

Comprehensive Review of Fire Services

Project Overview
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Background

- Fire Services Division evolved from an amalgamation of multiple fire departments in 2001
- Currently consists of 132 full time staff
 - 108 career firefighters and approx. 340 volunteer firefighters
 - provide Fire Prevention, Suppression and Emergency Rescue
 - 24 stations serve 160,000 residents within 3,627 sq km (including 330 lakes, highways, rail lines, airport, mines, residential and wild land areas)
- Includes medical aid, water/ice, vehicle extrication, fire alarm, land search & rescue



Background

- Challenges
 - Ensure that services align to community needs (risks)
 - Achieve operational effectiveness
 - Manage escalating costs
- 2012 preliminary review of the Emergency Services Department concluded that a Comprehensive Review of Fire Services is required (February 2012)



Project Objectives

- Fire Risk Assessment
- Fire Station placement & resourcing
- Fire operational effectiveness & options (rationalizing infrastructure, resources & operating protocols)
- Fire Services costs
- Cost containment options (including user fees)
- Fire Area Rating & impacts on service delivery
- Volunteer Fire Operations (including alternative deployment & oversight models, recruitment & retention)
- Fire Capital Replacement program



Project Organization

- Steering Committee:
 - Chief of Emergency Services (as Chair)
 - Fire Chief
 - Chief Administrative Officer
 - Chief Financial Officer
 - Director of Human Resources & Organizational Development
- This project to be carried out predominately by resources internal to the Fire Services Division...
 - By the end of the project, Fire Services personnel to have gained greater understanding for the design & delivery of Fire Services



Project Organization

- Other City Departments to assist where required (Information Technology, Finance, HR, GIS, etc.)
- IBI Group's role (project management services):
 - assist in the development of work plans
 - coordinate work activities
 - quality oversight of work performed
 - consolidate & document the work
 - provide advice & technical input to tasks led by Fire Services based on professional experience/insight & knowledge of Fire best practices
 - lead specific tasks (technical assessments) with third party support



Task Assignments

Task One — Review of Fire Services

Fire lead with IBI Group support – start date October 2012

- Fire risk assessment
- Fire station placement & resourcing
- Station appraisal
- Fire operational effectiveness & options (rationalizing infrastructure, resources and operating protocols)



Task Assignments

Task Two — Service Delivery Costs

IBI Group lead with Fire Services support – start date November 2012

- Options for cost containment (including user fees)
- Fire Services costs
- Fire Area Rating — investigate whether fire area rating is impacting service delivery



Task Assignments

Task Three — Volunteer Firefighter Operations

IBI Group lead with Fire Services support – start date
February 2013

- Volunteer Operations
- Oversight models
- Alternative deployment
- Recruitment & retention
- Training



Task Assignments

Task Four — Fire Services Capital Requirements

Fire Services lead with IBI Group support – start date
February 2013

- Apparatus/equipment rationalization impacts
- Fire Capital Replacement Program
- Capital Replacement Policy



Task Three Objectives

Investigate Volunteer Operations

Scope (issues to address):

- Role of Volunteer Firefighters for protection, prevention & public safety education
- Volunteer deployment practices
- Volunteer Firefighter turnout to emergency calls
- Volunteer Firefighter retention
- Training
- Equipment
- Recruitment & associated costs
- Alternative recruitment options
- Alternative deployment models
- Volunteer remuneration options
- Ranking System
- Other issues – as may be defined in consultation with Volunteer Firefighters



Task Three

Participants:

- Focus groups consisting of Volunteer Firefighters
- IBI Group Fire expert as focus group facilitator (facilitator to include external surveys & documentation of task findings)
- District Chiefs to organize & participate in focus group sessions
- District Chiefs also to serve as co-authors of ensuing report
- Couple of Volunteers to serve as "go-to" persons

Approach:

- Two-pronged approach involving 'internal' focus groups consisting of Volunteer Firefighters & an 'external' survey of peer Fire Departments



Task Three

Internal Focus Groups:

- One focus group meeting per District (four in total – during week of February 11th, 2013)
- Meet twice with each focus group (once at outset & again when task findings are in draft). This works out to four evening meetings back-to-back at outset and another four back-to-back evening meetings toward the end of task
- Each focus group to consist of 8 to 10 participants
- Participants to be suggested by the District Chiefs guided by such objectives as: achieving a range of years of experience, involving both active (vocal) and passive Volunteers, seek a minimum of one representative from each station, to include Volunteers of various rank



Task Three

External Survey:

- Survey — interview by teleconference & exchange of information by e-mail (may include some visits)
- Surveys to be conducted by IBI facilitator. The intent is to assemble data on a number of subject areas concurrently including:
 - Volunteer Fire Operations
 - Budget, user fees & cost control initiatives
 - Dispatch SOP's, dispatch training, etc.



Questions?

