



Report to: Council

Meeting Date: April 20, 2021

SUBJECT: Provincial Fire Safety Grant
PREPARED BY: Adam J. Grant, Fire Chief x 5982

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report entitled “Provincial Fire Safety Grant” dated April 20, 2021 be received; and,
- 2) That Council approve the Fire Safety Grant in the amount of \$85,700 from the Province of Ontario, to be used to fund the construction of a live fire training facility; and,
- 3) That a new 2021 capital project named “Fire Safety Grant” be created in the amount of \$85,700 to be funded from the Fire Safety Grant; and,
- 4) That the CAO be authorized and directed to execute the funding agreement and any related documents required to give effect thereto, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor; and,
- 5) That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Markham Fire has applied and been approved for a Provincial grant to assist in improving our service’s ability to conduct fire inspections or complete training during pandemic-type circumstances. A condition of the grant requires Council approval to access the funding. Fire and Emergency Services recommends that a live fire training facility built from shipping containers will provide a realistic, cost-effective and made-in-Markham solution to fire training during pandemic-like conditions.

PURPOSE:

The Province of Ontario has approved a one-time grant for municipalities to support efforts to minimize the impacts related to COVID-19 in either training or fire prevention inspections. Council approval is required in order to have the funds released to the municipality for use.

BACKGROUND:

On March 11, 2021, Solicitor General Sylvia Jones announced that the Ontario government would be providing \$5 million in new funding to assist municipal fire services address the impacts of COVID-19. The funds are to be focused on the departments’ challenges in providing either fire service training or fire safety inspection programs during situations such as the current pandemic.

Each municipal fire department in Ontario is eligible to receive a minimum base-funding grant, plus additional funding based upon population per capita. These funds are coming from the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021 budget; therefore, there are very short timelines to apply and receive approval to have funds released.

Markham Fire submitted a proposal to the Fire Marshal on March 18, 2021 for a grant amount to fund increased on-site training opportunities. On March 29, 2021 the Fire Marshal approved our submission for the funding, contingent on Council approval to be received on or before April 30, 2021.

Our current model for live fire training includes going offsite by leasing the Richmond Hill Burn Tower and having two Markham fire apparatus out of area during the training.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Two options were carefully considered. They included investing in additional resilience in fire prevention inspections or training. Throughout the ongoing pandemic our Fire Prevention team has been well equipped to deal with the impacts of COVID-19, and continue life-safety inspections and other duties. Training, however, has been significantly limited due to our lack of autonomy and reliance on another municipality for a live fire training facility.

By directing this Provincial grant towards our own live fire facility, not only will we be able to provide important training throughout situations such as this pandemic, but we will keep our fire apparatus within Markham during the on-shift training, should they be needed for an actual incident.

The proposed live fire training facility will be installed in the back compound of the 8100 Warden property. It will consist of 6 intermodal shipping containers (“sea cans”) welded together in a single-storey to create a 40’X40’ structure. It has been designed to meet National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard 1402, the standard associated with fire training facilities. The inside will be fabricated to replicate the City of Markham’s most significant risk to life and property with regards to fire, a single-family residential dwelling. Some interior walls will be fabricated to move which will allow the layout to be changed and provide ongoing training challenges. This structure will require little to no maintenance and will have a structural base to support two additional levels in the future. The training that will occur in this facility will include Class A burning (straw and wood) to realistically simulate fire conditions; fire control; search and rescue; forcible entry; wall breach and entanglement; ladder raises and hoisting; firefighter survival; and many other topics.

The Fire Safety Grant requires that all funds be utilized by August 31, 2021.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Grant Funding (A)	\$85,700.00
Proposed allocation, with HST impact (B)	
Supply and fabrication of cans	(\$61,056.00)
Foundation and engineering services	(\$15,264.00)
Transportation and installation of shipping containers	(\$10,176.00)
Building Permit Fee	(\$1,831.68)
Net (A) - (B)	(\$2,627.68)

The shortfall will be funded from Fire's program expenses budget. The live fire facility will be added to the next Life Cycle Reserve Study.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not Applicable

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Exceptional Services by Exceptional People

A well-trained emergency responder will perform as expected at incidents and effect better outcomes that directly contribute to increased public safety. Our fire facility will allow firefighters to practice skills related to rescue and suppression in very realistic fire conditions. The ability to practice these skills multiple times per year will allow them to remain in the highest state of readiness.

Safe, Sustainable & Complete Community

Being able to maintain our fire services skill level at all times contributes to public safety. Having the training facility located within Markham allows us to train more frequently while also being available to mitigate emergency incidents with little delay. Being reliant on other municipalities has the potential to create a situation (such as in the pandemic) where we are vulnerable to disruption of our training—this facility will solve that problem.

Stewardship of Money & Resources

The live fire training facility that we are proposing is built and designed to our specifications and not "off the shelf". Not only is it modular and scalable, but it's designed with Markham building stock in mind. Off the shelf shipping container training facilities similar to this can easily cost 5 times as much. Traditional training facilities (such as the one we lease in Richmond Hill) could easily cost 100 times as much. Since this training facility is assembled of individual containers it can also be moved, should the need arise.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Finance

Environmental Services

Building Dept

Asset Management

Legal Services

RECOMMENDED BY:

Adam Grant

Fire Chief, Fire Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Not applicable