



Gibsons & District Fire Protection Commission

Monday, October 21, 2024
790 North Road, Gibsons, B.C.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER 9:30 a.m.

AGENDA

1. Adoption of Agenda Page 1

MINUTES

2. Gibsons & District Fire Protection Commission (GDFPC)
meeting minutes of May 2, 2024 Annex A
Page 2

PRESENTATIONS AND DELEGATIONS

REPORTS

3. Fire Chief – 2024 GDVFD Q3 Report Annex B
Pages 3 - 33

4. Fire Chief – Preliminary Petition to Expand Gibsons &
District Fire Protection Service Area Annex C
Pages 34 - 50

5. Fire Chief – Q3 Variance Report Annex D
Pages 51 - 54

6. Fire Chief – 2025 Budget Annex E
Pages 55 - 57

COMMUNICATIONS

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

GIBSONS AND DISTRICT FIRE PROTECTION COMMISSION

May 2, 2024

MINUTES OF THE GIBSONS AND DISTRICT FIRE PROTECTION COMMISSION MEETING HELD AT THE SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT OFFICE LOCATED AT 1975 FIELD ROAD, SECHELT, B.C.

PRESENT: (Voting Members)	Director, Electoral Area E Director, Electoral Area F Alternate Director, Electoral Area F Councillor, Town of Gibsons	Donna McMahon Kate-Louise Stamford Ian Winn Stafford Lumley
ALSO PRESENT: (Non-Voting)	Gibsons & District Fire Protection Commission SCRD, GM, Planning & Development Gibsons & District Volunteer Fire Dept. (Chief) SCRD, Administrative Assistant/Recorder Public	Marilyn Pederson (Chair) Ian Hall Rob Michael A. O'Brien 0

CALL TO ORDER 9:40 a.m.

AGENDA The agenda was adopted to change the order of business as follows:
Agenda Item #7 Area Expansion Update to be discussed after Agenda Item #3 2024 GDVFD Q1 Report.

MINUTES

Recommendation No. 1 *Gibsons and District Fire Protection Commission Meeting Minutes of October 16, 2023*

The Gibsons and District Fire Protection Commission recommended that the minutes of October 16, 2023 be received, and adopted as corrected to add Marilyn Pederson, Gibsons & District Fire Protection Commission Chair to the attendance record as "Also Present".

REPORTS

Recommendation No. 2 *2024 GDVFD First Quarter Report*

The Gibsons and District Fire Protection Commission recommended that the 2024 Gibsons and District Volunteer Fire Department First Quarter Report be received for information.

The Gibsons and District Fire Protection Commission discussed the following items:

- *Area Expansion Update*
- *Fire Flows*
- *Firefighter Compensation*
- *Smoke Control Bylaw*

ADJOURNMENT 11:00 a.m.

Gibsons & District Volunteer Fire Department

2024 Third Quarter Report

October 22, 2024



Prepared by: Fire Chief Rob Michael

Table of Contents

Overview	2
Membership.....	2
Facilities	3
Apparatus.....	5
Vehicle, Facility and Equipment Service	10
Training	11
Callouts	14
Wildfire Deployments	16
Fire and Life Safety Inspections	18
Fire Investigations.....	19
Pre-incident Planning.....	20
Referrals.....	21
Population Density.....	22
Public Education.....	24
FireSmart Program.....	24
Community Emergency Preparedness Grant.....	26
Fire Truck Replacement	27
Emergency Generator	27
Radio Tower Replacement.....	27
Summary	28
Appendix A.....	29
Appendix B.....	30

Overview

The Gibsons & District Volunteer Fire Department (GDVFD) is a Sunshine Coast Regional District function and has been providing life and property protection to the West Howe Sound Fire Protection District since 1937. The fire department serves a population of approximately 12,000 including 4,758 in the Town of Gibsons (2021 census) and the fire protection district covers an area of roughly 22.7 km². Volunteer firefighters and officers are instrumental to the operation of the department. Their duties include 24/7 response to fire and rescue operations and maintaining the operational readiness of all apparatus and equipment. There is operational support to the volunteer members with paid full-time staff consisting of the fire chief, deputy chief, assistant chief, fire prevention officer and fire inspector. The SCRD Board has established the Gibsons & District Volunteer Fire Department as “full service” in accordance with the British Columbia Structure Firefighter Minimum Training Standards (Training Standards).

Membership

Membership currently sits at 45 firefighters, including three recruits. Last quarter, the department gained one member that returned to the department after travelling and leaving the Sunshine Coast for a little over a year. The department is also conducting a recruitment drive to assist with maintaining solid membership numbers, as it takes nearly two years to fully train new firefighters.



Facilities

Main fire hall: The Gibsons & District Fire Department main fire station is located at 790 North Road. It was built by volunteers in 1983 and serves as the main administrative building for the GDVFD. The main floor contains a large open area, containing the fire trucks and administration office area for the five staff members. The second floor contains a club room, kitchen and washroom facilities. All fire department members report to this station for practice sessions and the majority of the department's volunteers report to this station for callouts.



Satellite hall: The Cliff Mahlman fire station is located at 1226 Chaster Road. It was built in 1992 and serves as a satellite hall for the GDVFD. The building contains a large open area containing a fire truck and a simple washroom facility. A small number of volunteers respond to this station for callouts. It was named after Cliff Mahlman who served 35 years with the Gibsons & District Volunteer Fire Department between 1955 and 1990. The facility is shared with SCR D Parks and is adjoined by Frank West Hall.



Training yard: The GDVFD received budget approval and began construction of a training facility in 2011. The facility consists of three shipping containers, bolted together on a foundation located at the Town of Gibsons Public Works yard. The department originally spent \$50,000 on the container purchase and site development and an additional \$10,000 per year was invested in 2011 to 2015. The facility is currently lacking a lease to occupy the space on Henry Road and the department is working on drafting a lease agreement with the Town of Gibsons. The assistant chief is also assisting with future site development plans and improvements are being considered for 2025/2026. This training facility is an integral part of the GDVFD training program, ensuring trained responders are available to meet the needs of a full service fire department as outlined in the training standards.



Apparatus

Rescue 1: The rescue truck is a 2003 Freightliner built by Profire. This is a multi-purpose unit functioning as an equipment carrier, mobile lighting plant, firefighter rehab center and general staging hub. This apparatus carries auto extrication tools and has an onboard air filling station to support extended firefighting operations and can transport five firefighters.



Engine 1: The initial attack engine is a 2021 Ford 550 VM8 mini pumper built by E-One. It has a 250 imperial gallon water tank, a 1050 imperial gallon per minute pump and can transport four firefighters. The smaller and lighter vehicle is perfect for reaching difficult to access driveways and other locations that may have size and weight limits, such as the Gibsons Landing Harbour Authority. This apparatus has been deployed to assist with wildfires throughout the province in 2023.



Pumper 1: The pumper truck is a 2001 Freightliner built by HUB. It carries 1200 imperial gallons of water, has a 1050 imperial gallon per minute pump and can transport five firefighters. This apparatus has been deployed to assist with wildfires throughout the province in 2017, 2018 and 2021.



Quint 1: The aerial apparatus is a 2017 78' aerial built by E-One. It carries 400 imperial gallons of water, has a 1500 imperial gallon per minute pump and can transport six firefighters. This apparatus is

best suited for incidents within the downtown core where an elevated stream, or a large volume of water is required to be pumped from a fire hydrant.



Engine 2: The fire engine is a 2012 engine built by Pierce. It has 800 imperial gallons of water, has a 1250 imperial gallon per minute pump and can transport six firefighters. Engine 2 is positioned at the fire station on Chaster Road and is designed to provide protection to the residents in that area as well as support operations throughout the rest of the fire protection district.



Car 1: The chief vehicle is a 2019 Ford Explorer. This four-wheel drive vehicle is important for day to day routine activities and is used as a command vehicle at emergency incidents. This vehicle is used by the fire department chief officers.



Car 2: The fire prevention officer vehicle is a 2022 Ford F250. This four-wheel drive vehicle is important for use during fire inspections and investigations. It is also used as a duty officer vehicle for fire department officers. The vehicle is also capable of towing the hazardous material response trailer and structure protection unit.



Car 3: The van is a 2004 Ford E350 general purpose transport vehicle. It is used for routine fire department staff and volunteer activities. It can also be used to tow heavy equipment such as the hazardous materials response trailer or structure protection unit.



Hazmat 1: The hazardous materials response trailer is a 2022 cargo trailer. It is used for storing and transporting hazardous materials response equipment.



Vehicle, Facility and Equipment Service

Quint 1 was placed out of service (mid training) due to a faulty fuel lift pump. SCR D Fleet worked through the night to repair the apparatus. A replacement part has since been installed and the vehicle is now operating normally.



Tires were also replaced on Engine 2 due to wear and damage to the treads. Fire department vehicles returning from deployment were also checked over by mechanics to ensure ongoing operability of fire department assets.

The department's janitorial contract expired in Q3 of this year. After years of dedicated and exceptional service, our contractor has chosen to retire and will not be renewing her contract. The department is working with Roberts Creek fire to issue a joint bid. However, it is anticipated that costs will either increase, or a service reduction will be required. In the meantime, staff are attempting to fill the service gap and are cleaning the facility with the assistance of volunteers.

Training

The SCR D Board established the Gibsons & District Volunteer Fire Department as “full service” in accordance with the Training Standards. As a result, the GDVFD has adopted National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 – standard for firefighter professional qualifications as its minimum training for firefighters in the department. This revised program entails a modular certification, through the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC), from exterior, to interior, to full service training. In addition, first aid training totaling forty hours with a requirement to recertify every three years is a part of this program. It takes an average of two years for a recruit firefighter to attain this certification. Most of the training for this program is done in-house during the weekly practice sessions. Currently 42 members of the department have obtained exterior certification, 42 have obtained interior and 33 have obtained full service (NFPA 1001).



Training hours for the third quarter of 2024 consisted of 1054 person-hours. The focus of training for this quarter was: emergency vehicle operations, vehicle extrication, ladder skills and emergency scene management.

An emergency scene management course was hosted in Gibsons & Halfmoon Bay with members from both departments and Pender Harbour participating. Led by Halfmoon Bay Fire Chief Ryan Daley and Gibsons Fire Chief Rob Michael, the certified JIBC course was well received by students and covered the skills necessary to manage emergency incidents. The students will be evaluated in early Q4 before they receive their certification and begin using their newly acquired skills on the fireground.



There is now a total of 26 members are certified to *NFPA 1002 – standard for fire apparatus driver/operator professional qualifications*. Five of those members are certified as instructors, given their fire service experience. They are currently putting additional students through the training program, with the support of Justice Institute of British Columbia evaluators. The emergency vehicle operator training will continue as it satisfies a recommendation in the SCRD Fire Department Strategic Plan and updated Training Standards. The department has met their goal to have 50% of responding members obtain this certification.

The Sunshine Coast fire department training meetings are continuing with representation from all local fire departments. The objective of these meetings is to work on common goals and cooperate on training initiatives where possible. The group is beginning to see the results of these efforts where

efficiency and cost savings have been realized by each department. Each department has shared their 2024/2025 training plan and opportunities for further collaboration are currently being explored.

On July 13th, Sunshine Coast fire departments participated in a joint wildfire training exercise. Crews from the region put together a structure defense task force. A crew from Pemberton came across the ferry to participate as well. The training was essential in the region's efforts to prepare for local wildfire emergencies.



The department now has a total of four sessional instructors hired by the Justice Institute to conduct various training throughout the province. This is an outstanding achievement and testament to the department's training program. In addition, this will allow local instructors to assist with rolling out the emergency vehicle operation course to other departments on the Sunshine Coast. The Justice Institute is seeing a similar level of proficiency in other local departments and plans to add some more to their instructor pool in the near future.

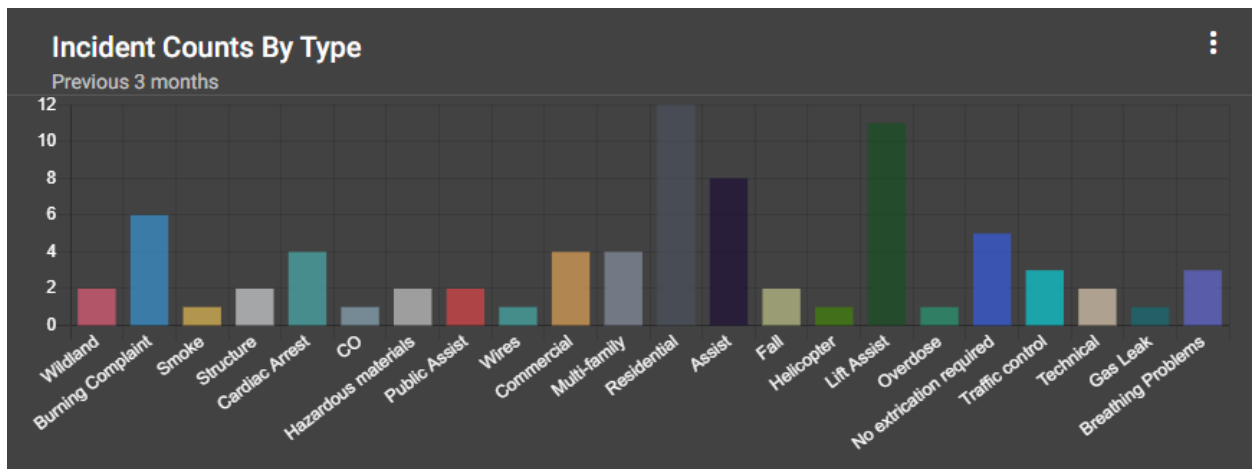
Training is also ongoing in *NFPA 1021 – standard for fire officer professional qualifications*. All fire department officers currently have their level I certification and several members have completed level II or above.

In an effort to prepare future leaders, the department has formed an acting officer pool. These members are beginning to take officer related training and are being mentored for future vacancies. In

addition, they can assist their assigned officers with crew management duties and provide vacation coverage. Three members were selected to participate in this pilot program with plans to add a few more in the near future.

Callouts

The GDVFD responded to 107 calls for service in the third quarter of 2024. This is compared to 98 calls for the same period a year before. A location map is included as Appendix A to provide a visual aid on where fire department callouts are generally occurring.



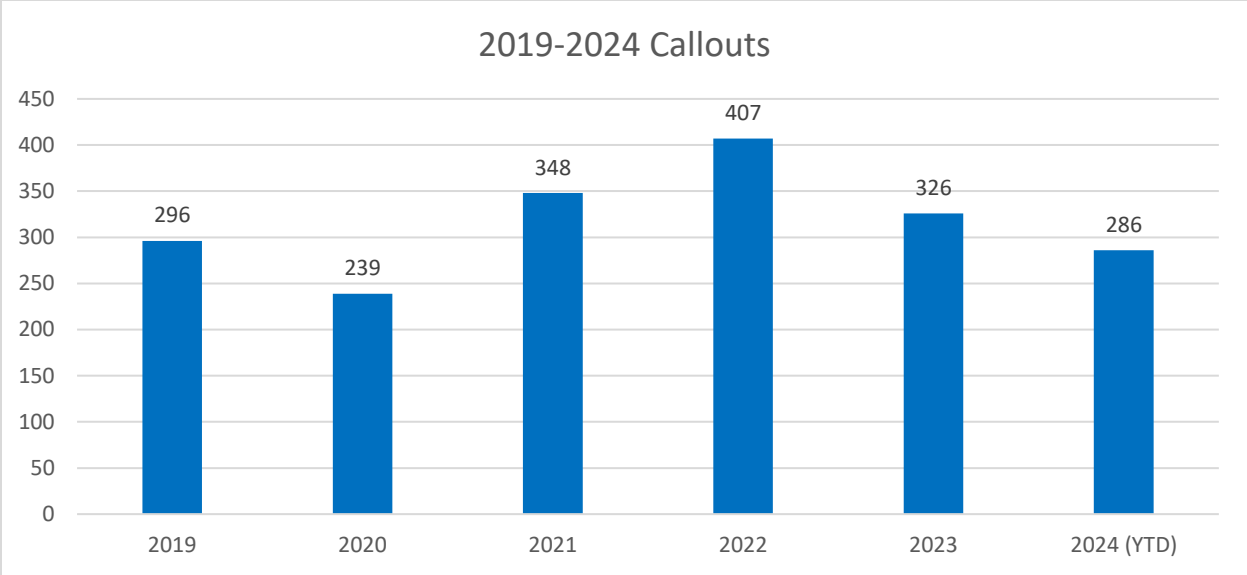
Notable incidents this quarter included: a vehicle into a building, two simultaneous calls for smoke inside of structures (requiring mutual aid from Roberts Creek), a jet ski accident, a fuel spill at a local gas station and another fuel spill at the local marina.



There were also several calls related to illegal burning. This resulted in a number of tickets issued during open burning restrictions through the high-risk summer period.



The fire department finished 2023 with 326 callouts. Although there has been a slight dip in demand for service in 2023, call volume is expected to rise over the next few years.



Wildfire Deployments

This year, the province requested command staff and a structure protection crew. A total of five members at a time were deployed for up to 14 days with one required crew change, due to the length of deployment. This could not have been accomplished without the support from our mutual aid partners and other SCRD fire department members. Not only do the crews get satisfaction from assisting with protecting the province, but they also gain valuable experience that can be utilized locally if a significant event were to happen on the Sunshine Coast.

Deployments this season went smoothly, had a positive operational impact in host locations, and no equipment damage or injuries were sustained. Training on structure protection, structure defense and leadership was utilized by SCRD firefighters and is directly relevant to local operations.

Command position:

- Fire Chief Rob Michael was deployed as a task force leader from August 4th to 11th to the Slokan Valley.



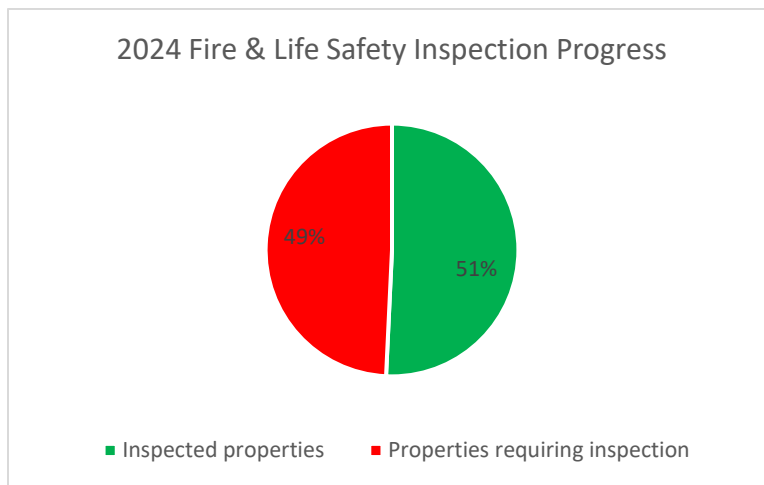
Structure protection:

- A mixed crew of members from Gibsons, Roberts Creek and Halfmoon Bay were deployed as a structure protection crew from July 23rd to August 13th to the Slokan Valley.

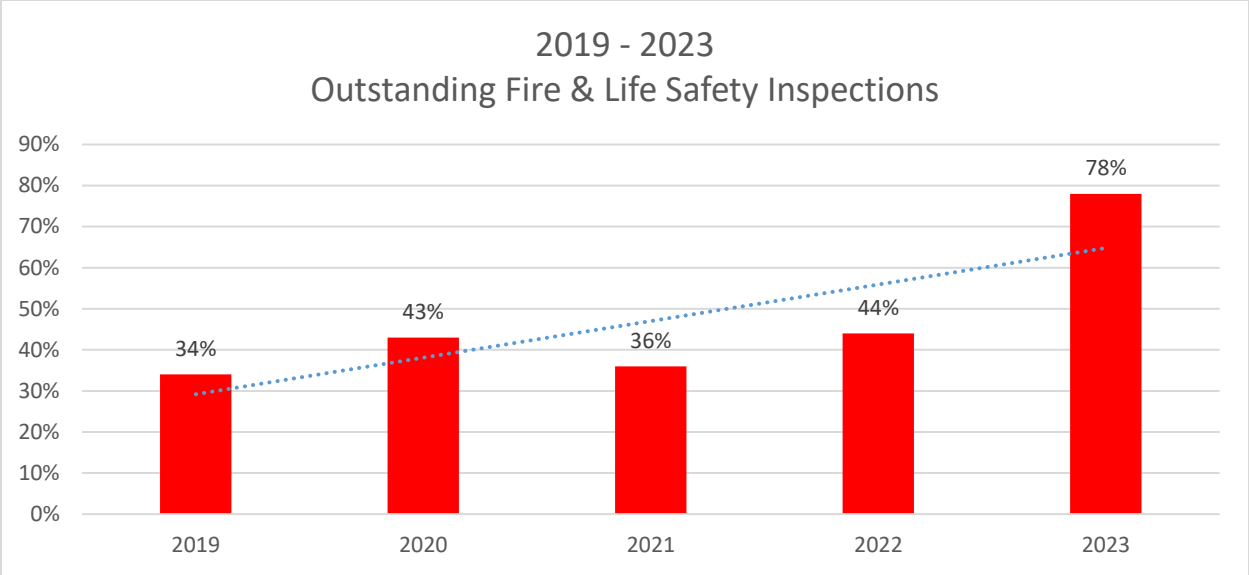


Fire and Life Safety Inspections

The West Howe Sound Fire Protect District has nearly 400 public buildings requiring fire and life safety inspections with roughly 95% of those properties located in the Town of Gibsons. It should be noted that this number may fluctuate with many businesses opening or closing their doors throughout the year. In the third quarter of 2024, 52 inspections were conducted, for a total of 13% for the year.



The fire prevention team is always keeping their eyes open for potential fire and life safety issues and is quick to bring them to the attention of those responsible. However, other high priority projects (such as emergency response and development referrals) have resulted in fewer fire & life safety inspections. As a result, the fire department has struggled to keep up with inspection requirements for a number of years.



Fire Investigations

All fires that result in damage to property, injuries or fatalities, or that require fire department resources to suppress, must be reported to the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC). Fire departments, insurance companies, the real estate industry, architects, building designers, building inspection departments, academic and medical researchers and government agencies use the fire reporting data for a variety of policy, planning and research purposes. The more complete the fire reporting data is, the more beneficial it is for departments to use the information for their own needs and for the OFC to answer questions raised by citizens. There were two incidents requiring investigation or an OFC fire report in the third quarter of 2024.



Pre-incident Planning

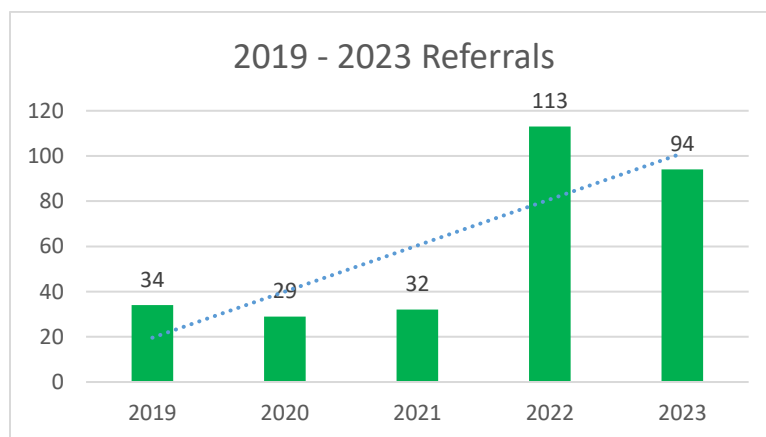
In an effort to better familiarize fire department personnel with the features of public buildings, including utility and fire suppression equipment locations and hazards to personnel, roughly 200 properties are identified as requiring pre-incident plan development. Pre-incident plans are being created using risk assessment where higher risk or frequently visited properties are being developed first. Three pre-incident plan was completed last quarter, bringing the total to 43. The fire prevention team took some time this year to review and update the existing pre-incident plans to ensure they continue to be valid and effective. Plans can quickly become out of date with variations in businesses, floor plan layouts and/or staffing changes.

Referrals

The GDVFD takes an active role in development in the West Howe Sound Fire Protection District. The fire prevention staff meet regularly with the SCR D planning division, attend monthly Town of Gibsons' development services meetings, review new building drawings, review tenant improvement drawings and submit referral documents for consideration. As well as identifying any BC Fire Code deficiencies, the fire prevention team identifies any fire department access, fire suppression and adjacent or co-located exposure issues. This time is seen as productive as the goal is to have a proactive approach to fire prevention. In total, 27 referrals were submitted in the second quarter of 2024.

ToG	SCR D	Q3 Total	Q2 Total	Q1 Total	YTD Total
15	3	18	27	30	75

The number of referrals continues to put pressure on the fire prevention team. Each referral requires diligent review by the fire prevention team and administration. With increased development, the complexities of the referrals and plan review are also expanding. This is taking more time and effort to complete, reducing the ability to conduct fire and life safety inspections as mentioned above.



Population Density

With rising call volume and densification within the fire protection boundaries, it is necessary for the fire department to better track relative fire department response measurements. Such measurements can be found in *NFPA 1720 – standard for the organization and deployment of fire suppression operations, emergency medical operations, and special operations to the public by volunteer fire departments*. Staffing and response time objectives for structural firefighting to low hazard occupancies (<2000 ft², two storey, single family home without basement or exposures) are separated into response zones. The zones are defined as urban (>1000 people per 2.6 km²), suburban (500-1000 people per 2.6 km²) and rural (<500 people per 2.6 km²). A map has been included in Appendix B to provide a visual aid of the different response zones and the fire department is working to better track and report on these statistics. It should be noted that there is a mix of demand zones within the West Howe Sound Fire Protection District, but most is considered urban; however, the fire department recommends a single standard when developing response time performance measurements.

Demand Zone ^{aaa}	Demographics	Minimum Staff ^b	Response Time ^c	Meets Objective
Urban area	>1000 people/mi ²	15	9	90%
Suburban area	500–1000 people/mi ²	10	10	80%
Rural area	<500 people/mi ²	6	14	80%
Remote area	Travel distance ≥ 8 m	4	Directly dependent on travel distance	90%
Special risks	Determined by AHJ	Determined by AHJ based on risk	Determined by AHJ	90%

^a A jurisdiction can have more than one demand zone.

^b Minimum staffing includes members responding from the AHJ's department and automatic aid.

^c Response time begins upon completion of the dispatch

There is also a definition for dense urban (>3000 people per 2.6 km²) contained within *NFPA 1710 – standard for the organization and deployment of fire suppression operations, emergency medical operations, and special operations to the public by career fire departments*. It is worth noting that the Town of Gibsons has a large portion of this population density and will likely become more saturated in

the near future with planned development. Although not specified for volunteer fire departments, NFPA 1710 also details staffing and response requirements to more complex structures such as apartment and high-rise buildings, not contained within the NFPA 1720 standard, which can be useful for future planning.

KEY REQUIREMENTS



Occupancy Type: Single-Family Dwelling
Deployment: Minimum of 16 members or 17 if aerial device is used

The initial full alarm assignment to a structure fire in a typical 2000 ft² (186 m²), two-story, single-family dwelling without a basement and with no exposures must provide for a minimum of 16 members (17 if an aerial device is used).



Occupancy Type: Garden-Style Apartment
Deployment: Minimum of 27 members or 28 if aerial device is used

The initial full alarm assignment to a structure fire in a typical 1200 ft² (111 m²) apartment within a three-story, garden-style apartment building must provide for a minimum of 27 members (28 if an aerial device is used).



Occupancy Type: Open-Air Strip Mall
Deployment: Minimum of 27 members or 28 if aerial device is used

The initial full alarm assignment to a structure fire in a typical open-air strip shopping center ranging from 13,000 ft² to 196,000 ft² (1203 m² to 18,209 m²) in size must provide for a minimum of 27 members (28 if an aerial device is used).



Occupancy Type: High-Rise
Deployment: Minimum of 42 members or 43 if building is equipped with fire pump

The initial full alarm assignment to a fire in a building with the highest floor greater than 75 ft (23 m) above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access must provide for a minimum of 42 members (43 if the building is equipped with a fire pump).

With current and anticipated development proposals, fire department response capabilities must be considered prior to approval. The fire department continues to work with the Town of Gibsons development services team to implement proactive and practical solutions to proposals that can allow the fire department to recommend approval(s). Some of the proposed solutions may include adding automatic sprinklers, increasing fire protection systems, altering the building construction materials, not allowing reduced setbacks and/or not accepting other variance requests. In the absence of full time career fire department staffing and established policy, the department must maintain the maximum allowable access, setback and equipment requirements to aid in fire suppression efforts. There are ongoing plans to work with the development services team to update bylaws and create additional policies to aid developers in understanding the local building standards, including fire department requirements; however, these are expected to take some time to research and build.

After careful and ongoing consideration and the current size/composition of the GDVFD, it has been determined that the fire department cannot provide service to buildings that are classed as high buildings by the BC Building Code. Essentially, this will limit the height of any proposed building to six stories if the intent is to be protected by the GDVFD. The fire department and ToG planning department continue to work together to discuss the implications of this limitation and consider future growth needs/challenges.

Public Education

The GDVFD is committed to public education and embraces requests for fire safety discussions, fire hall tours, portable fire extinguisher demonstrations and other public outreach initiatives. As part of the full-service training, members are required to teach a public education session. This quarter, the fire department attended the Sunshine Coast Climate Fair at the Gibsons Public market with a fire truck and crew. Several members of the public also stopped by for fire hall tours and were shown around by the fire prevention team.

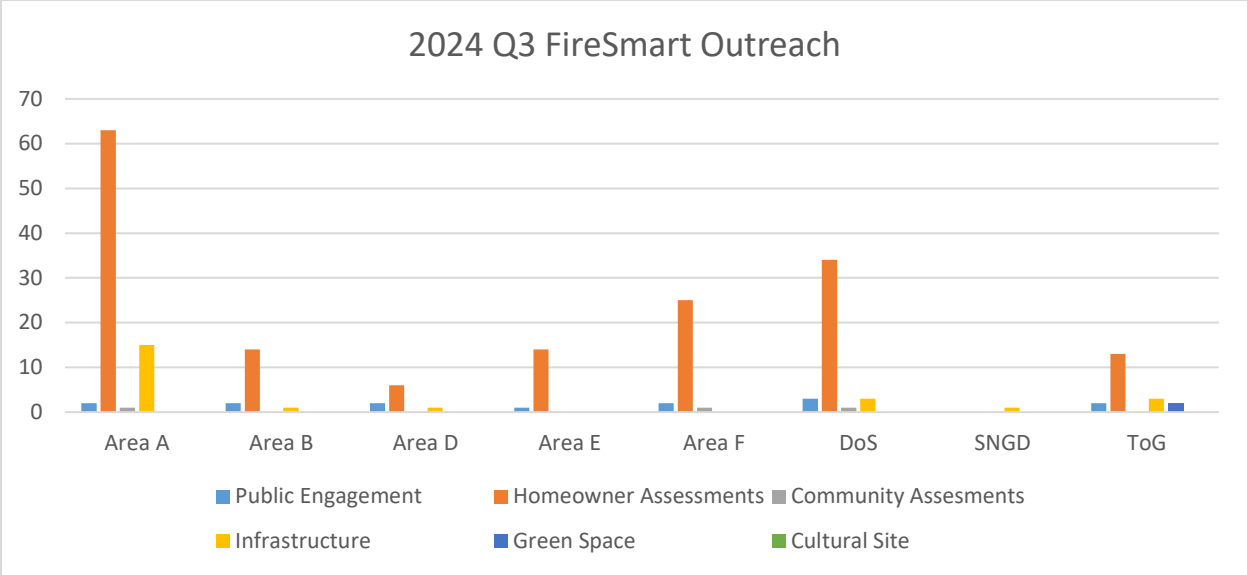
FireSmart Program

The Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) program was announced by the provincial government in 2018 and is intended to reduce the risk of wildfires and mitigate their impacts on BC communities. The FireSmart Community Funding and Supports program provides funding to local governments and First Nations in BC to increase community resiliency by undertaking community based FireSmart planning and activities that reduce the community's risk from wildfire. Funding is provided by the Province of BC and is administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). The SCRCD was successful with a regional grant application for \$1,500,000 towards the continuation of the region's FireSmart program.

Some staffing changes have taken place within the FireSmart Team, Erin Wilson has moved over to the Sunshine Coast Emergency Planning Program as the Emergency Management Technician. Ivy Lock from the Roberts Creek Volunteer Fire Department has moved into the Local FireSmart Representative role that was vacated by Erin, plus there have been two new additions to our casual crew members with Hannah Garden and Lee Fish taking on those roles.



Work continues with assessments of infrastructure sites, critical infrastructure, solid waste and other community facilities, as well as the fire halls and ambulance stations. To date the SCRD water/wastewater facilities have all been assessed, with the reports submitted.



Community Emergency Preparedness Grant

The Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) is a suite of funding streams intended to enhance the resiliency of local governments and First Nations communities in responding to emergencies. Funding is provided by the Province of BC and is administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM).

The Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) applied for and received this grant funding in 2019, 2022 and 2023; worth a total of nearly \$240,000, enhancing the capabilities of all four SCRD fire departments. Equipment and training are being organized for the 2023 grant funding received earlier this year.

Materials have been released for the 2024 intake and local departments submitted an application package. It is hopeful that the fire departments will again be successful to continue to build resiliency in relation to firefighting equipment and training of firefighters.

Fire Truck Replacement

The fire engine replacement bid was prepared and put out to market in Q1, 2023. With significant delivery time and budget challenges, the project was halted. The Gibsons & District Fire Protection met in Q2, 2023 to discuss next steps with bids coming in over budget. With additional assistance from finance and purchasing, plans have been revised to propose this project within the 2024 capital plan and utilize an alternate approval project (AAP) to confirm funding. With the AAP approved, staff began to seek pricing and proposals from qualified vendors. Results are being collected and evaluated. A report will be prepared for SCRD Board direction.

Emergency Generator

The emergency generator project is in the assessment phase. Next steps will be to evaluate possible grants or alternate funding opportunities. There may also be some opportunity for collaboration and partnership with a proposed solar panel project. The fire department met with the Solar Association in 2022 to discuss possible opportunities for this project. A report was received and staff are continuing to evaluate options moving forward. Staff are now looking into a combined proposal with SCRD Infrastructure staff.

Radio Tower Replacement

Although a separate function and part of the 911 program, it is worth mentioning that the radio equipment located at the main fire hall has been moved to the Telus building on North Road. Next steps are underway to obtain additional radio frequencies, including a repeating channel for fire department use which will improve the service even further. As approvals have been obtained for most radio frequency allocation requests, an implementation plan is being developed. There are some interdependencies with other projects and it is anticipated the implementation of these new channels

will be slightly delayed. It is likely that additional funding from reserves and a budget proposal is required to complete this project.

Summary

The fire department's membership currently sits at 45 members, with 33 of those members having achieved their *NFPA 1001 – standard for firefighter professional qualifications*. The focus of training for this quarter was: emergency vehicle operations, vehicle extrication, ladder skills and emergency scene management.

The GDVFD responded to 107 calls for service in the third quarter of 2024, including: a vehicle into a building, two simultaneous calls for smoke inside of structures (requiring mutual aid from Roberts Creek), a jet ski accident, a fuel spill at a local gas station and another fuel spill at the local marina.

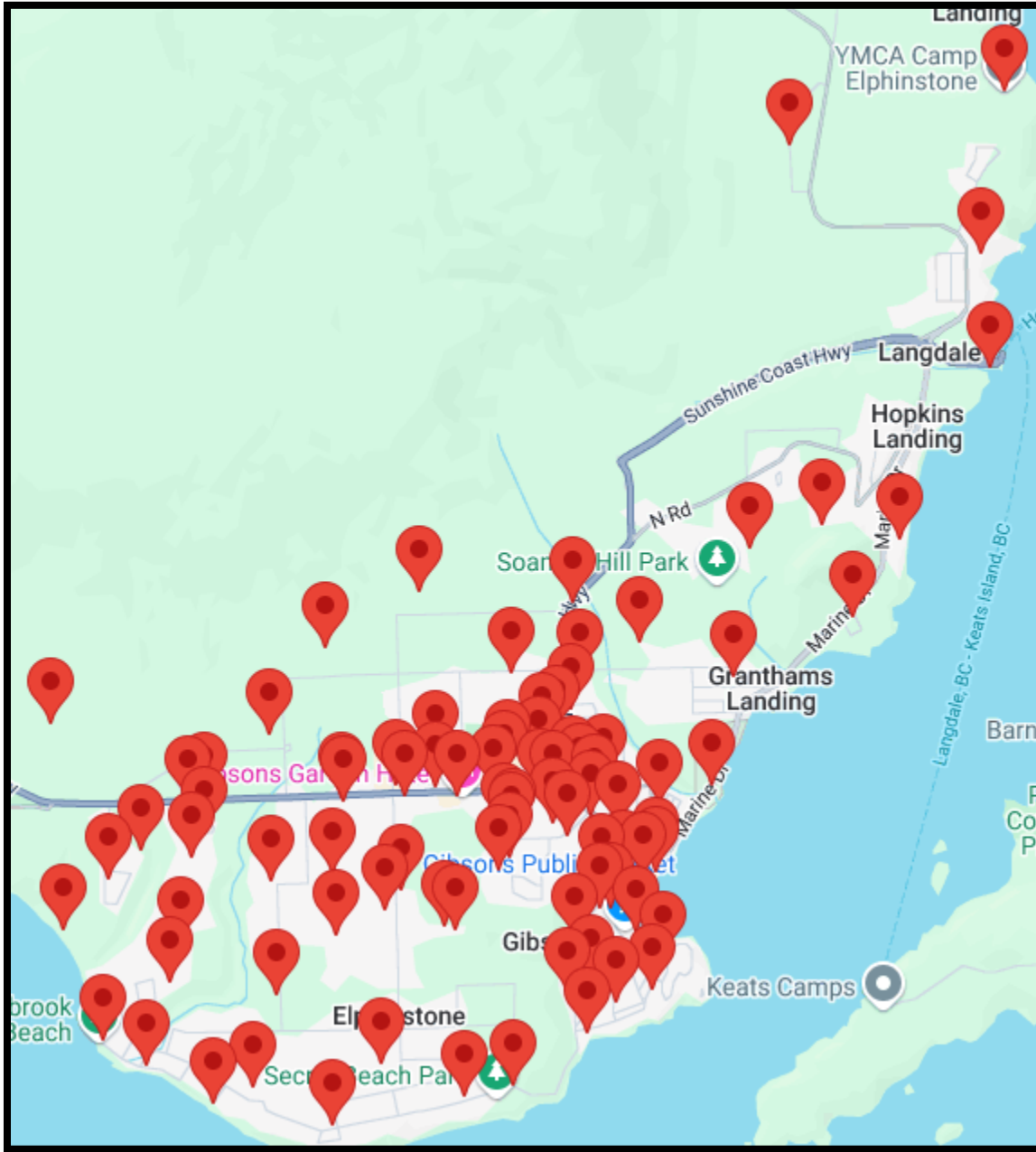
The fire prevention team completed 52 fire and life safety inspections, 18 referrals and two OFC fire investigations. The fire department also brought a fire truck to the Sunshine Coast Climate fair.

The SCR D FireSmart team is still seeing a steady stream of FireSmart homeowner assessments and public engagement events continue every weekend. They are also seeing a continued strong demand for neighborhood, communities, and private organization requests for FireSmart presentations.

The pumper 1 replacement project is included as part of the 2024 capital plan. With electoral support obtained via AAP, pricing and proposals are being collected from qualified vendors. Other budget projects continue to move forward, including utilizing funding from the 2023 CEPF firefighting equipment and training grant.

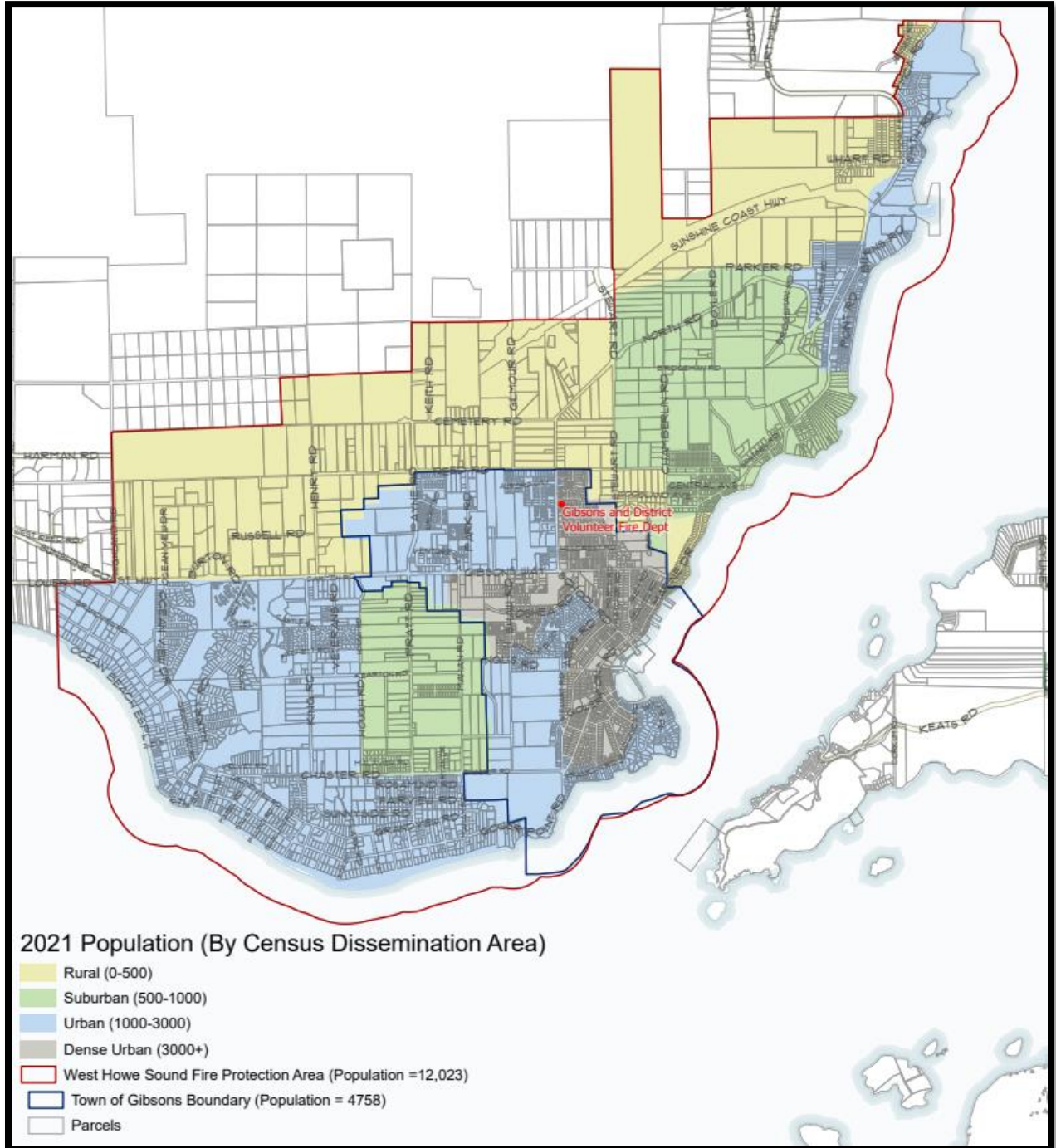
Appendix A

Location markers for GDVFD callouts (2024-Jul-01 to 2024-Sep-30).



Appendix B

Population density for the West Howe Sound Fire Protection Area (2021 census data).



SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT STAFF REPORT

TO: Gibsons & District Fire Commission – October 21, 2024

AUTHOR: Rob Michael, Fire Chief - Gibsons & District Volunteer Fire Department

SUBJECT: **PRELIMINARY PETITION TO EXPAND GIBSONS & DISTRICT FIRE PROTECTION SERVICE AREA**

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- (1) THAT the report titled Preliminary Petition to Expand Gibsons & District Fire Protection Service Area be received for information;**
 - (2) AND THAT a recommendation regarding a study to inform a formal petition process be provided to the Sunshine Coast Regional District 2025 annual budget process.**
-

BACKGROUND

A preliminary petition related to expanding the GDVFD fire protection service boundary (summary: 69 properties, northward along Port Mellon Highway) was received by SCRD in November 2023.

In Q1/Q2 2024, Fire Chief Rob Michael met with petitioners multiple times and conducted an assessment of the capacity of the fire department to serve the expanded area using existing resources (Attachment A).

In July, Chief Michael communicated to the lead petitioner, Mr. Tim Rockford, that the proposed expansion could not be accommodated with existing resources and that further study, through a (non-statutory) service review would be needed (Attachment B).

SCRD GM Planning & Development Ian Hall subsequently met with the lead petitioner and shared that in order to conduct a service review direction from the SCRD Board would be needed. The information generated by a service review is needed to inform the formal petition process. These comments/steps are aligned with guidance received from the Province. A letter from the lead petitioner requesting the Board's consideration of a service review was received September 12 (Attachment C).

As financial resources will be required to undertake further study, the matter is being referred to the Gibsons & District Fire Commission in accordance with the Commission's terms of reference. The matter will subsequently be considered by the SCRD at a future Committee meeting, taking into account recommendations from the Commission.

DISCUSSION

Options and Analysis

The service expansion process [is prescribed by the *Local Government Act*](#). In order to proceed with a formal petition, as requested by the lead for the preliminary petitioners, a service review (expansion study) is required. This study will generate information and options, with associated costing, relating to extending fire protection service to the proposed area. This information can then be shared with property owners in the area who can formally petition SCRD to join the service.

For a petition to be valid, it must be signed by owners of at least 50 percent of the parcels that would be liable to pay for the proposed service that represent at least 50 percent of the assessed value of land and improvements that would be in the proposed service area.

A regional district is not required to proceed with a service even if it receives a valid petition, however, in many cases petitions lead to the establishment of a service.

Current land use planning for the proposed service expansion area does not provide guidance on timing or triggers for expanding fire protection service. In general, the West Howe Sound Official Community Plan describes a settlement containment approach where growth is enabled in areas with existing water, solid waste collection and fire protection services.

Option 1: Conduct a service review (feasibility study) to identify the approach(es) and cost(s) that can be used to expand the Gibsons & District Fire Protection Service Area. Such a study could be most efficiently delivered by a consultant with fire service and financial modelling experience. An estimated project cost is \$33,000. Approximately 70 hours of staff from the Fire Department, GIS and Corporate Officer would also be required.

Option 2: Do not proceed with a study at this time. No expansion of the fire protection service boundary by way of a formal petition process would be undertaken.

Organizational and Intergovernmental Implications

There are potential service level and sustainability implications associated with service expansion. A professionally-prepared study is required to ensure that expansion of the fire protection service boundary does not negatively impact service delivery and the ability to meet fire response standards.

Both SCRD and Town of Gibsons are undertaking updates to housing needs reports and official community plans in 2024/2025. The results of these projects will inform future servicing plans.

Procedural advice from the Province was solicited and confirms the approach being followed.

Financial Implications

A service review project involving the proposed expansion area is estimated to cost up to \$33,000 and require approximately 70 hours of staff time.

Project costs would be funded by [210] Gibsons & District Fire Protection service. Funding sources could include taxation or operating reserves.

The SCRD Board may be considering proposals for other investments in the Fire Department to address current service demand/sustainability including compensation for volunteer firefighters and a part-time staffing lift focused on fire prevention.

Timeline for next steps or estimated completion date

The Fire Commission's recommendation(s) will be forwarded to the SCRD and considered at a future Committee meeting.

Proposals to the SCRD annual budget process will be considered at Finance Committee meetings on November 25 and 26, 2024.

A service review project, if directed would be undertaken in 2025 with timing determined by Board direction and the corporate workplan.

Communications Strategy

The lead preliminary petitioner, Mr. Tim Rockford, was advised of next steps including the Fire Commission's consideration of this report.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

N/A

CONCLUSION

SCRD received a preliminary petition for expansion of the Gibsons & District Fire Protection Service Area. Subsequent analysis determined that the expansion cannot proceed based on existing resources. A service review is needed to inform a potential formal petition process, which is being sought by the petitioners.

The Fire Commission's recommendation to the SCRD annual budget process is requested.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – GDVFD Area Expansion Feasibility 2024

Attachment B – Letter from Fire Chief Michael to Mr. Tim Rockford, July 17, 2024

Attachment C – Letter from Mr. Tim Rockford to SCRD Board of Directors, September 12, 2024

Reviewed by:			
Manager		Finance	
GM	X – I. Hall	Legislative	X – S. Reid
CAO	X – T. Perreault	Other	

Gibsons & District Volunteer Fire Department

Area Expansion Feasibility

2024

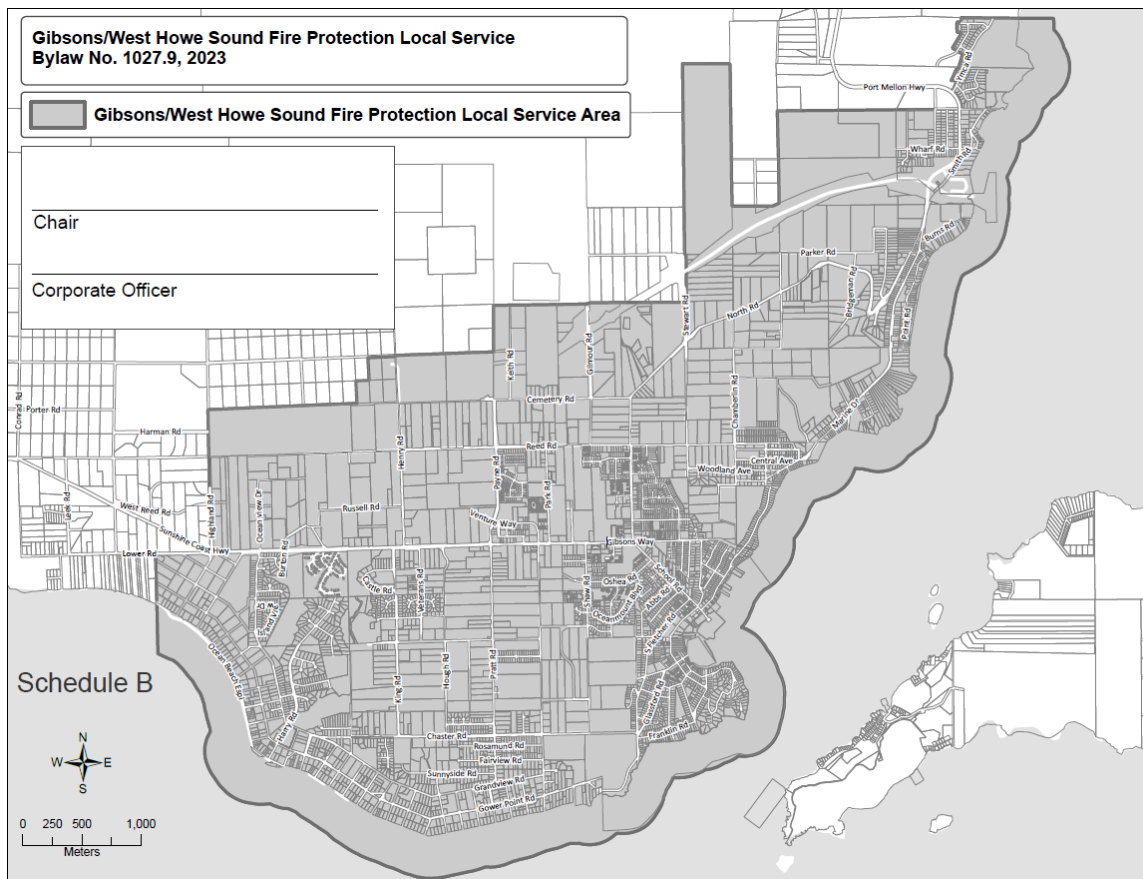


Background

A number of residents in West Howe Sound (SCRD Area F) have submitted a petition to the SCRCD to consider expanding the West Howe Sound Fire Protection District. The residents have met with senior management and the fire chief to discuss the possibility and share ideas. The fire chief has committed to doing some analysis on the proposal to determine feasibility.

Boundary

The northern edge of the West Howe Sound Fire Protection District ends at YMCA Road. It is unclear why this location was originally chosen to be the extent of the fire protection area, but an assumption can be made that there was very little development and population in this area when first established.



Proposal

The petitioners are proposing to extend the fire protection district to include properties 8 KM from the main fire hall, located at 790 North Road in Gibsons. As part of the proposal, it is noted that there would be some unusual boundaries. As a result, it is further recommended to include full neighbourhoods/streets that may extend the boundary up to 10+ KM from the fire hall.

Analysis

The fire department agrees that extending the fire protection area to include properties up to 8 KM from the main fire hall makes a certain amount of sense. It is further agreed that a natural or easily identified boundary also make sense from an awareness and training lens. However there are a number of items to consider before the fire department can endorse the proposal.

Staffing

The GDVFD has a mixture of career and volunteer personnel with a total capacity for 50 members. The predominantly volunteer force is supplemented with a career fire chief, deputy chief, assistant chief, fire prevention officer and fire inspector.

Proposal

It is proposed that fire department volunteers would respond to calls for service in the expanded fire service area.

Analysis

There would certainly be an increased demand on fire department administration, operations, training and fire prevention. An assumption can be made that an increase in call volume would be minimal and that the current volunteer compliment could absorb the service demand increase. However, it is worth noting that the volunteer service model is under review and that there could be additional costs associated with emergency callout in the near future as the SCRCD contemplates transitioning to a paid-on-call model.

Inspections

There are approximately 400 inspectable properties/businesses within the West Howe Sound Fire Protection District. It is the responsibility of the fire prevention team, consisting of the fire prevention officer and fire inspector, to complete these fire and life safety inspections.

Proposal

As part of the expanded service area, the fire prevention team would become responsible for fire and life safety inspections within the proposed area. The team would also be responsible for completing referrals and fire prevention activities, such as public education as well.

Analysis

The fire prevention team has been unable to inspect all 400 of the inspectable properties in the fire protection district since 2019. It is currently unclear how many inspectable properties are located in the proposed area that would add to the backlog. This also does not account for the increase in referrals, public education and other fire prevention activities that would be required as part of the updated service area. The service demand for these activities has been increasing significantly over the past number of years, without expanding the fire department's jurisdiction. A budget request to increase staffing for the fire prevention team in 2024 was deferred to 2025 compounding the risk here.

Training

Training requirements are becoming more stringent and it is taking firefighters longer to meet the provincial training standards. For example, it is now taking up to two years to have firefighters trained to the NFPA 1001 standard. This can be further complicated with the nature of a volunteer fire service with ongoing turnover and other priorities as considerations into the training schedule.

Proposal

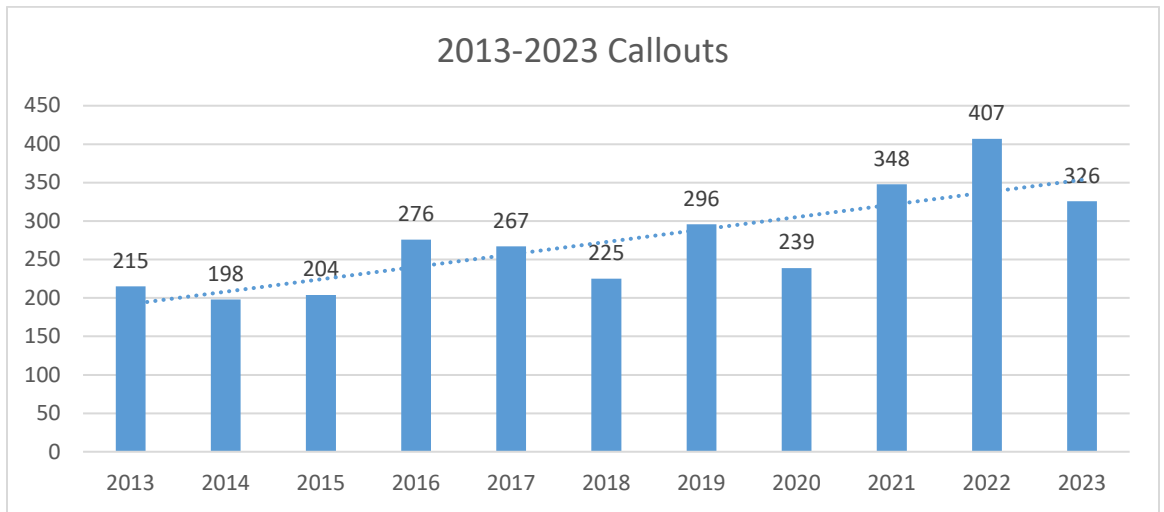
Residents require assurance that the fire department is trained and prepared to respond to incidents. The proposed service area has some unique challenges that require additional training.

Analysis

Fire department members would be required to prepare for an expanded service area and complete ongoing maintenance training that is not currently a focus. Training would include, but not be limited to: area familiarization, water shuttling and wildfire suppression. The additional training would take time and effort, adding to the already overwhelming requirements. As firefighters are currently paid for training efforts, this would also come at a cost. It is unclear how frequent this training would need to be scheduled and how much time would be dedicated to these new or expanded skills.

Operations

The call volume for the GDVFD is trending upwards over the past 10 years. The fire department finished 2023 with 326 callouts, shy of the record 407 the year before. Increased population is expected to have an impact on these figures in the future.



Proposal

With an expanded service area and expectation for fire department response, call volume is expected to increase. This includes: first response medical emergencies, rescue operations, response to fire, hazardous material spills, mutual aid to other fire services and other public services that the Board may direct from time to time.

Analysis

Currently the GDVFD has the ability to respond outside of jurisdiction with Provincial approval, if there is a life threat to life safety. Under this system, the fire department is eligible for liability protection, insurance coverage and cost recovery. Approving an expansion would cause the fire department to be responsible for first response medical emergencies, rescue operations, response to fire and hazardous material spills in this area. Most concerning is the responsibility for wildfire suppression, currently under the purview of the BC Wildfire Service.

A growth strategy needs be implemented to plan for future community expansion, with special consideration for the increased density in the Town of Gibsons and proposed area expansion past YMCA Road. It also needs to take into account the increased risk to the fire department for taking on expanded services, such as wildfire suppression.

Apparatus

The GDVFD currently has eight apparatus in total. This includes a fire engine, a pumper/tender, a rescue truck, a mini pumper and a ladder truck. In addition there are smaller support vehicles used to transport members for emergency calls, inspections and/or training sessions.

Proposal

Residents require assurance that the fire department is properly equipped to respond to incidents. The proposed service area has some unique challenges that require additional apparatus.

Analysis

The proposed expansion area does not have municipal fire protection systems. As a result, fire department operations would need to rely on shuttling water. It is unclear if the fire department will require a dedicated water tender to assure ongoing service delivery; however, it is clear that mutual and/or automatic aid with neighbouring departments will need to be expanded. Further analysis is required to determine if the GDVFD fleet is adequately sized to meet the increased service area/demand.

Facilities

The GDVFD operates out of the main fire hall on North Road, built in 1983. The main hall consists of offices and an apparatus bay. The bay is a three tandem-bay arrangement that can accommodate six vehicles. There is also a satellite fire hall on Chaster Road, currently housing a fire engine and support crew.

Proposal

The above proposal is connected to the main fire hall, as the Fire Underwriter's Survey recognizes 8 KM from a fire station.

Analysis

Although expanding the service area to 8 KM from the main fire hall may make sense, it can also pose some challenges. As the fire department is preparing for eventual fire hall replacement, it may be beneficial to determine if the current location is ideal. If the main fire hall is moved closer to the downtown core, this could have a negative impact on the expanded service area. Consequently, it could reduce options for fire hall relocation in the future. At this point, a third hall in the Langdale/Port Mellon area is not contemplated, but if further expansion is explored, this may need further analysis.

Insurance

In 2018, The Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) was provided updated information by all SCRD fire departments so that insurance grading could be reviewed. This review saw the Public Fire

Protection Classification (PFPC) for the area improved from a six to a four. The Dwelling Protection Grade (DPG) was maintained at a 3A/3B.

Proposal

One of the primary intentions of the area expansion proposal is for residents to recognize fire insurance savings.

Analysis

The cost and ability for residents to obtain fire insurance has been becoming increasingly challenging. Although all residents in British Columbia should have the ability to purchase fire insurance, the cost has been becoming unsustainable for residents outside of the fire protection district. Unfortunately, given the lack of infrastructure and distance from the fire hall for some proposed properties, this may still pose a challenge.

Properties without nearby fire hydrants may be classified by their insurance companies as semi-protected. Additionally, properties beyond 8 KM may still be considered as unprotected by their insurers. It will remain up to the individual property owner to address this with their insurers, but it is unlikely that residents in this area will receive the entire benefit from being in a fire protection area. Property owners will also be required to pay for fire protection services through taxation.

Financial analysis

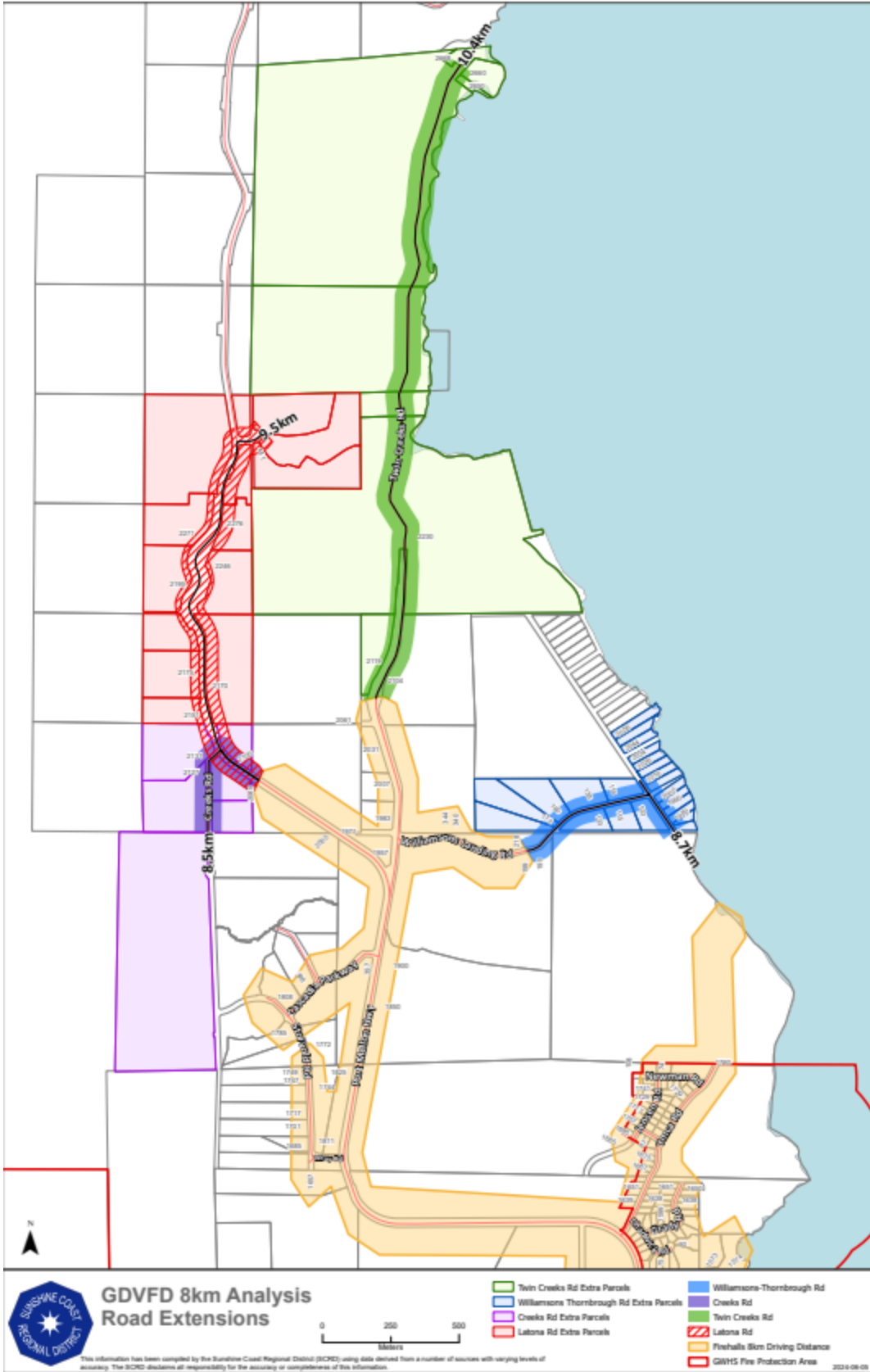
TBD

Recommendation(s) and/or conclusion

TBD

Maps

Several options for boundary extension consideration are contained within the attached map.





July 17, 2024

Dear Mr. Rockford,

Re: West Howe Sound Fire Protection District – Expansion petition

As you are aware, on November 6, 2023 the SCRD was presented with a preliminary petition signed by 69 residents in SCRD Electoral Area F (West Howe Sound) to have the Regional District evaluate the feasibility of expanding the fire protection service boundary of the Gibsons & District Volunteer Fire Department.

You are identified as the lead on this project, on behalf of the community members in West Howe Sound. As the lead on this project, I am writing you to provide an update on the status of the feasibility study and a recommendation of next steps.

Scope of Assessment

The petitioners’ interest in accessing Gibsons & District Volunteer Fire Department services through an amended fire protection area boundary is understood.

The feasibility assessment considered whether the boundary amendment could be accommodated under existing service levels. Potential new service requirements and demand associated with an expanded service areas as well current staffing levels; facilities, apparatus and equipment; call volume; training standards and inspection requirements were contemplated within that assessment.

Results of Feasibility Assessment

A review of the fire department’s operational capacity has highlighted challenges in maintaining current service levels within the existing service boundary. Further, services are primarily delivered by volunteers, and call volume has nearly doubled over the past 10 years. Training requirements have also increased in recent years placing additional demand on volunteers.

As a result, the feasibility assessment has determined that **the requested area expansion cannot proceed under existing resourcing and service levels, and the preliminary petition seeking a service boundary amendment must therefore be concluded.**

Next Steps

The inability of the fire department to expand the service boundary and remain within existing service levels compels an alternate process to consider of expansion of the fire service. This would be in the form of a non-statutory service review.

The decision to undertake a service review is the purview of the SCRD Board and requires Board direction to staff through an adopted Board resolution at a public meeting. Such a decision would normally be made as part of the annual budget process that begins each fall.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in SCRD services and specifically the services of the Gibsons & District Volunteer Fire Department.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rob Michael", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Rob Michael, Fire Chief

Cc: Sherry Reid, Corporate Officer

Cc: Ian Hall, General Manager Planning and Development

Cc: Gibsons & District Fire Commission

Sunshine Coast Regional District Board
1975 Field Rd.
Sechelt, B.C.
V7Z 0A8

September 12, 2024

(Delivered via email, and also hand delivered to the SCRD Office)

Re: Community request for a statutory service review of the GDVFD service function

Dear SCRD Board of Directors

It is with great disappointment that the property owners of Area F West Howe Sound have received the decision of our November 2023 petition. The preliminary petition was the SCRD recommended first step to signify sufficient interest in establishing a local fire protection service area. The petition process gathered 81 signatures of residents that desire fire protection service for their properties.

After submission of the petition there followed many meetings with concerned residents and Fire Chief Rob Michael. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the process and developments as his feasibility assessment progressed. In July 2023 we received a letter from Chief Michael informing the petitioners that:

“As a result, the feasibility assessment has determined that the requested area expansion cannot proceed under existing resourcing and service levels, and the preliminary petition seeking a service boundary amendment must therefore be concluded.”

For context, it is important to note that the area requested to be protected lies within the approximate 8km boundary that is considered the standard distance from a fire hall in order to provide fire protection services. And this area is the only one within the SCRD of significant residential density that does not have these services. And that the area is not serviced by a municipal water system, however many precedents exist on the Sunshine Coast where service is provided by other fire departments to properties not serviced by water mains and fire hydrants. An example of this is the upper Roberts Creek area where the Roberts Creek fire department has apparatus and trained personnel that can respond to fire calls.

The rationales for the service expansion are summarized here, and of course detailed discussions with Chief Michael occurred during our meetings over the course of the 8 months leading up to the decision.

1. Heightening risk of fires as a result of climate change. Most recently was this summer’s fire in the Port Mellon area that underscores our vulnerability.
2. Since the establishment of the existing northerly boundary at the YMCA Rd. many decades ago, there has been significant development and improvements to unprotected properties. Continued growth is anticipated and indeed expected.
3. In the absence of fire protection services property owners are now encountering difficulties in obtaining homeowners insurance. Citing risk tolerance limits the insurance companies are beginning to decline to provide coverage.
4. Negative impacts to existing property values could also be a consequence.
5. There are relatively high-density populated areas in the requested expanded fire protection area that have no fire protection services. Surprisingly YMCA Camp Elphinstone is unprotected as is the Langdale Heights RV Park located on the Port Mellon highway just north of Twin Creeks Rd.. This recently expanded RV park is predominately full-time residents that have found this to be an attainable housing alternative. An alternative that the SCRD should be supporting.

6. In the West Howe Sound OCP (2011), Section 6 cites the Langdale Comprehensive Development Area as an example of a potential area of clustered and affordable market housing. It goes on to state that other non-specified sites could potentially be considered for mobile home parks or clustered density. Area F has logical areas of potential development and such areas would have a greater chance of development if they were included in an expanded fire protection area.
7. Beyond the several RV Park properties in this area and YMCA Camp Elphinstone, the majority of the developed properties in this area are small to mid-size acreages with residential structure(s), along with a number of smaller waterfront properties in Williamson Landing. There are also several larger parcels that are still largely undeveloped – with most of them being within the ALR – while the others are associated with the Langdale Comprehensive Development Area.
8. Fear and concerns of residents due to increasing fire events in the province, and indeed our own area, are escalating and the SCRDR has a duty of care to protect its citizens during these events.

The July 17, 2024 letter from Chief Michael suggests an alternate process to consider expansion of the fire service area. This would be in the form of a statutory service review.

In consideration of the approximately 8 km from the fire hall boundary an expansion from the existing 5.5km boundary would include an additional 90 properties. The northerly boundary of the West Howe Sound OCP is approximately 8.5 km from the fire hall and would make a logical boundary for the fire protection expansion area. This would of course increase the tax revenue that would contribute to this service function. As discussed with Chief Michael the community is willing to pay our fair share in infrastructure improvements and to further discuss community support options that would enable this initiative to proceed.

Therefore, the property owners in this proposed fire protection expansion area wish to continue to pursue this process in the form of a statutory service function review.

And that, the undertaking of this service review is the purview of the SCRDR Board, and requires Board direction to SCRDR staff.

And that the decision to proceed with this service review would be included in the 2025 budget process that commences in Q4 '2024.

We trust that this request will be met with the support of the SCRDR Board of Directors and especially those directors that are participants in this service function.

Sincerely

Tim Rockford
Community Lead
Area F Fire Protection Area Expansion Initiative

Cc: info@scrd.ca Cc: Sherry Reid, Corporate Officer Cc: Ian Hall, General Manager Planning and Development Cc: Rob Michael, Fire Chief

SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT STAFF REPORT

TO: Finance Committee – October 17, 2024

AUTHOR: Brad Wing, Manager, Financial Services

SUBJECT: GIBSONS AND DISTRICT FIRE PROTECTION [210] DEFICIT

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- (1) THAT the report titled **Gibsons and District Fire Protection [210] Deficit** be received for information;
 - (2) AND THAT this report be forwarded to the **October 21, 2024 Gibsons and District Fire Protection Commission Meeting**.
-

BACKGROUND

In the second quarter of 2024 the corporate financial variance was presented. An unfavourable variance as reported for the Gibsons and District Fire Protection Service [210] as follows:

- **[210] Gibsons and District Fire Protection** – Deficit of \$55,436 as of June 30. Base budget operating expenses for this service are \$17,088 over budget (107% of YTD budget), and salaries and wages are \$41,600 over budget (111% of YTD budget).

Therefore, the following resolution was adopted at the July 25, 2024 Board Meeting:

219/24 **Recommendation No. 1** *Sunshine Coast Regional District Q2
Corporate Financial Variance*

THAT the report titled Sunshine Coast Regional District Q2 Corporate Financial Variance be received for information;

AND THAT staff prepare an in-depth report on the Gibsons and District Fire Service deficit for Q3 2024.

This report outlines the legislative framework for financial management as it relates to limits on expenditures, provides an update of the current financial position of the service, and provides information and analysis of the main factors driving the current deficit.

DISCUSSION

The financial management framework for Regional Districts in British Columbia is legislated through Part 11 of the *Local Government Act* ('the Act'). Division 1 of this part focuses on planning and accountability, including provisions for adoption of the annual five-year financial plan.

Section 374 of the Act stipulates that the financial plan must set out the proposed expenditures, proposed funding sources and proposed transfers between funds for each service, and that proposed expenditures and transfers must not exceed proposed funding sources. In effect, the budget must be balanced.

Once adopted, the financial plan serves as a guide for budget managers by setting a limit on expenditures with respect to each service as outlined in Part 11, Division 6 of the Act. Section 401, subsections 1 – 3 of the Act places a limit on expenditures as follows:

401(1) - A regional district must not make an expenditure other than one authorized under subsection (2) or (3).

401(2) - A regional district may make an expenditure that is provided for that year in its financial plan, other than an expenditure that is expressly prohibited by this or another Act.

401(3) - A regional district may make an expenditure for an emergency that was not contemplated for that year in its financial plan, other than an expenditure that is expressly prohibited by this or another Act.

In summary, except for expenditures for emergencies, it is expected that all services will operate within the expenditure limit set by the Board through adoption of the annual financial plan bylaw. Put another way, the expenditure limit as set in the financial plan is the mechanism that ensures a service operates within approved service levels.

The Gibsons and District Fire Protection Service was in a year-to-date deficit position of \$55,436 as of June 30, 2024 and was projected to exceed expenditure limits for the fiscal year and end the year in a deficit position.

As of September 30, 2024, the year-to-date deficit has grown to \$95,534.

It should be noted that the net recovery from wildfire deployments totaling \$21,718 does not factor into the deficit calculation. This recovery is transferred to capital reserves to fund future equipment and apparatus replacement commensurate with the additional wear and tear incurred during deployment.

What is also uncertain is whether historical base budget increases have been sufficient to maintain the approved service level considering recent inflationary pressure. The Gibsons and District Fire Department operates as a full-service department (Resolution 336/16 No. 6) which requires a higher level of training for firefighters and more extensive material and equipment requirements (e.g. hazardous materials response) than departments operating at the interior or exterior only service levels.

Options and Analysis

There are two main factors contributing to the deficit within the service: higher than budgeted wages and benefits and base budget operating expenses; specifically, clothing/turn out gear, materials and supplies, and repairs and maintenance.

Wages and benefits

Wages and benefits are \$53,424 over budget (110%) as of September 30. Of this total, \$26,300 is the result of a timing difference with respect to accrued vacation pay earned but not yet taken. This portion of the deficit will be mitigated by year end provided all vacation entitlements are fully utilized.

Most of the remaining deficit is attributable to job rating changes to unionized positions within the department that are anticipated to have a deficit impact of approximately \$25,500 for the calendar year in 2024. In addition to funding the deficit resulting from these changes, the resulting increase to the HR Plan in the 2025 budget will require a tax increase to fund the ongoing cost.

Finance has flagged a disconnect between the job evaluation process and the budgeting process related to these changes. Although rating changes are common across all departments, it is unusual to have two material changes impacting the entirety of the fiscal year implemented at the same time as was the case here. Processes will be reviewed, and changes will be implemented to ensure there is a mechanism to inform the budget process of any potential material budget impact resulting from the job evaluation process.

Base Budget Operating Expenses

The budget for base operating expenses was increased by \$58,000 in 2024 after being overexpanded by \$123,498 in 2023; however, actual expenditures for the nine-month period ending September 30 have only decreased slightly from \$327,277 in 2023 to \$325,074 in 2024.

As a result, year-to-date base budget operating expenditures are over expended by \$73,618 contributing to the overall deficit for the service.

The key line items that are driving the deficit in this area are clothing (station wear, turn-out gear [including mandatory safety equipment], uniforms) which is \$27,488 over budget (263%), materials and supplies which is \$14,495 over budget (186%), and repairs and maintenance which is \$27,264 over budget (156%). All other line items combined are \$4,371 over budget.

The factors driving these budget overages are not well understood currently. Roster size, inflation and changes to regulations and training standards are all likely contributing factors. A more in-depth analysis must be undertaken to better understand the alignment between the established service level and the operating budget to ensure available financial resources are optimized and to identify any areas that are legitimately underfunded.

Financial Implications

The Gibsons and District Fire Service will end the year with a material deficit that will need to be funded through operating reserves or 2025 taxation.

Timeline for next steps or estimated completion date

A report on year-end deficits will be brought forward to the 2025 budget process with options for funding the deficit.

The Fire Chief has already (at end of Q2) suspended non-essential equipment purchases and repairs through to the end of the fiscal year as a mitigation strategy.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

This reporting is provided in support of the Financial Sustainability Policy

CONCLUSION

Expenditure limits for the Gibsons and District Fire Department have been exceeded causing a material year to date deficit within the service of \$95,534 as of September 30, 2024.

The main factors driving the deficit are job rating changes resulting in wages and benefits being over budget as well as material operating expense overages for clothing, material and supplies and repairs and maintenance. Approximately \$26,000 of the reported deficit is a timing difference that can be mitigated by year end.

Further analysis will be undertaken to better understand the alignment between the established service level and the operating budget to ensure available financial resources are optimized and identify any areas that are legitimately underfunded.

The year end deficit for the service will need to be funded from operating reserves or 2025 taxation.

Reviewed by:			
Manager		Finance	
GM	X – I. Hall	Legislative	
CAO/CFO	X - T. Perreault	Other	

SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT STAFF REPORT

TO: Gibsons & District Fire Protection Commission – October 21, 2024

AUTHOR: Rob Michael, Fire Chief GDVFD

SUBJECT: 2025 GDVFD BUDGET

RECOMMENDATION(S)

(1) THAT the report titled 2025 GDVFD Budget be received for information.

BACKGROUND

The Gibsons & District Fire Commission is expected to meet prior to November 30th of each year to review and discuss the Gibsons Fire Protection annual budget.

DISCUSSION

The following is a summary of expected budget proposals for the GDVFD in 2025.

Options and Analysis

1. GDVFD Firefighter Paid on-Call:

- Objective: Modernize volunteer compensation model to respond to recruitment, retention and equity considerations. Act on recommendation from 2018/2019 service review.
- Estimated 2025 Cost: \$125,000 (currently being modelled, multiple implementation options)
- Estimated 2026 Cost: \$250,000 (currently being modelled)
- Notes: Aligns with 2023 honoraria review. Information report provided to SCRD Committee of the Whole October 12, 2023. A Firefighter Compensation Action Plan is currently being developed based on research and consultation done by Tim Pley & Associates and will provide additional information.
- Risks: Volunteer burnout; recruitment and retention challenges

2. GDVFD Assistant Fire Chief – Prevention

- Objective: Increase GDVFD staffing to add 1.0 FTE Assistant Fire Chief - Prevention.
- Estimated 2025 Cost: \$75,521

- Estimated 2026 Cost: \$137,004
- Notes: Assist with increasing workload/ability to meet legislated fire inspection and investigation requirements as reported in quarterly and annual reports and as noted as a trend in Dave Mitchell & Associates service review 2018/2019.
- Risks: Unable to maintain growing service demands.

3. GDVFD Hall #1 HVAC Replacement

- Objective: Improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of cooling and heating of the fire hall facility.
- Estimated 2025 Cost: \$33,000
 - \$17,000 currently budgeted in capital plan, for a project total of \$50,000
- Notes: Synchronizing the timing of the roof replacement and the removal of the rooftop AC unit is recommended to ensure the new roof is installed at one time and a patch is not required when the existing rooftop AC unit is relocated to the ground. This proposal seeks incremental funding to enable specifying of a ground-mounted heat pump that will be more efficient and easier to service than the current rooftop unit. It will also enable targeted heating/cooling whereas the current system only heats the upstairs area. The funding amount is the estimated difference between a like-for-like replacement and the preferred solution. Some energy cost savings are anticipated; offset by more extreme weather/more heating and cooling degree days.

Risks: Inefficient heating and cooling of fire department facility, including staff comfort.

Financial Implications

More information will be provided during the SCRD budget process in the form of budget proposals. The above items are in addition to the 20-year Capital Plan. A more thorough analysis will be included in the annual capital plan update provided prior to 2025 budget preparation.

Important: Further analysis of financial implications including consequential impacts to the Capital Plan, funding strategies and tax impacts will be required before this matter is presented to the SCRD Board. The primary focus of this report is to allow the fire commission to have discussions on the proposed projects.

Timeline for next steps or estimated completion date

Budget proposals will be developed for the SCRD budget process.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

TBD

CONCLUSION

The Gibsons & District Fire Protection Commission is requested to review and discuss the 2025 GDVFD budget prior to November 30th.

Reviewed by:			
Manager		Finance	
GM	X - I. Hall	Legislative	
CAO		Asset Mgmt	x-K. Doyle