



Overview

INTRODUCTION

In September 2011, community members and Cottleville Fire Protection District (CFPD) staff began a three-month process of working together to create a long-range plan for the fire District.

That goal is reflected in the name of the community engagement process: CARES: Citizens Advancing Responsible Emergency Services. This name reflects the desire for the community and Fire District to work together to create a plan to continue providing quality emergency services in a fiscally responsible manner.

At the beginning of the CARES program, participants made the decision to study a series of key topics during the process – training, equipment, staffing, facilities, operations and finances.

The community engagement process involved six 2-hour CARES meetings, and one open house at each firehouse. More than 50 individuals attended the community wide meetings, nearly 1,000 attended one of the open houses.

Additionally, the Facilitating Team (five community members, selected CFPD staff and special advisors) met three times before the first community meeting and once between each community meeting. The information learned and discussed as part of the meetings is included in this final report binder. The community engagement process resulted in recommendations, which are presented in response to the charge given to CARES participants by the Board of Directors.

PURPOSE

The following overview breaks the CARES program into four sections - purpose, participants, process and product.

The CARES Facilitating Team was given a charge from the Board of Directors:

CARES CHARGE

*The mission of the Cottleville Fire Protection District is to:
Provide protection to our community and to all who seek our help with
Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Excellence.*

This goal was set forth in the Cottleville Compass, which guides the direction of the District. The cornerstone of the Cottleville Compass is five ideologies.

1. We will provide service that surpasses the expectations of our customers; we will go that extra step to take care of their needs.
2. We will remain socially conscious and committed to our community and to our personnel.
3. We will provide our members with the necessary resources, support, and opportunities they need to achieve their goals today so we can ensure we have strong leaders for the District's future.
4. We will train all members so that we ensure the highest level of professional and technical proficiency in order to guarantee an appropriate response, regardless of the task.
5. We will act as good stewards of the monies entrusted to us by the taxpayers of our District.

Following the guide of these ideologies, and the Cottleville Compass, the Board is seeking the assistance of the community to develop a long-range operational plan for the future of the Cottleville Fire Protection District.

This long-range plan will guide District leadership as they work to meet the expectations of the community in regards to the level of service and protection citizens want from the District.

The Board hereby issues an invitation to the citizens of the District to participate in a community engagement program to create this plan. Participating citizens will be charged with the task of making recommendations in response to the following questions:

- What are the key challenges and opportunities facing the Cottleville Fire Protection District today and tomorrow?
- What are the best ways to address these challenges and make the most of these opportunities?
- What level of service does the community expect from the Cottleville Fire Protection District now and in the future?
- What resources in the areas of facilities, staffing, equipment, finances and communications are needed?
- What do we need to do to secure these resources?

The community group will report its recommendations to the Board by Dec. 13, 2011.

PURPOSE (continued)

The District was facing some hard challenges and the Board and District leadership thought it was important to involve the community in finding solutions. The Board of Directors wanted to utilize a process that engaged the community to examine the challenges and opportunities facing the District and provide the Board with recommendations for the future. The desire was for the District to receive a set of recommendations that represent the expectations of the community, the owners of the District.

With these factors in mind, the Board of Directors created and adopted the above charge for the CARES program.

PARTICIPANTS

Participation in the process occurred in two separate areas—Facilitating Team (FT) and CARES Community Engagement Sessions (CES).

FACILITATING TEAM (FT)

As its name suggests, this Team was responsible for facilitating the CARES process. The 13 person Team met nine times, three before the first CARES meeting and once between each CARES meeting.

As is so important in engagement programs, community members provided the leadership for the FT and the entire CARES process. The Community Chairs were Jason Duncan and Kim King. Steve Mahler, Cathy Elsea and Will Klein served as Community Leaders. District administration, firefighters and special advisors were also members of the FT and served as resources for the Community Chairs and Leaders.

The primary role of the FT was to provide leadership and coordination for the entire process. The group helped with decisions regarding process strategy and communications.

CARES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS (CES)

Since the CARES Community Engagement Sessions were the central component of the CARES process, there was a tremendous effort prior to the first meeting to communicate the importance of the process to the entire community.

Thousands of letters and postcards were sent to community residents, phone calls were made and e-mails were sent to countless community members. Press releases were sent to local media outlets, postings were made on Facebook, and a special web site was established to promote involvement in the process. Samples of the communication pieces are included in the final report binder.

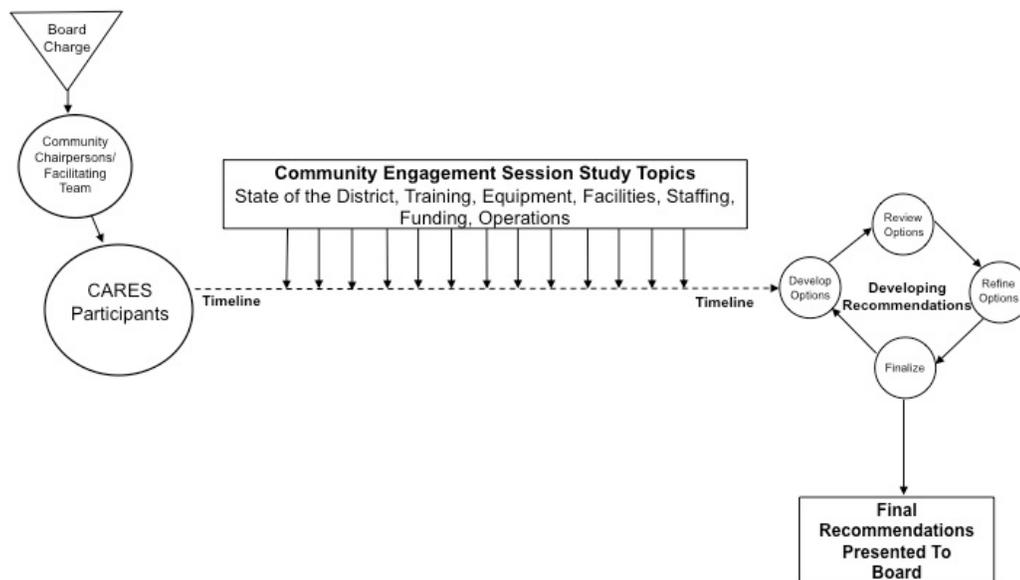
The goal was to use every means possible to reach out and invite all District residents to participate in the process. Prior to each subsequent meeting personal phone calls, press releases, e-mails and other communication helped to provide meeting reminders and other information to participants. In October a special community leaders breakfast was held to help spread the word about the process.

PARTICIPANTS (continued)

Attendance at the CARES meetings was consistent, with the top attendance being 36 and average attendance being around 15 participants. Fifty-five individuals attended and participated in at least one CARES Community Engagement Session, with more than 20 attending multiple sessions. A list of all the participants is included in the final report binder.

PROCESS

There were six CARES meetings from September to November 2011. The key study topics covered at each session were determined at the first meeting when participants went through an exercise to identify the top issues, topics, and questions to be addressed during the CARES process. The flow chart below provides a picture of the CARES process. The information in the chart should be viewed from left to right.



Step 1

The Board made the decision to move forward with the planning initiative and adopted the charge. This set the direction and parameters for the planning effort.

Step 2

Facilitating Team that would provide the leadership and guidance for the entire process is built. The first task in building this team was to identify and enlist key community members to serve as chairs of the effort.

Step 3

Build participation in the community-wide CARES effort. The approach for inviting participation was two-fold— recruitment and all call.

The recruitment effort included creating a database listing specific names and addresses of potential individuals who would receive a special invitation to participate.

PROCESS (continued)

This list included those who had recently utilized CFPD services or participated in a Cottleville Community Outreach event, civic and business membership lists, and other lists that could be generated.

As noted earlier, thousands of District constituents on this master database received personal letters or postcards announcing the process, and inviting them to participate.



The process was given an official name CARES – Citizens Advancing Responsible Emergency Services and project logo. This logo was used on all communication and meeting items.

To promote and provide continual communication support throughout the project, the District used several communications vehicles:

- Special invitation letters
- Press releases
- Posters
- Post Cards
- Social Media
- E-Mails
- Mentions in speeches given by District officials throughout the community

Copies of these communication materials are provided in the final report binder.

Step 4

After a thorough job of inviting the public to participate, it was time to begin the actual planning effort. A schedule was developed that would allow an appropriate amount of time between meetings to adequately prepare informational presentations. This time also allowed participants to process and digest the information and discussions.

The first CARES Community Engagement Session was held on Sept. 8, 2011. The purpose of this meeting was to provide a thorough orientation to the process along with an overview of the State of the District, and receive input and direction from participants regarding the major issues that would be studied during the process. Feedback from participants at that meeting was tabulated and summarized. This provided the basis for developing presentations for the remaining portion of the planning effort.

Everything throughout the process was data driven. Standards and requirements from organizations such as ISO (Insurance Services Office) and NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) along with numerous research studies were used in each informational presentation. CARES also identified benchmark fire districts for comparisons. Additional information learned by participants throughout the process is included in the key information section of this report.

PROCESS (continued)

In addition to an orientation meeting at the beginning of the process, and a recommendations meeting at the end of the process, topics for the CARES meetings were as follows:

| Meeting Date | Topic | Presenter |
|--------------|---|---|
| September 8 | Kick-Off Meeting Orientation to the Process State of the Cottleville Fire Protection District | Kim King Jason Duncan Chief Rob Wylie |
| September 22 | Staffing | Chief Rob Wylie |
| October 6 | Equipment | Assistant Chief Scott Freitag |
| October 25 | Operations, Facilities & Programs | Assistant Chief Scott Freitag |
| November 3 | Fire District Finance 101 | Chief Rob Wylie |
| November 17 | Draft Recommendations Presented | Community Chairs |

Each CES followed a specific, timed agenda. The session began with a brief recap of the preceding meeting and a review of the materials in the agenda packet. Following these explanations was an informational PowerPoint presentation on the designated topic for the evening. During the equipment meeting participants were also given the opportunity to see hands-on equipment demonstrations. Professionals and experts in each topic area gave the presentations. A copy of each presentation is provided in the final report notebook.

All presentations were rehearsed and critiqued by the Facilitating Team in advance. The Facilitating Team continuously evaluated the CARES process.

The formal presentation at each meeting was followed by a specific work activity. Participants worked in small groups (4 to 7 per table) to complete the activity. Participants were randomly assigned to a small group as they arrived for the session. The intent was to create an opportunity for participants to meet new people each time and hear different perspectives from a variety of individuals.

Each small group selected its own recorder and spokesperson. The recorder was instructed to complete the worksheet based on the consensus or general agreement of the group. Following the small group work the spokesperson from each group was invited to share the main ideas from the group with all the participants at the session. The work activity form was then collected from each table for documentation. Each CARES session concluded with a preview of the topic for the next session.

PROCESS (continued)

Following each meeting, specific reports were produced for distribution at the next meeting. These reports provided documentation of the information presented and summary work of the small groups. The reports included the following: Verbatim Responses (table-by-table comments from small group work) and an Executive Summary of the small group work (all tables). Copies of these documents from each meeting are included in the final report binder.

Step 5

The final section of the process chart is the recommendations phase. Following all of the topic presentations, The data from CARES presentation and the feedback from community participants resulted in a set of recommendations to help maintain quality emergency services now and in the future.

CARES OPEN HOUSES

Following the draft recommendations meeting, open houses were held at each of the firehouses. These were held to give even more community members the opportunity to provide feedback on the CARES recommendations. Nearly 1,000 people attended one of the Open Houses.

PRODUCT

The final section of the process chart is the recommendations phase. The final CARES meeting was devoted to reviewing and reacting to a set of recommendations. The FT then considered these suggestions in developing the next version of the recommendations, which were shared at the Open Houses. Following the Open Houses the FT worked together to create the recommendations for the Board.

The list of recommendations outline a long-range master plan to guide CFPD for the next several years. The recommendations are the final product of the CARES process.