

7.1 Introduction

Police, fire, emergency medical services, and emergency management are integral to the economic development and betterment of the community. Development and sustainability are dependent upon the City's public safety expertise since police, fire, emergency medical services, and emergency management define a community's quality of life and illustrate a community's character, brand, and vibrancy. Effective public safety is vital for outstanding community and economic development as potential residents, businesses, and visitors seek to reside, invest, conduct business, and travel within safe, stable communities.

Webster has had a longstanding reputation for providing, funding, and promoting exemplary public safety services. The Webster Police Department, with its staff of 70 employees, is a "Recognized" law enforcement agency by the Texas Law Enforcement Recognition Program. The Webster Fire Department, a full-time staffed department located in a new 22,000 square foot fire station, carries the best Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 1. While the community features a residential population of 11,000+, its daytime population exceeds 200,000 due to over 2,000 businesses within the municipality. Webster's ability to respond immediately to emergency calls (Police, Fire, or EMS), proactively prevent crime, and respond to major weather events, is tremendously important to the municipality's constituents who rely on efficient and effective public safety services. Superior public safety services have many benefits including lower insurance rates, reduction in crime, quick responses during emergencies, and increased public awareness. This section is devoted to planning for public safety services amidst Webster's growth.

7.2 Police

For nearly a decade, the Webster Police Department has been designated as a "Recognized" law enforcement agency by the Texas Police Chiefs Association Law Enforcement Recognition Program. This recognition is awarded every four years and is the gold standard for police agencies in Texas, representing stringent compliance with 164 best practices in nearly every aspect of law enforcement operations. This voluntary program, which requires in-depth internal and external analysis and review to prove compliance with a multitude of rigorous standards, was achieved by the Webster Police Department in 2010, 2014, and 2018. The Webster Police Department is one of 158 recognized Texas police departments in this program.



As the municipality is special in its composition of businesses and residences, Webster's Police Department is unique as well. Webster's Police keep pace with the continuous influx of visitors while striving to proactively reduce crime and traffic incidents. The Webster Police Department is composed of Patrol, Criminal Investigation, Communications, and Administration Divisions. The Patrol Division provides routine police patrol, provides response to calls for service, enforces traffic laws, and conducts accident investigations. The Criminal Investigation Division is responsible for conducting criminal investigations, investigating crime scenes, and investigating drug offenses. The Communications Division serves as the 911 call center, dispatches police, fire and EMS to calls for service, and provides for records management. The Administration Division leads the department by handling the daily operations, maintaining the Recognition Program requirements, overseeing the budget, providing training opportunities, and managing media and public relations. The Webster Police Department has successfully applied for and obtained grants for equipment and training and will continue to seek additional grant opportunities.

Webster Police Department's model of intelligence led policing, by which the Department assesses and manages risk to deter crime, has been very successful. In this model, the Police Department gathers and analyzes crime and social data to identify criminals and crime trends within the community and surrounding region. This analysis directly effects the allocation of police resources to prevent, deter, and respond to crime trends. The creation of a Street Crimes Unit has been instrumental in gathering intelligence and analyzing patterns within the community.

The Webster Police Department considers itself a Community Policing Agency in that it strives to be integrated into the community and responsive to community needs and beliefs. In furtherance of that goal, the Department actively pursues opportunities for involvement in community activities and routinely interacts with local schools and various social and community groups.

In 2006, the Webster Police Department created the Citizen's Police Academy, a 10-week program designed to educate citizens about the duties, responsibilities, policies, and procedures of the Department. This highly successful program covers a multitude of topics related to law enforcement, including patrol, criminal laws and procedures, criminal investigations, crime scene investigations, police equipment, defensive tactics, narcotics investigations, dispatching, K-9, and firearms training. This program permits participants to ride along with an officer on patrol and engage in realistic activities and real-time, relevant interaction. A Citizen's Police Academy Alumni group has been formed and is focused on assisting the Police Department and ensuring a safe community.

7.3 Fire Protection

The Webster Fire Department commits itself to the protection of the lives and property of its residents and visitors. This premier department consisting of a staff including a Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Fire Marshal, Assistant Fire Marshal, Fire Prevention Specialist, and 15 full-time firefighters, provides around the clock coverage of the City. The Department transitioned from a volunteer fire department to a full-time department to expedite calls for service, reduce response times, and provide 24 hour coverage. The Webster Fire Department follows best practices and is known throughout the region for its prevention and emergency response capabilities while keeping pace with the City's commercial and residential growth.



The 22,000 square foot station, built to withstand wind speeds of up to 146 miles per hour, also serves as the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The facility consolidates Fire Operations, Fire Marshal Division, Fire Administration, Emergency Medical Services, and Emergency Management. This facility also serves as home base for the Department's well regarded Regional Search and Recovery Dive Team.

Webster's Fire Department provides services for the City by responding to structural fires, motor vehicle accidents, medical incidents, fire alarms, severe weather, natural disasters, and other emergencies, in addition to rendering mutual aid to surrounding areas. Fire Station 1 has been built to serve the growing community for decades to come.

The Webster Fire Department is rated in the top 1% of United States cities earning the prestigious Insurance Services Office (ISO) number 1 rating, the result of the City's exceptional level of fire service and investment in personnel, equipment, facilities, services, training, and inspections. The Fire Department will continue to provide exemplary services as the Department keeps step with the growing commercial and residential population.

Many elements characterize Webster's top-notch emergency response proficiency including computer-aided dispatch, direct communication among providers and staff, discussion of techniques, strategies, and best practices, as well as the requirement of the Webster Fire Department that firefighters possess a minimum certification as Emergency Medical Technicians.

7.4 Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The Fire Department oversees the Emergency Medical Services Operation. Webster contracts with a private provider for emergency medical services providing an advanced life support level of service. Although a minimum of two ambulances are dedicated to the City, the contractor has multiple units available as needed. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) meets stringent response criteria maintained and monitored by the Webster Fire Department.

7.5 Emergency Management

The City provides emergency management through its Fire Department that oversees the planning and implementation of the City's Emergency Management Program. The City is susceptible to severe weather, flooding, and hurricanes. The Emergency Management Division guides the municipality through each of the four phases of emergency management:

Mitigation – removal of conditions that may become hazardous

Preparedness – the development of a plan of action, including information on personnel, equipment, supplies, and services available to the City during floods, severe weather, hurricanes, hazardous material events or terrorism

Response – mobilization of necessary services and responders, including secondary services such as specialized rescue teams

Recovery – the restoration of life to a pre-event state

Webster's Emergency Management serves as a cooperative model, using detailed planning, regional focus, and adherence to stringent FEMA guidelines. Emergency Management works as a liaison with most of the City's departments, including Fire, Police, and Public Works, and outside organizations such as NASA's Johnson Space Center, Harris County, City of Houston, and area hospitals. As a liaison, Emergency Management governs the distribution of resources and allocates assets for emergencies.

In preparation for disaster, mutual aid agreements, memorandums of understanding, and coordination with various public and private entities act as a "force multiplier" in leveraging resources for emergencies. The City also maintains a proactive approach to the maintenance of drainage facilities, including City controlled ditches, storm sewers, and enforcing certification on existing private detention ponds. The Public Works Department is critical in the mitigation strategy for the City of Webster. This approach leads to less property damage and loss of life due to a drainage system performing as intended.

7.5.1: Definition, Vision, Mission, and Principles

Definition: Emergency Management is the managerial function charged with creating a framework within communities to reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters.

Vision: Emergency Management seeks to promote safety and build a resilient community that is capable of coping with hazards and disastrous situations.

Mission: Emergency Management protects communities by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability for mitigating against, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from threatened or actual disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

Principles: The Emergency Management Department's work effort and purpose derive from these eight tenets:

Comprehensive – emergency managers must consider all hazards, all phases, all stakeholders, and all impacts relevant to disasters

Progressive – emergency managers must anticipate future disasters, prepare procedures, and take preventive measures to build resiliency and resistance to disaster in communities

Risk-driven – emergency managers must use sound risk management principles (hazard identification, risk analysis, and impact analysis) in delegating priorities and resources

Integration – emergency managers must ensure a unity of effort among all levels of government and elements in the community

Collaboration – emergency managers must create and sustain broad and sincere relationships among individuals and organizations to encourage trust, advocate a team atmosphere, build consensus, and facilitate communication

Coordination – emergency managers must synchronize the activities of all relevant stakeholders to achieve a common purpose

Flexibility – emergency managers must use creative and innovative approaches to solving disaster-related challenges

Professionalism – emergency managers must adopt science and knowledge-based approaches, founded on education, training, experience, ethical practice, public stewardship, and continuous improvement

7.6 Vision, Goals, and Actions

The Comprehensive Plan stakeholders formulated a vision, series of goals, and actions to serve as a framework for implementation for the Public Safety Chapter. These goals and actions are numbered for reference purposes only and do not suggest a priority.

Vision: Maintain a safe municipality with the ability to manage emergencies, hazards, and disasters effectively.

Law Enforcement

Goal 7.1 - Prevent, control, and reduce crime.

- Action 1. Provide an appropriate level of law enforcement services.
- Action 2. Foster mutual aid agreements with other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.
- Action 3. Maintain an average response time of four minutes or less for priority-one (life threatening) calls.
- Action 4. Utilize innovative policing techniques to reduce crime within the community.

Goal 7.2 - Collaborate with citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders to prevent crime.

- Action 1. Partner with community stakeholders to educate the public about crime prevention.
- Action 2. Support neighborhood crime watch groups, citizens police academy programs and other volunteer based initiatives to reduce crime.**Goal 7.3 - Ensure adequate police facilities exist for supporting a highly effective police department.**
- Action 1. Examine relocating the Police Department to the property north of the Fire Station or rebuilding the current Police Department in phases.
- Action 2. Increase the amount of secure space for evidence and ensure that necessary testing facilities are available to the Police Department to aid in the investigation of criminal offenses.

Fire Department

Goal 7.4 - Maintain a high level of service.

- Action 1. Ensure that “first out” (engine/aerial/rescue) apparatus have four personnel assigned per unit, and that the ancillary and support units are adequately staffed.
- Action 2. In anticipation of the residential population exceeding 15,000 residents or commercial businesses exceeding 3,000, plan for additional personnel and equipment as call volume will increase in tandem.
- Action 3. Review and modify the Fire Protection Plan to ensure best practices are achieved.
- Action 4. Monitor and analyze Fire Operations to provide appropriate service.
- Action 5. Provide an average response time of four minutes and 59 seconds or less for priority one (life threatening) calls.
- Action 6. Foster mutual aid agreements with other local, state, and federal entities.

Goal 7.5 - Maintain and replace apparatus as needed to ensure Webster is able to meet service demand.

- Action 1. Replace vehicles according to time in service: Aerial apparatus every 15 years; Fire Department engines every 10-20 years; and Lightweight support vehicles every 5 to 7 years.
- Action 2. Purchase vehicles and equipment as needed to meet demand or special conditions.
- Action 3. Ensure that the City’s plan is compliant with state and federal guidelines.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Goal 7.6 - Deliver an effective level of service.

- Action 1. Ensure adequate availability of Emergency Medical Services to satisfy calls for service.
- Action 2. Achieve response time of under four minutes and 59 seconds for 90% of priority one (life threatening) calls and a response time of under nine minutes and 59 seconds for priority two (non-life threatening) calls.

Emergency Management

Goal 7.7 - Achieve and implement an effective plan for emergency management.

- Action 1. Coordinate with various departments, volunteers, and non-profits; local, state, and federal agencies; and surrounding jurisdictions to plan for emergencies.
- Action 2. Apply for funding opportunities to enhance the City of Webster’s ability to mitigate risks within the community.
- Action 3. Investigate innovative approaches for mitigating risk and providing for an effective emergency management plan.