

Williamson County ESD No.2

2023 - 2027 Strategic Plan



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1. Open Letters

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WILLIAMSON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT #2

16248 Great Oaks Drive, Round Rock, TX 78681

Hello Neighbors,

January 7th, 2011, I took an oath to serve as commissioner of Williamson County Emergency Services District no. 2. (WilCo ESD2) As a retired firefighter and hazardous materials coordinator, my ambition at the time was to contribute my knowledge and experience to improve fire and emergency services in the unincorporated community where I lived.

An Emergency Service District (ESD) is a political subdivision authorized by Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 775. Voters approved the creation of WilCo ESD2 in an election of 1995. Since that time WilCo ESD2 has contracted with Sam Bass Fire Department to provide service to the approximately fifteen square mile area that includes nearly 8,500 homes, 2 multi-family complexes, 264 businesses and an estimated 32,500 residents.

Since 2011, the ESD has greatly improved operations, and investments. We have added a third station north of Brushy Creek, this station houses three new apparatus, and is manned by four full time firefighters/EMTs. Previously this area had been isolated in floods and other emergencies. Average response times have dropped from 7.25 minutes to under 6 minutes at last monthly report.

Recently, meeting with Sam Bass FD staff we identified areas of improvement that we want to focus on. These areas are:

- Replacement of Aging Front Line Fleet
- Enhance Employee Benefits to Aid in Recruitment and Retention
- Repair and Remodel Stations One and Two
- Enhance Community Risk Reduction Program

The fifth and final step going forward will be:

- Financing the above while continuing to provide first-rate service.

Moving forward with these initiatives will require a commitment from personnel, as well as our constituents. During a recent statewide conference, it was explained that per capita, municipalities operate their fire departments on budgets of two to three times those in unincorporated areas. This finance differentiation is our biggest obstacle in serving the Williamson County ESD#2 customers.

Sincerely,

Thom Nanninga, President
WilCo ESD#2



Sam Bass Fire Department

16248 Great Oaks Dr.
Round Rock, Texas 78681
512-255-0100 Office
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I am pleased to present the 2023-2027 strategic plan for Sam Bass Fire Department/Williamson County ESD #2. The basic concept surrounding strategic planning is allowing the agency to look at where it has been, where it is now, and where it wants to go. In meetings between the department and the board several programs currently in place were in need of improvement. It was determined in order to improve these areas while maintaining fiscal responsibility, a strategic plan needed to be developed. Two ESD Commissioners along with myself and Assistant Chief Farris had several meetings to determine the top four strategic initiatives. The top four initiative determined were:

- Replacement of Aging Front Line Fleet
- Enhance Employee Benefits to Aid in Recruitment and Retention
- Enhance Community Risk Reduction Program
- Repair and Remodel Stations One and Two

The fire service today is changing and the reality is that the fire service of tomorrow will change as well. The men and women of the Sam Bass Fire Department provide a high quality of service. Through planning and implementation, the department will improve and be able to continue to provide a high quality of service to the community we serve.

David W. Kieschnick

Fire Chief

Sam Bass Fire Department

2. Strategic Planning Process

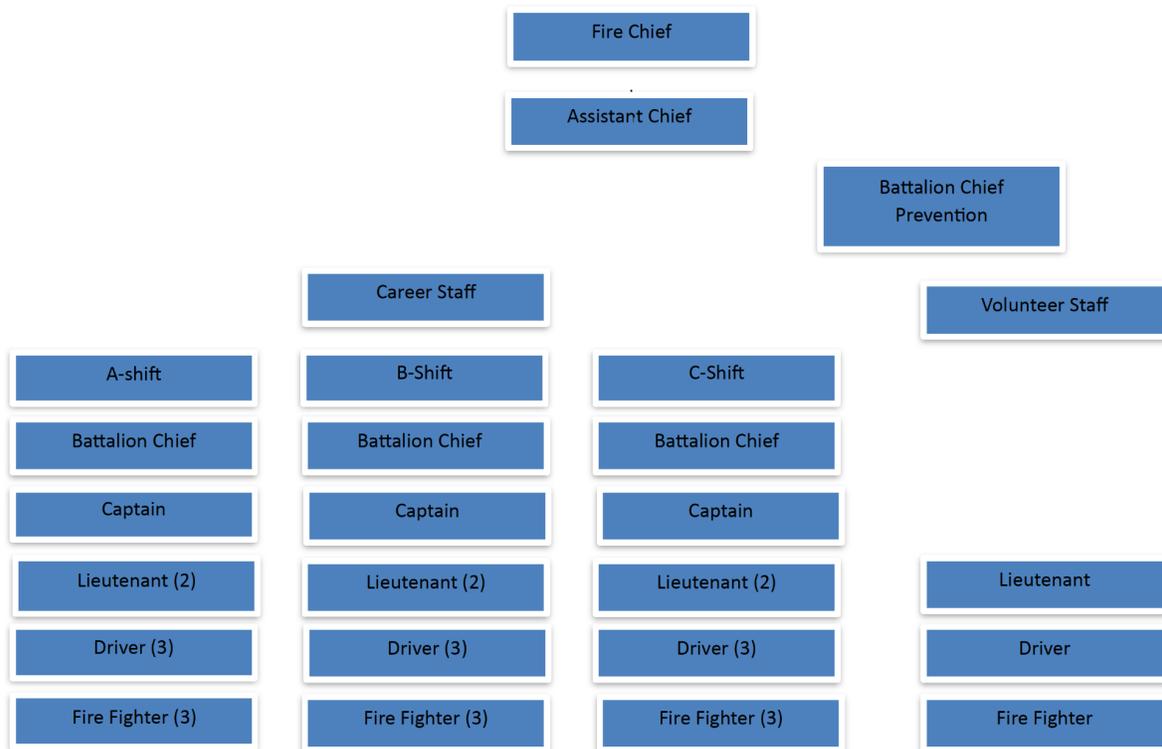
A Strategic Planning Committee was started by Commissioner Jordan Baltazor in December 2021 in collaboration with Board President Thom Nanninga, Sam Bass FD Chief David Kieschnick, and Sam Bass FD Assistant Chief Keith Farris. This plan is a result of the work of the Strategic Planning Committee.

The committee identified recent areas of strength and areas of opportunity for improvement. The resulting plan addresses the most strategic areas of opportunity to be addressed over the next five years.

| Areas of Strength | Areas of Opportunity |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintaining service and staffing levels during the COVID-19 pandemic ● Increasing call volumes have been handled with decreasing response times ● Begin to address existing pay/benefit needs to attract and retain appropriate staff ● Appropriate investment and stewardship of taxpayer resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Replace aging apparatus ● Employee recruiting and retention ● Community Risk Reduction Program ● Station 1 & 2 remodel/repair ● Increasing EMS call volumes ● Add additional company at Station 2 ● Diversify ESD revenue sources |

3. Organizational Background

Sam Bass Fire Department is staffed daily by ten paid crew members (three per station), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, operating on a 24 hours-on / 48 hours-off rotating schedule. There are currently over 30 paid crew members and a fluctuating number of volunteers.



4. Economics & Demographics

Emergency Service Districts (ESDs) are local political subdivisions of the State of Texas that may provide fire, rescue, emergency medical services (EMS) and other emergency services. ESDs are designed to ensure adequate funding of local fire, EMS, rescue, and other emergency services. Emergency Service Districts are NOT a municipal or county entity.

An important principle behind ESDs is to spread the funding for vital emergency services amongst everyone within the District that might depend on those services. ESDs are primarily funded by an ad valorem (property) tax. ESDs may also levy a sales and use tax for additional funding. ESD tax revenues mean more time to focus on training and the provision of emergency services rather than fundraising and other activities. Through stable funding, many established ESDs have considerably reduced fire and medical response times and allowed local entities to provide enhanced services, thus saving lives, property, and funds for local citizens.

ESDs are created under Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 775. As a political subdivision of the State of Texas, an ESD may: (1) acquire, purchase, hold, lease, manage, occupy, and sell real and personal property or an interest in property; (2) enter into and perform necessary contracts; (3) appoint and employ necessary officers, agents, and employees; (4) sue and be

sued; (5) impose and collect taxes as prescribed in this chapter; (6) accept and receive donations; (7) lease, own, maintain, operate, and provide emergency services vehicles and other necessary or proper apparatus, instrumentalities, equipment, and machinery to provide emergency services; (8) construct, lease, own, and maintain real property, improvements, and fixtures necessary to house, repair, and maintain emergency services vehicles and equipment; (9) contract with other entities, include other districts or municipalities, to make emergency services facilities and emergency services available to the district; (10) contract with other entities, including other districts or municipalities, for reciprocal operation of services and facilities if the contracting parties find that reciprocal operation would be mutually beneficial and not detrimental to the district; (11) borrow money; and perform other acts necessary to carry out the intent of Chapter 775 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.

ESD Taxing Authority

As a governmental entity, the primary source of funds for an ESD is tax revenue. An ESD has two primary methods of securing this revenue - *Ad Valorem (Property) Tax* and *Sales and Use Tax*. An ESD may impose an ad valorem tax on all real and personal property within the District that is subject to taxation. The current maximum allowable rate of taxation for some ESDs across the state is \$0.10/\$100 of valuation. ESDs are also one of a select group of local political subdivisions that are eligible to levy a local sales and use tax, subject to voter approval. The maximum sales tax rate in Texas is 8.25%. Of that number, 6.25% is reserved and collected by the State of Texas. The remaining 2% sales tax rate is available for ESDs to collect in increments of $\frac{1}{8}$ % up to 2% if it is available.

District History

The Sam Bass Fire Department began in 1980 as the Sam Bass Company of the Round Rock Volunteer Fire Department and was staffed solely by volunteers. There were 10 charter members at that time and the annual operating budget was roughly \$25,000. All support was received through generous donations from the public.

The original two fire trucks were a used 1971 brush truck that came from the oil fields and a 1946 Chevy pumper. They were housed in a 2-car garage that also served as the meeting and training facility. In 1984, the department obtained its first Class-A pumper and in the late 1980's the Brushy Creek MUD donated a portable building that served as the first real classroom and office for the fire department.

In the early 1990's, three bays were built at Station 1 and the previous building was donated to a local church and hauled away. Over the years, two more bays have been added, along with a conference room, foyer, and living quarters for the crews.

Current Board Members

- Thomas Nanninga (2021-2022) - President
- Russell Strahan (2022-2023) - Vice President
- Tim Hunsberger (2022-2023) - Treasurer
- Darryl Pool (2022-2023) - Secretary
- Jordan Baltazor (2021-2022) - Assistant Treasurer/Secretary

6. Department Mission and Principles

MISSION

“TO PRESERVE LIFE AND PROPERTY”

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ensuring and protecting the public’s safety is our primary concern. We will do everything in our power to separate hazardous and destructive threats from the people that rely on us and the property in our jurisdiction.

PUBLIC TRUST

The public’s trust is vital to the successful operation of the Sam Bass Fire Department. We will conduct ourselves with honesty, integrity, honor, and respect to ensure that trust is maintained.

PUBLIC SERVICE

It is important to the Sam Bass Fire Department that our department is viewed as providing more than just an emergency response. While we will always maintain emergency readiness, it is our goal that we also provide an array of services that support the well-being of our community.

7. Strategic Initiatives

7.1. Replacement of Aging Front Line Fleet

One of the biggest challenges that the District faces is fleet replacement. An aging fleet, apparatus mechanical issues, lack of a defined replacement plan, and funding plan are a great

portion of the challenges we face. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is a globally recognized nonprofit organization, which delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research, training, education, outreach and advocacy. Williamson County ESD #2 recognizes and subscribes to the standards set forth by the NFPA.

NFPA 1911, outlines the standards for equipment maintenance, testing and replacement. In addition, technology changes and upgrades impact fleet replacement plans as well. One of our objectives here is to create a staggered/strategic outline for replacement. We have included in this plan the above factors, which have created difficult decisions for the ESD board. Below, Appendix A outlines the replacement plan of WilCo ESD2/Sam Bass Fire Dept.

7.2. Enhance Employee Benefits to Aid in Recruitment and Retention

We would like to increase both PTO and the 401k with a matching option to help increase the interest to work for the Sam Bass Fire Department and to also retain those quality individuals we already have on staff. We have an average employee turnover rate of 43.8% over the last two years to other local fire departments due to their being able to offer higher pay and better employee benefits than we can offer.

*As of 3/30/2022 this was the make –up of the Sam Bass FD.

- 17 Full-time employees
- 26 Split-shift employees
- 10 PRN employees

We currently offer PTO in four segments. After one full calendar year of employment up to five years and an employee earns time off by hours work the previous calendar year up to year five at 1200 to 2399 hours per year earn 1.5 shifts off per year and after five years will earn 3 shifts. An employee working 2400+ hours earns 3 shifts per year and after five will earn 6 shifts per year.

Sam Bass Fire Department (SBFD) currently offers a 401k program available to any employee after meeting eligibility requirements. This is a voluntary program for the employees to have without any matching from SBFD at this time due to budget constraints.

There is a proposition to increase Paid Time off (PTO/Vacation/Sick Leave) and add a matching option to an already offered 401k program that has been in place since the year 2004. This program has been in place as is since the opening of Station 2 and due to budget constraints.

*Provided by Battalion Chief Justin Whitaker

7.3. Enhance Community Risk Reduction Program

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard 1730 states:

“Conducting a Community Risk Assessment is the first step toward management of risk based on local needs and circumstances. It is intended to collect and analyze data to make decisions about programs and resources necessary for the implementation of a Community Risk Reduction Plan (CRRP).”

A CRA represents the first two steps in a 6-step community risk reduction program, shown here:



Williamson County ESD #2 along with Sam Bass Fire Department have a long history in being actively involved in providing fire protection, inspection, and education to the community of which we serve. As the community continues to evolve, the District needs to evaluate and evolve our techniques and priorities to ensure our Community Risk Reduction Program is meeting the needs of our customers.

7.4. Repair and Remodel Stations One and Two

Station One (17505 Great Oaks Drive) was last updated in 1998 and Station Two (16248 Great Oaks Drive) was completed in 2001. Both stations are staffed 24/7/365 and are in need of repairs and upgrades. Specifically to each location:

Station One



- Replacement of the HVAC systems (all the current units are original to the building)
- Replacement of kitchen cabinets
- Flooring throughout the living areas
- Interior paint throughout the living areas
- Address site drainage issues
- Repair exterior openings to prevent leakage
- Additional insulation to improve energy efficiency

Station Two



- Floorplan changes to move turnout gear storage to the closets in the apparatus bay and move station supply storage to climate controlled environment
- New flooring throughout the living areas and office spaces
- Interior paint throughout the living areas and office spaces
- Replacement of ceiling tiles as needed

Over the years routine maintenance and repairs to both these facilities have taken place. After twenty plus years, both are in need of significant upgrades.

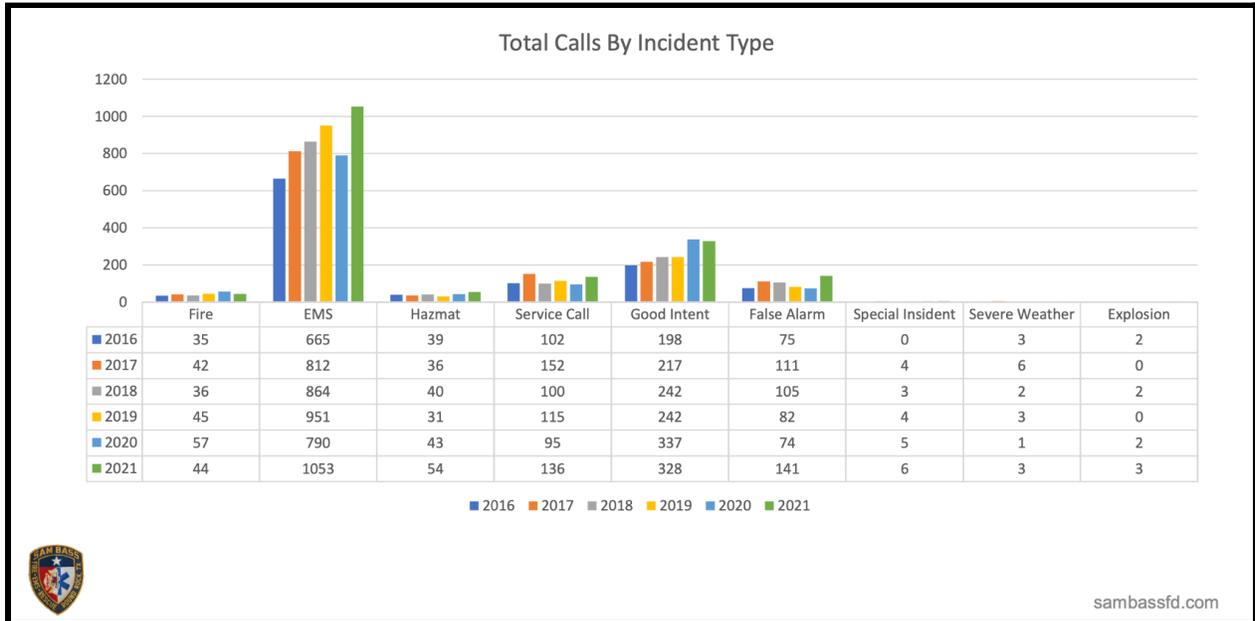
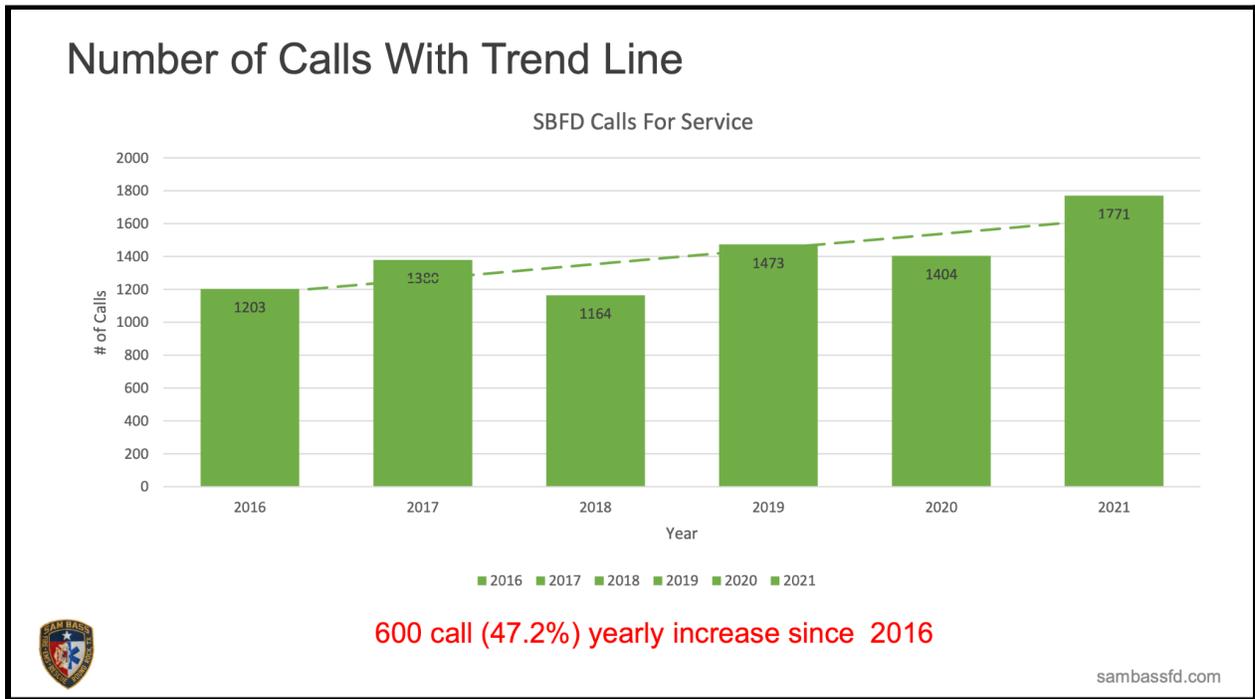
Appendix A - Vehicle Replacement Plan

Replacement List

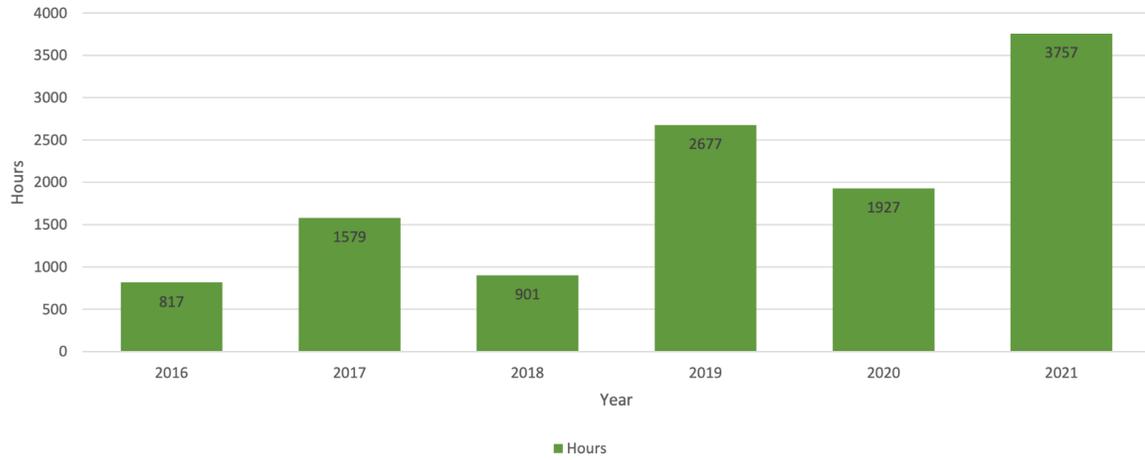
| Year | Vehicle | Make | Model | Lifespan | Replacement Year* |
|------|----------|--------------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 2004 | Engine 2 | Pierce | Quantum | 15 Years | 2022 |
| 2003 | Engine 1 | Pierce | Quantum | 15 Years | 2024 |
| 2005 | Command | Chevy | Tahoe | 20 Years | 2024 |
| 2004 | Ladder 1 | Pierce | Dash | 15 Years | 2026 |
| 2001 | Tender 1 | Freightliner | Semo | 15 Years | 2028 |

*Purchase Order Date

Appendix B - Call Volume



SBFD Training Hours



sambassfd.com