



Jennifer Wyness, Ward 2 Councillor

2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets-Calgary Fire Department

Calgary currently has the weakest response standard of any major city in Canada when it comes to fire. Our fire department is under immense pressure as they are expected to fill the gaps within EMS as they have been under red alert more frequently and is requiring CFD to stay on scene longer. They have the opioid crisis to respond to and we have seen severe climate events (such as the grass fire at Nose Hill during the winter, and grass fires during the summer). We also have seen additional occupational health and safety hazards that the fire department are responsible for addressing. The release of the revised NFPA in 2020 provides us with an opportunity to reassess the fire department's resourcing requirements in light of these and other challenges.

On March 30th, Council voted to support my Notice of Motion to request a high-level overview of risks facing the Calgary Fire Department, and associated mitigation strategies currently in place, along with a preliminary assessment of these strategies' effectiveness.

This review will also include an estimate of resources and potential timelines required to meet the applicable staffing levels and service model recommended by the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710. The review will report back as part of the 2023-2026 budget cycle deliberations, with a general overview of the relationship between municipal fire protection service levels and home insurance costs in Calgary.

There is no better time for this review than during budget deliberations as Council is ultimately responsible for the service levels Calgarians receive. By exploring the cost benefit and ROI for Calgarians, we as a Council can be better educated to plan for the next budget cycle. This motion is about receiving information only, so that Council can understand what it would cost and what the benefits might be, especially in terms of a potential for reducing home or commercial insurance. Decisions we make have a financial ripple effect felt by Calgarians. We need to understand what the gold standard is going forward and knowing what our limitations are within our resources. We are in an inflationary time, and this is when government needs to look for ways to help families with the tools available to Council. Thank you to my Council colleagues for supporting my motion.

Jennifer Wyness