

TOWN OF SWANSBORO FIRE DEPARTMENT

2023 – 2028 STRATEGIC PLAN





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MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

With great pleasure and a profound sense of responsibility, I introduce the Swansboro Fire Department's inaugural 5-Year Strategic Plan. This document represents a pivotal moment in our history as we collectively **chart** a course for the future, grounded in our commitment to the community, service, progression, tradition, and dedication to continuous improvement. As we embark on this **journey** together, I am grateful for your trust and support in the Town of Swansboro Fire Department.

At the core of this strategic plan is our unwavering dedication to the well-being of the Swansboro community. Our department is dedicated to fostering a culture of continuous improvement. We will remain dedicated to actively engaging with our community to understand the unique challenges and expectations, ensuring our services are tailored to your evolving needs.

The landscape of emergency services is ever-changing, and to remain at the forefront, we must embrace progression. This plan outlines our commitment to continuous improvement through innovation, advanced training, and the incorporation of cutting-edge technologies. We recognize that excellence is not an accepted destination but a continuous journey.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to every member of the Swansboro Community, the Elected Officials, Town Staff, and the Fire Department for your trust, support, and collaboration. This 5-Year Strategic Plan is a testament to our shared commitment to building a safer, stronger, and more resilient Swansboro. Together, we **embark** on a **passage** that will shape the future of our fire department and, by extension, the future of our community.

Respectfully,

Jacob T. Randall



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FIRE DEPARTMENT HISTORY

December 26, 1783 – The Swansboro Fire Department was first established in concurrence with the establishment of the Town's municipal corporation.

1942 – The department was officially chartered and established in 1942, relocating the fire station to 6th Street. The Town of Swansboro Public Works Department currently occupies the building today.

1944 – The first “fire truck”, a 1943 Dodge Pickup, was acquired. The truck carried firefighting equipment and a small water tank.

April 3, 1946 – During the Town Council meeting, Councilmen Casper and Henry Tolson proposed a resolution to create a fire zone for the Town of Swansboro. The two councilmen and Fire Chief John Bell were tasked with defining the fire zone, known today as the Town of Swansboro's Primary Fire District.

“Fire Zone: All buildings and territory beginning at the Waterfront on Water Street, continuing down Water Street to Broad Street, Broad Street to the Waterfront at Casper's store, meandering the Waterfront to Cross Highway Bridge to the beginning of Waterfront at Water Street.”

May 1, 1946 – The sitting Board of Commissioners appointed Fire Chief John Bell as the Fire Inspector to enforce the adopted fire ordinances the State of North Carolina outlined.

August 1989 – The current Fire Station at 609 West Corbett Ave was constructed.



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1990 – The department transitioned as an entity of the Town of Swansboro, though it remained the Swansboro Volunteer Fire Department.

2009 – The first paid personnel were hired to provide coverage during normal workday hours and supplement the volunteer staff.

2017 – An addition to the current facility was constructed to accommodate personnel sleeping quarters, allowing for 24-hour staffing.

2023 – The Department is a division of the Town of Swansboro, consisting of (3) Full-Time Command, (9) Full-Time Operational, (20) Part-Time, and (7) Volunteer personnel.



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MISSION STATEMENT

The Compass

A mission statement serves as the **compass** and foundation of an organization, encapsulating its purpose, values, and long-term objectives. It serves as a guiding light, steering the decision-making process and providing a sense of direction for both internal and external stakeholders. A well-crafted mission statement articulates the core identity of the Town of Swansboro Fire Department, fostering a common culture of purpose among personnel and aligning their efforts toward achieving goals. This statement is a crucial strategic tool that defines the purpose and reason for existence, shaping our culture, strategy, and impact on the community.

The mission of the Town of Swansboro Fire Department is to provide quality fire, rescue, and emergency medical services for citizens and guests of the community by cultivating a culture of training, prevention, and public education solidified by our pride, tradition, and dedication.



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VISION STATEMENT

The Map

A Vision Statement **charts** an organization's objectives and long-term goals, illustrating a path to the future it envisions. It goes beyond the immediate objectives outlined in the Mission Statement, **mapping** a broader and more inspirational view of what the Town of Swansboro Fire Department hopes to achieve over time. The Vision Statement is a motivational force that inspires stakeholders and guides strategic planning. It provides a clear image of success, aligning the Town of Swansboro Fire Department's efforts toward a shared and ambitious destination.

Continuously improve and expand service capabilities through a whole-community approach supported by strategic planning, enhanced training, and data-driven performance.



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VALUES

The Helm

Much like the **helm** of a vessel, values represent the fundamental principles and beliefs that **pilot** an organization's behavior, decisions, and culture. These values define the Town of Swansboro Fire Department's character, influencing how individuals within our organization interact with each other and the community. Our values shape how personnel approach tasks that contribute to the overarching mission. Each reflects the Town of Swansboro Fire Department's commitment to ethical conduct, integrity, and the interests of our stakeholders.

Utilizing the acronym **FIRST IN**, the Town of Swansboro Fire Department members have identified the values that drive our passion, commitment, and dedication to excellence for the community so that we may remain first in all aspects.

Fortitude **I**ntegrity **R**eliable **S**elfless **T**actful – **I**nclusive **N**oble



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DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Organizational Background

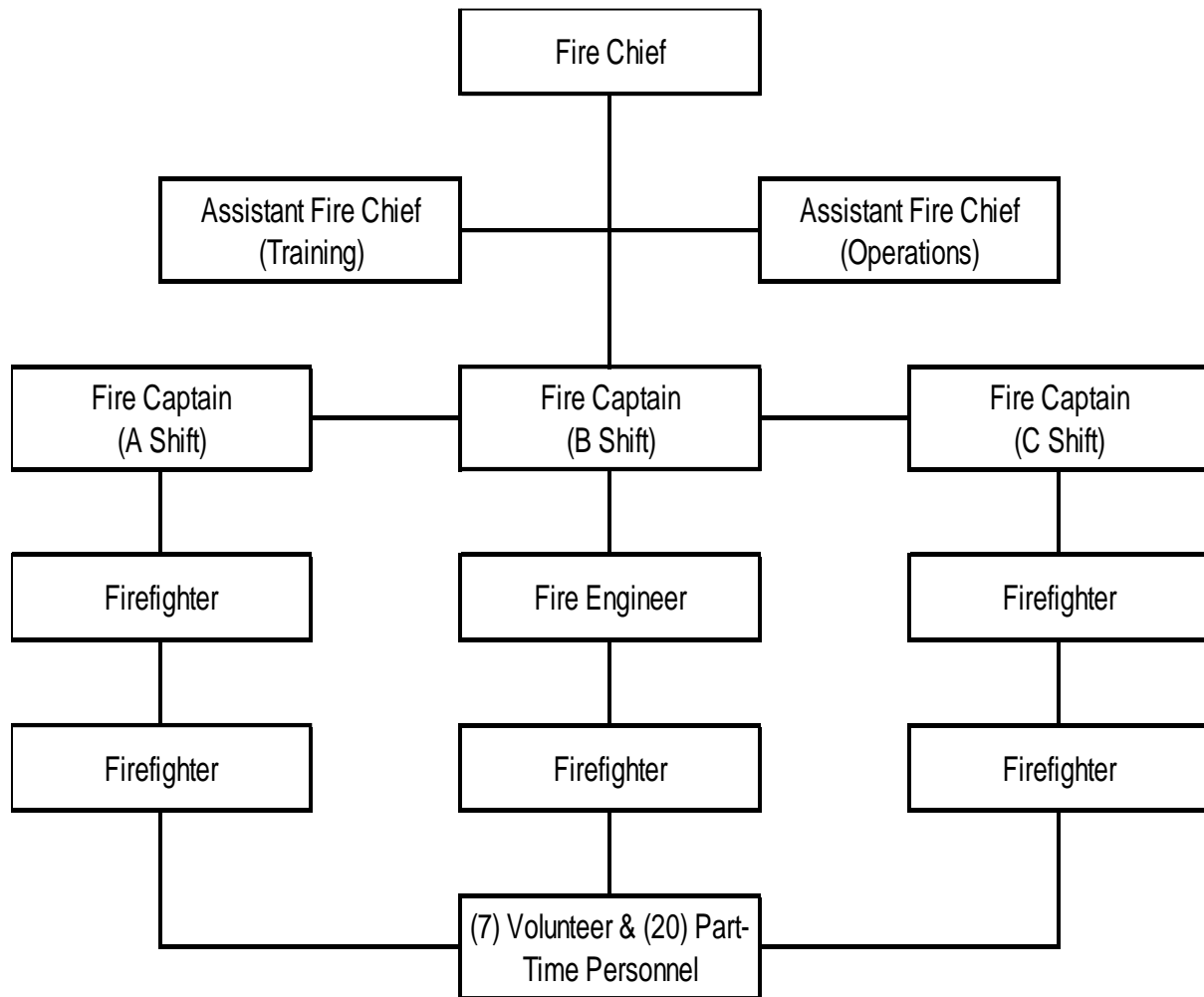
Founded in 1783, The Town of Swansboro, known as the “Friendly City by the Sea,” is a small community alongside the White Oak River and Intracoastal Waterway in the Northeastern corner of Onslow County, North Carolina. The current incorporated City Limits consist of approximately 2.421 square miles, bearing a permanent population of 3,744. Swansboro, while growing, retains the quiet appeal, picturesque waterfront, and hometown feel enriched with historic colonial landmarks and natural resources.

While the original Swansboro Fire Department was established within the original Town Charter in 1783, the department truly defined today was established in 1942. The department, which was solely volunteer, began to transition into a town department in 1990 upon completing the current fire station at 609 West Corbett Ave. In 2009, the Town hired the first paid personnel to supplement the volunteer members during normal business hours when they were not always available to answer calls. Over time, growth of the district size, call volume, training standards, and technological advancements drove the need for more consistent staffing to maintain a standard of coverage. Thus, the fire station was renovated to accommodate overnight shifts and full-time personnel. In 2017, the Town of Swansboro Fire Department began providing 24-hour, 365-day coverage to the citizens.

Today, the Town of Swansboro Fire Department is committed to refining the quality of life throughout the community by delivering an all-hazards approach. The department serves a primary response district totaling 9.491 square miles, with a permanent population of 5,603. The district consists of the incorporated Town Limits of Swansboro – the Swansboro Fire District, and the contracted unincorporated district of Onslow County – the White Oak River Fire District. The department holds the Insurance Services Office (ISO), Public Protection Class (PPC) rating of 4/9e. Comprised of 39 personnel, the department maintains numerous services and programs to foster a safer community for citizens, businesses, and guests.



Organizational Structure





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Services

The Town of Swansboro Fire Department is a multi-faceted organization that provides services in the core programs listed below.

Town of Swansboro Fire Department Services		
Fire Suppression	Emergency Medical Services (First Responder – EMT)	Community Risk Reduction (Public Education)
Fire Prevention Inspections		Emergency and Disaster Management
Fire Investigations	Hazardous Materials (Responder)	Technical Rescuer (Vehicle Extrication)



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Strategic Planning

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC Analysis)

<div>S</div> <div>STRENGTHS</div>	<div>W</div> <div>WEAKNESSES</div>	<div>O</div> <div>OPPORTUNITIES</div>	<div>C</div> <div>CHALLENGES</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Community Engagement ❖ Staff Interoperability ❖ Leadership Knowledge ❖ Professionalism ❖ Public Education ❖ Customer Service ❖ Fire Prevention ❖ Community Growth ❖ Organizational Growth ❖ Knowledge Base ❖ Staff Eagerness ❖ Progressive Mindset ❖ Redefined Culture ❖ Interoperability and Relationships with Mutual Aid ❖ Community Respect ❖ Supportive Management ❖ Supportive Group of Elected Officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Previous Communication ❖ Defined Training Program ❖ Recruitment and Retention ❖ Professional Development Program (Career or Volunteer) ❖ Capital Improvement Plan ❖ Passive Listening versus Active Listening ❖ Ineffective Response Force ❖ Response Plan ❖ Response Capabilities ❖ Real-World Experience ❖ Reactive Mindset ❖ No Previous Vision ❖ Defined Structure ❖ Stagnant Organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ New Leadership ❖ New Vision ❖ New Community Engagement ❖ Growth ❖ Culture ❖ Recruitment and Retention ❖ Inclusion ❖ Diversity ❖ Professional Development Programs ❖ Defined Structure ❖ Outlined Quality Training Program ❖ Service Enhancements ❖ Data-Driven Advancements ❖ Performance-Based Decision Making ❖ Educational Support ❖ Supportive Management ❖ Supportive Elected Officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Staff Inexperience ❖ Staffing Levels ❖ Catching Up ❖ Competitive Salaries ❖ Current Facility ❖ Aging Apparatus ❖ Aging Equipment ❖ Outdated Technology ❖ Non-Existent Replacement Schedule ❖ Growth of Community ❖ Budgetary Constraints ❖ Economic Stability / Inflation ❖ Increasing Call Demand ❖ Strained Resources ❖ Increasing Overlapping Incident Percentage ❖ Increase Training Requirements



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Critical Service Gaps and Action Items

Reviewing the agency's current status, five (5) critical service gaps were recognized. These critical issues are and will remain detrimental to the service performance and outcomes should action not be taken. The critical service gaps listed below established the framework for the five (5) strategic action items supported by goals, objectives, and tasks.

Professional Development and Investment

Service Level Advancements

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Expanded Planning Efforts

Enhance Program Initiatives



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Goals, Objectives, and Tasks

In conclusion, our commitment to the strategic plan is exemplified through the meticulous creation of Goals and Objectives, each accompanied by associated critical tasks, all adhering to the SMART criteria—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This deliberate approach ensures that our organizational efforts are aligned with our Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and core Values while being methodically crafted to be clear, quantifiable, realistic, and time-sensitive. By adopting this SMART framework, we affirm our dedication to successfully executing our strategic plan, fostering a culture of accountability, innovation, and continuous improvement. This commitment positions us on a **course** for sustained success, where each task and objective contribute meaningfully to our overarching mission and vision.

<i>Goal 1 – Professional Development and Investment</i>		Define a Staffing Development Plan and Program
Objective 1A	Create a Professional Development Plan that embraces recruitment, retention, and continuous development of all personnel.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Evaluate the current professional development ladder.➤ Review the individual's training transcript.➤ Define needs for the organization, aligning with future goals.➤ Evaluate the current adopted FY pay plan.➤ Identify pay ranges to eliminate compression while promoting growth.➤ Build a professional development ladder that promotes training and education with progressive requirements.	
Objective 1B	Outline training topics to increase consistency, ability, service capability, and knowledge from foundational to advanced courses.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Evaluate current personnel on performance ability.➤ Develop a training program to enhance consistency among all personnel.➤ Strengthen the training program to incorporate any required courses for service-level enhancement.➤ Work with partnering agencies to increase mutual and automatic aid training.➤ Establish standards to evaluate performance throughout the agency.	



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Objective 1C	Develop a plan to augment, amplify, and sustain a staffing matrix to exceed standards and enhance service capabilities.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Evaluate operational efficiency with the current staffing model.➤ Review effective response force standards and achievability with current staffing.➤ Examine organizational needs for all shifts, ensuring the minimum staffing standard is met.➤ Assess automatic aid agreements and their impact on the primary district.➤ Apply for Staffing Grants.➤ Seek additional funding opportunities to increase manning levels.➤ Create a minimum staffing standard requiring specific qualifiers to fill shift vacancies.
Objective 1D	Enhance volunteer professional development and growth opportunities through vigorous recruitment, retention, engagement, and inclusion.
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Align the volunteer professional development standards with the career professional development program, creating consistency throughout the agency.➤ Communicate agency-level changes and updates to all personnel.➤ Reconstruct the pay-per-call and duty-time program to embrace a paid-part-time-on-call type of employee.➤ Accommodate specialty training programs on nights and weekends for attendance by Volunteer Personnel.



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<i>Goal 2 – Service Level Enhancements</i>		Develop and Implement Programs that enhance service capabilities.
Objective 2A	Obtain Medium Rescue designation by the North Carolina Rescue & EMS Association.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluate the current state of the agency related to training and equipment needed. ➤ Incorporate required equipment purchases into the annual budgetary process. ➤ Train personnel on new equipment, techniques, and standards for Medium Rescue. ➤ Incorporate the required Rescue Course into a refined Professional Development Program. 	
Objective 2B	Enhance the level of Emergency Medical Service providers from Basic Life Support (EMT) to Advanced Life Support (Paramedic).	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluate the current credentials of personnel throughout the agency. ➤ Develop a plan for hiring or training personnel to the Paramedic level. ➤ Incorporate the required equipment into the annual operating budget. ➤ Apply with the Onslow County-Camp Lejeune EMS System to increase service from the EMT to the Paramedic Level. 	
Objective 2C	Amplify the standard of cover by effectively staffing a service company.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek grants related to Staffing. ➤ Increase part-time funds to supplement staffing. ➤ Stage hiring of personnel annually to allow for cost adjustment. ➤ Alter minimum staffing standards to articulate the increased service level. 	
Objective 2D	Design and Replace Engine 17 and Truck 17 (Engine & Ladder Company)	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Form a working group of individuals to discuss needs and specifications. ➤ Identify the various characteristics of both jurisdictions (County and Town). ➤ Define the needs of the agency with future vision. ➤ Compile specifics for each apparatus and request proposals from apparatus dealers. 	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Obtain a letter of intent for purchasing the apparatus.➤ Seek financing options.➤ Receive apparatus, train personnel, and place them in service.
Objective 2E	Complete the Public Safety Building (EOC) project.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Evaluate the needs of the agency (present and future).➤ Gather input from the community.➤ Design a resilient and sustaining facility.➤ Construct the facility.



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<i>Goal 3 – Commitment to Continuous Improvement</i>		Demonstrate and Validate Improvements with Quantifiable Date Metrics.
Objective 3A	Lower the agency's ISO PPC class rating in both districts.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review previous results. ➤ Identify areas for improvement. ➤ Assign responsibility for tracking and preparation to each category. ➤ Evaluate the agency quarterly and annually to ensure progression is tracked positively. 	
Objective 3B	Evaluate response capabilities, response times, and performance objectives for all incidents, supporting organizational changes with solidified data.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluate current times related to response, turnout, scene time, and operational performance. ➤ Establish an achievable standard to reach. ➤ Define outlier policies for obscure data points. ➤ Provide monthly data performance to the agency. ➤ Review policies associated with performance and augment to align with data-driver performance. 	
Objective 3C	Achieve fire service accreditation through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE).	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Secure support from the governing body and elected officials. ➤ Obtain required CPSE training. ➤ Assign an Accreditation Manager and build a team. ➤ Develop a Community Risk Assessment/Standard of Cover (CRA/SOC) ➤ Update Community Driven Strategic Plan. ➤ Complete Self-Assessment Manual (SAM). ➤ Evaluate all Category 5 Criterion. 	
Objective 3D	Perform annual evaluations on all current and future programs to identify service gaps and review impacts, outcomes, performance, and progress.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluate personnel annually, providing future goals and measuring performance. ➤ Conduct annual performance evaluations for all operational categories. ➤ Review the annual performance of the agency. 	



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<i>Goal 4 – Expanded Planning Efforts</i>		Outline and Implement a Planning Program that improves forecasting of expenditures while embracing a proactive and progressive agency.
Objective 4A	Define an apparatus replacement schedule aligning with planned growth, development, and relative standards.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review current apparatus inventory. ➤ Evaluate the condition of all apparatus. ➤ Track expenditures related to normal operating, repair, and maintenance expenses. ➤ Review ISO and other standard requirements to plan for apparatus replacement types. 	
Objective 4B	Establish a non-capital outlay replacement program to reduce overlapping, large-quantity purchases.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review current inventory or equipment. ➤ Evaluate the condition and standard of equipment. ➤ Define a consistent standard amongst the organization and an accepted frontline life-cycle length. 	
Objective 4C	Implement a Personal Protective Equipment replacement plan to increase personnel safety, reducing carcinogenic exposures.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obtain a primary set of turnout gear for all personnel. ➤ Obtain a secondary set of turnout gear for all personnel. ➤ Create an annual replacement schedule. ➤ Develop bi-annual inspection policies to wash and decontaminate turnout gear. 	
Objective 4D	Increase communication with Internal and External Stakeholders to promote a community-driven strategic planning process.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enhance social media presence. ➤ Continue emails to internal staff. ➤ Research external communication methods for engagement. ➤ Promote the Community Connect module of the FirstDue RMS. 	
Objective 4E	Create a long-range plan for agency development and growth.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a 30-year roadmap for organization growth, succession planning, and service development. ➤ Develop a future fire station location study. ➤ Define the staffing matrix to increase coverage and enhance the professional development program. ➤ Plan for future advancements in current divisions and other needed divisions. 	



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Goal 5 – Enhance Program Initiatives		Establish a Framework for and begin implementing programs that strengthen continuous improvement, personnel safety, and community risk reduction.
Objective 5A	Develop a physical fitness program that emphasizes physical endurance.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluate the current health and wellness program. ➤ Identify a baseline for all personnel. ➤ Identify any specific needs or deficiencies within current programs. ➤ Create programs to address deficiencies. ➤ Educate and train personnel. ➤ Implement an annual health and wellness review process. 	
Objective 5B	Establish a cancer prevention program incorporating measures to reduce exposures and increase screenings.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review current efforts for cancer prevention and screenings. ➤ Add specialized testing to annual NFPA physicals. ➤ Create a high-risk gear replacement program. ➤ Establish a decontamination standard. 	
Objective 5C	Create a Junior Firefighter (Explorer) program.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review the Police Department's Explorer program standard. ➤ Obtain designation through the BSA as an established Explorer Post. ➤ Advertise to the target population. ➤ Establish policies and guidelines for Explorers. ➤ Identify Explorer group advisors/leaders. 	
Objective 5D	Amplify community risk reduction efforts through fire life safety education, fire prevention, and emergency management programs.	
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review local Ordinances, seeking to strengthen from NC DOI and the Building Code Council. ➤ Ensure Pre-Plans and Inspections are completed annually, including follow-ups. ➤ Create a Community Risk Reduction division. ➤ Strengthen community relationships for Emergency Management Functions. ➤ Increase training in emergency management. ➤ Continue to support the Carteret County Safe Kids group. ➤ Obtain NC CPS certification and site establishment. 	
Objective 5E	Strengthen community resiliency through redefined emergency management program developments.	



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Critical Tasks

- Evaluate the current Emergency Management program.
- Revise the Emergency Operations Plan.
- Create Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- Coordinate with stakeholders for Stormwater and other Mitigation efforts.



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Continued Support and Success

A Robust strategic plan is the backbone of our agency's continued success, providing us with a clear *map*, well-defined goals, and a framework for continuous improvement. This thoughtful and comprehensive plan reinforces our dedication to achieving and maintaining excellence in all our endeavors. As we move forward, let us carry this commitment with us, using it as a guiding force to navigate challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and elevate our performance to new heights. Together, we are poised for excellence, and our strategic plan is a powerful tool in this ongoing pursuit of organizational excellence.

Recognizing that the effectiveness of any plan is contingent on the effort invested in its implementation, we are poised for substantial improvement. Our strategic plan provides a solid foundation, but its true value lies in the collective commitment to translating it into action. Through collaborative effort and a shared dedication to realizing our goals, we are well-positioned to meet but exceed our ambitions for improvement in the days ahead.



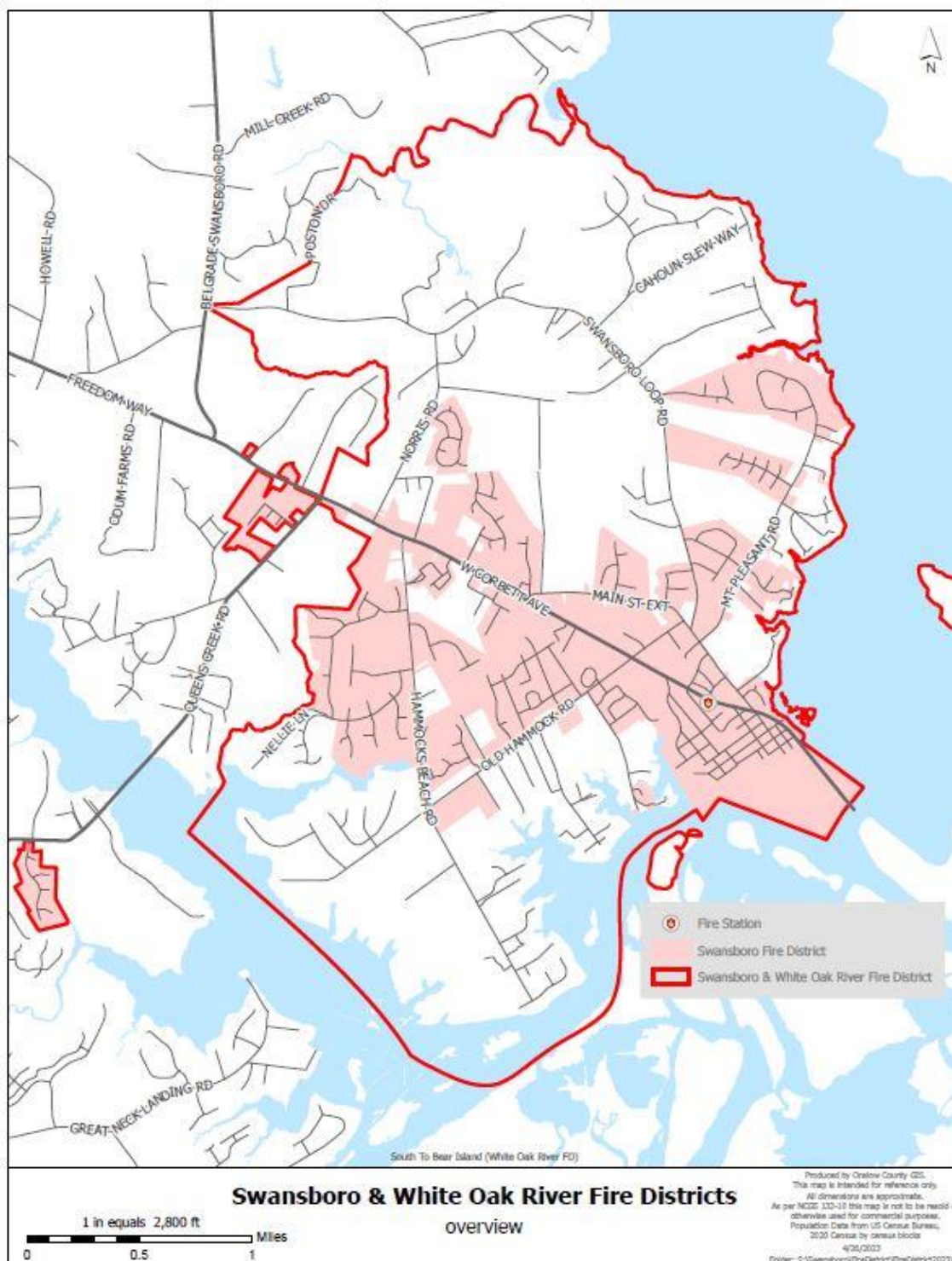
APPENDICES



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Appendix I – District Overview

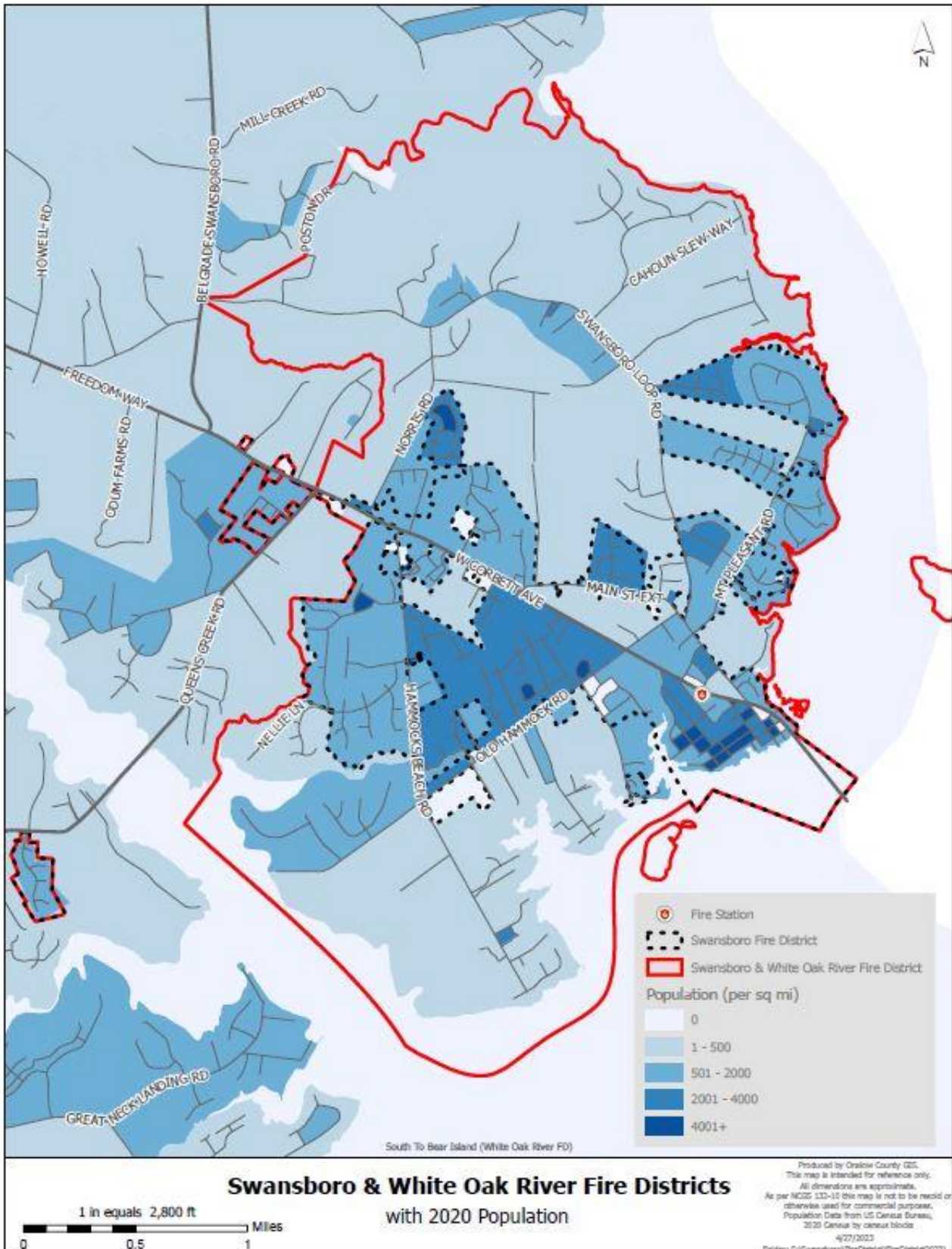




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Appendix II – Population Density

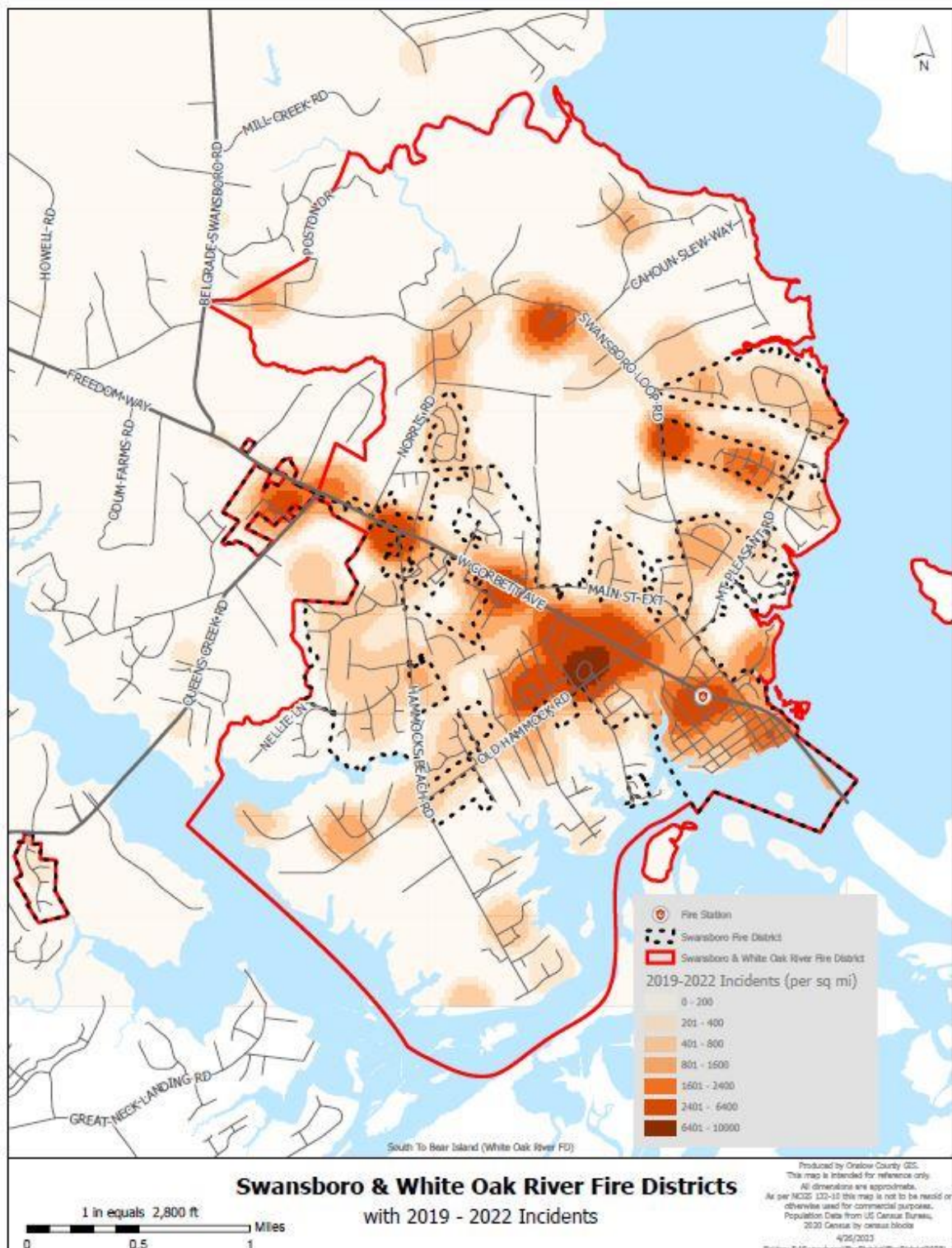




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Appendix IV – Total Call Volume Heat Map (2019-2022)

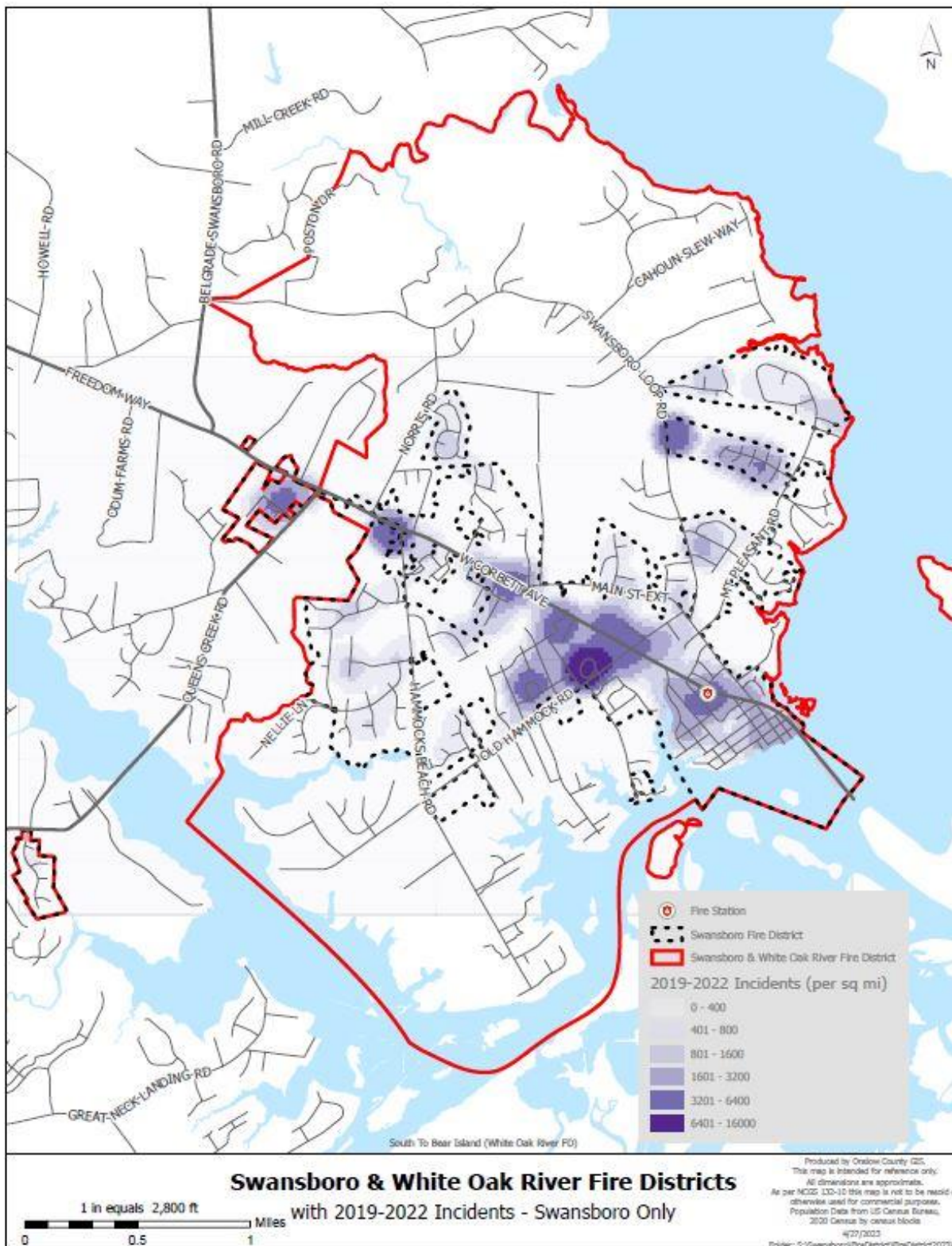




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Appendix V – Total Swansboro Fire District Heat Map (2019-2022)

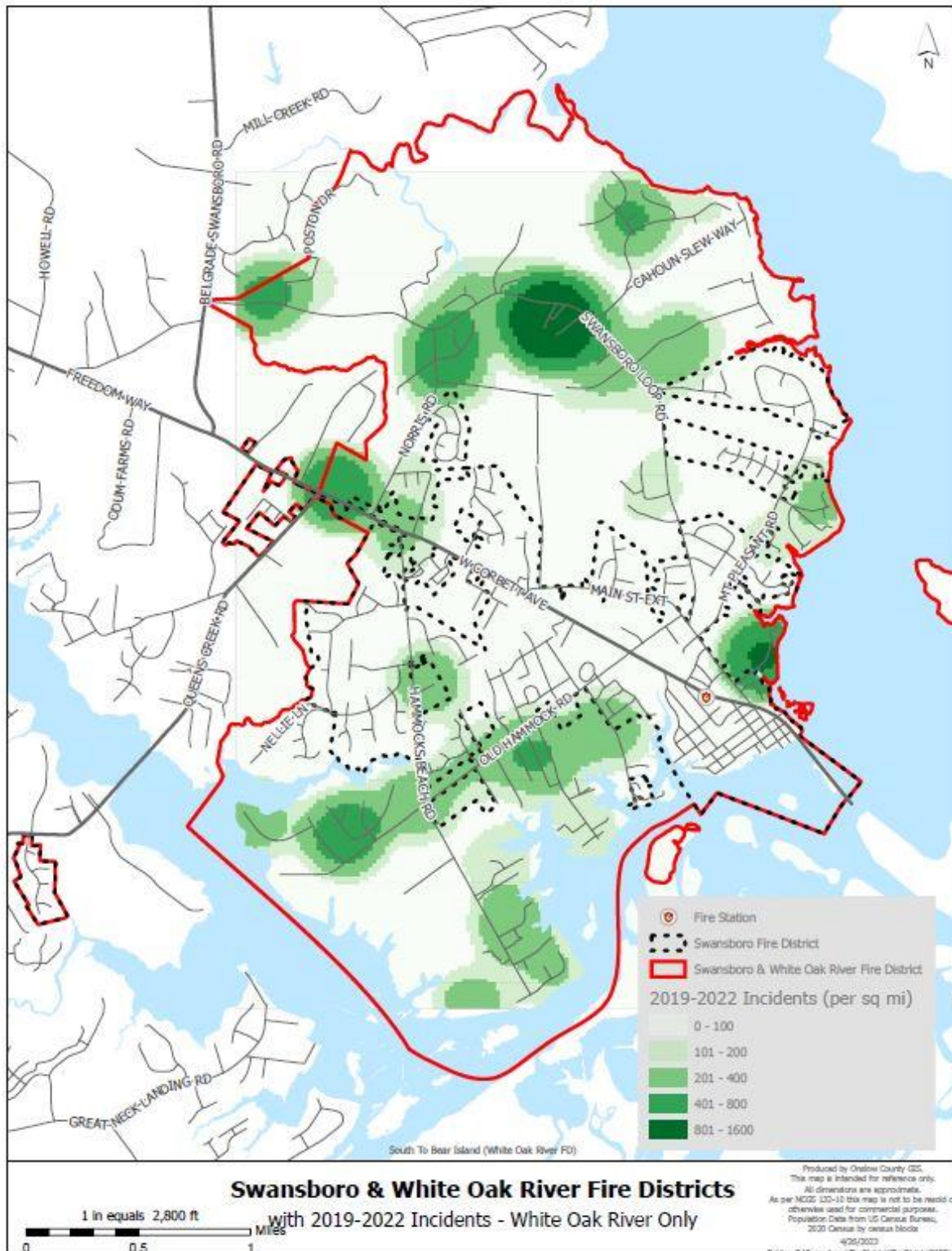




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Appendix VI – Total White Oak River Fire District Heat Map (2019-2022)





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Appendix VII – Terms and Definitions

ALS – Advanced Life Support

BLS – Basic Life Support

BSA – Boy Scouts of America

CAD – Computer-Aided Dispatch

CPS – Child Passenger Seat

CPSE – Center for Public Safety Excellence

CRA – Community Risk Assessment

EMT – Emergency Medical Technician

EMS – Emergency Medical Services

EOC – Emergency Operations Center

ISO – Insurance Services Office

NCDOI – North Carolina Department of Insurance

NFA – National Fire Academy

NFPA – National Fire Protection Association

PPC – Public Protection Classification

PSB – Public Safety Building

SAM – Self-Assessment Manual

SOC – Standard of Cover