



CENTRAL YORK FIRE SERVICES

January 16, 2015

CENTRAL YORK FIRE SERVICES REPORT 2015-01

TO: Joint Council Committee

SUBJECT: Draft Fire Department Master Plan

ORIGIN: Central York Fire Services – Fire Chief

RECOMMENDATION

THAT CYFS Report 2015-01 dated January 16, 2015 regarding the July 2014 Fire Department Master Plan Update be received for information purposes.

COMMENTS

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the JCC with an overview of the July 2014 Fire Department Master Plan Update (FDMPU).

Budget Impact

A multi-year approach is being considered in an attempt to minimize fluctuations in the tax rate over the next few years. The 2015 draft operating and capital budget includes recommendations from the Fire Department Master Plan Update.

Summary

In general, Central York Fire Services is in agreement with the recommendations in the draft master fire plan. The plan will guide the Town of Newmarket and the Town of Aurora Councils in making appropriate decisions concerning the provision of fire prevention and protection services. We will review some of the service levels outlined in the Master Fire Plan update with the consultant (Dillon), prior to the final report being released.

Background

The draft plan is a strategic framework to assist the Councils of Newmarket and Aurora to make decisions regarding the provision of fire protection services based on their local needs and circumstances.

The delivery of fire protection services includes the optimization of three lines of defense:

1. Public education and prevention
2. Fire safety standards and enforcement; and
3. Emergency response

The Ontario Fire Marshal recently indicated that further optimization of programs targeting the first two lines of defense must be a priority, as these are the most effective means to further reduce the impacts of fire and fire related injuries.

The consultant believes CYFS reflects a progressive fire service that has developed a comprehensive fire protection plan which is supported by a high degree of public satisfaction and support. The results of the Town of Newmarket's 2014 Community Survey indicate 94% of residents are satisfied with Fire and Emergency Services in the Town. This is an increase in performance of 2% from the last survey conducted in 2010.

Fire Department Master Plan Update

The consultant's recommendations are summarized under four divisions, the highlights of which include:

- i. Administration Division
 - additional support staff is recommended – the conversion of the part-time administrative assistant to full-time and the implementation of a Network and Communications Coordinator and a full-time Human Resources Consultant have been identified
 - emphasis on job descriptions for unionized staff, a performance development program, including succession planning in all areas, and the development of mission and vision statements and organizational values
 - the development of a standard operating guideline with York Region Police Services for joint responses and the investigation of further shared services and joint purchasing opportunities with other York Region emergency services
- ii. Prevention/Education Division
 - The creation of two additional full-time positions, one being a Fire and Life Safety Educator and the other being a Fire Inspector.

- the inclusion of material from the FDMPU in some of both Towns' existing bylaws, the creation of some new bylaws, and the review of some existing bylaws
 - the implementation of the proposed fire prevention/public education staffing model presented in the FDMPU
- iii. Fire Suppression Division
- the revision of emergency response protocols to those recommended in the FDMPU
 - the construction of a fifth fire station with space for administration, fire prevention/public education, and a new training centre in the area of St. John's Sideroad and Industrial Parkway
 - the hiring of 20 additional firefighters, coordinated with the construction of the new fire station
 - in conjunction with the addition of the fifth fire station, the sustainability of station 4-1 be reviewed and possibly relocated
- iv. Training Division
- the implementation of an Assistant Deputy Chief position
 - an additional Training Officer position bringing the total to three, as well as an Administrative Assistant for training
 - clear direction to all staff on their roles and responsibilities relative to department training and staff development, including clarification of the roles of training officers and the development of an enhanced comprehensive annual training program
 - an assessment of training facilities as part of the design of the fifth fire station

Proposed Implementation

With the aggressive timelines presented in the FDMPU, there are a number of challenges that will have to be reviewed. A timely implementation of the Master Fire Plan initiatives will reduce the level of risk to the residents and their property.

In order to prepare for an additional fire station and staff, the current support staff in the Fire Prevention, Training and Administration areas need to be brought up to complement. This will ensure the internal infrastructure is in place prior to the hiring of additional suppression staff.

If the Councils support the rationale for the fifth fire station and the increased level of protection provided to the communities, we will need to move forward quickly to secure a properly sized and located station location. Preliminary work using GIS to determine travel time to incidents has identified the St. Johns Sideroad corridor between Bayview and Industrial Parkway is the target area to maximize CYFS response capabilities. The first priority will be to secure the land in 2015. The next step will be to hire a consultant to

assist with the design of the facility. The construction of the station would take place over two years and be completed prior to the end of 2017.

With the appropriate support staff in place, a partial hiring of firefighters could take place in 2016 with the balance being hired in the later part of 2017. The staggered start of these groups of employees will allow for the staff costs to be spread out over a 3 year period (2016-2018) to minimize the tax impact.

Capital funding for the project will be required in 2015 to secure a suitable location and provide for the project consultant to design the facility. The construction budgets for the completion of the project will be required over the following two years (2016-2017). There will also be a need for an additional apparatus purchase and associated equipment during the 2016 budget cycle. Equipment for the additional suppression staff will be purchased over the two years commensurate with the hiring of the firefighters.

Next Steps

The 2014 FDMPU outlines a course of action to take place over the next five year cycle. CYFS staff has reviewed the draft and have made some initial comments to the consultant regarding implementation. The FDMPU is a guideline which assists the department and the communities to ensure our focus on fire prevention, public education, code enforcement and suppression capabilities meet the needs of the communities we serve.

We will continue to work with the consultant on delivering a final report and present that to council as soon as possible. However, in the interim, it is imperative to understand and properly address the identified risks we need to move forward with some key components of the plan which call for immediate staffing upgrades in the Training Division and the timely deployment of firefighters working from a central fire station location.

CONSULTATION

On January 9, 2015 a Public Information Centre was held at the Art Ferguson Clubhouse. While the event was well attended by local council members, staff and a few members of the public, there was not a significant amount of public comment.

BUDGET IMPACT

A multi-year approach is being considered. The first option, which is being recommended, is to have the fifth fire station with full complement in place by the end of 2017. This option would impact 4 budget years (2015-2018). A decision could be made to spread the impact equally over the four years or to have a lesser tax impact on the first year(s) with a higher tax impact in future years.

The second option, which is not optimal or recommended, is to have the fifth facility with full complement in place by the end of 2018. This option would impact five budget years (2015-2019). In addition, the tax impact could be equally spread over the five years or be phased in, with a lesser tax impact in the first year(s) and a higher tax increase in subsequent years.

The costs of the various options are included in the 2015 budget report.

CONTACT

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