

Kitchener Fire Department Master Plan 2017-2022 Executive Summary



Community Services
Department
March 2017



Fire Chief's Message

The Kitchener Fire Department, in collaboration with City of Kitchener personnel, external stakeholders and members of the public have developed this fire master plan to serve as a strategic guideline to advance the department over the next five years.

The Kitchener Fire Department Master Plan (KFDMP) is also intended to assist Kitchener Council in making decisions regarding the provision of fire protection services based on the local needs and circumstances of our community.

The analyses, strategic actions and operational actions contained within this plan have been prepared with regard for the legislated responsibilities of the municipalities as contained within the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (1997) (FPPA) and the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA).

Within the Province of Ontario the delivery of fire protection services are guided by the FPPA including the strategic optimization of the three lines of defence which include:

1. Public Fire Safety Education
2. Fire Safety Standards and Enforcement
3. Emergency Response

Significant emphasis has been placed on the use of Public Fire Safety Guidelines (PFSG) and the resources provided by the Office of the Fire Marshal - Emergency Management (OFMEM) while developing this master plan.

The KFDMP for the period of 2017 to 2022 is designed to offer a high level of fire protection services to the community in a cost effective manner resulting in the best value for the municipality.

In closing, I would like to thank the KFDMP project team for their dedication and commitment in shaping this fire master plan.



Fire Chief Jon Rehill

Executive Summary

The Kitchener Fire Department (KFD) provides City of Kitchener residents, visitors and businesses with protection against loss of life, property and the environment from the effects of fire, accidents and all other hazards through preparedness, prevention, public education and emergency response.

The development of the Kitchener Fire Department Master Plan (KFDMP) recognizes the continued commitment of city council and senior staff to providing the highest level of services to the community in the most cost effective and efficient manner while at the same time developing fire personnel and strengthening community partnerships.

During the development of the KFDMP various risk factors were considered. Currently, there are municipal growth factors that are increasing the level of risk facing the fire department's service delivery to the community. They include:

- increase in the number of residential buildings due to a rise in population
- increase in the number of commercial, industrial and institutional buildings
- increased traffic volume on city streets
- increase in population density as a result of high-rise intensification

Within the fire service at a provincial and local level, there are operational risk factors which are significantly important to address over the period of this master plan. Those factors are:

- Office of the Fire Marshal - Emergency Management (OFMEM) transition from the Ontario fire service standards to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards
- training gaps to achieve NFPA standards, education, enforcement, and building code
- insufficient fire technology solutions causing operational inefficiencies
- provincial legislation demands on the department (i.e., vulnerable occupancies)
- increasing costs of municipal fire service
- increased requirements for emergency planning and business continuity

The KFDMP was primarily based on the three lines of defence framework from the OFMEM. By following that framework in addition to further data collection and analysis, the KFD will enhance service delivery through implementation of strategic and operational actions in the KFDMP as follows.

Strategic Actions

First Line of Defence - Public Fire Safety Education

Through the first line of defence of the OFMEM framework, the department will continue to educate our community in fire and life safety and fire prevention strategies. Throughout the next

five years our department is committed to exploring and expanding new techniques and platforms to better inform and engage the neighbourhoods within the city. Examples include:

- develop an annual communication plan that better utilizes the city's digital and print communication tools (Action #24)
- create fire and life safety programs to better educate the diverse population of the city e.g., new Canadians (Action #25)
- implement the "After The Fire Is Out" program by suppression personnel to enhance fire and life safety messaging in the community (Action #28)
- create a public education team from existing staff who can provide enhanced fire and life safety training in specific areas related to fire risk (i.e., geographic, demographic) to better serve the neighbourhoods (Action #26)

Second Line of Defence - Fire Safety Standards and Enforcement

Through the second line of defence of the OFMEM framework, the department will continue to conduct fire inspections and when necessary enforce compliance through the Ontario fire code. Identified within the fire master plan review (2016) was a service gap in relation to fire prevention inspection cycles of buildings within the municipality. Currently, the department does not have a routine inspection cycle in place. Beginning in 2017, the department will:

- develop and implement a routine inspection cycle based on industry best practice (Action #21)
- educate and train suppression personnel to be able to conduct inspections in low and moderate risk occupancies e.g., day care facilities (Action #34)
- educate and train suppression personnel to assist with legislated requirements for high risk / vulnerable occupancies e.g., long term care facilities (Action #35)

Third Line of Defence - Emergency Response

The third line of defence of the OFMEM framework occurs when suppression personnel are required to respond to an emergency. In 2014, the OFMEM transition from the Ontario fire service standards to the NFPA standards created a significant change in how suppression staff are trained and how they respond to specialty rescues. The department will:

- update the city's Establishing and Regulating By-Law, Fire Department to reflect changes in NFPA standards related to the KFD specialized rescue response (e.g., confined space, trench rescue and light rail transit) (Action #1)
- create exercise based training scenarios for suppression staff in high risk occupancies (e.g., vulnerable occupancies, heavy industry) to develop and educate crews in firefighter tactics and strategies to strengthen our emergency response capabilities (Action #30)

- after technological solutions are in place, conduct a comprehensive review of the fire department's response capabilities per response standard NFPA 1710 (Action #29)

Operational Actions

Cost Efficiencies and Effectiveness

From the research and data collection/analysis for the master plan, the project team determined there are opportunities within the fire department to generate revenue, find internal departmental efficiencies and utilize technology solutions – all with the goal of being more efficient. This includes:

- implement recommendations from the Fire Technology Strategy (Action #23)
- work with the city's asset management team to develop a comprehensive asset management program focused on station maintenance (Action #4)
- conduct a workload analysis for all divisions (Administration, Apparatus and Equipment, Direct Detect, Emergency Communications, Emergency Management and Business Continuity, Fire Prevention, Fire Systems and Projects, Public Education, Emergency Response, Training) (Action #3)
- explore business opportunities to offer a variety of services (e.g. direct detect) to other municipalities to create strategic revenue generation opportunities (Action #5)

Staff Development

Using information from the review of the fire divisions and from the 2016 Employee Culture Survey results, the project team identified opportunities to strengthen internal staff development, well-being and career growth. The following actions will assist the department in moving forward with initiatives related to staff development:

- develop a department wide officer development program and succession plan (Action #32)
- provide cross divisional training and job mentoring to enhance service delivery and improve operational effectiveness (Action #33)
- continue to enhance our wellness/fitness initiatives to ensure mental and physical resiliency and well-being of staff (Action #6)
- promote an engaged workplace culture by implementing actions driven by the results of the 2016 Employee Culture Survey (Action #7)

Strengthening Partnerships

During the analysis of demographic information of the various fire divisions, the project team felt that the fire department staff should strengthen its relationships with external partners and the community. To achieve this, the department will:

- work with all levels of government to educate the community and external public safety partners e.g., school, hospitals, in emergency preparedness (Action #20)
- provide training to corporate departments to ensure the proper management of their continuity of operations during a significant event or emergency (Action #19)
- increase the awareness of existing, and encourage the development of new programs, aiming to educate persons not typically attracted to the fire service (i.e., the Young Female Firefighting program) (Action #9)
- commit to building an inclusive and diverse workforce that is reflective of the community (Action #10)

