



Strategic Plan

2026



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Message from the Fire Chief

On behalf of our organization, I am extremely proud to share South Metro Fire Rescue's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan with our community and stakeholders. The men and women at SMFR provide world-class service to our rapidly growing communities through practical, forward-thinking, and people centered initiatives.

Our challenge as an agency has been, and will continue to be, remaining proactive and innovative while staying ahead of change and continuing to provide exceptional service through all-hazards emergency response. I am honored to serve alongside what I believe to be the most compassionate and gifted caregivers and firefighters this profession has to offer.

We save lives, protect property, and serve our community. This is our mission and sends a clear message to our residents, businesses, and visitors that above all else, we exist to make our community safer. South Metro strives for excellence in everything we do to ensure the continual pursuit of taking care of others at the highest levels possible, aided by innovation and adaptability to the changing needs of our communities.

As you will see in our Key Focus Areas, our main objectives are driven by the foundation of service excellence, community health, transparent communication, and engagement. Additionally, South Metro will look to prioritize our own organizational health, partnerships at all levels, with responsible and sustainable financial health at the forefront. We aim to reduce risk, collaborate with our local and regional service providers, as well as lead the fire service industry in best practices. The ability to deliver those services will be backed by a commitment to the mental and physical well-being of our incredible men and women, strong infrastructure, long term success, and a healthy culture of trust and transparency.

Our Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for success and represents a collective effort with input from our community, Board of Directors, our workforce, external partners, political and business leaders, and industry experts. As an agency, South Metro Fire Rescue is privileged to serve in a capacity that provides for the safety and protection of our communities through their trust in our dedicated personnel.

John Curtis, M.S., CFO, FSEDI
Fire Chief



Vision

A fire service leader setting the highest standards in prevention and emergency response services, positively impacting lives with every encounter.

Mission

We save lives, protect property, and serve our community.

Key Focus Areas and Strategic Goals

PRIORITY 1



Service Delivery

- + Deliver the right resources to the right call at the right time
- + Commit to innovative approaches that improve services
- + Invest in infrastructure to enhance and support the delivery of services

PRIORITY 2



Financial Health

- + Responsible stewards of public funds
- + Comprehensive long range financial planning

PRIORITY 3



Organizational Health and Culture

- + Hire, retain, develop, and grow the right people for the long term
- + Expand on culture of caring for employees
- + Remain aware of employee challenges and opportunities

Core Values Statement

Excellence through professionalism, accountability, compassion, and engagement.



PRIORITY 4



Community Health and Safety

- + Increase emergency preparedness across our communities
- + Improve the prevention of crises

PRIORITY 5



Partnerships

- + Be an active, engaged member of communities and organizations we serve
- + Pursue regional all hazards partnerships to reduce risk
- + Influence collaborative policymaking at the local, state, and national levels

PRIORITY 6



Communication and Engagement

- + Enhance trust
- + Develop strategies to make our communication more targeted and engaging
- + Ensure we create and demonstrate value in our services

About South Metro Fire Rescue

South Metro Fire Rescue (SMFR) is dedicated to protecting and serving over 287 square miles across Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson counties along the southern border of the Denver metropolitan area.

SMFR proudly serves the cities of Bow Mar, Castle Pines, Centennial, Cherry Hills Village, Columbine Valley, Foxfield, Greenwood Village, Littleton, Lone Tree, and Parker, along with portions of Aurora and Lakewood. Additionally, SMFR serves unincorporated communities such as Castle Pines Village, Highlands Ranch, The Pinery, Four Square Mile, and Louviers, as well as key transportation and business hubs, including Centennial Airport and Lockheed Martin.

SMFR serves a diverse population of 571,500 residents representing urban, suburban, and rural areas and over 160 languages spoken and is governed by a seven-member, publicly elected, board of directors. The board works with the Fire Chief to establish policies, adopt the budget, and provide the overall direction and vision of the organization. As a special district, SMFR supports its operations with critical services, including fleet maintenance, logistics, facility management, finance, information technology, and human resources.

Operating from 30 strategically located fire stations, SMFR provides all-hazards capabilities including fire suppression, emergency medical services (including advanced life support and patient transport), hazardous materials, technical rescue, aircraft rescue and firefighting, and water rescue and recovery. Community services include permitting, inspections, investigations, risk reduction, emergency management, community relations, and dispatch.



785
SMFR employees



\$290.5
million in property and contents saved



67%
total incident volume was EMS



78%
of structure fires contained to room of origin



96%
compliance with 1:00 minute dispatch goal



51,407
District calls



25%

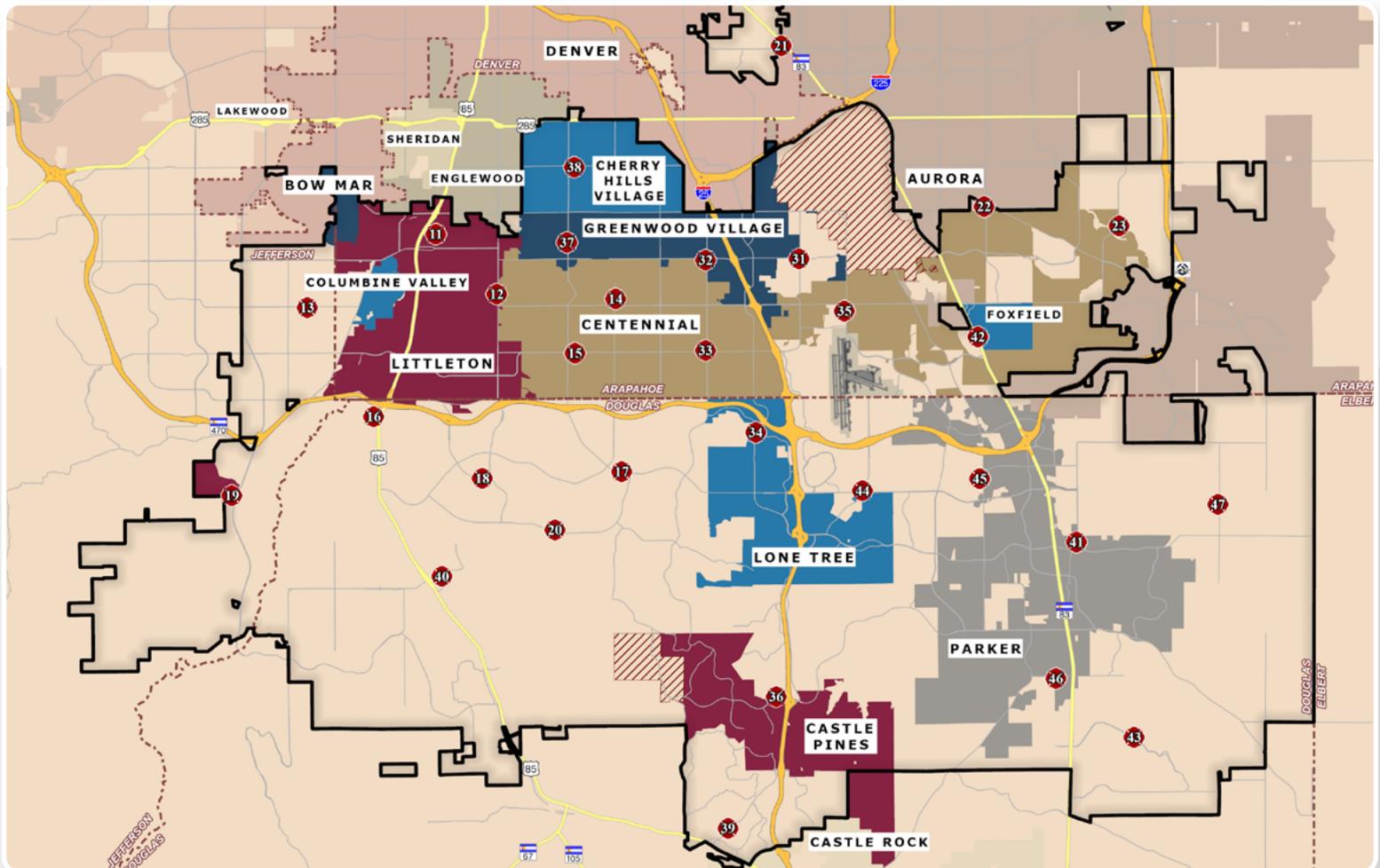
increase in emergency incidents since 2019 due to rapid growth



ISO-accredited



SMFR has been rated as a Class 1 fire department by the Insurance Services Organization. This is the top rating that reflects our fire suppression, training, water supply, and dispatch capabilities.





Key Focus Areas



KEY FOCUS AREA 1 Service Delivery

Service delivery at South Metro is a forward-thinking process that leverages industry-wide innovation and data to optimize every response. We are a customer-centered organization that remains open to new ideas and is not anchored by tradition, allowing us to adapt our resources to meet changing community needs, risks, regulations, and environmental factors. Through efficient growth and a willingness to embrace novel technologies, we ensure that our services remain the benchmark for excellence and intentional, outcome-based service.

Strategic Goals

1. Deliver the right resources to the right call at the right time
2. Commit to innovative and efficient approaches that improve services for the community
3. Invest in infrastructure to enhance and support the delivery of services

Outcomes

- + **Risk Reduction:** Reduce damage, property loss, death and severe injury
- + **Leadership:** Recognized innovation and leadership by other fire services
- + **Proactive:** Creative and proactive planning and approaches to service delivery
- + **Evolution:** Adapt and evolve to meet new community needs
- + **Data Informed:** Use accurate data to inform, evaluate, and improve services
- + **Resource:** Serve as a resource for other service providers



KEY FOCUS AREA 2

Financial Health

We maintain financial health through customer-focused, efficient, data-informed long-term planning that aligns with our strategies, major projects, and initiatives. We ensure a culture of fiscal responsibility and cost-efficiency by using best practices and constant evaluation to demonstrate our value as stewards of public funds. This disciplined approach ensures that our budget remains predictable and resilient, allowing us to meet community needs today while remaining adaptable for the future.

Strategic Goals

1. Responsible stewards of public funds
2. Comprehensive long-range financial planning

Outcomes

- + **Sustainability:** Continue to meet the needs of our growing community
- + **Infrastructure:** New, improved, and well-maintained infrastructure; including technology
- + **Strong Financial Status:** Responsible management of debt and revenue sustainability for long range plans
- + **Reputation:** Top-notch reputation and trust from community and partners





KEY FOCUS AREA 3

Organizational Health and Culture

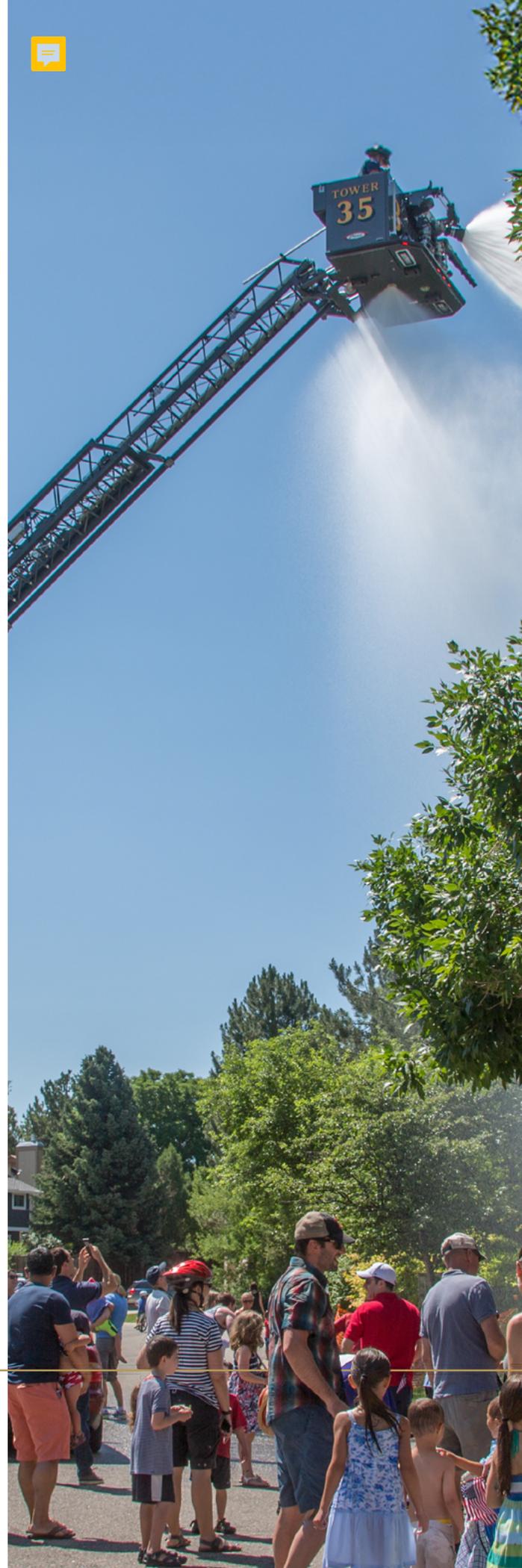
We take care of our people so that they can take care of our community. We are committed to being an employer of choice by cultivating a culture of trust, psychological safety, and holistic wellness encompassing the fiscal, mental, and physical health of our team. We foster an environment where accountability, shared values and mission-focus lead to long-term stability and employee loyalty.

Strategic Goals

1. Hire, retain, develop and grow the right people for the long term
2. Expand culture of caring for employees
3. Remain aware of employee challenges and opportunities

Outcomes

- + **Health and Physical Safety:** Fewer on-the-job injuries with cost-effective safety measures
- + **Mental Health and Well-being:** Increased access to mental health resources, people feel supported by the organization at all levels
- + **Strategic Workforce Management:** Succession planning, talent attraction, increased retention
- + **Engagement and Growth:** Increased job satisfaction, more opportunities for professional growth, training, and experience
- + **Service and Innovation Culture:** Service innovation that is not inhibited by tradition





KEY FOCUS AREA 4

Community Health & Safety

We are dedicated to saving lives and protecting property with a flexible approach to meeting the needs of our community, understanding that safety is not always 911. Through a risk-based approach rooted in data, we prioritize prevention, mitigation, and alternative response models to address both physical and mental health needs. By fostering buy-in, communicating, and educating, we empower our community to take personal responsibility, creating a resilient environment to live, work, learn and play where resources are accessible and risks are identified before they become emergencies.

Strategic Goals

1. Increase emergency preparedness across our communities
2. Improve the prevention and outcome of crises

Outcomes

- + **Community Satisfaction:** Customer service that results in trust and resilience
- + **Risk Reduction:** Use a holistic approach of education, preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery resulting in the reduction of reliance on the 911 system
- + **Safety:** More lives saved, lower risk of incidents
- + **Reputation:** Strong positive reputation for our operational and business services



KEY FOCUS AREA 5

Partnerships

Partnerships at South Metro mean being a trusted resource and a proactive collaborator with a diverse network of partners from local neighborhoods to public, private and non profit organizations and service providers. By aligning with shared goals and our regional stakeholders, we serve as leaders to bridge gaps, solve complex problems and set shared standards for a safer community. Our commitment to these relationships allows us to leverage regional expertise and collective action to achieve outcomes that no single organization could reach alone.

Strategic Goals

1. Be an active, engaged member of the communities and organizations we serve
2. Pursue regional partnerships to reduce risk
3. Influence collaborative policymaking at the local, state and national levels

Outcomes

- + **Relationships:** Positive working relationships with all our partners
- + **Board Engagement:** Board engagement, leadership and support of strategic plan
- + **Alignment of Goals and Roles:** Aligned incentives; clear roles with partners sharing the same goals
- + **Education:** Informed partners and community stakeholders
- + **Satisfaction:** Increased satisfaction with services
- + **Presence and Engagement:** Regular communication with our partners and integration with other resources





KEY FOCUS AREA 6

Communication and Engagement

We practice proactive and intentional communication that builds trust through honesty, consistency, and two-way listening. By remaining approachable and receptive to both our internal team and our external community, we deliver prioritized, multifaceted messages that are clear, concise, and relevant to our diverse audiences. We ensure our communication is not only educational and timely but also innovative, interesting, and adds context for everyone we serve.

Strategic Goals

1. Enhance trust
2. Develop strategies to make our communication more targeted and engaging
3. Ensure we create and demonstrate value in our services

Outcomes

- + **Broad and Reciprocal Engagement:** Our workforce is informed and engaged across the organization with follow up and follow through processes in place
- + **Efficiency:** Cost-effective communications that have a clear target audience
- + **Transparency:** Taxpayers are aware of how and why their funds are being allocated
- + **Trust:** Establish SMFR as a trusted partner of services, resources, and knowledge and a steward of public funds
- + **Educated Community:** Community is aware of risks and resources and is prepared with information
- + **Awareness:** Awareness and understanding of how the governance of SMFR is structured and how services are delivered

Critical Success Factors, Strategic Advantages and Challenges

Our Critical Success Factors (CSF) are rooted in a strong relationship with the communities we serve and our Mission. Applying these factors and strategies to our work will allow us to operationalize and implement actions that will accomplish goals.



Critical Success Factors

- + Strengthen communication channels and outreach
- + Invest in state-of-the-art technology improvements
- + Continue to develop strong relationships with community partners to leverage resources
- + Ensure fiscal transparency and accountability
- + Utilize innovative approaches
- + Focus on customer service.

During the process of creating this Strategic Plan, several strategic advantages and challenges were identified.

Strategic advantages are those strengths, opportunities and attributes that will enable South Metro Fire Rescue to be successful; challenges reflect the issues or situations that could impair our ability to achieve our Strategic Goals. All these factors were taken into consideration during our strategic planning process within the Key Focus Areas and Strategic Goals.



Strategic Advantages

- + Supportive, engaged, and innovative community
- + Elite skilled workforce that is supported by the organization
- + Collaborative local partners
- + Commitment to innovation
- + Future thinking leadership



Challenges

- + High rate of growth in population and density
- + Uncertain climate and weather patterns
- + Balancing competing community desires with available resources and revenue
- + Aging infrastructure and growth-related needs
- + Planning for future technology needs

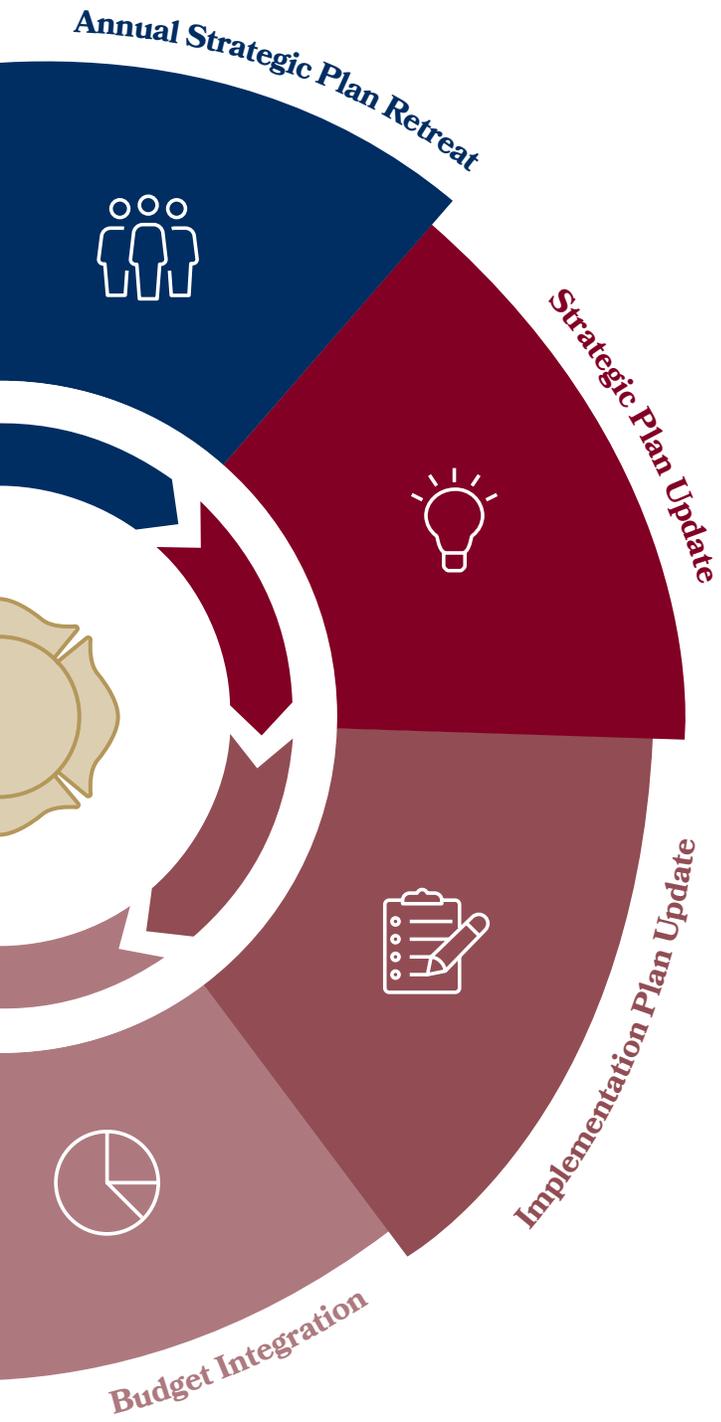
The Path Forward

A strategic plan should never collect dust or sit on a shelf – it is a living document. Our plan is designed to be flexible, adaptable, and innovative and will be adjusted based on community feedback, changes in the economy, or unforeseen circumstances. The Board and leadership team will use the information and lessons learned from this plan to make decisions about policies, programs, and services to meet the needs of the communities we serve today and in the future.

Through integration with our other long-range plans, our budget, and our daily activities, this plan will come to life and be continuously updated and improved. A key part of our success will be the implementation plan as well as a regular reporting process to the Board. **Our approach to keeping the plan alive is shown in this graphic.**

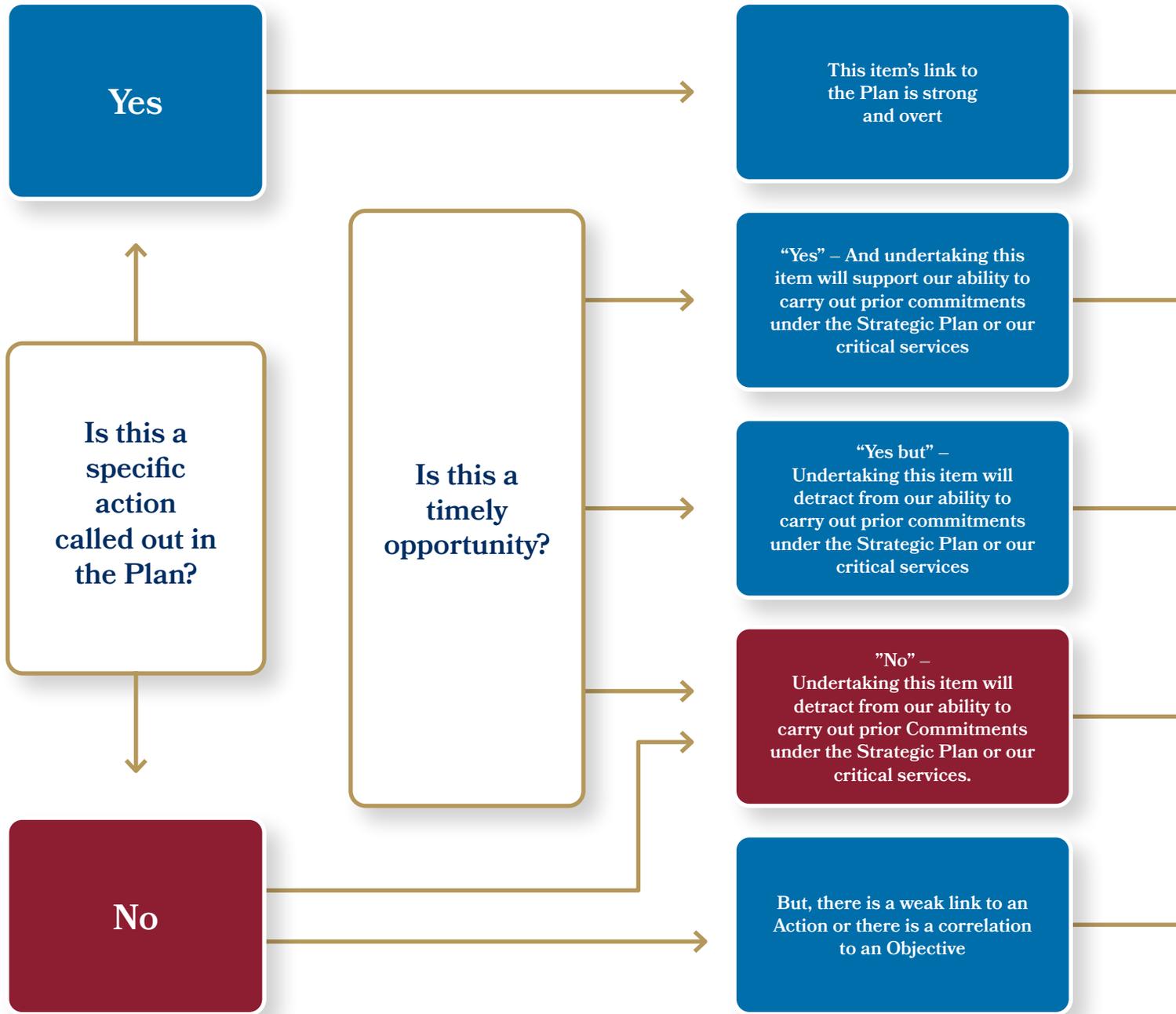
The strategic plan focuses on what is most important for our communities and the people we serve with our current services and our future plans. As a guiding tool that informs our budgets and decisions, we will use the Key Focus Areas and Strategic Goals to make informed decisions about innovative programs, services, staffing levels and commitments.

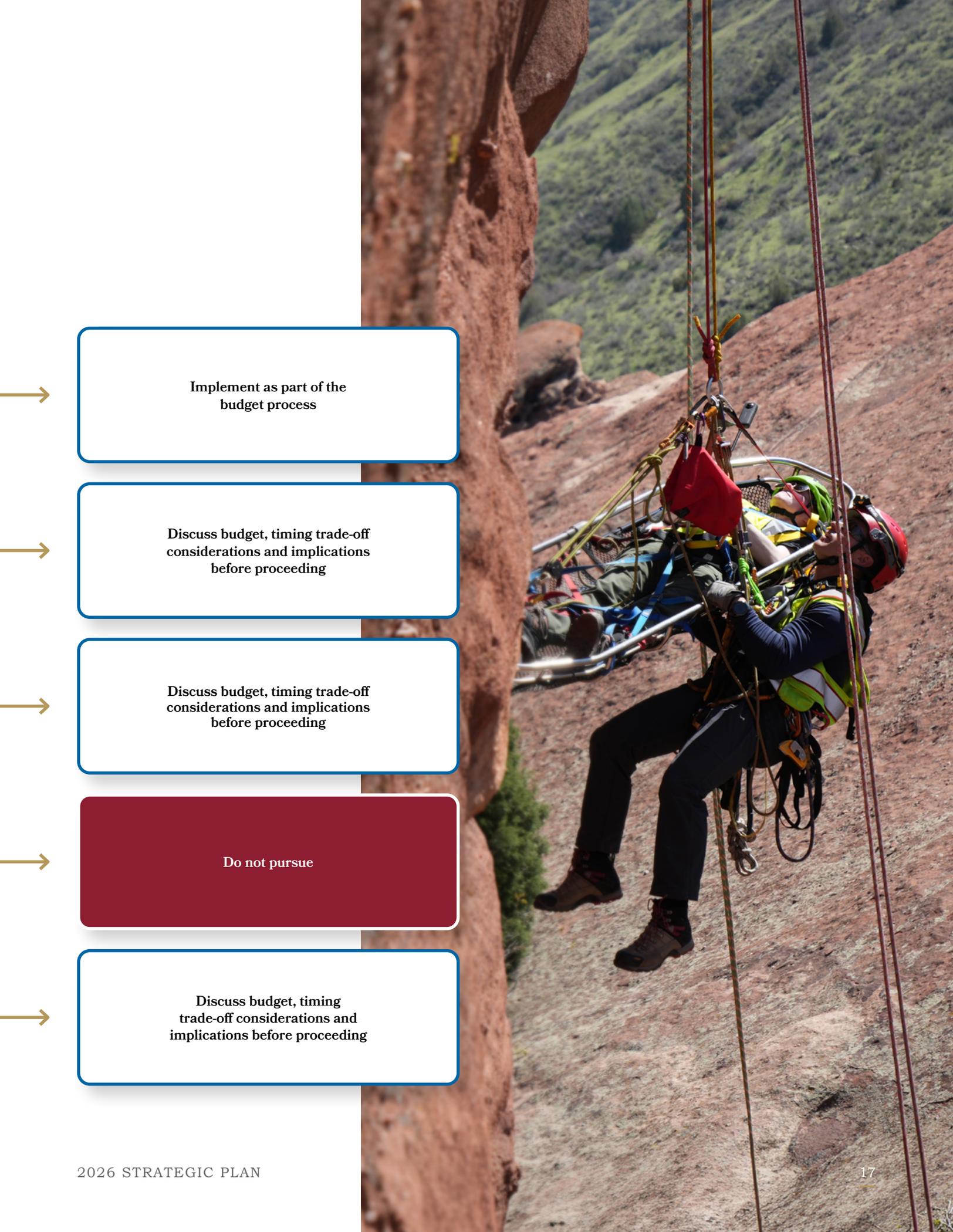




Decision Making

As a decision-making tool, the strategic plan will clearly show when to approve a new approach, when to take time to study new information to see how it will align with our strategies, and when to make the difficult decision to not fund a new program or service that does not support our Vision for the future.





Implement as part of the budget process



Discuss budget, timing trade-off considerations and implications before proceeding



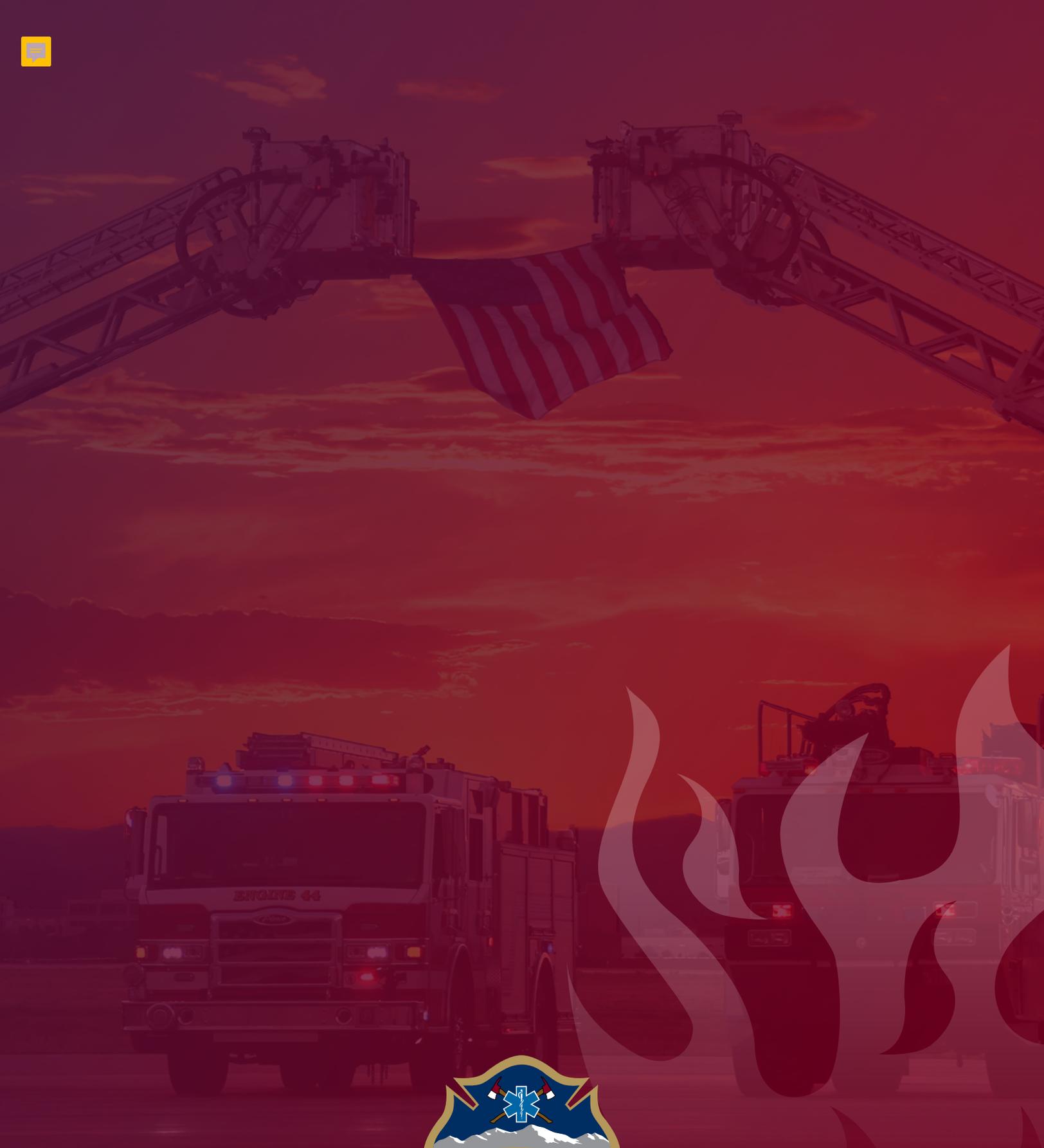
Discuss budget, timing trade-off considerations and implications before proceeding



Do not pursue



Discuss budget, timing trade-off considerations and implications before proceeding



southmetro.org