



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Toronto Fire Services Update

Date:	April 3, 2014
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Fire Chief and General Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	p:\2014\ClusterB\FIR\cd140007

SUMMARY

This report responds to Council's request for the Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services (TFS) to report to the Community Development and Recreation Committee with regards to the Master Fire Plan, an enhanced Fire Prevention and Education Program, technology improvements, the consolidation of Fire Services and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and alternatives to the 24 hour shift model.

Throughout 2012 and 2013, numerous studies of TFS were conducted, including an organizational and service review of TFS and Toronto Emergency Medical Services (TEMS), a review of training and recruitment by the Auditor General, and a study by the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS). The recommendations and strategies in these studies focused on a multi-year plan (2014 to 2017) to improve service through enhanced deployment of resources, training, aggressive fire inspection and enforcement, improved fire prevention, enhanced supporting technologies and a revised Master Fire Plan.

In alignment with the recommendations and strategies presented in the studies and adopted by Council, TFS was requested to provide an update on the implementation status of numerous initiatives. These include the new Master Fire Plan, the development of enhanced fire prevention and public education programs, and the implementation of Dynamic Staging, Predictive Modeling, GPS-Based Dispatch and Traffic Signal Pre-emption. Council direction also required TFS to further evaluate the consolidation of the TFS and TEMS Communication Centres as well as to evaluate alternate staffing and deployment models with the Operations Division.

TFS has commenced work on the implementation of these initiatives which will ultimately lead to positive changes in the way TFS delivers all hazards response and crucial services to the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services, recommend that:

1. The Community Development and Recreation Committee receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Any financial implications associated with the implementation of the Master Fire Plan and other changes that may be implemented as highlighted in this report will be considered either through separate reporting to the Standing Committee, or considered as part of the 2015 and future-year Operating Budget processes.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on January 29 and 30, 2014, City Council approved the 2014 Capital and Operating Budgets. Motion 228 of Council requested the Fire Chief and General Manager, Fire Services provide updates to the Community Development and Recreation Committee regarding: the Master Fire Plan; a staffing and implementation plan for the enhanced Fire Prevention and Education program; an implementation plan for the new technologies recommended in the Fire Underwriters Study report; the consolidation of Fire Services and Emergency Medical Services communications centres; and an evaluation of alternatives to the current 24 hour shift.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.EX37.1>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Throughout 2012 and 2013, numerous studies of TFS were conducted. The City Manager initiated an organizational and service review of TEMS and TFS, including consideration of the opportunities identified by KPMG in 2011 through the City's Core Services Review. The results of the review were endorsed by City Council in July 2013. In November 2013, City Council adopted the Auditor General's report entitled "Improving the Administration and Effectiveness of Firefighter Training and Recruitment." The objective of the audit was to review training activities at TFS and identify opportunities for improvement.

Finally, City Council requested that TFS report on opportunities and associated costs to improve the City of Toronto's Public Fire Protection Classification (PFPC). A study was undertaken by the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) and in the fall of 2013, FUS published a report that set-out options TFS could undertake to achieve the Council directive. Based on the FUS report, TFS recommended strategies to improve the PFPC over the period of 2014 to 2017. These strategies were approved by City Council in December 2013.

The recommendations and strategies presented in these reviews will ultimately lead to positive changes in the way TFS delivers all hazards response and crucial services to the public.

COMMENTS

In addition to the recommendations and strategies noted above, Council provided a number of directives to TFS at the time of City Council's approval of the TFS 2014 Operating Budget. These include commissioning a new Master Fire Planning process, developing enhanced fire prevention and public education programs within TFS, and the implementation of important initiatives including Dynamic Staging, Predictive Modeling, GPS-Based Dispatch and Traffic Signal Pre-Emption. Council direction also requires TFS to further evaluate the consolidation of the TFS and Toronto Emergency Medical Services (TEMS) Communication Centres as well as requiring TFS to evaluate alternate staffing and deployment models with the Operations Division.

Master Fire Plan

An updated Master Fire Plan for Toronto will integrate the current and planned improvements across all fire programs and services, and will align with the City of Toronto's Strategic Actions and the TFS Strategic Plan for 2013 to 2018 to ensure that fire requirements resulting from growth are considered. In accordance with Council's direction, TFS will develop the Master Fire Plan in consultation with other City divisions to ensure proposed development and intensification within the City is appropriately addressed. Public engagement and consultation will also form part of this process. The delivery of the final Master Fire Plan is anticipated by the end of 2014.

Enhanced Fire Prevention and Education Program

Several reviews recommended increased staffing in the Fire Prevention and Public Education division to bolster the activities in this area. This is supported by the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal's "three lines of defence" for the delivery of fire protection services in Ontario – education, inspection and suppression. Through the 2013 Operating Budget process, TFS added 15 new fire inspectors, as a result of the FUS review, to pilot a risk based inspection program and to launch a pre-fire planning program across the City. Both projects were set up and underway prior to year end 2013.

An additional 25 staff were requested and approved in the 2014 Operating Budget. The additional 25 staff approved in 2014 will include assignments to fire inspection and public education, as well as the further development of a new fire investigations unit approved in 2013 and launched in 2014. Over the course of the next four years, TFS will be making a significant investment in public education to reduce the risk and incidence of fires including a reduced risk of loss of life and injury to both private citizens and firefighters. The following initiatives are currently being developed and implemented.

- A new organizational structure has been developed to allow increased attention on both inspection and education activities. The division of responsibilities will allow

concentrated oversight and the development of performance measures to track success. The new organizational structure will ensure the effective use of new staff as proposed in the multi-year approach identified in the 2014 Budget Process. It is anticipated that this plan will be approved for implementation by May 1, 2014.

- TFS actively participates on a number of inter-divisional teams with respect to issues which affect multiple City divisions. Currently the inter-divisional team on hoarding has improved communication between divisions and provided an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of each division in dealing with these issues. Further expansion of these types of initiatives will ensure a fulsome City response to the needs of residents – an integrated approach to emergency prevention and education better leverages organizational partnerships and collaboration to advance shared emergency prevention and education goals and objectives. A new initiative dealing with rooming houses was recently launched in late March 2014.
- Prevention and education programs will be targeted to areas of greatest risk identified through enhanced research and the use of fire risk management tools. TFS has adopted a "task-force" approach to a number of issues, including inspection related to retrofit requirements, inspection of student residences and rooming houses in areas surrounding educational institutions, and the recent legislation requiring enhanced fire safety requirement, inspection and education in vulnerable care occupancies. In addition, Public Education staff will continue to work closely with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) on the development of programs geared to priority neighbourhoods, and will develop targeted programs for areas identified through high emergency call volumes. The identification of priority areas and the development of educational programs are anticipated to involve both Toronto Police and TEMS to ensure coordinated efforts.
- Fire Inspection enforcement staff will develop a more aggressive enforcement policy for Fire Code violations that impact upon the life safety of the occupants of a building. This will include the potential for additional revenue generation that may be possible from increased enforcement activities, along with new fees that may be established for properties that are not compliant on first inspection and require additional inspections. This will be included in the 2015 Operating Budget process.
- A routine inspection program for high risk occupancies implemented in August 2013 will allow for a more fulsome development of fire inspections, code enforcement and fire investigations; these are key components to decreasing fire occurrence as well as the resulting impact upon people and property. An investment in fire inspection reduces the risk and incidence of fires, and has been shown to reduce false alarms, property loss and loss of life and injury to both private citizens and firefighters. A risk based inspection program was developed as a pilot program in 2013 and will be expanded as additional staff become available. To date, TFS has not been able to routinely inspect buildings due to limited resources. Inspections were largely limited to complaint and request inspections, including those required for special occasion permits and liquor licenses. In addition, provincial legislation has a large impact on

the use of staff time as the roll out of new legislated fire safety programs (most recently including hotels and vulnerable care occupancies) require a significant amount of staff time in Toronto as compared to other municipalities due to the volume of buildings involved. The City's commitment to the additional staffing requested through 2017 will ensure that TFS can continue to respond to both the priorities of the Province and the City with respect to inspection activities.

- Four new staff were approved in the 2013 Operating Budget to form a new fire investigation team in Toronto. These staff investigate fires in the City that are outside of the parameters used for the Ontario Fire Marshal's investigations. These staff are expected to begin work in May 2014 and will focus their attention on investigating the high number of fires in Toronto where the cause is recorded as "undetermined", in order to inform the efforts of the Public Education section in the development of new programs to reduce the number of fires and the resulting loss of life and property. Where investigations uncover Ontario Fire Code violations, TFS will adopt a more aggressive policy for prosecution as previously noted.
- The addition of 15 new staff in the 2013 Operating Budget allowed the development of risk awareness programs and pre-fire planning in conjunction with the operations division. Both of these programs were identified as requirements by FUS to maintain and improve the City of Toronto's PFPC. Future fire prevention efforts will involve much greater participation from suppression staff as they make up the largest proportion of staffing in the fire service and are more intimately aware of their respective running areas and the high risk and high call volume properties that exist in these areas. The existing programs involve suppression staff completing high level inspections for the review of prevention staff, to determine the properties that require a more fulsome inspection. With respect to pre-fire planning, suppression staff begin the process with an initial inspection using a checklist and are assigned a fire inspector who works with them to ensure all areas of the plan are addressed and that crews are aware of the life safety systems in various properties, including their locations, and the location of nearest hydrants to ensure the most effective staging of apparatus in the event of an emergency.
- Over the past several years, TFS has been working with a vendor to develop an effective records management tool for fire inspections, based on the results of a 2006 audit. A pilot project to allow inspection data to be entered in the field was less than successful and the hardware required was too large and cumbersome to be effective for inspectors. This software has now been developed as a mobile application, and all inspectors will be provided with iPads in the spring of 2014 to allow the full implementation of mobile inspections, with data available in real time. The anticipated successful launch of this program will allow for the future development of additional mobile technologies replacing outdated mobile data terminals (MDTs) in fire vehicles and allowing both suppression and prevention staff access to data. The mobile solutions will be developed and piloted to ensure effectiveness before being implemented department-wide. These solutions will be achieved over the next several years and based on recommendations of the Master Fire Plan.

Technology Improvements

The increased use of technology is expected to yield improvements in efficiency and service levels. TFS is reviewing the interdependencies associated with the introduction of these technologies with existing platforms, as well as identifying additional requirements in order to develop a comprehensive implementation plan. A detailed implementation plan will prioritize initiatives that have the greatest impact to the City's PFPC, while identifying budget requirements and time lines. It is anticipated that the scope of technology improvements will require a multi-year implementation plan or TFS specific technology implementation strategy. Development of a technology implementation strategy is underway with an initial draft expected by Q3 2014.

Activities currently under way, with implementation expected by year end, include: fill-in (staging) and predictive modelling solution; the implementation of a new Fire Station Alerting System which utilizes text to speech technology and improves business continuity; and, the development of an RFQ, to be released in July 2014, to enhance GPS signals within fire stations.

Consolidation of Fire Services and Emergency Medical Services

Since 1998, the consolidation of TFS and TEMS has been the subject of numerous reviews and studies. There is a high degree of collaboration and integration between the two divisions to ensure optimal and efficient service delivery. A joint report with the City Manager's Office further addressing this matter is expected to be tabled at the May 27, 2014 Executive Committee meeting.

Alternatives to the Twenty-four Hour Shift Model

This matter pertains to employee and labour relations matters, and will be dealt with under a separate confidential report.

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SIGNATURE

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