CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide a brief overview of the Township of Lower Merion, its location, demographics and governance.

This Chapter also provides basic information regarding the fire, rescue and emergency medical services (EMS) delivery agencies, the background and framework for the development of this Study and a discussion of current and local fire service trends.

THE SETTING

The Township of Lower Merion is located in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. It is surrounded by the City of Philadelphia and the following municipalities in both Montgomery and Delaware Counties:

- Upper Merion Township
- Whitemarsh Township
- Borough of West Conshohocken
- Borough of Conshohocken
- Haverford Township
- Radnor Township

Figure 1.1 includes maps reflecting the Township of Lower Merion in Montgomery County and the location of Montgomery County in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

The Township of Lower Merion dates back to 1682 when it was first settled. Today, Lower Merion consists of 23.64 square miles and is recognized as an attractive and affluent residential community located along Philadelphia’s Main Line in the Delaware Valley area.

As stated in the Township’s website, “Fine homes and estates, excellent highways, exclusive shops and department stores, luxury apartment houses, stately church edifices, some
INTRODUCTION

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION (continued)

buildings dating back to the 17th century, and superior public, private and parochial schools and colleges characterize the Township."

Transportation Routes and Waterways

Major highways and roadways that either border or transit the Township of Lower Merion include:

- City Avenue (U.S. Route 1);
- Lancaster Avenue (U.S. Route 30);
- State Route 320;
- Conshohocken State Road (State Route 23);
- Blue Route Expressway (I-476 (Blue Route); and,
- Schuylkill Expressway (I-76 (Expressway).

Additionally, the Schuylkill River forms the border of Lower Merion and rail lines transit the Township, including:

- Septa passenger lines;
- Amtrak: Ardmore Station; and,
- Norfolk Southern: Freight Line.

Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. census, the population of the Township was 59,850 with an estimated number of persons per square mile of 2,532. Since that time, the population of the Township seems to be decreasing very slightly, since, according to the Bureau, in 2003 the population was 59,740 and, according to the County, the population of the Township in 2005 was 59,520.
INTRODUCTION

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION (continued)

Further, according to the 2000 U. S. Census, the median value of single family homes was $341,100, the median household income was $86,373 and there were 23,699 housing units in the Township. Moreover, renter-occupied units accounted for 24.5 percent, while owners accounted for 75.5 percent of housing units. Finally, the median age of the population was 41.2 years.

Township Governance

The Township of Lower Merion operates under the council-manager form of government. The Township is governed by a fourteen-member Board of Commissioners. The commissioners are elected by ward to serve overlapping four-year terms. The board is the responsible legislative body and provides overall policy and direction to the Township. As a Township of the First Class, the Township’s board enacts ordinances and resolutions, as required.

The Township Manager is appointed by the Board of Commissioners to serve as the chief executive officer who oversees the day-to-day operation of the Township.

BOROUGH OF NARBERTH

The Borough of Narberth is a separate one-half square mile political entity located entirely within the boundaries of Lower Merion Township.

The Borough provides most of its own community services, including the operation of its own police, transportation and streets departments. The Narberth Fire Company provides fire protection to the Borough of Narberth and a non-Borough portion of the Township. It is supported directly in many ways by the Borough.
INTRODUCTION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Lower Merion Township is located in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Montgomery County has a population of 775,688 and is the third largest county in the state. Within the County's 482.4 square miles, there are 62 municipalities, each with its own governmental structure. These municipalities include 24 boroughs, 12 first class townships, including the Township of Lower Merion, and 26 second class townships.

Public safety services in Montgomery County are decentralized and primarily focused at the municipality and local level.

Emergency dispatch services for the Lower Merion fire and emergency medical services are provided by the calltakers and fire dispatchers of the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety. Moreover, the training staff of the department provides substantial national and state standard-based fire and rescue training and certification services to the members of the Lower Merion Fire Department (LMFD).

LOWER MERION FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire protection and related services are provided to the Township by the Lower Merion Fire Department, which is headed by the chief fire officer. The primary operational fire services are provided through the seven-member, largely volunteer-staffed, fire companies. Each of the fire companies is headed by a chief of that fire company district.

The fire companies include:

- Belmont Hills Fire Company
- Bryn Mawr Fire Company
- Gladwyne Fire Company
- Merion Fire Company of Ardmore
- Narberth Fire Company
- Penn Wynne/Overbrook Hills Fire Company
INTRODUCTION

LOWER MERION FIRE DEPARTMENT (continued)

- Union Fire Association of Lower Merion

Each fire company operates from its own fire station. In addition to the fire company chief, each fire company includes a number of other volunteer operational officers that may include one or more deputy chief, assistant chief, captain and/or lieutenant positions. The administrative officers of each of the fire companies include a president for administrative aspects of the fire company and a number of volunteer administrative officers that may also include vice president, treasurer, assistant treasurer, secretary and financial secretary.

Each fire company employs at least two full-time paid staff members, generally referred to as “housemen,” who function as firefighters and/or engineers. The hiring criteria, daily duties and responsibilities, training requirements, supervisory structure, pay, benefits, working hours, employment rules and regulations and utilization during emergency incidents varies significantly among the seven member fire companies. The funding for providing these paid housemen (to be referred to in this report as paid firefighters) is largely provided by Township and Borough taxpayers.

The Township employees who are part of the LMFD Office include the chief fire officer, deputy chief fire officer, three deputy fire marshals and one administrative secretary. These staff members provide LMFD leadership and command, fire-related emergency management, training, building inspections, plans review, public fire safety education, fire origin and cause, and arson investigation services.

LMFD Mission Statement

The official mission statement of the Lower Merion Fire Department is as follows:

“To provide the highest level of fire protection necessary to minimize life and property losses through stringent code regulation, fire prevention and improved suppression capability”.

Carroll Buracker & Associates, Inc. 5
INTRODUCTION

LOWER MERION FIRE DEPARTMENT (continued)

LMFD Staffing

The reported staffing of the various components of the LMFD in May 2007, totaling 309, included:

- 43 volunteer fire company officers
- 240 volunteer firefighters
- 20 paid firefighters working in the fire stations
- 6 Township employees in the Fire Department Office

Fire Companies

The following offers some basic information regarding each of the seven LMFD fire companies.

Belmont Hills Fire Company

- Montgomery County Station 22
- Location: 4 S. Washington Avenue, Belmont Hills
- Originally established: 1919

The Belmont Hills Fire Company operates one pumper, one heavy rescue unit, and a ladder truck. The rescue unit operated by Belmont Hills is one of two heavy rescue units operated in the Township. The Belmont fire station is located near the entrance to the Schuylkill Expressway and the fire company responds to over 185 calls per year on that highly traveled, limited access highway.

Bryn Mawr Fire Company

- Montgomery County Station 23
INTRODUCTION

LOWER MERION FIRE DEPARTMENT (continued)

- Location: 901 Lancaster Avenue, Bryn Mawr
- Originally established: 1904

This fire station is the most active of the LMFD in terms of incident call workload. Part of its workload relates to responses into Radnor Township which accounts for nearly half of its overall workload. The Bryn Mawr Fire Company operates two pumpers and a ladder truck. Bryn Mawr is also responsible for one of the two county decontamination trailer units located in the Township.

Gladwyne Fire Company

- Montgomery County Station 24
- Location: 1044 Black Rock Road, Gladwyne
- Originally established: 1944

The Gladwyne primary service area includes a very upscale, largely residential area of Lower Merion. This fire company operates two pumpers, a tiller aerial ladder truck, the LMFD’s only air/light unit, a utility and two small boats for water rescue purposes.

Merion Fire Company of Ardmore

- Montgomery County Station 25
- Location: 35 Greenfield Avenue, Ardmore
- Originally formed: 1890

The Merion Fire Company provided the first fire protection in Lower Merion Township when formed in 1890. Today, they operate with two pumpers and one aerial ladder.
INTRODUCTION

LOWER MERION FIRE DEPARTMENT (continued)

Narberth Fire Company

- Montgomery County Station 26
- Location: 100 Conway Avenue, Narberth
- Originally established: 1897

The Narberth Fire Company operates with three pumpers and one aerial ladder truck. Narberth provides fire and rescue services to the Borough of Narberth and a portion of the Township of Lower Merion.

The Narberth Fire Company is unique in that it is located in the Borough of Narberth, which provides the majority of its tax funding.

Penn Wynne/Overbrook Hills Fire Company

- Montgomery County Station 21
- Location: Manoa and Rock Roads, Wynnewood
- Originally established: 1929

One pumper, a heavy rescue unit and one aerial ladder truck are operated by Penn Wynne. They are also responsible for one of the two Montgomery County decontamination trailer units.

Union Fire Association of Lower Merion

- Montgomery County Station 28
- Location: 149 Montgomery Avenue, Bala Cynwyd
- Originally established: 1903

Union operates one pumper, a ladder tower truck and a utility truck.
INTRODUCTION

DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The Narberth Community Ambulance, also known as the Volunteer Medical Service Corps of Lower Merion and Narberth, provides pre-hospital emergency medical care and transport to the residents of the Township and surrounding areas. The Narberth Community Ambulance headquarters location of operations is within Lower Merion at 121 Sibley Avenue, in the Ardmore section of Lower Merion.

Narberth Ambulance is managed operationally by a chief supported by a number of operational officers: deputy chief, assistant chief, battalion chief, shift captains and administrative captain. A chief officer functions as the coordinator and supervisor of day-to-day operations. Narberth Ambulance is largely a paid organization that includes full-time EMS providers, including EMT-P (paramedic) certified staff. Additionally, there are a number of volunteer members who provide supplemental staffing on an “as available” basis.

This planning effort did not include a review of the Narberth Community Ambulance, but the provision of emergency medical services was considered by the Study Team during the course of this evaluation. The importance of EMS provision and the team effort involved in the provision of fire and emergency medical services in a community such as Lower Merion Township cannot be ignored.

CHANGING FIRE SERVICE TRENDS

The fire and EMS services today are evolving nationwide for a number of reasons, not the least of which are the changing complexities of the communities served. A variety of trends and issues in local government are requiring municipalities to consider changes in the fire service as part of an overall strategy to solve a number of problems. While the issue of recruitment and retention of volunteers in the fire service is a complex and challenging problem for local communities served by volunteers, a brief review of several other trends and issues affecting local municipalities and their fire services is outlined in the next several sections.
INTRODUCTION

CHANGING FIRE SERVICE TRENDS (continued)

More than any period in recent history, changes in local governments are having, and will continue to have, a significant impact on the fire service. The fire service, known for its traditionalism, is having to confront these changes at an unprecedented rate. Certain trends for the next decade are becoming more apparent. These can be categorized into five general headings:

1. Concerns about the environment;
2. Scientific and technological advancements;
3. Fire and injury prevention, and public education;
4. Fiscal constraint; and,
5. Role of fire departments.

Concern About the Environment

During the 1980s, worldwide concern about the environment impacted every facet of life. Businesses and industries had to respond responsibly by adapting their way of doing business to protect the environment. "Changes in the natural environment may necessitate revolutionary changes in the fire service," stated Herman W. Brice, Chief Fire Administrator, Palm Beach County Fire Rescue Department. Brice, a noted fire expert, referred to water shortages and concern about water runoff as issues which may force the fire service to develop alternate means of extinguishment. With a perceived increase in global warming among major scientists, there may be an increase in the number of natural disasters to which the fire service must respond.

Part of this attitude about the environment stems from an overall concern of people toward their safety. The public is demanding that risks be lowered, and that they be shielded from potential harm. This results in legislation and regulations regarding hazardous materials, and increased pressure for code enforcement.
INTRODUCTION

CHANGING FIRE SERVICE TRENDS (continued)

The concern for personal safety extends beyond the general public. Fire service personnel who previously showed little concern for their own well-being, especially in emergency situations, are increasingly aware of the dangers inherent in their work. They are demanding that their risks of injury and illness be reduced through standards, regulations, training, safe equipment, and personal protection. These demands are increasing personnel and other costs associated with the fire service, and are necessitating changes in the way fire suppression is conducted. The demands are also resulting in greater focus by management on the employee/volunteer as a valuable resource.

Concerns for the employee/volunteer are extending beyond fireground safety issues. Employee/volunteer assistance programs, wellness programs, physical fitness programs, and critical incident stress debriefings (CISD) are emerging as common approaches to employee/volunteer health and safety.

Changes in the American workforce also affect the fire service. Increasingly, women and minorities are becoming vital members of the fire service. While many fire departments have started addressing these overdue workforce changes, many still have the attitude that “it won't happen to my department.” The impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) still is yet to be fully recognized by the fire service; legislation may cause the service to rethink its philosophy regarding qualifications to be a firefighter in today's world.

The proliferation of regulations is having a significant impact on the fire service. Occupational safety and health organizations have started enforcing regulations pertaining to the fire service and other public service agencies. New regulations regarding hazardous materials and the recent regulations related to blood-borne pathogens have placed significant requirements on the fire service, including training of personnel, providing proper protection, and providing the resources necessary to fully implement the regulations. For the future, the work environment in the fire service will become more regulated from both outside and inside the fire protection community. While most of these regulations should enhance the fire
INTRODUCTION

CHANGING FIRE SERVICE TRENDS (continued)

service's preparedness, there will be additional costs associated with operating a 21st century fire department.

Scientific and Technological Advancements

The technological trends will make the work of persons involved in fire and safety services easier and yet more challenging. The increasing sophistication of electronic detection and early activation of suppression systems will reduce the risk of devastating fires. Computer technology will enhance not only notification and dispatch specialties, but also the response sequence and maintenance of data. With improved data management systems brought about by the increased utilization of computers, the fire service will be able to provide more timely and complete evaluation of community needs, and the appropriate response to meet these needs.

Improvements in technology may also enhance the ability of fire personnel to perform certain functions, such as fire inspections, plan reviews and dispatching. Further, technology is likely to impact the staffing requirements to perform these functions. Overall, improved technology may help prevent fires and provide more efficient work performance. The end result is an anticipated decrease in the number of personnel in the fire service work force.

Fire/Injury Prevention and Public Education

Fire/injury prevention and public education have become one of the main activities to which more time, attention, and resources will be devoted in the fire service in the future. Over the past several decades, the fire service has been very effective in reducing the number of fires and losses due to fires, through fire prevention programs and public education. Many fire service leaders now believe that the same lessons learned in developing effective public education programs can be applied to injury prevention programs. A significant reduction in the number of injuries is a goal. Public education programs can help reduce the number of injuries; moreover, public education should help individuals become more aware of early
INTRODUCTION

CHANGING FIRE SERVICE TRENDS (continued)

warning signs for various illnesses, so that timely intervention can occur and prevent complications.

Part of the public interest in health has centered around the ability to provide help during a crisis situation. For quite some time, fire and EMS companies have been looked upon as a source for public training to handle emergencies. For example, self help programs such as citizen CPR and “what to do before an ambulance arrives” are programs provided by fire/EMS services personnel. These programs not only serve to enhance the safety of the community and save lives, but are also excellent methods for fire departments to market their services. As funding of public agencies continues to be a major constraint on local government, the fire service must recognize the need for promoting its services to the community in order to secure community support for sufficient funding of the fire service.

One challenge of the next decade in public education and prevention programs will be in reaching target groups that are experiencing the most significant problems with life safety. These groups include the very young and the elderly as well as low-income and minority populations.

Fiscal Constraints

In local government, municipal administrators and elected officials have become frustrated with the loss of revenues and fiscal constraints imposed at the state and federal level. While revenues are being reduced, labor costs continue to rise. This has caused significant pressure on the municipalities to reduce other services to an even greater extent or raise taxes. Unfortunately, fiscal constraints can create suspicion and friction among administrators, elected officials and service providers.

Increases in legal action and litigation, both as a result of labor disputes as well as other legal issues, have also negatively impacted the availability of revenues to reward good employee/volunteer performance or enhance services. Municipal officials indicate that, as
INTRODUCTION

CHANGING FIRE SERVICE TRENDS (continued)

fiscal constraints have increased as a result of decreased revenues, litigation and associated expenses have increased.

These examples are only a few of the fiscal constraints that are negatively impacting local governments and causing officials to search for viable alternatives for maintaining strong volunteer fire and emergency medical services.

Role of Fire Departments

The future of the fire service will include not only an expanded role for fire departments, but also a more complex one. As noted earlier, fire service personnel will be increasingly required to protect the environment, promote public safety and education, and become or remain emergency care providers. Moreover, emergency medical services in the fire service (e.g., EMS first responder service) will become more important as the fire problems decrease, and the population in the U.S. becomes older.

Additionally, fire and EMS service personnel will require excellent interpersonal skills in order to interact well with the public. Customer service, a key to success in business, has become a more important part of the fire service.

Increasingly, Americans are demanding satisfaction, not only in consumer products, but also in public services, such as fire protection, for which they are paying. In the future, fire departments will be held more accountable to the citizens of their community for the services. This concept of accountability is likely to evolve into a quality assurance program, where a fire department's performance will be evaluated and measured against standards set by the community.

At the national level, progressive municipal officials and fire administrators are recognizing the inevitable changes. In making predictions about the future of fire service, Chief Brice of
INTRODUCTION

CHANGING FIRE SERVICE TRENDS (continued)

Palm Beach stated that “due to budget constraints, increased demand for service, and increased levels of training and certification requirements by state and federal agencies, emergency services providers and local governments will find it necessary to consolidate smaller departments into regional service providers to take advantage of broader tax bases.” Chief Brice also stated that more cooperation will be required in certain functional areas, such as training, in order to be cost-effective in providing the support services.

While the economy has taken an upswing in the past several years at the national level, the impact of past fiscal issues will linger into the future. The recent financial crisis has forced local governments to closely examine resources allocated to various services. Managers, including fire and emergency medical service managers, are being challenged with providing better and more services with fewer resources. Progressive leaders are accepting this challenge by working with government and the community in a partnership to provide and sometimes expand necessary services without an increase in resource allocation.

The trends impacting the fire service today and tomorrow should result in an improved fire service, safer communities, safer work environment, and an informed customer. However, professional fire personnel, both paid and volunteer, should be prepared for the challenge.

STUDY FRAMEWORK

The Study Team utilizes a modern, comprehensive and systematic industry-based framework for its analyses. The framework incorporates the model developed by the Accreditation Committee of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), a program of accreditation for and by fire agencies and personnel.

This fire department accreditation process is currently under the auspices of the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). Employing this model as a framework for the Lower Merion Fire Services Plan provides established criteria for the review and will provide the reader with information on the latest thinking in the fire service.
INTRODUCTION

STUDY FRAMEWORK (continued)

It should be noted that one CBI Study Team member is a certified peer assessor with the CFAI.

The analysis categories included in this model, and to be used as a general guide during this Study, are as follows:

1. Governance and Administration;
2. Community Assessment;
3. Goals and Objectives;
4. Programs;
5. Physical Resources;
6. Human Resources;
7. Training and Competency;
8. Essential Resources; and,
9. External Systems Relations.

Within each of these categories are criteria and considerations that were weighed by the Study Team in conducting this analysis. Criteria in these categories that were applicable to the Study areas were utilized.

In addition, the Study Team has developed a significant amount of customized material, applicable specifically to local fire departments. At the same time, there are several generic components that do not, based on their nature, vary from one system to the next, such as the description of the basic types of apparatus and equipment, the fire station location analysis model, and basic apparatus maintenance guidelines. As applicable, the Study Team has employed these basic criteria.
INTRODUCTION

STUDY FRAMEWORK (continued)

Standards and Accepted Practices

The Study Team utilized published fire protection standards and information on accepted principles and practices for the operation and management of fire services as background and guidelines for the conduct of this Study. Some of the key organizations with standards and publications utilized, as appropriate, as part of this planning effort include:

1. National Fire Protection Association;
2. Insurance Service Office (ISO) Commercial Risk Services, Inc.;
3. International Association of Fire Chiefs;
4. International City Management Association; and,
5. Federal and State OSHA.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) follows a nationally-recognized process for the establishment of many standards that are applicable to fire protection operations and administration. In many jurisdictions, some of the NFPA standards have been adopted and fully implemented while other NFPA standards are utilized as general guidelines for pursuing further improvement in safety and services. The following list includes some of the key NFPA standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Standard</th>
<th>NFPA Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications</td>
<td>1001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications</td>
<td>1002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications</td>
<td>1021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector, Fire Investigator, and Fire Education Officer</td>
<td>1031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Fire Protection Services for the Public</td>
<td>1201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Service Training Reports and Records</td>
<td>1401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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STUDY FRAMEWORK (continued)

- Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program 1500
- Fire Department Incident Management System 1561
- Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Resources 1720
- Pumper Fire Apparatus 1901
- Aerial Ladder and Elevating Platform Fire Apparatus 1904

These and other written standards and nationally-recognized documents, such as the current edition of the NFPA *Fire Protection Handbook*, were utilized by the Study Team as a framework for this planning project.

PERCEPTIONS OF LOWER MERION SERVICE PROVIDERS

The “themes” pertaining to positive and problematic areas were identified by the Study Team in the course of conducting interviews of volunteers and employees. To qualify as a theme, multiple volunteers/employees had to independently cite the area of strength or concern. The themes identified may not be factual, but leave no doubt that they are perceived as important areas.

The themes regarding strengths included:

1. The people are the strength of the organization;
2. Late model, state-of-the-art pieces of apparatus;
3. Company members operate in a well-organized and disciplined manner;
4. Members willing to take on any task;
5. Rescue unit and its equipment that allows us to function as a technical rescue unit with a decontamination trailer;
6. Great crew of workers that can work well together and know their job;
7. Each of the fire companies is unique;
8. The volunteers are the strength;
9. Members’ commitment to community service;
INTRODUCTION

PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE PROVIDERS (continued)

10. The hands-on training provided to the members;
11. Members’ willingness to learn;
12. Excellent Township support;
13. The great service provided to our community;
14. Our very diversified group of firefighters;
15. The “older guys” with a lot of really good experience;
16. The pride and tradition that comes with being a member of the fire company;
17. Good friends that gather at the station;
18. Good apparatus replacement program;
19. Having many “trades” experienced members (plumbers, electricians, etc.);
20. Good building improvement program;
21. High level of training and commitment to training;
22. Volunteer leadership;
23. A lot of pride and history in the fire companies; and,
24. The “junior” programs are being successful.

The themes included several areas for improvement:

1. Organization;
2. Staffing;
3. Training;
4. Safety;
5. Operations; and,

The themes resulting from service provider input in each of these areas for potential improvement will be discussed in each chapter related to these aspects of fire services delivery.
INTRODUCTION

PREVIOUS FIRE SERVICES STUDIES & REPORTS

The Study Team requested a copy of any prior fire studies, plans and/or memorandum. Copies of the following documents were provided:


B. Memorandum entitled “Fire Department Response and Compensation,” by Assistant Township Manager, Township of Lower Merion, June 25, 1969;

C. *Fire Station Location Study and Report* by Leon M. Karr, Superintendent of Fire, Township of Lower Merion, July, 1979;

D. Memorandum entitled “Fire Department Administration Office Staff Report,” by Keith E. Frederick, Township Manager, Township of Lower Merion, April 6, 1979;

E. *A Fire Services Survey of the Township of Lower Merion* by Burkell & Associates, July, 1990;

F. Memorandum entitled “Fire Department Services,” by Chief Fire Officer Harry R. Knorr, Jr., Township of Lower Merion, March 13, 1992; and,


The Study Team noted that a number of past studies and plans involving the Township of Lower Merion focused on fire stations and facilities. Other studies and memoranda related to organization, staffing and operations. Recommendations contained in the comprehensive study conducted by Burkell & Associates may still be relevant, and include:

1. Implement an operations section, in which approved company personnel function as Township-level command officers;

2. Implement a fire prevention section, which will increase the level of code enforcement and public education activities within the Township; this will necessitate an increase of three new positions;
INTRODUCTION

PREVIOUS FIRE SERVICES STUDIES AND REPORTS (continued)

3. Formulate a comprehensive plan to address recruitment of volunteer fire company personnel;
4. Develop a pension and retirement program for volunteer fire staff that will provide financial payments based on the number of years of service;
5. Develop a volunteer financial incentive plan for member retention;
6. Ensure that fire companies accepting any Township funding comply with Township guidelines/standards;
7. Address paid firefighter staffing by giving each fire company two options involving paid staff: (1) choose not to have paid staff or (2) accept paid firefighter staffing. All paid staff would be required to meet physical hiring standards, attain minimum training standards, be trained to driver/operator level, be paid according to standard wages and benefits, and perform consistent duties and work shifts;
8. Staff the fire prevention section with two additional inspectors;
9. Strengthen the fee and violation structure for fire and life safety code infractions;
10. Create a public educator position within the fire prevention section for Township-wide fire safety and burn prevention programs;
11. Implement a comprehensive training structure;
12. Mandate a minimum level of firefighter training for recruits;
13. Initiate a multi-company drill program on a regular basis;
14. Create a comprehensive written standard operating procedures manual for operations;
15. Create and implement performance standards and regularly provide feedback to all companies on the performance standards;
16. Initiate incident command system (ICS) training for all personnel;
17. Develop and implement an emergency vehicle operator course for all fire company personnel who drive/operate fire apparatus;
18. Develop and facilitate officer development programs;
INTRODUCTION

PREVIOUS FIRE SERVICES STUDIES AND REPORTS (continued)

19. Develop officer candidate training for fire company officer positions; require personnel to complete this training prior to rank attainment/promotion;
20. Establish a safety committee to develop a comprehensive safety plan;
21. Appoint a safety officer for each fire company;
22. Develop and foster team spirit through team building processes;
23. Develop a total quality management program to focus on both internal and external customer relations;
24. Implement a comprehensive awards and recognition process; and,
25. Accomplish future fire company fund raising through a coordinated campaign.

TOWNSHIP STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Township to be addressed in conducting this Study include:

• Provide recommendations for the preservation of the volunteer component of the fire service to the greatest and longest extent practical, and for retaining and recruiting volunteer members.

• Address the utilization of current paid fire personnel.

• Assess the Township Fire Department Office, including staffing levels.

• Assess volunteer staffing levels and daytime response.

• Evaluate the apparatus fleet and a replacement plan, to include apparatus location, type, number, maintenance, ownership, testing, funding and life cycle.
INTRODUCTION

TOWNSHIP STUDY OBJECTIVES (continued)

• Assess the number, location, ownership and response areas of each of the six fire stations within the Township with recommendations as to current and/or future needs.

• Identify operational issues facing the Fire Department Office and fire companies in accordance with appropriate NFPA, OSHA and EPA standards and best practices. Recommend improvements to the including present organizational, command and management structure of the emergency services.

• Assess the health, safety and wellness programs of the firefighters, including compliance with industry standards, such as NFPA 1500.

• Evaluate the training and professional development of both career and volunteer firefighters, ensuring compliance with departmental standard operating procedures and with industry standards and guidelines, such as 1001 and 1500.

• Assess incident command communications and procedures.

• Evaluate the existing coverage and utilization of the Lower Merion Township Fireman’s Relief Association funding support.

• Recommend enhancements to company fund-raising activities and performance.

• Assess Township funding of the Fire Companies.

• Identify capital and equipment needs (immediate, mid-term and future).
INTRODUCTION

TOWNSHIP STUDY OBJECTIVES (continued)

- Identify and assess local district mutual aid agreements.

- Develop working relationships with emergency service agencies within and outside of the Township.

- Designate services to be provided by each individual fire company in the context of a comprehensive response policy, with an attempt to reduce any redundancies.

- Establish goals and objectives of the fire service.

- Assess the Township’s emergency management plan as it relates to the Fire Department and the VMSC.

- Identify any other topic or area considered advisable for improved operations.
CHAPTER TWO:
FIRE SERVICES ORGANIZATION