



Manitowoc Fire Rescue Department Business Plan to Create Life Safety & Neighborhood Services Division

Our overriding intent with this plan is to improve the quality of services we provide to the customer and community. We hope that this document will provide the reader with an understanding of the current state of building inspection operations in both the Community Development and Fire Rescue Departments and will contrast that with the intended future state of a newly formed Life Safety & Neighborhood Services Division. We hope that this document is informative for the Council. Although it does not provide every detail needed for an effective solution, it provides a framework from which to direct further discussion.

Mission Statement

Provide solution-oriented services to the community through the application of professional skills, adopted plans, and standards which facilitate the growth of the local economy and enhance the quality of life and preserve the environment for current and future generations.

Vision Statement

The Manitowoc Fire Rescue Department Life Safety & Neighborhood Services Division is efficiently and effectively providing building inspection, plan review, and neighborhood compliance services in seamless coordination with fire and rescue services. These services are being provided in collaboration with the development review process administered by the Community Development Department.



Chief
Todd Blaser

Admin Assistant
Judy
Fuerbringer

Life Safety & Neighborhood Services

Deputy Fire Chief
Gregg Kadow

Building Inspection
Civilian Positions
4 FTE

Professional Enrichment

Deputy Fire Chief
Karl Koch

MFD SHIFTS

A SHIFT

2- Captains
2- Lieutenant
6- Motor Pump Operators
7- Firefighter/Medic

B SHIFT

3- Captains
1- Lieutenant
5- Motor Pump Operators
8- Firefighter/Medic

C SHIFT

3- Captains
1- Lieutenant
6- Motor Pump Operators
7- Firefighter/Medic

Overview

I am pleased to present the Business Plan for the City of Manitowoc Fire Rescue Department Life Safety & Neighborhood Services Division. It reflects our desired outcomes to fairly and efficiently process Building Safety requirements while following State mandates. We are committed to maximizing our service delivery and achieving the highest level of service in an open, collaborative environment.

As the City continues its recovery from the financial crisis, we must continue to examine what is working and what is not working in our day to day operations and what we are likely to face in the future. We must continue to look for opportunities to improve overall Life Safety & Neighborhood Services Division administration. This plan outlines our goals and strategies to achieve a vision and we encourage the continued partnership with Community Development, the business community, taxpayers, and others to make that happen.

As we climb out of the recession we must focus on a proactive approach to the management of the City of Manitowoc Life Safety & Neighborhood Services Division. A clear and focused goal, with customer service at the forefront, will guide us through. Being cognizant of past managerial decisions, respectful to public perception, we must look ahead with a clear vision. We will implement forward thinking. The next five years offer unique challenges respectful to staffing, budget constraints and service expectations. Division organizational changes will key both short and long range successes. Goals will be achieved with due diligence of staff at all levels. Expectations for creative problem-solving will be expected at a high level, within the boundaries of jurisdictional mandates. We must take a brief look backward to obtain forward thinking clarity.

The plan is simple by design and will be based upon a blending of Manitowoc Fire Rescue Departmental established operating guidelines, Building Inspection Division established mandates and operating guidelines, and expectations that will be attainable. Council support to maintain a solid customer service staff based upon workloads generated by economic growth is a key factor. The Division will not burden the Council with undue financial requests but rather seek their approvals for continued success.

The City of Manitowoc Fire Rescue Department is responsible for Life Safety inspections within the City of Manitowoc in accordance with State Statue 101.14 and Department of Safety and Professional Services Chapter 314. The Building Inspection Department is responsible for enforcing compliance of municipal and

state ordinances, standards and codes for projects. Each organization has the jurisdiction to inspect each business in the community. This at times can lead to multiple inspections and lack of coordination between the agencies.

The division of responsibility for fire code and building enforcement can create confusion for the customer. When a City can combine departments to increase services or save money it's a positive reflection upon the City based on community perception. The fire service in general is an innovative group but often tradition seems to win over improved efficiency. In a time when the community is looking to reduce "big government" combining any service which is logical deserves a good look.

The following information is an attempt to share the logistics that may be needed in order to show the increased efficiencies by bringing the Building Inspection Department under the supervision of the MFRD. This collaboration is mission driven by utilizing the cooperative efforts to protect life and property of all aspects of the City of Manitowoc.

Fire Code Enforcement and Building Inspection are dedicated to improving the quality of life and assuring the interests of life, health and safety in the City of Manitowoc. The combining of these Divisions accomplishes their goals through the implementation of codes and standards as they relate to construction, fire and life safety and property maintenance. It is the goal to serve the residents of Manitowoc with the highest level of professionalism, proficiency and customer service in the industry.

Goals

The following goals break down the proposed vision statement into more focused areas for implementation through strategic development decisions.

- a. Improve performance on the City's goals for 2015 including supporting outstanding customer service definition and delivery, continuing our LEAN journey toward greater efficiencies, and utilizing partnerships to balance quality and cost of services.
- b. Add capacity to inspect commercial and multi-family residential buildings.
- c. Add capacity to inspect neighborhood compliance issues through additional experience and training.
- d. Increase communication between Fire and Inspection on cross-over areas like property inspections, demolition permits, occupancy permits, and plan review.
- e. Increase collaboration between all applicable departments when a new development is proposed.

Implementation Strategies and Tactics

Implementation strategies and tactics are needed in order to achieve the mission, vision, and goals stated in this plan. Specific implementation measures are identified below following a discussion of stakeholders, challenges, and services trends.

Stakeholders

Our stakeholders are identified as our current and future staff, the residents of the City of Manitowoc and more specifically, the customer base contractors and developers. In simple terms everything we do as a cohesive unit affects our stakeholders in some manner. This is not limited to life safety issues by way of Building Codes, but fees charged to permit holders and approvals or rejections of projects. With fees being attached to permits it's imperative that proper follow up occurs.

Current Challenges

In an ever-changing economic climate the Life Safety & Neighborhood Services Division will face daily constraints which can only be overcome by taking a proactive approach to management and with an attempt to forecast changes and be prepared to meet these challenges. An example of this would be for an enhanced response to neighborhood concern in reference to municipal code. As with any change in delivery systems,

challenges are anticipated. The following areas are currently of concern with this proposed organizational shift:

- a. The sharing of administrative support staff needs to be handled in a way that is sensitive to the employee environment and not creating a major setback to either affected Department.
- b. Related to the item above, additional capacity for clerical support may be needed in one or more areas.
- c. Maintaining a strong connection with Community Development and Planning is important. The improved collaboration that has taken place in recent years between Planning and Building Inspection has been beneficial and should not be lost in this organizational shift.
- d. In order for MFRD to assist further with neighborhood compliance issues, Fire personnel will need to learn the basics of the Zoning Code.
- e. If the City Electrician is increased to full-time and the Electrical Inspector position is not, then it should be expected that the Electrical Inspector position will become vacant. This will need to be quickly addressed in order to keep up with electrical permits and compliance issues.
- f. There are significant existing gaps in Building Inspection service delivery. The permit inspection backlog (we are currently inspecting about 25% of permits issued) will be a liability coming into this arrangement. Other basic activities, like keeping up with filing of completed plans and responding to customers inquiries, are a daily challenge.

Service Trends

- We all know that the fire service fills a critical need in all communities. Fire departments were organized at first around fire suppression activities, but during the past several decades the activities of typical fire departments have increased dramatically. At the same time, the number of fires occurring and the number of resultant fire deaths have decreased.
- Much of this reduction is the direct result of the success of the fire service in implementing and enforcing more stringent fire codes, including the increased use of sprinklers in not only commercial but also residential properties.
- As the call-for-service workload for working fires has decreased, many fire departments have taken on emergency medical services (EMS) that provide first responder or advanced life support capabilities.

- For many years, Wisconsin has operated under a unique process where the building code and fire were one. This was identified in state statute, whereas buildings were being built, the building and fire inspectors shared code enforcement equally. Once built, the responsibility was turned over to the fire inspector. That changed in July of 2002, when the state adopted the International Building Code (IBC) as its building code for new construction, and in a parallel move, adopted the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) 1, Fire Prevention Code, for use, operation, and maintenance of existing buildings. The adoption process was a lengthy, controversial, and contentious affair where code officials opposed each other: building officials favoring the adoption of the IBC and its partner code the International Fire Code (IFC); fire officials supporting the proposed NFPA 5000 Building Code and NFPA 1 Fire Prevention Code. Ultimately a compromise was reached, but friction continues between the code officials.
- The Building Inspection Division is responsible for planning, and construction issues whereas the Fire Department concentrates on use, operation, and maintenance issues.
- We also know that building inspection services fill a critical need in all communities. Building inspection departments were first organized around an expected level (or amount) of construction activity and an accepted level of regulatory oversight. However, the pace and methodologies of construction are both moving targets, and the adaptability of municipal building inspection operations typically lags behind the pace of change in the community. As economic development has become an increasing priority in Wisconsin communities, the prevailing view of building inspection services has shifted from that of regulator, to that of customer service provider. This will be an ongoing challenge as the reality is that "the customer is always right" does not hold true when it comes to many matters of code application and enforcement.
- The solutions to the building inspection customer service challenge are found in providing timely responsiveness, even though customers must at times still be corrected from making dangerous, costly, and noncompliant mistakes in their construction activities. The solutions are also found in the approach that is taken with a customer when dealing with these challenging situations. Not only is ongoing training still needed in the technical aspects of construction oversight and inspection, but strengthened skillsets are now needed in the areas of conflict resolution, assertive behavior, and clear communication.

- The State of Wisconsin State Statutes designate the fire chief of each municipality as the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) and in so doing require they be responsible for the inspection of all public buildings and place of employment within their jurisdiction.
- These inspections, with few exceptions, must be conducted two times per year in a non-overlapping six-month period. It is during these required inspections that the firefighter/inspector often comes across building alterations in various stages, or occupancies that underwent a change of use.
- At times this is a result of poor communication between the Building Inspection Division and the Fire Department when permits are pulled, but often times the work was done without a building permit. Cultural changes are needed both within city operations, and within the community at large.
- Even though the city does require building permits that are issued by the Building Inspection Division, quite often the work is being done without obtaining the proper permit. Adding to the challenge is the current absence of a process to require the issuance of a specific business license.
- The state allows local municipalities to approve plans for alterations and new construction up to a specific size limitation. Projects above the threshold require plan review and approval by the state and inspections be conducted by a certified building inspector.
- The functions of code enforcement, fire prevention, plan review and code interpretation, inspections, and customer service and satisfaction have a direct impact and effect on the level of risk within communities. Endorsing a unified proactive code enforcement program before, during and after the construction of buildings promotes a comprehensive, multi-hazard risk reduction plan that addresses life safety and property conservation for the citizens of my community.

Enhancements for Stakeholder

- *Elimination of Duplication.*

A great deal of time is lost because of duplication of plans review, operations and inspection operations.

- *Increased Cost Effectiveness and Productivity of Employees.*

While duplicate tasks are eliminated without loss of service, employees become available to take on new and different tasks.

- *Decreased Budgetary Requirements.*

The obvious benefit of increased efficiency is the reduction in budgetary requirements because the elimination of duplication.

- *Elimination of Code Interpretation Conflicts.*

Currently, the building official and the fire code officials are qualified to render decisions regarding code interpretations locally. This leads to confusion on the part of the builder, particularly if the interpretations differ.

- *Increased Training Levels.*

With departments consolidated, appropriate training levels can be reached more easily and adequately for each employee.

- *Increased Delivery of Inspection Services.*

With the elimination of duplicative efforts, and the increase in training levels, there is more effective delivery of inspection services to the public.

- *Greater Guarantee of Safety to the Public.*

With inspections being performed more frequently by more knowledgeable inspectors, the public can expect a greater guarantee of safety because code provisions relating to public safety are being enforced effectively and efficiently.

- *Improved Organizational Skills.*

The fire department possesses the knowledge, experience, motivation and organization to effectively integrate the two departments into one effective operation.

Consolidation identifies one individual responsible for assigning complaints, monitoring progress and following-up. Cross training and dual responsibility as the foundation for a comprehensive model code enforcement program. The training and dual responsibilities enhance the communication efforts between the inspectors, citizens, and other groups of individuals involved with the code process. Cross training adds depth to both departments.

Implementation

The following is a brief overview of the logistics that will need to be addressed for the integration of the Building Inspection Department into the Manitowoc Fire Rescue Department.

Short Term:

- Begin development of a Memorandum of Understanding between MFRD and the Community Development Department with a specific plan of action and commitments toward implementation.
- Create a new MFRD organization chart for PFC approval
- Direct supervision will be performed by D/C Gregg Kadow
- Execute a knowledge transfer process regarding current operation of Building Inspection, progress on Business Process Improvements, and other LEAN measures already being implemented.
- Continue collaboration with other City Departments
- City Attorney to assist with current City Ordinance and how to implement fire rescue authority with enforcement.
- Evaluate progress and make adjustments to the plan if needed.

Intermediate:

- Execute the Memorandum of Understanding referenced above.
- Creation of Standard Operating Procedures
- Review and update benchmarking for key compliance measurements
- Create a cooperative records management system
- Bring fire admin and building inspection into one functional area
- Review and finalize a Mission and Vision Statement for new collaborative division
- Cross train of administrative support and share responsibilities
- MFRD Deputy Chiefs pursue Commercial Building Certification
- Evaluate progress and make adjustments to the plan if needed.

Long Term:

- Further explore the possibility of the City of Manitowoc accepting responsibility as agent for State of Wisconsin for building and plan review.
- Evaluate progress and make adjustments to the plan if needed.

Governing Principles and Core Values

The values and beliefs governing Life Safety & Neighborhood Services Division will include the following governing principles:

- *The City will enforce its ordinances based on the violation, not the violator. The focus of our code enforcement is on the nuisance activity or structure, without regard to the source of the complaint or the nature or character of the violator.*
- *The City seeks compliance first and foremost. Enforcement efforts are directed at providing opportunities for solving problems and eliminating violations, not punishing people.*
- *The City will maintain the confidentiality of the source of any complaint along with accepting anonymous reports of violations. The City will enforce confirmed violations based on the idea that they are violations against the City, not against a neighbor or other individual parties.*
- *Health & safety violations are given the highest priority so that human life and property are protected without delay. Violations of 'general welfare' rules such as zoning will be addressed at a second level of attention, allowing reasonable solutions to be implemented in reasonable time.*

The following cores values will further support the governing principles for the Life Safety & Neighborhood Services Division:

- *Equitable treatment*
- *Integrity-* the division must conduct itself in a manner that is socially responsible and gains recognition and respect for its functions and positive contributions to the City of Manitowoc.
- *Service- quality, timeliness, and cost efficiency of service* with applicable solutions to the challenges that arise, is the number one priority. The citizens of the City are our customers and the reason for our existence.

- *Professionalism* - the staff is the source of our strength; its competence, knowledge, and experience reflect on the City's reputation and vitality.
- *Resourcefulness* - pursue new ways to get the job done with resources available.
- *Innovation*- be open to innovative ways to address issues, provide solutions to difficult challenges, and promote the Divisions Mission.
- *Teamwork and Interaction* are essential to our success as individuals, and as a division.

Conclusion

This information is an attempt to share the logistics that may be needed in order to show the increased efficiencies by bringing the Building Inspection Division under the supervision of the MFRD. This collaboration is mission driven by utilizing the cooperative efforts to protect life and property of all aspects of the City of Manitowoc.

Both operations are dedicated to improving the quality of life and assuring the interests of life, health and safety in the City of Manitowoc. The combining of these Divisions accomplishes our goals through the implementation of codes and standards as they relate to construction, fire and life safety and property maintenance. It is the goal to serve the residents of Manitowoc with the highest level of professionalism, proficiency and customer service in the industry.

Our intent is to improve the quality of services we provide to the customer and community. *We hope that this document provided the reader with an understanding of the current state of building inspection operations in both the Community Development and Fire Rescue Departments and contrasted that with the intended future state of a newly formed Life Safety & Neighborhood Services Division.* We will continue to develop productive and professional relationships with the customers and community. We look forward to a continued positive and supportive relationship with the present and future Councils.