



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: February 24, 2023

TO: COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

NAME AND TITLE: Adam Davey, Director of Public Safety

SUBJECT: Fire Services Future Planning and Training Site Feasibility Study

ATTACHMENT(S): Five (5): BC Structure Firefighter Minimum Training Standards; 2016 Standards of Cover Report; 2022 Strategic Plan update; Executive Summary PowerPoint from Dave Mitchell & Associates; AND Fire Services PowerPoint presentation

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION the report titled, “Fire Services Future Planning and Training Site Feasibility Study,” dated February 24, 2023 from the Director of Public Safety, for future City budgetary planning, commencing with a 2024 service enhancement request for deliberation as part of the 2024 City Budget.

PURPOSE:

The intent of this report is to highlight the Fire Services future planning and fire training site feasibility study. In 2022, the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) released the *BC Structure Firefighter Minimum Training Standards* (attached), fulfilling the OFC legislative mandate to define the minimum standards of training required for structure firefighters in British Columbia. A priority of this standard is for local authorities to define, determine, and establish the communities service level to be provided by the fire department. To achieve this, *Fire Bylaw 8272, 2013* will require an update.

The consultancy firm, Dave Mitchell & Associates was awarded the contract to complete a ‘Standards of Cover’ report in 2015 (published in 2016, attached) and a strategic plan update in 2022 (updated with 2023 data, attached). These reports identified several recommendations, including the three priorities to:

1. Replace Fire Hall 1 with a state-of-the-art fire administration building (*new Fire Hall 1 completed 2021*);
2. Address the changes in the community and fire department with a comprehensive long term staffing plan (*attached, in progress, 2024 - 2028*), and
3. Develop a formal fire training facility within the community (*feasibility study in progress, approved in the 2023 City Budget. Findings and recommendations to be presented to Council in Q3*).

Dave Mitchell and Chief Warner are in attendance to present the findings from the strategic plan update and to lay out framework and foundation for the future of Fire Services in Prince George. The BC Structure Firefighter Minimum Training Standards, 2016 Standards of Cover and 2022 Strategic plan reports, executive summary PowerPoint, and fire service presentation are attached.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This program supports the City's 2023-26 strategic plan in two of four sustainable strategic pillars:

Pillar I: City Government

- Grow the city;
- Continue to improve processes and practices to support effective and efficient service delivery.

Pillar III: Social Health & Well-Being

- Maximize the quality of life for all residents;
- Document, communicate, and implement the City's homelessness and public safety strategies to support advocacy efforts and enhance service delivery to ensure a safe, healthy, and clean community for all.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

This is a multi-year, multi-million-dollar program. Detailed costing shall be conducted as part of the first service enhancement request during the 2024 City budget process.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

This extensive presentation package delivers the future needs of Fire Services, ensuring Mayor and Council are well informed to support their upcoming planning decisions and growth of the city.

This report provides the high-level findings of the Strategic Plan Update of Fire Services. This package represents the culmination of nearly a decade of planning. Options to update and improve the Fire Bylaw, aligning with the Provincial Firefighter Training Standards will formalize the long-standing service the Fire Department has provided to the city – a Full-Service Fire Department. The fire training site feasibility study will identify stakeholders, concept layout of a proposed site at two prescribed locations, including a phased rollout plan, and capital budget estimation. Concept drawings and capital budget estimations will also be provided to support future capital renewal and expansion in accordance with the staffing and service plans, for future budget considerations. Following through on the 5-year staffing plan will bring the Fire Department within compliance of NFPA 1710, ensuring the appropriate number of firefighters on scene to fight residential structure fires in the recommended length of time. Additionally, the staffing enhancement will support the increase in requests for service in recent years. Finally, Fire Services have committed to support the Capital Budgeting process by laying out future capital expenditures.

This package is intended to ensure Council is well-informed in advance of upcoming budget years and service enhancement requests. The Fire Training Center feasibility study findings shall be presented to Council in Q3. Following this, planning for a training center to be incorporated into future capital expenditure plan(s) shall coincide with service enhancement requests in accordance with the 2024-2028 staffing plan, should Council approve.

When considered in aggregate with the concurrent Police Services Review 2023-2027 plan, the proposed enhancements to protective services throughout the 2020s is the most significant change to the provision of public safety to the residents of Prince George in over a generation. The current rate of call volume and demand for protective services is no longer sustainable without substantial, multi-year increases to police and fire services.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Adam Davey
Director of Public Safety

APPROVED BY:

Andy Beesley,
Director of Civic Facilities and Events/
Acting City Manager

MEETING DATE: March 1, 2023