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2016 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Toronto Fire Services – Resources Required to Address Safety Concerns associated with Vertical Response Times

Issue/Background:

- At its meeting of January 11, 2016, the Budget Committee requested the Fire Chief and General Manager, Fire Services to provide a briefing note on vertical response times and resources required to address safety concerns associated with vertical response times.
- Vertical response time is the amount of time required to transition from the curb side of an affected high-rise property to the location of the actual emergency in a high-rise building and is in addition to Total Response Time.
- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations by Career Fire Departments* (NFPA 1710-2016) is the accepted performance standard for urban fire service deployment. The standard now addresses the increased number of firefighters required for high-rise emergency response (Effective Firefighting Force) and the risks associated with vertical response.

Key Points:

- The risks associated with emergency response in high-rise buildings pose significant challenges for TFS. This is increasing consistently on a year over year basis as the city continues to densify and as the number of multi-storey and high-rise residential buildings increases.
- The three lines of defence, as defined in the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, (Public Education, Fire Code Enforcement, and Emergency Response) are key in the delivery of effective fire protection services and in mitigating the challenges with high-rise emergency response due to the risks associated with vertical response.
 1. Public Education – Educating the public to prevent, escape and survive fires in a high-rise building is the first key to mitigating high-rise risks related to vertical response challenges. TFS proactively educates the public on fire safety and fire prevention to enhance the public's ability to prevent and survive fires and other hazards. As the first line of defence, it is important that TFS deliver timely and effective education to the City's high-rise residents and building supervisory staff. The addition of resources recommended through the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) report and approval by City Council in 2013, will enable TFS to move towards meeting this important high-rise fire safety education objective in

accordance with NFPA 1730-2016 standards (FUS report results and Council decision is located at

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD25.1>).

2. Fire Code Enforcement – Ensuring that high-rise buildings are regularly inspected and are free from Fire Code violations is the second key to mitigating high-rise risks related to vertical response challenges. TFS enforces the Ontario Fire Code and related fire safety standards to ensure that buildings meet the Code and are safe for residents and emergency responders. The addition of resources recommended through the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) report and approval by City Council in 2013, will enable TFS to move towards meeting this important high-rise inspection and enforcement objective in accordance with NFPA 1730-2016 standards.
 3. Emergency Response – Effective emergency response is the third key to mitigating vertical response challenges. TFS deploys initial responding crews to reported fires in order to permit efficient and effective rescue and fire suppression operations. As an emergency incident escalates, additional crews and resources are deployed in order to ensure that an effective firefighting force is maintained. TFS is presently reviewing both resources and deployment protocols to allow TFS to continue to move towards meeting NFPA 1710-2016 standards.
- The ongoing Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) Accreditation process will include a comprehensive internal and third-party review of all aspects of TFS operations, including an assessment of TFS emergency response protocols, standards of cover, training, and resource allocation. The outcomes of this process will be reported to Council upon completion, along with any recommendations.
 - The increase in the number of high-rise developments in the City of Toronto and the impact this has on response times necessitates an assessment of the overall placement of stations and firefighting crews. TFS is evaluating fire station location effectiveness and apparatus staffing complement relative to the population density in high-rise areas and planned growth areas of the city as part of the ongoing CFAI Accreditation process.
 - TFS is also in the process of implementing a number of critical technological changes that are expected to yield improvements in efficiency and service levels by altering the way in which resources are deployed and utilized.

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