

PRRD Fire Service Needs Assessment

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Focus of the Report



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 - Peace River Regional District (PRRD) area east of Dawson Creek
 - Electoral Area D's request for fire protection review
 - Survey Results
 - Feedback from residents
 - Public information sessions
 - PRRD Administration Feedback
 - Insights from PRRD administration
 - Other sources of feedback
 - Potential Fire Protection Options
 - Different levels of fire protection
 - Capital and operating costs

Challenges in Developing Fire Service

Recruiting and Retaining Volunteer Personnel

Training Requirements

Effectiveness and Sustainability

Balancing Responsibilities



FireWise Consulting Ltd.

Review Process and Methodology

Kickoff Meeting

Stakeholder Engagement

- Site Visit by FireWise
- Scheduled for September 23 - 26, 2024
- Facilitated two public information sessions

Information Gathering

Cooperation from Regional District

Report Findings



Option 1: Maintain the Current Situation

- Advantages of Maintaining Current Situation
 - No capital costs for firehall, trucks, and gear
 - No annual operating expenses
 - No operational liability exposures
- Disadvantages of Maintaining Current Situation
 - Community risk remains unchanged
 - No emergency response services for non-forestry fires and rescues
 - May not meet resident expectations for fire protection services



Option 3: Create a Composite Staffed Fire Service

- Advantages of Composite Staffing Model
 - Lower personnel costs compared to full-time paid fire service
 - Paid personnel ensure consistency in administrative tasks
 - Chief supports volunteer firefighters with training and leadership
- Disadvantages of Composite Staffing Model
 - Significant capital costs for firehall, trucks, and gear
 - Increased operational costs, including salaries, benefits, and equipment
 - Pressure on the Chief due to limited volunteer firefighter availability



Option 5: Expanded Service Delivery Area (Regional Model)

Enhanced Resource Allocation

- Pooled resources such as personnel, equipment, and funding
- Better allocation based on actual needs and risk levels

Improved Operational Efficiency

- Coordinated planning and deployment
- Reduced duplication of efforts
- Streamlined response times
- Consistent service levels

Cost Savings

- Consolidation of administrative and operational functions

Standardized Training and Protocols

Enhanced Capacity and Specialization



Important Areas of Consideration

Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

- Requires support from local and regional efforts
- Ongoing challenge needing a minimum of 15 firefighters
- 2021 census indicates a small pool of approximately 160 potential candidates

Volunteer Fire Fighter Training

- Training level depends on the level of fire protection chosen
- Higher level of protection requires more training



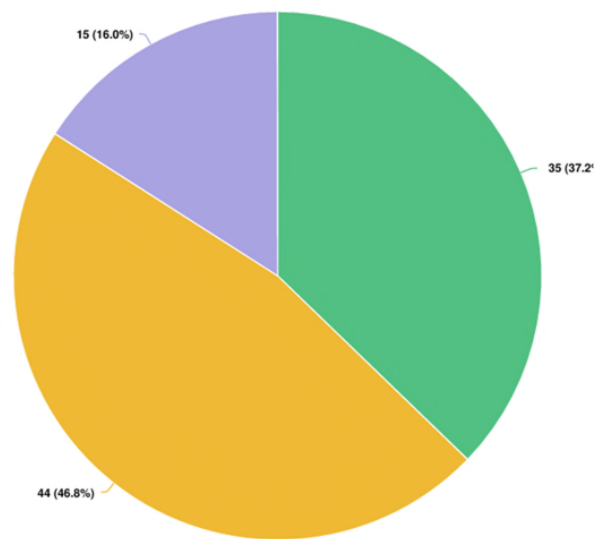
Fire Service Recommendations

- Expanded Service Delivery Area
 - Minimal impact on operational tempos
 - Significant economic pressure on property owners
 - Prudent to expand fire protection area
 - Evaluate regional options
- Apparatus Recommendations
 - Maintain fleet of one pumper-tanker unit, one water tender, one wildland response unit, and a utility pickup
 - Support fleet with structure protection equipment
 - Additional capacity through mutual and automatic aid responses
- Firehall Recommendations
 - Careful consideration of firehall location for best coverage and response times
 - Design must withstand disasters such as extreme cold, power outages, severe weather, wildfires, and earthquakes



Community Expectations

- **Community Feedback**
 - **Importance of Fire Services:** 82% consider fire protection as important to must-have
 - **Types of Fires:** Preparedness for building fires, wildfires, and fires near buildings
 - **Service Levels:** Support for a full-service fire department
 - **Rescue Services:** Importance of rescue services for emergencies
 - **Fire Prevention Programs:** Strong support for FireSmart inspections and fire safety education



Financial

Fire Station Requirements

- Two double bays for apparatus storage and servicing
- Space for practical training props
- Minimum facilities: decontamination areas, showers, lockers, change areas, storage, office, training room
- Excludes land purchase or greenfield remediation
- Additional costs for septic and water supply systems

Capital Replacement Costs

- Ongoing costs include capital replacement based on regulations or industry standards
- Annual testing and certification requirements

Training Needs

Wages for Volunteer Firefighters



Conclusion

Current and Future Fire Protection Needs

Importance of Sustainable Fire Service

Options for Fire Protection

- Composite fire department preferred
- Balance between protection and financial limitations

Challenges to Address

- Recruit and retaining volunteer firefighters

Potential Expansion of Service Delivery Area



Thank You

Questions?

