Calgary

Calgary Fire Department

2019-2022 Strategic Outlook

STEVE DONGWORTH
FIRE CHIEF

Message from the Fire Chief

2019-2022 Strategic Outlook

The Calgary Fire Department (CFD) is committed to excellence in the services we provide Calgarians. I am pleased to present our 2019-2022 Strategic Outlook in the following pages. This Outlook highlights our dedication to public safety and making our city a better place to live.

As the demographics of Calgary continue to change, we work to ensure all voices are heard. By strengthening ties with our community partners, we can reduce community risk, stay prepared for threats and provide education to the public. These relationships also allow us to be more efficient and effective in our delivery of services.

The employees of the Calgary Fire Department are the backbone of the organization. We are committed to their health and wellness — both physically and mentally — and we work to ensure our department is a place of inclusion where everyone feels safe and respected. Employee and citizen feedback have been instrumental in developing this Outlook to move our Department into the future.

This Strategic Outlook is reflective of my belief that no matter the economic climate, we can provide safety to the citizens of Calgary. It is a great responsibility and honour to serve our residents and visitors.

Steve Dongworth

Vision, Mission and Values

CITY OF CALGARY

A great place to make a living, a great place to make a life.

CFD VISION

To be an international fire service leader

CFD MISSION

To serve the community through excellence in prevention, education, protection and safety

CFD VALUES

Pride, Professionalism, Teamwork and Respect

The Calgary Fire Department is dedicated to the health, safety and vitality of Calgarians. We deliver our services through an integrated program of emergency and non-emergency response, fire and life safety education, and inspection and enforcement. Our services support The City of Calgary's purpose to make life better, every day for citizens.

How we conduct ourselves is as important as the services we provide. Our employees are committed to our four core values of pride, professionalism, teamwork and respect. We work together to provide exceptional fire and emergency service and proudly strive to improve, both in and out of our fire stations. The expectation is that our employees perform their duties to the best of their ability in an inclusive and respectful culture. Every one of our employees is given every opportunity to succeed.

Another aspect of our value system relates to our citizen-centric approach. We are focused on having a positive impact at the neighbourhood and community level with the continued goal of reaching one in nine Calgarians every year in a non-emergency setting.

HIGH RISE
FIRE
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Lines of Service

Calgary Fire is Integral to Our City

Through our three lines of service, our 1,516 employees provide fire and emergency response, fire inspections and enforcement as well as fire and life safety education. These services are foundational to the safety of Calgary and our 1.26 million citizens.

Fire and Emergency Response

We respond to fire and fire-related incidents, critical medical interventions, motor vehicle collisions, hazardous conditions, specialized technical rescues, including water rescues, calls for public service assistance, and need for community risk reduction through fire prevention activities. Our team of 1,298 firefighters are based in 40 fire stations throughout Calgary, covering the city's 848 square kilometres.

Fire Inspections and Enforcement

We provide fire inspections of commercial, industrial and assembly structures, fire code consultation and related technical services to enhance public safety, compliance with legislation, minimize fire-related risks, and protect lives, property and the environment. All fires are investigated in accordance with the Safety Codes Act to identify trends, code changes and product recalls for community risk reduction efforts.

Fire and Life Safety Education

We provide fire and life safety education and training to prevent fires, injuries and deaths while reducing risk to citizens, property and the environment. Our services target vulnerable populations including children, seniors, new immigrants and people with mobility challenges.

Our Partners

To deliver our services, we work closely with several stakeholders including, but not limited to: Calgary Police Service, schools, the business community, community groups and associations, social service agencies, Alberta Health Services, Calgary 9-1-1, Calgary Emergency Management Agency, ATCO, ConocoPhillips Canada, Enmax, CP Rail, Water Treatment and Supply, and Alberta Emergency Management Agency.

Service Environment

Fires today spread faster, burn hotter, cause more damage to property, and consequently pose a higher risk to firefighters and the public due in part to changes in building design and construction. We watch several trends, including our response performance, technology opportunities, risk levels, growth areas, population increases, demographics, weather, and construction types.

Meeting Core Service Level Targets

Call volume is increasing for fires, medical calls, motor vehicle collisions and public assistance. While we are close to meeting our target of seven minutes for the first emergency unit to arrive, we continue to work on meeting our target of 11 minutes, which applies to serious and escalating fires that require additional firefighters, equipment and apparatus from across the city. In those cases, we met the target of 11 minutes, 77 per cent of the time, which equates to over two minutes slower than the target.

Focus on Mental Health and Wellness

Support for the mental, emotional and physical wellness of our employees continues to improve. Keeping our workforce healthy has become paramount and we have recently added several new programs and resources to support this. In 2018, we started a three-year pilot program with embedded psychologists to do initial assessments, early interventions and referrals. In addition, ongoing counselling is available through our Employee Family and Assistance Program. We also provide mental health literacy training to all firefighters to reduce the stigma.

Rising Demand for Critical Medical Interventions

There were 25,201 critical medical interventions (CMI) in 2018, which accounts for more than 47 per cent of our call volume. CMIs have increased by 20 per cent in the last four years and this is impacting our response to citizens. We have also experienced significant increases in highly traumatic events including heart attacks (93 per cent) and opioid overdoses (350 per cent). To coincide with the increase in call volume, we have evolved our response model and adapted to the increase in fentanyl-related events as well as methamphetamines. We also equipped our staff with Naloxone to improve citizen outcomes with overdoses.

Adjusting to Slower than Expected Economic Recovery

Although we have saved more than $4 million by streamlining our processes, resources continue to be stretched across the corporation as The City recovers from more than 10 years of economic challenges. The economic downturn affects all aspects of our business. This includes limited capital and operating funding to support the replacement of fire trucks, equipment, fire stations, and staffing levels. In addition, risk levels in the community are rising due to the increase in vacant buildings and space, which can impact building life safety systems compliance during the downturn.

Growth in the Periphery and Established Areas

Calgary continues to grow, with an estimated increase of 26,000 citizens per year. Growth is occurring both in the periphery and in the established areas of the inner city. As of 2018, City Council approved 14 new communities for development. With growth, comes an increase in and the number, size and severity of call volumes. As new communities develop, we must continue to fulfill our commitment to providing Calgarians adequate emergency response coverage within an economic downturn and funding constraints.

Alignment and Direction

Our accountability to the municipal government, citizens, customers, and communities is at the forefront of our plans, decisions and actions. Our work is closely aligned with the Community Services' business priorities, the One Calgary 2019-2022 Service Plans and Budget as well as City Council's citizen priorities. Our goal is to make life better, every day for Calgarians.

City Council Alignment

We work alongside 12 other City service providers to deliver Council's citizen priority of creating ***A City of Safe and Inspiring Neighbourhoods***.

City Administration Alignment

Our work is aligned with One Calgary, 2019-2022 Service Plans and Budget. Within One Calgary, city-wide investment priorities are laid out alongside corresponding services and initiatives. We recognize that we need to provide efficient and effective services to citizens in exchange for their financial investment.

Community Services Alignment

The Community Services Department includes Calgary Community Standards, Calgary Emergency Management Agency, the Calgary Fire Department, Calgary Housing, Calgary Neighbourhoods, Calgary Parks, and Calgary Recreation. Each year the General Manager, Directors and Chiefs set the priorities. These priorities are guideposts in planning the department priorities and strategic initiatives. In 2019, the key priorities are:

- Service Delivery
- Workforce and Culture
- Assets
- Policy and Strategy
- One City, One Voice
- Finance

Priorities

During the 2019-2022 business planning period, we will strive to maintain response time performance for high-risk emergencies through changes to our deployment strategies. We recognize the best strategy is to stop fires from occurring in the first place. We will continue to augment our fire prevention efforts through face-to-face engagement by our firefighters at the community level.

Over the next four years, we anticipate that the demand for services will increase as the population increases, new structures are built, businesses change hands, and the result of changing legislation. We plan to open five new fire stations and will add one safety codes officer per year to address the increasing demands. Transitioning to a community risk reduction approach will allow us to increase public safety by mitigating fire risk in maximum to high-risk buildings while continuing to provide service required by the Provincial Quality Management Plan. To achieve this, the number of Fire Safety Codes Officers dedicated to request-based inspections will decrease so they can focus on completing risk-based inspections for maximum and high risk-structures.

Guided by the One Calgary, 2019-2022 Service Plans and Budget and the Community Services Department priorities, and motivated by our vision and values, we will continue to improve by focusing on the following:

Enhancing the Delivery of High-quality Public Safety Services Valued and Expected by Calgarians

We will deliver programs and services the public needs when they need them, at the right cost, by:

- Maintaining emergency response services and the positive impact to the community
- Implementing a risk-based inspection model to focus efforts on life safety issues found in higher-risk multi-family, commercial and industrial buildings and activities
- Providing and improving the quality of data, analytics and strategies for decision making, planning and growth to improve service to Calgarians
- Supporting our firefighters by developing the tools, training, programs and resources they need to successfully deliver safety education
- Developing and distributing more plain language information to customers and citizens
- Being more innovative, flexible and proactive in the way we plan for and respond to community risks and emergencies
- Providing training for fire crews and inspectors to ensure delivery of consistent and accurate information to citizens and customers

One City, One Voice.

We support local business and the economy, and promote a progressive public service culture through One City, One Voice by:

- Supporting licensing of new businesses with our service partners in The City
- Increasing compliance with the Alberta Fire Code, to ensure the safety of the citizens in commercial and industrial buildings that pose a risk to public safety
- Supporting the creation of the Indigenous Relations Office and continue Indigenous Relations training with our employees

Ensuring a Caring, Safe and Healthy Workplace

We will foster a safe and respectful workplace for all employees by:

- Continuing to emphasize respect and inclusion as key attributes of our workplace culture, and address the safety and psychological health needs of our employees while fostering more diversity in our workforce
- Providing training, education and technical assistance to improve firefighter capabilities, skills and safety at emergencies
- Providing timely technical and professional support for our front-line services
- Fostering employee loyalty and job satisfaction by helping employees feel and perform their best at work
- Increasing our capacity to be innovative and to serve and protect people who have different experiences or backgrounds, and enhance our ability to be receptive to various traditions and ideas
- Mitigating risks for our staff with emergency service delivery

Managing Our Assets

We will keep our infrastructure and assets operating efficiently and cost effectively to ensure quality service for Calgarians by:

- Advancing corporate priorities such as our Corporate Coordinated Operations & Maintenance (CCOM), resiliency and long-term sustainability
- Ensuring our firefighters have the apparatus, equipment and personal protective equipment needed to minimize their exposure to specific hazards and to enable the delivery of appropriate public safety services
- Supporting Calgary's corporate approach to facilities operations and maintenance, and capital investment that supports infrastructure resilience, organizational alignment and a cultural shift to integrated service delivery and intentional management of The City's infrastructure portfolio

Responsible Policy and Strategy

We will meet Council's agenda, and anticipate and plan for the future while managing time constraints and the budget by:

- Planning for growth, investigate regional services and monitor risk and impacts to Calgary Fire
- Setting goals and objectives, measure progress and ensure accountability, including risks, mitigation and reporting
- Leading the delivery of quality public services through Accreditation and ongoing pursuit of excellence in the Fire Service

Supporting the Corporation's financial position

We will ensure that the department is operated efficiently and effectively by:

- Contributing to corporate service reviews and reductions, where required
- Improving business processes to increase efficiency and effectiveness of operations
- Being increasingly innovative, flexible and proactive in the way we plan for and respond to community risk and emergencies

This document was revised in October 2019 to reflect changes due to 2019 reductions.