

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: July 29, 2022

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Adam Davey, Director of Public Safety

SUBJECT: PGFRS Standard of Cover Service Level Midpoint Review – 2022 Refresh

ATTACHMENT(S): Two (2): Executive Summary from Dave Mitchell & Associates; AND PowerPoint presentation

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council:

1. RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION the report titled, “PGFRS Standard of Cover Service Level Midpoint Review – 2022 Refresh,” dated July 29, 2022 from the Director of Public Safety;
2. AUTHORIZE Administration to submit a one-time enhancement for Budget 2023 deliberations to conduct the detailed fire training center feasibility study in 2023; AND
3. SUPPORTS Administration to build a multi-year, multi-phase plan to comply with the recommendations set forth in the “PGFRS Standard of Cover 2022 – Midpoint Review” for future Council consideration.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council information pertaining to the next phase of the professional Fire/Rescue Standard of Cover assessment. During budget 2022 deliberations, Council requested a review be completed. Dave Mitchell and Associates were awarded the contract to conduct this review. This review ought to be considered within the larger Fire/Rescue strategic framework that commenced prior to the new Fire Hall #1 planning. The last Standards of Cover review was conducted in 2015/16. Some of the gaps identified have grown since then, and the 2022-midpoint refresh report provides updated recommendations that ought to drive the next generation of professional Fire/Rescue planning in Prince George. This review shall drive the strategic framework from which to conduct a multi-phased, multi-year long-term plan.

Dave Mitchell is in attendance to present his initial findings. An executive summary is attached, and the final technical report will be available later this fall. The complete report recommendations shall be considered alongside a similar police services review currently being conducted, and a comprehensive protective services strategy will be presented for the next Council’s consideration. Fire Chief Warner is also in attendance for Q&A.

DISCUSSION:

Although many of the recommendations (18 of 24) identified in the 2015/16 Standards of Cover review have been actioned, the remaining gaps have grown in the previous seven years. Some of the reasons include, an evolving and increasingly more complex regulatory environment (to include training and OHS), substantial increase in calls for service, and a growing community with increases in new build structures,

particularly in multi-story residential units. It is acknowledged that closing the service level gap is a multi-year initiative, with tradeoff costs that the next Council shall consider.

Details of the finalized report will be presented alongside the police service review, so that the next Council has a comprehensive picture of the future service environment recommendations, needs, and tradeoffs associated with budget challenges. The intent of today's update is to brief Council on initial findings, provide early notification of the upcoming protective services presentation in Q4 2022, and maintain momentum to action one major recommendation, the initial stages of development of a Fire Training Center.

Two main recommendations from this staff report:

1. Hire a consultant to conduct a detailed feasibility study (completed) in 2023 to identify and provide options for Council to consider in budget 2024 to commence work on a Fire Training Center. This site ought to have sufficient size to accommodate future Fire/Rescue Service growth as recommended in the 2022 Standard of Cover Midpoint Review Report. Within this scope of work will include differing service models, including potential partnerships, and options based upon differing budgetary scenarios;
2. Administration shall begin work on a multi-year, multi-phased plan to implement the recommendations in accordance with budget realities. This ought to be considered by the next Council as a multi-year strategic initiative, in concert with police services and bylaw services, as part of a comprehensive protective services plan.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The attached presentation provides the high-level initial findings of the midpoint review refresh of Prince George Fire/Rescue Services Standards of Cover. This marks an approximate seven-year timeframe since the last comprehensive Standards of Cover review was conducted, in 2015/16. Of the original 24 recommendations, 18 have been actioned. The remaining service gaps have since increased mostly due to expanding regulatory requirement complexities, responding to calls related to the opioid epidemic and fires, increasing volatility and duration in natural (and man-made) disasters impacting the city and region, and the development and densification of new multi-story residential builds and a growing population.

Administration will provide the finalized report alongside a similar police services review in Q4 2022, for Council's consideration of a multi-phased, multi-year protective service delivery model that provides options (and costs) for ensuring long-term, high quality, and sustainable professional protective service delivery.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Adam Davey, Director of Public Safety

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager
Meeting date: August 15, 2022