



## The Corporation of the Township of Huron-Kinloss

---

### Staff Report

**Report Title: Lakeshore Response Times 2024**

**Date: Oct. 7, 2024**

**Report Number: FIR-2024-10-27**

**Department: Fire and Emergency Services**

**File Number: C11 FIR 24**

**Prepared By: Jeff Bradley Fire Chief**

**Attachments: None**

---

#### **Recommendation:**

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby receives for information Report FIR-2024-10-27 prepared by Jeff Bradley, Fire Chief;

AND FURTHER THAT the Infrastructure Needs Assessment indicated for 2025 in the Township's Integrated Master Plan be considered complete and that response times, and call volumes be monitored to determine the need and timing for completion of a future feasibility study for a lakeshore area fire hall;

AND FURTHER THAT Staff be directed investigate and implement alternative mitigation measures as outlined in report FIR-2024-10-27 as budget permits.

#### **Background:**

The Lucknow & District Fire Board (LDFB) discussed the possible need for a fire station located in the lakeshore area and requested Staff investigate issues related to response times in the lakeshore area. The board expressed concerns regarding response times to medical and fire related emergency calls.

The Township's Fire & Emergency Services Strategy Plan recommends for "inclusion of a third fire station to be built in the Lakeshore Area" with an anticipated timeframe of within the next 6-10 years. The Integrated Master Plan (IMP) recommended the completion of an Infrastructure Needs Assessment for a fire hall at the Lakeshore, as a 2025 objective. This needs assessment was expedited to enable the Fire Chief to provide an update as requested by the LDFB. The Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh (ACW) Council considered a report on response times, and it was reported to the LDFB that ACW Council is satisfied with the response times within their community and that the Council is not supportive of pursuing a joint lakeshore area fire station at this time.

This report is being provided to Committee of the Whole to provide the data analysis used to assess the infrastructure needs at the lakeshore respecting a third fire station.

## **Discussion/Analysis/Overview:**

Response time may be impacted by a variety of factors. The data collected on factors affecting response times is challenging to gather as it is complicated by the multiple sources of information and the data-sharing policies of agencies involved.

Although the IMP called for an infrastructure needs assessment to be conducted in 2025, staff accelerated the data collection based on the LDFB's request to investigate response times.

Emergency response times are set through the NFPA standards. Considered a best practice, NFPA 1720 Standard is supported by the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) and the choice to adopt the standard is up to the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) and Council.

NFPA 1720 standard for emergency response in a rural area is 14 minutes-80% of the time. Ripley Huron Fire Department (RHFD) current response times average 16 minutes from the time of emergency page to on scene.

## **Medical Calls Data**

In 2022 there were 22 medical calls along the lakeshore and 18 of the calls were canceled by a higher medical authority Bruce County Paramedics or Huron County Paramedics (EMS) as the fire department was not required to attend. 4 calls when EMS was delayed, and the fire department was first on scene and provided medical care until the transfer of patient care to EMS on scene.

In 2023 there were 30 medical calls along the lakeshore 29 of them were canceled by (EMS) as fire department was not required to attend. 1 call when (EMS) was delayed, and fire department was first on scene and provided medical care until the transfer of patient care to EMS on scene.

## **Fire Related Calls Data**

In 2022 (RHFD) responded to 15 fire related calls, 5 of them were canceled by authority Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) as the fire department was not required to attend. 10 calls were attended by the fire department.

In 2023 (RHFD) responded to 16 fire related calls, and 8 of them were canceled by authority (OPP) as the fire department was not required to attend. 8 calls were attended by the fire department.

## **Total number of calls along the lakeshore**

In 2022 the emergency call total was 14

In 2023 the emergency call total was 9

## **Office of Fire Marshal (OFM) Options**

A recommendation to decrease response times from the OFM included establishing alternative measures like automatic agreements to ensure a NFPA 1720 standard response, with other municipality fire stations Kincardine or Goderich using Point Clark as a center point of the lakeshore. Both stations are further away than the Ripley station location for a response.

Kincardine to Point Clark 19 km.

Goderich to Point Clark 40 km.

Ripley to Point Clark 18 km.

Staff will investigate the merits and levels of such agreements and pursue them accordingly.

The Office of the Fire Marshal's defence model to support fire risk reduction and mitigation includes the three lines of defence:

1. Public Education and Prevention
2. Fire Safety Standards and Code enforcement.
3. Emergency response

When there is an extended duration of response times, and the call volume is low and alternative measures are not sufficient. The decision to increase Lines 1 (Public fire safety education) and Line 2 (Fire safety standards and enforcement) is a way to help mitigate the situation.

The most vital component of any community's fire protection services is the effectiveness of its fire prevention program. Legislation, regulations, and standards pertaining to fire safety focus primarily on fire prevention. Enforcement of these codes is one of the most effective ways of reducing the loss of life and property due to fire. In addition, public fire safety education programs have the potential to reduce the loss of life and property due to fire. Every community should strive to provide an adequate, effective, and efficient program directed toward fire prevention, life safety, risk reduction of hazards.

Staff have noted the following as potential mitigation measures to be implemented in line with the OFM's defense model:

### **Lakeshore Public Education and Prevention**

1. Smoke and CO alarm program.
2. Home fire prevention and risk reduction.
3. Early local fire bans.
4. Elimination of beach fires.
5. Fire apparatus accessibility to locations.
6. Improve water sources.

## **Fire Safety Standards and Code enforcement.**

1. Complaint follow up with enforcement.
2. Changes to the Open-Air Burn By-Law No.2016-139

## **Recommendations**

The data analysis completed by Staff does not support the need for a third station in the lakeshore area at this time. Alternatively, Staff are recommending that the Township enhance fire prevention activities and programs, including public education as outlined in this report.

Fire Prevention initiatives will prioritize home fire prevention, the installation of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, kitchen fire safety, and the development of home escape plans. We all have the responsibility to install and perform a monthly test on smoke alarms. We also have the responsibility to practice two ways out fire escape plan to ensure our part and commitment to fire safety in rural areas.

Staff recommend that the Infrastructure Needs Assessment indicated for 2025 be considered complete, that alternative mitigation measures be implemented as outlined in this report, and that response times, and call volumes be monitored to determine timing for completion of a future feasibility study for a lakeshore area fire hall.

## **Financial Impacts:**

Any changes in level of service for provisions of an enhanced fire prevention program will be included in future operating budgets.

## **Performance Measurement:**

Decrease in response times, decrease in calls that are turned around or cancelled.

## **Strategic Area:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Embrace a thriving rural lifestyle | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhance Municipal Service Delivery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for Inclusive Growth                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure Financial Stability                    |

**Strategic Goal:** Strive for continuous improvement and increased efficiency

## **Respectfully Submitted By:**

Jeff Bradley, Fire Chief

## **Report Approved By:**

Jodi MacArthur, Chief Administrative Officer