funding		
Lead	Fire Chief		
Key Personnel	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery		

Goal 2B	Enhance the OFR Wellness Program	Planned Start	Expected Duration
	<i>OFR will continue to prioritize the mental health and well-being of staff by expanding wellness resources, and proactive engagement strategies.</i>		
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore additional health benefits for first responders</li> </ul>	Q4 2027	180 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalize process for exposure tracking in First Due</li> </ul>	Q4 2026	90 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce Blue Card incident debrief system</li> </ul>	Q3 2026	90 days
Resources	Blue Card, First Due		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Support		
Key Personnel	OFR OHSW Committee Town of Okotoks OHS Committee		

<b>Goal 2C</b>	<b>Reinforce Accountability</b> <i>Embedding Just Culture principles across the organization will promote fairness, learning, and responsibility while supporting a positive, safety-focused work environment.</i>	<b>Planned Start</b>	<b>Expected Duration</b>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement SOG adherence using the Just Culture algorithm</li> </ul>	Q4 2026	180 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design reports to track metrics e.g. inspections, pre-plans completed, etc.</li> </ul>	Q2 2026	180 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Deputy Chiefs office time at station #2</li> </ul>	Q1 2026	Completed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share Town goals and learning objectives structure with operational crews and how they support it</li> </ul>	Q1 2026	90 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalize probation and performance documentation process</li> </ul>	Q3 2026	90 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop awareness of generational differences and communication styles and evaluate methods to create access and then follow up for accountability.</li> </ul>	Q1 2028	90 days
Resources	Survey, training course, Human Resources		
Lead	Fire Chief		
Key Personnel	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery Deputy Chief – Service Support Captains		

<b>Goal 2D</b>	<b>Maximize Professional Development Opportunities</b>	<b>Planned Start</b>	<b>Expected Duration</b>
	<i>Investigate strategies to encourage, support and promote ongoing growth and development of all personnel.</i>		
Objectives	• Create a mentoring program to expose staff to all facets of the fire service and enhance skill development.	Q1 2027	180 days
	• Create a process where the Town of Okotoks professional development aligns with the OFR internal goal setting and professional development reviews.	Q1 2027	180 days
	• Implement a department-wide foundational core competency training program for all personnel in all ranks.	Q1 2029	180 days
Resources	NFPA 1041, 1021, 1051, 1031, 1033, HR, IT		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery		
Key Personnel	Chief Officers		

<b>Goal 2E</b>	<b>Develop Roadmap for Succession Planning</b>	<b>Planned Start</b>	<b>Expected Duration</b>
	<i>Develop a formal succession planning framework to ensure leadership continuity and internal talent development.</i>		
Objectives	• Ensure continuity roadmap for specialty team leadership	Q2 2026	180 days
	• Identify and address roadblocks to succession planning for personnel moving from the ‘floor’ into specialist and Chief Officer positions.	Q3 2027	180 days
	• Explore additional staffing opportunities	Q1 2028	90 days
Resources	Survey, NFPA 1006		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery		
Key Personnel	Chief Officers		



### Priority 3: Community Risk Reduction (Reduced Risk for a Healthier and Safer Community)

OFR recognizes that a safer Okotoks starts with prevention, education, and proactive risk mitigation. This priority supports community resilience by increasing public safety outreach, contributing to fire-safe development, and standardizing code compliance. These efforts empower residents, reduce incident severity, and align with the Town’s broader planning goals.

Goal 3A	Enhance Public Education (Prevention)	Planned Start	Expected Duration
Objectives	<i>Through school visits, public events, home safety inspections and community engagement with the Community Connect platform, OFR will increase community awareness and engagement in fire prevention and life safety practices.</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an annual plan to use social media platforms to share fire safety tips, updates on community events and benefits of the Community Connect platform.</li> </ul>	Q1 2026	2026 plan completed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen relationships with local schools to provide students with impactful public education initiatives.</li> </ul>	Q1 2027	180 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen relationships with local schools’ maintenance staff to ensure ongoing compliance with fire code.</li> </ul>	Q1 2027	180 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design a process to share resources available after an emergency e.g. Salvation Army</li> </ul>	Q1 2028	180 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze public education efforts to evaluate effectiveness in improving outcomes in community public safety</li> </ul>	Q1 2027	180 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with Okotoks Family Resource Centre to create a plan to support underrepresented populations</li> </ul>	Q4 2026	180 days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an annual plan for monthly radio interviews/public service announcements or newspaper ads</li> </ul>	Q1 2026	90 days	
Resources	CEMP, Community Engagement		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Support		
Key Personnel	Administrative Support		

<b>Goal 3B</b>	<b>Review Community Risk Assessment (Prevention)</b>	<b>Planned Start</b>	<b>Expected Duration</b>
	<i>Greater integration into the Town's development review processes will allow OFR to proactively identify risks, enforce code compliance, and support fire-safe growth.</i>		
Objectives	• Integrate more closely into Town Planning + Development activities	Q1 2026	180 days
	• Refine OFR portion of business compliance process initiated in Jan 2025	Q2 2026	180 days
	• Influence development of corporate risk program and OFR's compliance	Q1 2027	180 days
Resources	Cityworks		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery		
Key Personnel	Manager, Planning Services Administrative Support Project Specialist Corporate Analyst		

<b>Goal 3C</b>	<b>Identify Safety Standards and Code Enforcement Activities to Address Risks (Protection)</b>	<b>Planned Start</b>	<b>Expected Duration</b>
	<i>A comprehensive program for proactive fire safety inspections for residential, commercial, and public buildings will ensure compliance with fire prevention codes, identify fire hazards, and encourage timely maintenance and repairs to non-compliant issues.</i>		
Objectives	• Expand pre-planned occupancies to include all class A, B, F, multi residential, 'big box' and valued properties	Q1 2028	180 days
	• Expand pre-planned occupancies to include all class D and E properties	Q4 2028	180 days
	• Require businesses, home-based and storefront, to register for the Community Connect/High Hazard program	Q1 2027	180 days
Resources	First Due		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery		
Key Personnel	SCOs and Crews Project Specialist		



#### Priority 4: Infrastructure, Resources and Performance Measures

Focus on infrastructure, capital planning, asset lifecycle management, and internal data systems to support sustainable growth and readiness.

As regional demands and expectations increase, OFR must continue to plan strategically for future infrastructure. This priority positions the department for long-term sustainability, accreditation, asset tracking, and forward-looking facility and equipment planning.

Goal 4A	Leverage Data and Performance Dashboards	Planned Start	Expected Duration
	<i>Expanding the use of real-time performance dashboards (Darkhorse Emergency) and structured reporting will support transparency, decision-making, and continuous improvement.</i>		
Objectives	• Tailor Darkhorse to changing annual reporting needs	Q1 2026	90 days
	• Create internal dashboards to display the key stats – one for shifts and one for fire leadership team	Q3 2026	90 days
	• Create annual reports for Council	Q1 2026	Once per yr
	• Develop a report for department pages and callbacks and who attends	Q3 2026	90 days
	• Move to reports to focus on Outcomes not just Outputs	Q1 2027	180 days
Resources	Darkhorse Analytics		
Lead	Project Specialist		
Key Personnel	Corporate Analyst		

Goal 4B	Plan for Future Response Locations and Apparatus	Planned Start	Expected Duration
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs Identification: Initiated through risk assessment and service demand forecasting, this phase confirms the necessity of a new station based on community growth and deployment gaps.</li> </ul>	Q1 2027	90 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain Council capital budget approval for new fire station</li> </ul>	Q2 2027	90 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site Evaluation and Feasibility: Potential locations are assessed for operational viability, access, and alignment with municipal planning frameworks.</li> </ul>	Q3 2027	90 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and Planning: This phase includes architectural design, functional layout, and integration of staffing and apparatus needs.</li> </ul>	Q1 2028	365 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction and Implementation: Physical development of the station and onboarding of personnel and equipment.</li> </ul>	Q1 2030	365 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post-Implementation Review: Evaluation of the station's performance against intended service outcomes, including response time improvements and ERF capability.</li> </ul>	Q1 2032	90 days
Resources	Darkhorse Analytics, Architect, Council budget approvals		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Support		
Key Personnel	CAO Chief Officers Project Specialist		

Goal 4C	<b>Implement Asset Management System</b> <i>Support accurate lifecycle forecasting, replacement planning, and capital investment decisions.</i>	Planned Start	Expected Duration
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the First Due platform to record, track, and maintain fire service apparatus, equipment, and infrastructure</li> </ul>	Q1 2027	Ongoing
Resources	First Due, Dynamics		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Support		
Key Personnel	Project Specialist Equipment Committee Town of Okotoks Asset Managers		



### Priority 5: Foster Robust Partnerships and Regional Collaboration

As the town of Okotoks continues to grow, collaboration beyond municipal boundaries becomes increasingly important. This priority focuses on enhancing external relationships that support service continuity, shared emergency readiness, and transparent communication. By reviewing mutual and automatic aid agreements, strengthening regional planning efforts, and improving access to public-facing performance data, OFR will continue to build trust, enhance service effectiveness, and contribute to a more resilient region

Goal 5A	Update mutual and automatic aid agreements	Planned Start	Expected Duration
	<i>Strengthening and updating mutual aid and automatic aid agreements will enhance regional collaboration and improve response capacity across municipal boundaries.</i>		
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jointly review agreements with participating agencies</li> </ul>	Q1 2026	180 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diamond Valley</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High River</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foothills</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Southern Alberta Fire Departments</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a process to annually review and revise mutual and automatic aid agreements</li> </ul>	Q1 2027	90 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Central Emergency Management Agency review</li> </ul>	Q2 2026	180 days
Resources			
Lead	Fire Chief		
Key Personnel	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery Disaster & Emergency Management Technician		

Goal 5B	Collaborating on Regional Emergency Readiness	Planned Start	Expected Duration
Objectives	<p><i>Joint planning and interagency training exercises will improve regional preparedness and alignment during large-scale or cross-jurisdictional emergencies.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration and capacity of All Hazards Incident Management Team</li> <li>• Tabletop and full exercise for train derailment with regional agencies</li> <li>• Coordinated training with regional agencies – ICS courses.</li> <li>• Coordination and training with private sector interested parties.</li> </ul>	Q1 2026	180 days
Resources	Consultant to build both train derailment exercises – covered by Emergency Management Preparedness Grant		
Lead	Fire Chief		
Key Personnel	Disaster & Emergency Management Technician		

<b>Goal 5C</b>	<b>Strengthen Community Engagement and Public Accountability</b>	<b>Planned Start</b>	<b>Expected Duration</b>
	<i>Enhance how OFR communicates with the public, gathers feedback, and shares performance data. This includes expanding stakeholder outreach, building awareness of services, and creating mechanisms for transparency and public trust such as surveys, and educational campaigns,</i>		
Objectives	• Conduct community survey re: expectations of fire services	Q1 2030	90 days
	• Discuss plan to share incident/performance information on website	Q4 2030	90 days
	• Conduct face-to-face meetings with community stakeholders re: expectations of fire services	Q2 2030	180 days
	• Refine OFR’s contributions to Town of Okotoks community events such as Light Up, parade, Show & Shine, etc.	Q2 2026	180 days
Resources	First Due, Community Connect platform		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Support		
Key Personnel	Manager, Community Engagement Administrative Support Project Specialist		

<b>Goal 5D</b>	<b>Define Incident Procedures for Mutual Aid Calls</b>	<b>Planned Start</b>	<b>Expected Duration</b>
	<i>Ensure consistent practices for incident command and monitoring safety of crews.</i>		
Objectives	• Identify differences in agency response plans on joint incidents	Q1 2027	180 days
	• Create safe operating procedures for mutual aid calls	Q1 2027	180 days
Resources	First Due		
Lead	Deputy Chief – Service Delivery		
Key Personnel	Captains Regional fire agencies		



## Priority 6: Continuous Improvement

Through accreditation and updated insurance grading OFR will ensure that as community risks change, OFR remains a responsive, high performing, and community-centred organization.

Goal 6A	<b>Achieve CFAI Accreditation</b>	<b>Planned Start</b>	<b>Expected Duration</b>
	<i>Pursuing CFAI accreditation will formalize OFR's commitment to continuous improvement, performance accountability, and community-centred service delivery. Re-accreditation will take place 5 years after initial.</i>		
Objectives	• Submit 3 core documents to CPSE by 31 March 2026	Q1 2026	90 days
	• Coordinate Peer Team site visit	Q2 2026	30 days
	• Attend Commission announcement	Q3 2026	30 days
	• Program and criterion leads will create annual program appraisals to contribute to CPSE annual compliance report requirements	Q1 2027	Annually
	• Define a plan for re-accreditation activities	Q1 2027	30 days
	• Create process for Annual Program Appraisals	Q2 2026	180 days
Resources			
Lead	Fire Chief		
Key Personnel	Project Specialist/Accreditation Manager Assistant Chief		

Goal 6B	<b>Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) Re-assessment</b>	<b>Planned Start</b>	<b>Expected Duration</b>
	<i>Pursue a re-assessment through the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) to support community risk reduction, validate improvements in fire protection capacity, and inform insurance grading for residential and commercial properties.</i>		
Objectives	• Finalize information required for re-assessment	Q3 2026	90 days
Resources	Accreditation documentation		
Lead	Fire Chief		
Key Personnel	Project Specialist		

## Implementation

The successful execution of this Strategic Plan depends on a structured, transparent, and adaptive approach to tracking progress, measuring performance, and adjusting to emerging needs.

## Operational Plan

While this Strategic Plan outlines OFR’s long-term direction and priorities for the 2026–2031 period, the Operational Plan translates that vision into the specific actions required to achieve meaningful progress. The operational plan functions at a shorter time scale - quarterly - and identifies the day-to-day and week-to-week activities that drive each strategic objective forward. It outlines the concrete steps, responsibilities, timelines, and performance measures that guide implementation across all levels of the department.

Unlike the Strategic Plan, which focuses on *what* OFR is striving to accomplish over the next five years, the Operational Plan focuses on *how* that work will be carried out. It details the operational tasks, workflows, and resource requirements needed to support each priority area. It also establishes the Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) that must be monitored regularly to ensure progress remains on track. These indicators—tracked through systems such as First Due, Darkhorse Emergency, and OFR’s internal reporting dashboards—provide real-time visibility into performance, enabling timely adjustments and evidence-based decision-making.

The Operational Plan will be updated annually to ensure alignment with budget cycles, emerging risks, staffing changes, and new data insights.



## Monitoring

### Performance Measures

Each objective is supported by clear performance measures that track outcomes, service quality, and operational effectiveness. These measures, monitored through tools like First Due, Darkhorse Emergency and internal Power BI dashboards, will be reviewed quarterly to inform timely decision-making and support continuous performance management. Where applicable, performance results will also contribute to corporate-level reporting and support alignment with the Town's Key Result Areas in the Town of Okotoks 2025–2028 Corporate Business Plan.

### Annual Reviews

Progress on each strategic priority will be assessed as part of OFR's internal annual review cycle. These reviews will evaluate the status of each objective, identify barriers to success, and recommend adjustments where needed. This review process is designed to align with the Town of Okotoks' budget planning cycle, ensuring that operational and capital resource needs are reflected in financial decision-making.

### Reporting and Strategic Alignment

To promote transparency and accountability, OFR will produce quarterly dashboards and an annual performance report summarizing progress, key achievements, and emerging risks. These updates will be shared with OFR staff, Senior Leadership Team, and the community. The reporting process will be aligned with the Town's Strategic Plan and Municipal Development Plan (MDP), ensuring consistency with community goals and long-range land use and infrastructure planning. This integrated approach helps maintain strategic coherence across departments and supports the Town's commitment to effective service delivery, fiscal responsibility, and sustainable growth.

## Conclusion

The 2026-2031 Strategic Plan sets a clear and actionable path forward for OFR, grounded in evidence, informed by community and staff input, and aligned with the Town's long-term vision. Through targeted investments in emergency response, workforce development, risk reduction, and regional collaboration, this plan strengthens OFR's ability to serve a growing and evolving community.

The priorities and objectives outlined here reflect more than operational goals—they represent our shared commitment to safety, accountability, and excellence. As we continue to pursue CFAI accreditation and adopt a culture of continuous improvement, this plan will serve as both a roadmap and a benchmark.

Implementation will be closely tied to the Town's budget cycle, corporate business planning process, and performance reporting framework, ensuring that OFR's work remains aligned with broader

municipal goals. Quarterly reviews of performance measures, and public reporting will provide transparency, guide resource decisions, and support adaptability in the face of changing risks.

Above all, this plan reinforces OFR's core mission: keeping our community safe. By working together—with staff, Council, partners, and residents—we will continue to build a fire and rescue service that meets today's needs and is ready for tomorrow's challenges.