

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

By initiating a Fire Master Plan study, the Town of Oakville seeks to strategically guide its Fire Services through the next ten to twenty years of intense population and municipal growth. The Fire Master Plan study has reviewed all aspects of the department in order to ensure that performance standards and guidelines reflect best practices and are in compliance with the Ontario *Fire Protection and Prevention Act (1997)*. Recommendations are provided under the same headings and in the same sequence followed in the report.

Administration

1. Undertake an administrative review of the fire department with input from senior management and administrative staff, in conjunction with implementation of the records management solution. If the review does not lead to a reduction in administrative workload, consideration should be given to hiring additional administrative support staff. Depending on the outcome of the review, it may be necessary to adjust or redefine roles and responsibilities of administrative staff. Additional analytical support for the department could be required as it transitions to electronic records management.
2. Consideration should be given to either creating a “Utility Person” position or filling the Assistant Deputy Chief position in conjunction with assigning additional duties to on-shift fire suppression staff to undertake coordination and distribution of stock for personal protective equipment and other duties related to firefighter equipment. There will also be a need to review the need for an “Air Technician” position once the accommodated position fulfilling this role lapses.
3. The Fire Department should initiate a review and update of all fire service by-laws and agreements. They should also begin the process of introducing and updating operating guidelines, procedures and policies. A new analyst position (temporary, term, or contract) could be added to further the development and implementation of these operating guidelines, or the duties could be assigned to a Deputy Chief or a new Executive Officer position.. A system should be developed to ensure periodic review all operating guidelines, policies and procedures for the Oakville Fire Department.
4. A space needs assessment should be undertaken to determine the requirements and the ways to accommodate current and future needs for the entire Department. Office space at Department headquarters are inadequate and given the additional staff recommended and station relocations planned, a comprehensive review is necessary.
5. The Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) role can be re-assigned to either of the other two Deputy Fire Chiefs (i.e. Support Services or Training and Prevention), another Senior Fire Department staff (e.g. Assistant Deputy Chief), an Executive Officer or someone outside the Fire Department (i.e. from another Town department) to ensure continuity during an emergency. Given that no new capacity has been added within Fire Department management despite recent organizational changes options to be pursued include a new CEMC position within the Fire Department, division of tasks among several senior Fire Department staff or transfer of responsibilities to staff in a different Town department.

The CEMC should prepare a three year emergency management work plan to maintain the requirements under the Essential Level as well as begin to develop and implement the requirements under the Enhanced and Comprehensive Levels should the Town want to pursue an increased level of readiness. Also, a written plan and testing process should be completed

for evacuation procedures as outlined in the Town of Oakville Emergency Response Plan. The Town should consider locating a multi-use back-up EOC at an existing and/or new fire station and upgrading the Town Hall Emergency Operations Centre to allow the use of multiple computers.

Fire Prevention and Public Education

1. Two additional Fire Prevention Officers should be hired immediately to provide one inspector within each of the Town's six fire prevention districts. Two additional Fire Prevention Officers should be hired to meet the forecasted demands related to growth in the North Oakville when development is sufficiently advanced.
2. It is recommended that one additional Public Education Officer be hired immediately. Until this is completed, the current Public Education Officer's tasks should focus on public education initiatives with special projects reassigned as appropriate. One additional Public Education Officer should be hired to accommodate the growth needs in North Oakville when development is sufficiently advanced. This recommendation should be monitored and reassessed to allow programs to be added or enhanced as needed which would require resources additional to the estimated total of three public education officers.
3. In addition to ensuring the certification of fire prevention officers, introduce a basic training program for new employees in the division and document certification levels expected of Fire Prevention Officers.
4. Initiate a process to ensure that operating guidelines, procedures and policies are developed, reviewed and maintained by the fire prevention division. The Special Officer recommended under Administration could lead this.
5. Include the completion of the Office of the Fire Marshal Fire Prevention Effectiveness Model (Public Fire Safety Guideline 04-39-12) as part of division responsibilities and include annual reviews of programs and activities delivered.
6. Conduct a risk assessment of the Town's harbours to determine an adequate level of service for fire prevention, public education and fire suppression.

Fire Suppression

1. Staff front line apparatus up to four firefighters per truck, consistent with industry best practices and industry performance measures. This requires the hiring twenty additional full-time firefighters.
2. Move Station 3 and Station 5 to more optimal locations.
3. Based on the fire station location modelling carried out, it is recommended that the Town adopt Option 7a and plan for a nine-station configuration. New Station 8 and new Station 9 should be constructed when growth in North Oakville is sufficiently advanced. This will necessitate the purchase of two new pumper apparatus and staff with complements of four firefighters for each of the four shifts (i.e. a total of 20 full-time firefighters per new station).
4. Purchase an additional rescue for Station 1.
5. Purchase an additional quint for Station 4

Training

1. One additional training officer should be considered once staff hiring for new North Oakville stations begins.
2. A computerized records management software tool should be made available for the training section as part of the overall department records management.
3. Immediate development of a process to ensure that necessary standard operational guidelines, procedures and policies are identified prioritized and completed. This could be lead by the Special Officer recommended under Administration.
4. Provide adequate budget for computer-based distance learning and a training resource library.
5. Prepare a Master Training Plan to identify and ensure the completion of short and long-term training goals. The plan should consider a range of training delivery options including a process to second qualified non-training personnel to complete special projects, partnerships with other municipalities and joint training opportunities with local industrial partners. The plan should also include a business case for the training centre with respect to maintenance, future development and utilization by outside groups.
6. Add an additional building should be sought to provide year-round training.

Fleet

1. Dispose of reserve Quint 207.
2. Place Pump 251 in reserve and retire Pump 211.
4. Monitor the primary Hazmat vehicle's condition and performance given its age and budget for a replacement vehicle (e.g. newer cube van).
5. Increase small equipment budget to reduce out of service time.
6. Maintain fire apparatus with a specialized core of mechanics (i.e. within corporate fleet).
7. Adopt a rotation program for heavily used apparatus.

10.7 Communication and Technology

1. As the volume of emergency calls continues to grow consideration of additional staffing and/or a supervisory structure should be considered by the Joint Operating Committee. Incremental growth and financial planning of a new model may consider options such as:
 - Developing 24/7 on-site supervision capabilities
 - Identifying a Communications Coordinator for 24/7 coverage
 - Providing a third dispatcher on each shift

Recommendations of the Joint Operating Committee should be presented to both the Oakville and Burlington Council.