

# Saskatoon Fire Department – Fire Training Facility Update

## ISSUE

The Saskatoon Fire Department (the Department) must meet the demands of maintaining key skills in all disciplines in a safe and efficient manner. Considering the size and complexity of modern fire services, a purpose-built dedicated training facility (training facility) would best allow the Department to provide training in a controlled learning environment to meet short and long-term needs. Firefighter skills must meet required standards as defined by the *National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996*.

## BACKGROUND

A training facility has been a part of business and future growth planning for over 31 years. The need for a training facility has become more urgent due to the increased complexity of required firefighter skills, regulatory frameworks, and our growing City. A training facility will be foundational for the Department to be able to meet these needs.

At the August 14, 2018 public meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Planning Development and Community Services, the Department provided a presentation to highlight the need for a training facility. Committee resolved that the Administration report back, with more detail, on options for a SFD fire training facility. This included exploring the ability to expand to a corporate or regional facility as well as including other options in a phased approach.

## CURRENT STATUS

The Department's Management Team engaged with staff through a Joint Labor/Management Committee (the Committee). The Committee researched comparable training sites in Canada and developed a project plan. Through this process, it became apparent that a broader training facility could meet the immediate training needs of the Department and address the training infrastructure requirements of other civic Divisions.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Work was undertaken to evaluate and assess various training facilities and operating models in Canada. These models range from fire-specific facilities to multi-divisional corporate safety training centers.

The municipalities included in the evaluation and assessment were Calgary, Edmonton, Vermillion, Regina, and Red Deer. There were also Provincial facilities located in Manitoba and British Columbia that were reviewed. Through this investigation, it was found there were a number of similarities between training facilities such as the presence of a classroom, burn tower, street scape, and structures for fire-science behavior. In addition to this, it was noted that some of the training facilities offered distinct uses such as industrial and wildland firefighting, technical rescue, and interoperability for multi-agency emergency response and preparedness.

This evaluation and assessment was instrumental in determining key features required of the site. The Committee continues to work on various aspects of the plan such as the potential parcel size, identification of stakeholders, and finalizing a phased approach to the development of a more comprehensive training facility.

Meetings have occurred between the Cities of Warman and Martensville and their respective fire services. The mutual benefit of a regional facility is commonly recognized.

Discussions have been initiated with the Rural Municipality of Corman Park and the Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth Committee (P4G) as a means to identify areas that might be suitable for a training facility. These discussions will be ongoing as the Committee nears possible land selection.

Initial discussions have occurred with Treasury Board Crown, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA), regarding the alignment of training curriculum development, offering of courses, and accreditation to best suit the needs of career, on call, and volunteer fire departments.

Key features of the phased approach have been prioritized and are shown below.

### **Phase 1**

- Defined location for live fire training site
- Land acquisition
- Site preparation and servicing
- Movement of office structures
- Set up of live fire training area

### **Phase 2**

- Indoor year round multipurpose training facility indoor facility
- Driving track with street scape for City of Saskatoon (CoS) Divisions
- Fire buildings and props for industrial high-angle training
- Water retention pond for firefighter dive training and CoS utilities and environmental studies
- Confined space training props for CoS Divisions and industrial recertification
- Practice sand box for CoS heavy equipment training (earth moving)
- Classrooms and lecture auditorium
- Props for CoS, provincial, and private utility training such as hydrants, power poles, natural gas appliances, underground vaults, and train derailment
- Grounds for collaborative training with agencies with a direct role in emergency planning and response such as Canadian National (CN) and Canadian Pacific (CP) railways, Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS), rural fire departments, private industry, and SPSA

### **Phase 3**

- Training tower for high-rise evolutions
- Concrete drill square
- Paved practical skills training area

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The training facility is the number one priority for the Department. An approved capital project is not currently in place, therefore a report will be brought forward, prior to the end of Q2 of 2020, seeking post-budget approval for Phase 1. It is anticipated that there is adequate funding available in the Fire Facilities Funding Plan for Phase 1.

Phases 2 and 3 will be included and prioritized with the Fire Strategic Facility Master Plan report, planned for the end of 2020.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Land-use conflicts will be considered during land selection to address any social implication.

Environmental implications would be evaluated during the planning and development of each phase and best practices with respect to environmental stewardship incorporated where suitable.

At this time, there are no privacy or legal implications identified.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The Committee will continue to explore partnerships through meetings, presentations, and public engagement.

Administration will report back with details regarding land location selection and purchase through the Standing Policy Committee on Finance.

#### **Report Approval**

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