

**FIRE SERVICE  
MANAGEMENT LETTER  
STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**TOWN OF GROTON, MA**

**SEPTEMBER 2017**



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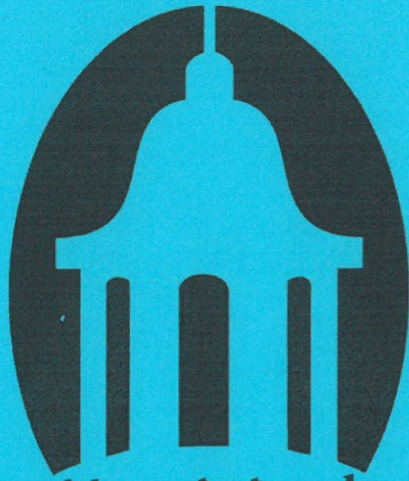
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# *REPORT*



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**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION & STRATEGIC PLANNING OVERVIEW**

The Town of Groton, Massachusetts, contracted Municipal Resources, Inc. to develop a strategic plan based on the recommendations of the fire service management letter that was completed in June 2017. The development of this strategic plan provides the Groton Fire Department and the Town of Groton with a tool to chart the future direction of the fire department, and to provide an effective and efficient service level to a growing community.

Once a management letter has been completed, implementation often stalls as the client is overwhelmed with the amount of change necessary for substantive implementation. The process of introducing change into a public-sector organization needs to be carefully developed and monitored. Implementing a strategy needs to involve stakeholders, contain established priorities for action, and realistically pace change. It is our belief that through considering and

implementing the recommendations outlined within this document, that the Groton Fire Department will enhance the effectiveness of its responses and produce a more efficient use of resources that will benefit the community for years to come.

This document will prioritize and pace the implementation of the recommendations that were contained within the organizational analysis that was completed in June 2017. Based on our experience with several similar studies, we have found that the greatest success occurs when each of the 28 recommendations listed in the management letter are assigned to a task group of stakeholders that has the responsibility to move the specific action item forward, considering the pace of change that can be tolerated by the organization.

## **THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

Strategic planning is an organization's process of defining overall direction and making decisions relative to the optimization of limited resources. A strategic plan also contains tools that can guide the organization toward developing a paced level of change that matches the community and the membership of the organization. Strategic planning became prominent in corporations during the 1960s, and remains an important aspect of organizational planning. In this case, the Groton Fire Department will need to consider approximately 28 recommendations that were defined within the recently completed fire service organizational analysis. It will also be necessary to involve as many stakeholders as possible in developing paced action that will lead toward successful implementation of these recommendations.

Strategy has many definitions, but generally involves setting goals, determining actions to achieve the goals, and mobilizing resources to execute the actions. A strategy describes how the ends (goals) will be achieved by the means (resources). In the Town of Groton, the Town Manager, the Board of Selectmen, and Chief McCurdy are tasked with determining the community's fire and life strategy. Strategy can be planned (intended) or can be observed as a pattern of activity (emergent) as the organization adapts to its environment or competes. It is our observation that the strategy currently in place in Groton is a progressive and forward thinking one, at least from the perspective of the department and the community. Notably, the Chief has sought to engage the community and involve a wide variety of stakeholders in this planning process. While these stakeholders may want to develop a long-range plan for the future, uncertainties regarding finances, resources, and the growth of Groton, provided the catalyst for an independent review of the department, along with the development of a recommended long-term strategic plan. Through this document, it is our goal to assist the Groton Fire Department in moving forward in a planned or intended strategic manner.

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



those recommendations. The strategic implementation process considers the intricacies of the organizational environment including the following:

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

### Inputs

During this project, data was gathered from a variety of sources including:

1. Interviews with key fire service personnel;
2. A survey administered to the entire fire department staff;
3. A review of pertinent data and documents relative to both the organization and the community;
4. Service demand analysis;
5. Identification of the service level desired in the community;
6. Identification of the current standard of cover;
7. Organizational response performance metrics;
8. Data obtained from peer communities; and
9. Observations gathered through field visits.

Additional input data will be gathered as the fire chief administers a survey to residents in the coming months. Inputs are then collected to help support an understanding of the environment and its opportunities and risks. Other inputs include an understanding of the values of stakeholders. These values may be captured in an organization's mission statement, and in the observed organizational culture which provides an emergent perspective on the actual values present within an organization. The input gathered during the organizational analysis forms the basis for each of the recommendations that have been developed.

### Outputs

The output of strategic planning includes documentation and communication describing the organization's strategy and how it should be implemented, sometimes referred to as the

strategic plan. The strategy may include a diagnosis of the competitive situation, a guiding policy for achieving the organization's goals, and specific action plans to be for the implementation of the recommendations listed. A strategic plan may cover multiple years and is a flexible document that should be updated periodically.

### Outcomes

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

In an effort to assist the Groton Fire Department, we have developed five task groups to allow the organization to take prioritized and paced doses of change. Perhaps the best analogy is to consider each recommendation as a small wave that will reverberate through the organization. If all of the recommendations were pursued at one time, they would amount to a tidal wave of change that would create a level of chaos. Instead, we suggest that change be monitored and paced by the teams or task groups that are charged with implementation of a manageable set of recommendations.



## CHAPTER II

### COMMUNITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The Town of Groton is a vibrant and growing community located in northwestern Middlesex County, Massachusetts. The Town was founded in 1655, and has a strong American history. The population was 10,873 at the 2012 town census. According to the United States Census Bureau, Groton has a total area of 33.7 square miles (87.3 km), of which 32.8 square miles (84.9 km) is land, and 0.9 square miles (2.4 km) (2.79%) is water. Groton is the largest town in Middlesex County in terms of square mileage. Groton is served by state routes 40, 111, 119 and 225. It borders the towns of Pepperell, Dunstable, Tyngsborough, Westford, Littleton, Ayer, Shirley, and Townsend.

The Groton Fire Department is a full-service fire/rescue agency that provides a myriad of fire services and emergency medical patient transportation to the residents of Groton. The Department averages 1,181 emergency responses per year, with 65% (756) of those responses being emergency medical related. On average, the Department responds to 8 structure fires per year. The highest call volume occurs from 7AM to 7PM. Overall, response times from the time a call is received at the dispatch center, until the first unit arrives on the incident scene, averages 8:23 minutes, with a much shorter average response time during daytime hours when an initial response crew is present. However, this statistic requires some additional clarification, which is detailed in the body of the Management Letter.

Similar to fire service agencies across the country, the Groton Fire Department is struggling with a number of issues that relate to its ability to provide efficient and effective services to the community. The management letter identified that the two primary issues confronting the department at this time are on-call staffing (including recruitment and retention), and reducing overall response times.

## CHAPTER III

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

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

1. Strengths: characteristics of the agency that allow it to meet its mission or provide exceptional service to a community.
2. Weaknesses: characteristics of the agency that create internal conflict, dysfunctional, and frustrate organizational performance, thus creating a disadvantage to the organization in its efforts to meet the goals established by its mission statement.
3. Opportunities: elements that the organization could pursue or develop to its advantage.
4. Threats: elements in the environment that could create organizational instability or reduce the ability of an agency to meet its mission.

Users of SWOT analysis must ask and answer questions that generate meaningful information for each category (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to make the analysis useful and find their competitive advantage.

#### Internal and external factors

A SWOT analysis aims to identify the key internal and external factors seen as important to achieving an organizational objective. SWOT analysis groups key pieces of information into two main categories:

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

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



## **Application**

A SWOT analysis was originally developed as a reflective tool for profit seeking companies. However, the usefulness of SWOT analysis can apply to all types of organizations, and is particularly applicable to public sector functions. A SWOT analysis may also be used in pre-crisis planning and preventive crisis management. SWOT analysis may also be used in creating a series of recommendations in the context of an organizational study.

A SWOT analysis can be used effectively to build or focus an organization's intended strategy. The steps necessary to execute strategy-oriented analysis involve: identification of internal and external factors, selection and evaluation of the most important factors, and identification of relations existing between internal and external features.

## **When to use SWOT**

The use of a SWOT analysis by a community organization are as follows: to organize data, enhance communications between divergent groups, provide insight into barriers that may be present while engaging in social change processes, and identify strengths available that can be activated to counteract these barriers.

A SWOT analysis can be used to:

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

## **Benefits**

The SWOT analysis in a public safety framework is beneficial because it helps organizations decide whether or not an objective is obtainable and therefore, enables organizations to set achievable goals, objectives, and steps to further the change or organizational development. It enables organizers to take visions and produce practical and efficient outcomes that effect long-lasting change, and it helps organizations gather meaningful information to maximize their

potential. Completing a SWOT analysis is a useful process regarding the consideration of key organizational priorities.

### **GROTON FIRE DEPARTMENT SWOT ANALYSIS**

As the study team approached the development of a strategic plan, a SWOT analysis was completed as a means to provide the Groton Fire Department with an external view of the agency. The following key points have been distilled from this consensus based process:

#### **Strengths**

1. Fire and EMS operations appear to be well regarded by the community.
2. The dedication and passion of the department personnel was evident throughout our evaluation.
3. Members are willing to take action to resolve problems.
4. A strong core of personnel who are willing to accept change.
5. A low level of ego driven obstructionism.
6. The community's positive and proactive orientation toward future planning.
7. Fiscal stability of the community.
8. A moderate level of growth within the community.
9. The department is very well regarded in the area.
10. Strong support within the community as a whole.
11. A well maintained and well-equipped modern apparatus fleet.
12. A very dedicated and proactive Fire Chief.
13. A modern centrally located headquarters facility.
14. Annual equipment inspections and testing are completed as required.
15. Career staff are not only available for the ambulance, but also for fire duty.



16. A solid training program.
17. Produces a good value to the community.

### **Weaknesses**

1. Response to emergency scenes appears slightly less than optimal based on elongated response times that are above average.
2. Staffing shortages occur particularly during the day when many on-call personnel are at work.
3. A core group of personnel do the majority of the work.
4. Ongoing difficulty with recruitment and retention as experienced by similar contemporary fire departments.
5. No established Standard of Cover.
6. No long-range strategic plan.
7. Limited number of SOPs/SOGs.
8. No formal pre-fire planning program.
9. The lack of mobility connectivity and mobile data.
10. Limited water supply locations in coverage areas not covered by water systems.
11. The perceived need to maintain a third station as a normal point of deployment.

### **Opportunities**

1. Enhanced on-call recruitment and retention efforts designed to bolster the current level of response and operational effectiveness.
2. Development of an accelerated path of qualification that rapidly leads from auxiliary to firefighter status.
3. The development of a mentoring program for on-call staff.

4. Redistribution of resources using a two-station deployment model.
5. Development of public/private partnerships to assist with community outreach efforts.
6. Formal identification of a Standard of Cover.
7. Increased/improved on-call response.
8. Implementation of in station crew staffing by on-call personnel.
9. Reduction in time commitment necessary for on-call personnel while simultaneously improving the value of time that is available.
10. Groton Fire Department accreditation.
11. Improved marketing and enhanced community outreach through innovative program development.

### **Threats**

1. Continually increasing requests for service as the community continues to develop and grow placing increasing strain on the on-call personnel.
2. Unfunded mandates from regulatory agencies.
3. Political change that could jeopardize organizational support.
4. Reduction in the function of the on-call responders based on the increased use of cross-staffing by the career personnel.
5. General reduction in volunteerism across the country will challenge continued viability of the volunteer company.
6. Increasing population, with increased demands for service, yet a demographic that may not be inclined to volunteer.



## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The organizational analysis completed in June 2017, offered the following recommendations:

#### II. Defining the Service Level

Recommendation II-1 - If the community wishes to enhance the service level, and provide 24-hour coverage, the Town should consider adding four additional career staff over a period of two years, adding two in the first year and expanding the hours of coverage, and then adding two more positions in year two, providing 24/7 coverage.

Recommendation II-2: To facilitate response coordination, all personnel should be issued portables radios.

Recommendation II-3: Automatic aid agreements should be initiated with adjacent communities to assist not only with coverage to outlying areas of the Town, but also to improve longer response times that are apparent in those areas, some of which also contain or will contain significant target hazards. This would also be advantageous to enhance capabilities to respond to multiple calls for service. However, this concept should be utilized judiciously so as not to create response issues for adjacent communities, for instance, only utilized upon receipt of an actual report of a fire.

#### III. Organizational Structure

Recommendation III-1: Utilizing the job descriptions previously provided, develop a compensation plan that provides an appropriate level of compensation for each rank.

Recommendation III-2: Conduct a survey of five comparable, on-call, compensation plans, developing the average paid by position. Utilize this survey to gain perspective and develop a compensation strategy for the next five years.

#### IV. Recruitment and Retention of On-Call Staff

Recommendation IV-1: Recruitment and Retention of on-call personnel needs to continue as a primary focus of the Groton Fire Department, this program should be an ongoing effort.

Recommendation IV-2: Increase the number of on-call staff to 50 and require that these personnel are properly trained and certified. Of these 50 personnel, 9 should be officers, 31

should be firefighters, and 10 should be auxiliary firefighters that are being prepared for advancement.

Recommendation IV-3: The Town should pursue a SAFER Grant for the recruitment and retention of on-call personnel.

Recommendation IV -4: The Town of Groton should consider the development of a program that would provide active responders with the opportunity to obtain health insurance. The Town of Groton should pay a graduated percentage of this program.

Recommendation IV-5: The Town of Groton should recognize that the only way to develop a more active and properly staffed Department, in the absence of hiring a significant force of career firefighters, is to determine what would motivate potential responders and craft a program of investment that meets these extrinsic and intrinsic needs.

Recommendation IV-6: The Town of Groton should convene a focus group to determine what concepts and recruitment and retention strategies are feasible and most attractive to potential candidates.

Recommendation IV-7: Develop a series of team based activities that build involvement in the organization.

Recommendation IV-8: Increase the level of communication with the community relative to the need for on-call firefighters. Examples of this strategy should include periodic open houses, a LED sign Board (located at a highly visible location not within the historic district, an example of a suitable location would be at the Groton landfill), community mailings, newspaper coverage, development of a social media presence, radio, and media advertisement. The proposed SAFER Grant could be utilized to cover many of these expenses.

Recommendation IV-9: Seek assistance from the Massachusetts Call and Volunteer Firefighters Association (MCVFA) relative to enhancing recruitment efforts in Groton.

Recommendation IV-10: Continue to have and expand a social media presence to enhance communication with the public. This should be a task that is assigned to a firefighter.

## **V. Qualification and Training of Personnel**

Recommendation V-1: Conduct two lesson driven training sessions per month that include all personnel from both stations working together as a team. All of the training lessons should be derived using formal, standardized lesson plans. To adequately accomplish this, an annual training schedule should be developed on a collaborative basis with the personnel of the



Department, and especially relative to the officers of the Department. Records of this training should be retained in an electronic database.

Recommendation V-2: Participation in training programs offered regionally, through the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy and the National Fire Academy, should also be encouraged and supported.

Recommendation V-3: The training officer should join and participate with a statewide group of training officers in a professional organization known as MIFDI (Massachusetts Institute of Fire Department Drill Instructors). This group would not only provide insight and guidance as to various training programs and concepts, but would also provide an opportunity for professional networking.

Recommendation V-4: The Groton Fire Department should consider sending some of the officers to National Fire Academy programs. A beneficial program to consider would be the Volunteer Incentive Program. Also, the Training Officer should complete the Management of Training Programs course at the National Fire Academy.

Recommendation V-5: NIMS training is extremely critical and should be conducted for all members of the Department. Firefighters should be trained to the basic level of ICS 100-700, Officers to the ICS 300 level, and the Chief should be trained to the ICS 400 level.

Recommendation V-6: All officers in the Department should achieve professional certification to the appropriate level for their rank. That consists of the following certification level based on rank: Lieutenant - Fire Officer I; Captain - Fire Officer II; Deputy Fire Chief - Fire Officer III, and Fire Chief - Fire Officer IV.

## **VI. Apparatus and Facilities**

Recommendation VI-1: The engine that is either the oldest or in poor operating condition should be removed from the fleet and surplus.

Recommendation VI-2: The West Groton Station should be closed and surplus.

## **VII. Employee Survey**

Recommendation VII-1: A mission and vision statement should be jointly developed by the Chief and members of the Department.

Recommendation VII-2: Two SOGs should be reviewed at each training meeting.

RecommendationVII-3: The entire Department should be engaged and involved in an enhanced and ongoing recruitment effort.

RecommendationVII-4: Every effort should be made to develop a consistent procedure for advancement from Auxiliary to Firefighter.

### **VIII. The Next Steps Forward – Pacing Change**

Recommendation VIII-1: The Chief should establish a working group to review the recommendations contained in the Management Letter, prioritize these recommendations, and develop a paced timeline to initiate these changes. This would be a precursor to developing a formal strategic plan that would serve as a “vision for the future”.



## CHAPTER V

### TASK GROUPS & TIMELINE

In an effort to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations contained in this document, we suggest that five groups of stakeholders be assembled and assigned to initiate change. Each task group should be composed of a least three individuals. Task groups are responsible for implementation and must recognize that the policy decisions relative to organizational direction have been made. Therefore, each task group is charged with the responsibility of implementation of the specific recommendations assigned.

Task groups selected for Groton include:

1. Apparatus & Facilities: Assigned 2 recommendations
2. Internal and External Communication: Assigned 5 recommendations
3. Operations: Assigned 3 recommendations
4. Recruitment and Retention of Personnel: Assigned 9 recommendations
5. Training: Assigned 8 recommendations

Note: the final recommendation relating to pursuing accreditation is assigned to all task groups.

Only the primary task group for each recommendation is noted here. Some recommendations will require collaboration between groups. The department may also determine it is best to involve multiple task groups to implement other recommendations.

To realistically accomplish the tasks associated with these 28 recommendations, action will need to be paced in an effort to produce a sustained, but not overwhelming, level of internal and external change. Recommendations are prioritized and assigned as detailed below:

1. Immediate: 5 recommendations
2. 6 Months: 7 recommendations
3. One year: 8 recommendations
4. Two years: 5 recommendations
5. Three years: 2 recommendations

Several of the recommendations, especially those involving recruitment and retention efforts, will require an ongoing effort, while others which are typically recommendations pertaining to organizational practice, should be periodically revisited.

## CHAPTER VI

### STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following tables identify the recommendations, assigned task group(s), timelines for implementation, potential barriers to implementation, and critical tasks. Not all recommendations have been listed as many would really be sub-components under a primary recommendation.

<b>Recommendation II-1</b>	If the community wishes to enhance the service level, and provide 24-hour coverage, the Town should consider adding four additional career staff over a period of two years, adding two in the first year and expanding the hours of coverage, and then adding two more positions in year two, providing 24/7 coverage.
<b>Task Groups</b>	➤ <b>Operations</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Two Years</b>
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Internal concern relative to the changing role of on-call staff</li> <li>➤ Fiscal and political concern within the community</li> <li>➤ Timing and pace of implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Educate the community relative to value and benefits offered by an initial response crew</li> <li>➤ Conduct a cost /benefit and organizational impact analysis</li> <li>➤ Develop a reasonable pace of implementation</li> <li>➤ Develop a partnership with the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and Town Manager relative to implementation</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation II-2</b>	<i>To facilitate response coordination, all personnel should be issued portables radios.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Operations</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Immediate
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sufficient fiscal resources</li> <li>➤ Potential delay based on availability</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify personnel that currently lack radios</li> <li>➤ Prioritize distribution</li> <li>➤ Utilize funding from the Fiscal 2018 budget, 2018 capital fund and potential Fire Act grant funding as this is a safety and response related operational issue</li> <li>➤ Identify required capability and features such as intrinsically safe construction</li> </ul>

<p><b>Recommendation II-3</b></p>	<p><i>Automatic aid agreements should be initiated with adjacent communities to assist not only with coverage to outlying areas of the Town, but also to improve longer response times that are apparent in those areas, some of which also contain or will contain significant target hazards. This would also be advantageous to enhance capabilities to respond to multiple calls for service. However, this concept should be utilized judiciously so as not to create response issues for adjacent communities, for instance, only utilized upon receipt upon an actual report of a fire.</i></p>
<p><b>Task Group</b></p>	<p><b>Operations</b></p>
<p><b>Timeline</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ One year to complete initial plan</li> <li>➤ Updated in year 3</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Resistance to change</li> <li>➤ Concerns relative to overtime and compensation</li> <li>➤ Impact on collective bargaining agreements</li> <li>➤ Lack of cooperation from adjacent communities</li> <li>➤ Political resistance</li> <li>➤ Concern that response could be excessive</li> </ul>
<p><b>Critical Tasks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Coordination with area fire chiefs</li> <li>➤ Coordination with town officials</li> <li>➤ Stakeholder buy in</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation III-1</b>	<i>Utilizing the job descriptions in Appendix A of the fire service management letter, develop a compensation plan that provides an appropriate level of compensation for each rank.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Recruitment and Retention</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Two years
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Impact on collective bargaining agreements</li> <li>➤ Lack of peer responses</li> <li>➤ Fiscal constraints</li> <li>➤ Potential political resistance</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Coordination and interface with compensation plans within the Town of Groton</li> <li>➤ Development of compensation analysis through benchmarking</li> <li>➤ Input of Groton Human Resources Staff</li> <li>➤ Development of an impartial compensation analysis</li> </ul>

<p><b>Recommendation III-2</b></p>	<p><i>Conduct a survey of the compensation plans of five comparable, on-call fire departments, developing the average pay by position. Utilize this survey to gain perspective and develop a compensation strategy for the next five years.</i></p>
<p><b>Task Group</b></p>	<p><b>Internal Communications</b></p>
<p><b>Timeline</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Six months</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identification of peer communities that are acceptable to the department and the Town</li> <li>➤ Time constraint to complete and update the existing survey developed for the management letter</li> <li>➤ Potential political resistance</li> </ul>
<p><b>Critical Tasks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Build a survey that incorporates the Department's current needs</li> <li>➤ Survey follow-up and aggregation of data</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation IV-1</b>	<i>Recruitment and Retention of on-call personnel needs to continue as a primary focus of the Groton Fire Department, this program should be an ongoing effort.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Recruitment and Retention</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Immediate and ongoing
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Time constraints for on-call participation</li> <li>➤ Fiscal constraints relative to limitations on the number of on-call personnel</li> <li>➤ Recognition that despite past experience increasing membership is a realistic goal</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review of current recruitment practice</li> <li>➤ Review of successful industry best practices</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation IV-2</b>	<i>Increase the number of on-call staff to 50 and require that these personnel are properly trained and certified. Of these 50 personnel, 9 should be officers, 31 should be firefighters, and 10 should be auxiliary firefighters that are being prepared for advancement.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Recruitment and Retention</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Three years
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Time constraints for on-call participation</li> <li>➤ Fiscal constraints relative to limitations on the number of on-call personnel</li> <li>➤ Transitional membership (those that relocate or leave after a short period of time)</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Development of a multidimensional recruitment strategy</li> <li>➤ Communicate efforts to all stakeholders to solicit input and develop organizational buy-in</li> <li>➤ Empowering members to recruit new personnel</li> <li>➤ Development of retention strategies valued by the membership</li> <li>➤ Development of an accelerated training program for new personnel so that they rapidly become valuable contributors on the fireground</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation IV-3</b>	<b><i>The Town should pursue a SAFER Grant for the recruitment and retention of on-call personnel.</i></b>
<b><i>Task Group</i></b>	<b>Recruitment and Retention</b>
<b><i>Timeline</i></b>	➤ One year
<b><i>Potential Barriers to Implementation</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Grant writing ability and projection of the need of the community and value of the proposed program</li> <li>➤ Political and fiscal constraints relative to locating funds for percentage match associated with this grant program</li> </ul>
<b><i>Critical Tasks</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Coordination with an accomplished grant writer for development or review of the narrative</li> <li>➤ Obtain successful grant applications from other communities with similar circumstances</li> </ul>



<p><b>Recommendation IV-4</b></p>	<p><i>The Town of Groton should consider the development of a program that would provide active responders with the opportunity to obtain health insurance. The Town of Groton should pay a graduated percentage of this program based upon the percentage table above.</i></p>
<p><b>Task Group</b></p>	<p><b>Recruitment and Retention</b></p>
<p><b>Timeline</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Two years</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Perception relative to what some feel is an undue benefit for an on-call firefighter</li> <li>➤ The cost may produce a fiscal barrier if it is looked at as a benefit rather than an investment in the long-term sustainability of the on-call structure</li> <li>➤ Political acceptance</li> </ul>
<p><b>Critical Tasks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify response levels and quantify how many personnel would be eligible</li> <li>➤ Identify how many of the eligible personnel would pursue this retention incentive</li> <li>➤ Identify annual costs (updated quotes) based on participation and the percentage of payment that would be the responsibility of the Town</li> <li>➤ Present this retention incentive as an investment and compare it to costs of additional fulltime staffing and benefits</li> <li>➤ Consult with other communities that have developed similar programs</li> </ul>



<p><b>Recommendation IV-5</b></p>	<p><i>The Town of Groton should recognize that the only way to develop a more active and properly staffed Department, in the absence of hiring a significant force of career firefighters, is to determine what would motivate potential responders and craft a program of investment that meets these extrinsic and intrinsic needs.</i></p>
<p><b>Task Group</b></p>	<p><b>Recruitment and Retention</b></p>
<p><b>Timeline</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ One year</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Perception relative to what some feel is an undue benefit for an on-call firefighter</li> <li>➤ Lack of internal feedback pertaining to what recruitment and retention incentives are the most valuable</li> <li>➤ A lack of initial consensus on the depth of this program</li> </ul>
<p><b>Critical Tasks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Conduct a survey relative to recruitment and retention incentives</li> <li>➤ Develop a focus group to build consensus on the scope, depth and timing of the program</li> <li>➤ Development of a prioritized proposal that harnesses the feedback of the focus group</li> <li>➤ Projecting the value of this program to the community</li> <li>➤ Development of a partnership with the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation IV-6</b>	<i>The Town of Groton should convene a focus group to determine what concepts and recruitment and retention strategies are feasible and most attractive to potential candidates.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Internal/External Communications</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Six months, revisit in two years
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lack of internal feedback</li> <li>➤ Members indicating these incentives are not needed as they are on-call/volunteers</li> <li>➤ A lack of internal understanding relative to the potential use and benefits of a retention program</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Conduct a survey relative to recruitment and retention incentives</li> <li>➤ Develop a focus group to build consensus on the scope, depth and timing of the program</li> <li>➤ Development of a prioritized proposal that harnesses the feedback of the focus group</li> <li>➤ Projecting the value of this program to the community</li> <li>➤ Fiscal constraints present within the Town of Groton</li> <li>➤ Development of a partnership with the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation IV-7</b>	<b><i>Develop a series of team based activities that build involvement in the organization.</i></b>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Recruitment and Retention</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ One year and ongoing</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ As this represents a change in organizational behavior and shifts norms resistance should be expected</li> <li>➤ Recognition that if not initiated slowly the amount of change could produce a cultural backlash</li> <li>➤ Fiscal constraints present within the Town of Groton</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Development of several team based training activities such as developing a maze that teams would move a ball through by raising and cribbing a platform with extrication tools</li> <li>➤ Development of additional crew based training sessions</li> <li>➤ Development of a monthly meal at the station prior to a training session</li> <li>➤ Development of family based social or community activities</li> </ul>



<p><b>Recommendation IV-8</b></p>	<p><i>Increase the level of communication with the community relative to the need for on-call firefighters. Examples of this strategy should include periodic open houses, a LED sign Board (located at a highly visible location not within the historic district an example of a suitable location would be at the Groton landfill), community mailings, newspaper coverage, development of a social media presence, radio, and media advertisement. The proposed SAFER Grant could be utilized to cover many of these expenses.</i></p>
<p><b>Task Group</b></p>	<p><b>Internal/External Communications</b></p>
<p><b>Timeline</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ One year</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Personnel may resist this change and see additional efforts as contrary to the primary mission of the organization</li> <li>➤ Time availability to manage these new tasks</li> <li>➤ Fiscal constraints present within the Town of Groton</li> </ul>
<p><b>Critical Tasks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify the best methods of communication for the Town of Groton</li> <li>➤ Review other model or best practice programs in place in other similar communities</li> <li>➤ Identify potential costs</li> <li>➤ Prioritize action based on community impact (reaching the greatest number of residents)</li> <li>➤ Consider grant funding for larger costs</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation IV-9</b>	<i>Seek Assistance from the Massachusetts Call and Volunteer Firefighters Association (MCVFA) relative to enhancing recruitment efforts in Groton.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Recruitment and Retention</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Two years
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	➤ Concern that recruitment and retention efforts should be local only
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Contact the MCVFA and understand how the recruitment and retention methods currently in place can be harnessed for the Town of Groton</li> <li>➤ Identify MVCFA best practices relative to recruitment and retention</li> <li>➤ Identify three MCVFA members that have been the most successful, reach out to those communities to gain an understanding of their program and most effective methods</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation IV-10</b>	<i>Continue to have and expand a social media presence to enhance communication with the public. This should be a task that is assigned to a firefighter.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Internal/External Communications</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Six months and ongoing
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Development of policies relative to the use of social media</li> <li>➤ A potential lack of skill and expertise</li> <li>➤ A lack of personnel availability to manage a social media presence on an ongoing basis</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop social media goals and policies</li> <li>➤ Inform the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager of the plan to expand the social media footprint</li> <li>➤ Develop or enhance a social media platform such as Facebook and or Twitter</li> <li>➤ Develop a strategy for ongoing management and updates of this social media presence</li> <li>➤ Solicit and add personnel to this program to broaden input and internal/external exposure</li> <li>➤ Review and utilize any available media kits or PSAs</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation V-1</b>	<i>Conduct two lesson driven training sessions per month that include all personnel from both stations working together as a team. All of the training lessons should be derived using formal, standardized lesson plans. To adequately accomplish this, an annual training schedule should be developed on a collaborative basis with the personnel of the Department, and especially relative to the officers of the Department. Records of this training should be retained in an electronic database.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Training</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Six months
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Availability of instructor</li> <li>➤ Lack of development time</li> <li>➤ Concern that this formalization changes the fabric of the organization</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop a training schedule with assignments for specific lessons</li> <li>➤ Coordinate with assigned officers on development</li> <li>➤ Identification of training innovations</li> <li>➤ Development of a blend of basic and innovative training</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation V-2</b>	<i>Participation in training programs offered regionally, through the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy and the National Fire Academy should also be encouraged and supported.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Training</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Immediate
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Development of a sentiment that participation in these programs has not been required or offered previously</li> <li>➤ Fiscal and political constraints present within the Town of Groton</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify and send out course notices to appropriate personnel via e-mail</li> <li>➤ Identify what compensation will be offered to attend selected courses</li> <li>➤ Encourage participation of all personnel and recognize successful completion of programs</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation V-3</b>	<i>The training officer should join and participate with a statewide group of training officers in a professional organization known as MIFDI (Massachusetts Institute of Fire Department Drill Instructors). This group would not only provide insight and guidance as to various training programs and concepts, but would also provide an opportunity for professional networking.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Training</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Six months
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Not a previous requirement associated with the position</li> <li>➤ Availability of personnel to attend many of these meetings</li> <li>➤ Fiscal constraints present within the Town of Groton</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop networking opportunities to collaborate on the development of training programs with a similarly focused group</li> <li>➤ Procurement of materials offered through this organization</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation V-4</b>	<i>The Groton Fire Department should consider sending some of the officers to National Fire Academy programs. A beneficial program to consider would be the Volunteer Incentive Program. Also, the Training Officer should complete the Management of Training Programs course at the National Fire Academy.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Training</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ One year
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Availability of personnel considering family and employment obligations</li> <li>➤ Fiscal constraints may limit the number of personnel that could attend these programs</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop and post information relative to course offerings</li> <li>➤ Direct relevant course announcements to appropriate personnel via e-mail</li> <li>➤ Encourage and recognize attendance at these programs</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation V-5</b>	<i>NIMS training is extremely critical and should be conducted for all members of the Department. Firefighters should be trained to the basic level of ICS 100-700, Officers to the ICS 300 level, and the Chief should be trained to the ICS 400 level.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Training</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Immediate
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Availability of personnel to attend additional training</li> <li>➤ The cost of compensation related to this additional training</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assess current levels of NIMS training and compliance</li> <li>➤ Encourage on-line participation</li> <li>➤ Identify compliance goals</li> <li>➤ Host programs offered by DFS and MEMA</li> <li>➤ Track performance against these goals</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation V-6</b>	<i>All officers in the Department should achieve professional certification to the appropriate level for their rank. That consists of the following certification levels based on rank. Lieutenant - Fire Officer I; Captain - Fire Officer II; Deputy Fire Chief - Fire Officer III, and Fire Chief - Fire Officer IV.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Training</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Three years
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Availability of personnel to attend additional training</li> <li>➤ The cost of compensation related to this additional training</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide personnel with certification information pertinent to their current rank</li> <li>➤ Establish certification goals</li> <li>➤ Recognize success when an employee obtains a certification</li> <li>➤ Monitor progress relative to meeting the goals established</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation VI-1</b>	<b><i>The engine that is either the oldest or in poor operating condition should be removed from the fleet and surplused.</i></b>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Apparatus and Facilities</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ One year</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Community coverage concerns</li> <li>➤ Political considerations within Groton</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assess the current condition of the apparatus fleet</li> <li>➤ Select the unit to be eliminated from the fleet</li> <li>➤ Coordinate with the Town relative to selling this unit in compliance with MGL 30B</li> <li>➤ Consider posting the unit on a 30B compliant auction site such as <a href="http://www.municibid.com">www.municibid.com</a></li> </ul>





<b>Recommendation VI-2</b>	<b><i>The West Groton Station should be closed and surplus.</i></b>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Apparatus and Facilities</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Two years
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Community coverage concerns</li> <li>➤ Political considerations within Groton</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assess the current condition of the station</li> <li>➤ Develop a plan to decommission and or reuse this station</li> <li>➤ Identify a contingency plan relative to future use and how this station could be utilized during severe events in the future</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation VII-1</b>	<b><i>A mission and vision statement should be jointly developed by the Chief and members of the Department.</i></b>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Internal/External Communications</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Six months
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	➤ Lack of organization participation and buy-in and support
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Solicit input</li> <li>➤ Organize a group session relative to identify core elements of this statement</li> <li>➤ Encourage participation</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation VII-2</b>	<b><i>Two SOGs should be reviewed at each training meeting.</i></b>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Training</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Immediate</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Time constraints</li> <li>➤ Internal interest</li> <li>➤ Sufficient administrative support</li> <li>➤ Effective distribution to all employees</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop a schedule so that all SOGs are covered</li> <li>➤ Review and develop new SOGs so that the material covered reflects up to date operational information</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation VII-3</b>	<b><i>The entire Department should be engaged and involved in an enhanced and ongoing recruitment effort.</i></b>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Recruitment and Retention</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Six months</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Time constraints</li> <li>➤ Lack of belief that this goal is realistic</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Communicate plans</li> <li>➤ Encourage participation</li> <li>➤ Develop a Recruitment and retention budget</li> <li>➤ Organize activities</li> </ul>



<b>Recommendation VII-4</b>	<i>Every effort should be made to develop a consistent procedure for advancement from Auxiliary to Firefighter.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>Training</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ One year
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lack of organization participation and buy-in and support</li> <li>➤ Time constraints</li> <li>➤ Internal interest</li> <li>➤ Fiscal constraints</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assess current procedure</li> <li>➤ Solicit input and assistance</li> <li>➤ Identify improvements</li> <li>➤ Development of written criteria</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation VIII-1</b>	<i>The Chief should establish a working group to review the recommendations contained in this letter, prioritize these recommendations, and develop a paced timeline to initiate these changes. This would be a precursor to developing a formal strategic plan that would serve as a “vision for the future”.</i>
<b>Task Group</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	➤ Ongoing
<b>Potential Barriers to Implementation</b>	➤ Time constraints
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Selection of personnel</li> <li>➤ Identify critical tasks</li> <li>➤ Establish goals for completion</li> </ul>



## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

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

It is our sincere hope that this report and the accompanying strategic plan will be used by the Groton Fire Department and the governing bodies as a road map for improving the delivery of fire and emergency medical services throughout the Town of Groton. Members of the community should feel confident that the Groton Fire Department is a professional public safety organization that is providing a high-quality level of service to the community. We continue to be impressed with the dedication and commitment of its members. The MRI study team further believes that the Groton Fire Department has the skills, capabilities and motivation to become an effective, highly trained and motivated organization that meets or exceeds nationally recognized standards for operational readiness. There are challenges to be sure, but we are also quite confident the membership will rise to the occasion. Although we have prioritized recommendations as we see them and developed the strategic plan and its implementation timetable based upon that perspective, the Groton Fire Department, and/or municipal leaders may decide to develop their own priorities; modify our recommendations or timelines based on the ever-changing needs of the department and the Town and coordinate solutions based on time, personnel, and fiscal realities. In order to address the recommendations that have been identified in this report, and implement the strategic plan, the Groton Fire Department should:

1. Approach them strategically and systematically.
2. Break them down to reasonably sized components.
3. Categorize them as short-term and long-term goals, i.e., items that can be accomplished within existing resources and items that will require additional funding and/or time to accomplish in the coming years.

4. Refer to them when making recommendations, check them off as they are accomplished, and most importantly, recognize the positive achievements publicly.

One final recommendation that we make that is separate from the other recommendations that are contained in the study report and are implemented through the strategic plan is that the Groton Fire Department should pursue accreditation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI).

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

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

The accreditation process provides a well-defined, internationally-recognized benchmark system to measure the quality of fire and emergency services<sup>1</sup>.

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) comprehensive self-assessment process promotes excellence and encourages quality improvement by enabling fire and EMS agencies to:

1. Assure colleagues and the public that they have definite missions and objectives that are appropriate for the jurisdictions they serve
2. Provide a detailed evaluation of the services they provide to the community
3. Identify areas of strength and weakness within the department
4. Create methods or systems for addressing deficiencies while building organizational success
5. Encourage professional growth for both the department and its personnel

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



6. Provide a forum for the communication of organizational priorities
7. Foster national recognition by colleagues and the public
8. Create a mechanism for developing strategic and program action plans<sup>2</sup>

	<b>Seek accreditation for the Groton Fire Department through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI).</b>
<b><i>Task Groups</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Leadership and Governance</li> <li>➤ Operations</li> <li>➤ Emergency Medical Services</li> <li>➤ Performance Analysis</li> <li>➤ Policy Development</li> </ul>
<b><i>Timeline</i></b>	<b>Begin process about 36 months from the start of the strategic plan implementation process.</b>
<b><i>Potential Barriers to Implementation</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lack of interest or buy in from various components of the fire department</li> <li>➤ Lack of support from municipal and/or fire department leadership</li> <li>➤ Failure to implement key recommendations found in the strategic plan</li> <li>➤ Time commitment necessary to complete the process</li> </ul>

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

	Seek accreditation for the Groton Fire Department through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI).
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Implement strategic plan recommendations</li> <li>➤ Designation of a project leader and coordinator</li> <li>➤ Gain full support of internal and external stakeholders</li> <li>➤ Approach project systematically</li> <li>➤ Development of data, benchmarks and procedures</li> <li>➤ Ongoing analysis of data and compliance with benchmarks</li> <li>➤ Commitment to continual system improvement</li> </ul>