

Status Update on report for Toronto Fire Services Service Delivery Enhancements

Date: August 24, 2020
To: Economic & Community Development Committee
From: Fire Chief & General Manager, Toronto Fire Services
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to the October 2, 2019 City Council request included in EC7.1 "Toronto Fire Services Transformation Plan Update", for the Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services (TFS) to report back to City Council, prior to the 2021 Budget Process, with recommended strategies, initiated both through the Toronto Fire Services Transformation Plan and the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) review, with the view to enhance overall service delivery and to address both the emerging, and the forecasted risks and needs of the growing City.

A number of initiatives arising from the TFS Transformation Plan are underway, including a comprehensive operational deployment review. Additionally, in March 2019, TFS achieved international CFAI accreditation which included the identification of a number of opportunities for continuous quality improvement. These initiatives will inform the recommendations for service delivery enhancement strategies, particularly opportunities that will enhance staff deployment in an effective and efficient manner.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, work related to the advancement of the Transformation Plan initiatives and CFAI recommendations was placed on hold in accordance with the COVID-19 emergency declaration in Toronto.

In order for TFS to provide City Council with evidence-based recommendations for future service delivery improvements, along with the most effective means of addressing both current and emerging fire safety risks and trends, additional, ongoing analysis is required. Following the completion of this review, TFS anticipates that recommendations for future service delivery improvements will be provided prior to the 2022 budget process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services recommends that City Council:

1. Direct the Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services to report back to City Council through the Economic and Community Development Committee in advance of the commencement of the 2022 budget process with recommended strategies as a result of the Toronto Fire Services Transformation Plan and Commission on Fire Accreditation International related review initiatives to enhance overall service delivery and address emerging and forecasted risks and needs of the growing City.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from the recommendation in this report.

While City Council had requested a review of strategies to enhance overall service delivery as part of the 2021 budget process, the review of these strategies is ongoing and will be completed prior to the 2022 budget review for consideration with the Program's budget submission, which will provide TFS sufficient time to evaluate the impact of the changes currently underway through the TFS Transformation Plan and through the CFAI accreditation process.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of October 2, 2019, City Council requested the Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services to report back to City Council in advance of the commencement of the 2021 budget process with recommended strategies, as a result of the Toronto Fire Services Transformation Plan and Commission on Fire Accreditation International related review initiatives, to enhance overall service delivery and address emerging and forecasted risks and needs of the growing City.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EC7.1>

COMMENTS

On March 7 2019, City Council requested TFS report back to the Economic and Community Development Committee (ECDC), prior to the 2020 Budget Process, on opportunities to develop strategies to enhance overall service delivery.

A number of initiatives arising from the TFS Transformation Plan were underway, including a comprehensive operational deployment review and detailed assessments

and analyses of operational capacity, staff resource allocations and planned / unplanned absence planning and mitigation strategies.

As well, in March 2019, TFS achieved international CFAI (Commission on Fire Accreditation International) accreditation under the Centre for Public Safety Excellence, making Toronto the largest city in North America with an accredited fire service. The achievement of CFAI accreditation included the identification of a number of opportunities for continuous quality improvement. These recommendations are now informing ongoing service delivery and operational deployment review initiatives within Fire Services. These initiatives inform recommendations for the enhancement of service delivery strategies, particularly as they relate to effective and efficient staff deployment. In early 2020, TFS successfully completed its first annual compliance review in order to maintain accredited status.

In March 2020, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, TFS was forced to shift focus and resources to managing and mitigating the effects of the pandemic on emergency response. As such, work related to the advancement of the Transformation Plan initiatives and CFAI recommendations was placed on hold until the COVID-19 pandemic emergency was terminated and normal operations have been restored across the City of Toronto.

TFS is unique in its responsibility for oversight of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). In addition to providing staff support to the Emergency Operation Centre, there was a significant impact to the TFS leadership team as result of internal staff re-assignment to further support the OEM and the City's overall emergency response. This resulted in a number of internal movements to backfill and cover key positions within TFS. TFS was forced to adapt to the challenges COVID-19 posed and all efforts were focused on managing daily operations to ensure the sustainment of service levels throughout the initial COVID-19 response.

As the City of Toronto begins to recover and rebuild, and staffing compliments return to pre-COVID-19 operational levels, TFS is shifting from functioning under COVID-19 response to stabilizing in the new environment and strategizing for what's next, doing so at war-time speed. The Transformation Plan initiatives, and CFAI recommendations have provided the framework for enhancing overall service delivery and continuous improvement at TFS. Due to the temporary lack of resource availability as a result of COVID-19, 72% of TFS Transformation Plan Projects and CFAI recommendations were put on hold. These projects are only now recommencing with COVID-19 protocols and safety measures in place.

COVID-19 presented unanticipated and unprecedented circumstances, the majority of which were out of TFS' control. This resulted in TFS experiencing a change in service requests and volume during the first two quarters of 2020. In order for TFS to provide City Council with evidence-based recommendations for future service delivery improvements, along with the most effective means of addressing both current and emerging fire safety risks and trends, ongoing work is required. TFS anticipates that recommendations for future service delivery improvements will be provided prior to the 2022 budget process.

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