

ATTACHMENT #1

VERNON FIRE RESCUE SERVICES  
AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
**STRATEGIC  
PLAN  
2025-2032**



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## CITY OF VERNON

# MISSION STATEMENT

“To deliver effective and efficient local government services that benefit our citizens, our businesses, our environment and our future.”

## GOVERNING VALUES

### INTEGRITY

Our words match our actions

### SOUND INFORMATION

We make decisions based on data and smart growth principles

### PRINCIPLES

We apply common principles to ensure fairness and to increase trust

### FAIRNESS

Our decision are unbiased and focused on equal opportunity

### TRANSPARENCY

We make decisions in a way that builds trust and we are willing to explain our “why”





# INTRODUCTION

I am excited to present the Vernon Fire Rescue Services and Emergency Program Strategic Plan for 2025–2032. This plan provides a road map that will address existing gaps and position the department to continue to provide reliable service to our growing community. This plan relies on strong relationships, the leveraging of local and regional resources, and a high level of cooperation with neighbouring communities.

Vernon Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) has been on a journey of growth and improvement since 2017 and, by 2032, will be regarded by both residents and other local governments as providers of outstanding services for exceptional value. I am honored to be a part of this dedicated team, and I am looking forward to participating in our next achievements.

Our plan outlines strategies to enable the successful delivery of services across each of the division's departments, including:

- Administration;
- Fire Fighting (Rescue & Training);
- Fire Prevention & Life Safety; and,
- Emergency Management (Emergency Support Services & FireSmart).

The VFRS team works collaboratively with other City of Vernon divisions, community partners, neighbouring jurisdictions, and other orders of government to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters.

The City of Vernon Council, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), IAFF Local 1517 Executive, Deputy Fire Chiefs, Fire Services Coordinator, Firefighters, Training and Fire Prevention Officers, Emergency Program Coordinator, and the FireSmart Coordinator significantly informed the plan's development. It has been created with Jodi Barrie, Coordinator, Fire Rescue Services; Alan Hofsink, Deputy Fire Chief, Operations; and Brian Parsons, Deputy Fire Chief, Prevention and Life Safety.

This plan is also informed by relevant standards and legislation, the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS), industry best practices, various reports and reviews, community stakeholder feedback, and the knowledge and experience gained through the successful creation and implementation of the VFRS Eight-Year Strategic Plan 2018-2025.

A third-party review of the division began in late 2023 and was completed in April of 2024. The resulting assessment and recommendations have been foundational in the consideration of strategies for resourcing and deployment through the term of the plan. The Tim Pley & Associates Ltd. (TPA) review included input from a wide range of stakeholders and was completed by a team of subject matter experts. The TPA team has a broad range of experience and qualifications to speak to fire services operations, training requirements, fire services management, legislative matters, industry best practices, and legal considerations.

A foundational consideration in creating the plan is to ensure that it supports the accomplishment of Council's 2023–2026 Strategic Plan. In making decisions and considering options, Council's identified values and priorities have been reflected on, and the reader will note a similar style, verbiage, and other connections between the documents.



An effective plan needs to consider what is required to be successful in the current space and time. The ideal time span for the plan considered and weighed the speed at which change occurs in today's environment and the rhythm of local government; including council terms and budget cycles.

It was decided that a longer term is needed to accomplish some of the goals of the plan; therefore, an eight-year time frame was selected. This longer time frame creates the opportunity to spread the cost of the plan out but creates a risk that the environment may change enough that the strategies considered today may no longer be appropriate in the later years. To address this risk, a review and validation of the plan have been built into the fourth year. Additionally, where appropriate, different scenarios considered environment changes when creating strategies to help us achieve the final goals.

As this contemporary plan is implemented, the team will experiment with new ideas, select the most effective approach for the time and space, and then adapt the approach as needed. We will continue to move the needle forward and continue to learn, grow, and evolve. In today's environment of social challenges, community growth, and climate change, properly resourcing mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities is a big deal. When well executed, these activities are proven to be effective at preventing loss, reducing severity, and enabling recovery.

## Progress to Date

With Council's ongoing support and sustained investment, the Vernon Fire Rescue Services Eight-Year Strategic Plan 2018-2025 has been completed ahead of schedule. Foundational elements including staffing, equipment, apparatus, training, and facilities have received needed attention. Completion of the 2018 Plan has positioned VFRS to deliver reliable fire rescue services, to varying service levels, from three (3) FUS-recognized fire stations. The City is also providing effective emergency management and emergency support services programs and maintains a stand-ready emergency operations center.

A FireSmart program has been implemented, and a City of Vernon-funded FireSmart Coordinator position has brought stability to the program. The City is now able to effectively access and manage provincial funding, coordinate City departments in broad efforts to create a more wildfire-resilient community, lend support to neighborhood-level FireSmart initiatives, and engage contractors and summer students for the delivery of additional programming.

Since 2017, Council has invested in Fire Rescue Services. Along with capital projects in the magnitude of 7 million dollars, the operational budget has increased from 5.4 million in 2017 to 9 million in 2024. Systems and processes have been improved, an additional 16 career firefighters have been added to front-line response, an emergency manager and a FireSmart role have been created, worn-out equipment replaced, new fire apparatus purchased, buildings renovated, and innovative projects such as early wildfire detection have been undertaken. Today, VFRS is staffed with 40 front-line career and 15 auxiliary firefighters who provide service from three (3) fire stations.

The VFRS management team consists of a fire chief and two (2) deputy chiefs. Portfolios are well established and provide clarity regarding areas of responsibility. The team effectively administers the division's programs and services.

Union/management relationships are respectful and productive. Both union and management representatives communicate well and seek opportunities to work together in advancing the interests of the community along with the well-being of firefighters. Staff morale is high, and the team delivers services with compassion and courage.

This plan builds on the successes of the 2018 plan. It identifies key goals and enablers for the provision of safe and reliable services to a growing community with a long and spread-out boundary. It is a foundational document for the creation of the division's annual work plans.

Vernon is a growing community, and the latest projections see this growth continuing. In January 2024, BC Stats released estimates for population growth in communities through to 2046. BC Stats estimated that Vernon would grow from 45,552 in 2022 to 67,356 in 2046. That increase of 21,804 represents a 47.9 percent population growth. We will need to test these projections through the life of the plan to ensure resourcing keeps pace with the needs of a growing community.

Looking forward, I anticipate continued advancement with early fire detection and suppression systems. Drones will provide a bird's-eye view of an incident and perhaps even move to a location with or ahead of responding units. There are some prototype drones today with fire suppression capacity. Fire trucks may have automated drive or pumping capacity, freeing up a firefighter for other priority assignments.

At the same time, our community is likely to look considerably different in the years ahead due to increased density, high-rise buildings, carriage houses, and secondary suits. These changes will create new service delivery challenges, and thoughtful community design is foundational to public safety as the community grows.

Something that is unlikely to change is the need for the City to provide its fire and rescue services from at least three (3) fire stations. Geography and topography are the principle factors contributing to this need, and unless an approach is found to move fire rescue teams more quickly across the City's landscape, they will need to continue to be stationed strategically throughout the community.

Across Canada, communities, including Vernon, are seeing an increased need from their emergency programs. We are activating the City's emergency program more frequently and for longer periods of time to help the city manage through wildfires, floods, pandemics, and weather emergencies. When the City is not experiencing its own emergency or disaster, it often activates to help other communities in need. Historically, BC emergency programs have focused most of their attention on response activity and, to a lesser degree, recovery. Now, with new legislation in place in the form of the BC Emergency and Disaster Management Act (EDMA), there is to be a more balanced focus on mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery. This is a very good thing, as it presents opportunities to create a more disaster-resilient community.

Today we have a chance to do better than we did yesterday, to move the needle ahead, and to leave it better than we found it. This is my hop

e for VFRS, the City of Vernon, and our community.

Sincerely,



David Lind,  
Director, Fire Rescue Services



# VISION

To be recognized as industry leaders in fire prevention, safety, response and recovery while working within a healthy, respectful, community-focused culture. We will achieve this by continuously developing capacity and ability within our department; developing service-focused programs; strengthening relationships with our community, with our leaders and with each other; fostering strong leadership and trust at every level and remaining grounded in our values.

# MISSION STATEMENT

To deliver effective and efficient local government services that benefit our citizens, our businesses, our environment and our future.

# VALUES

Our team values professionalism, compassion, courage, unity and strength. Through these values, we are proud to provide life safety services and leadership to our community.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan outlines Administration's best professional advice for providing fire rescue services and emergency management to the City of Vernon. It will guide priority setting, budget requests, and work planning through to 2032. Staffing, apparatus, equipment, and facilities are foundational aspects for providing effective services to the community. As such, much of this plan focuses on providing adequate resources and staging them in strategic locations throughout the community to enable a timely response.

Public education can reduce the impact and severity of an emergency. When people recognize a risk and do the right things early, an emergency's negative effects can often be minimized or eliminated altogether. Mitigation work is also effective at reducing the number of emergencies and severity when an emergency does occur. Emergency planning, fire safety inspections, FireSmart work, early detection and warning, pre-planning, and aid agreements with other agencies are considered within the scope of this plan.

We have created this plan with a high level of awareness of the need for strong relationships amongst City departments. Much of the City's work in the areas of community development, climate action, health and safety, public works, recreation, information services, and water distribution is connected to the services provided by Vernon Fire Rescue and Emergency Management. In a large-scale emergency or disaster, every City department is drawn on to staff the Emergency Operations Center and to provide emergency support services. Equally important is fostering a high level of cooperation and mutual support with other agencies, levels of government, and the community we serve. Quite simply, we are better together!

Establishing and maintaining effective fire rescue services and emergency programming is an important consideration in creating a safe and resilient community. To deliver timely service across Vernon's footprint requires that firefighters operate from three (3) well-located fire stations. Providing services 24 hours a day requires a large number of employees, and as a result, much of the division's annual budget is allotted to the people's costs. A strong focus on supporting employee wellness is foundational to accomplishing the organization's goals and objectives. Firefighting, rescue, and emergency management are physical, strategic activities that require responders to perform many tasks at the same time, under stressful conditions, and while racing against the clock.

To provide a full level of service, a fire station should be staffed with at least four (4) firefighters 24/7. To cover the clock with a minimum of four (4) firefighters requires twenty firefighters in total. Those twenty firefighters are evenly divided and work on four different shifts. Sixteen of the firefighters provide base staffing and four (4) cover approved leave such as vacation, training, and sick leave.

Due to the risk profile of the service area, Station 1 is optimally staffed with no less than six (6) firefighters. In the term of this plan, the target is to achieve resourcing levels to provide full service from Stations 1 and 2 24/7. And to provide 24/7 exterior operations and first medical response from Station 3, with support from auxiliary firefighters. To accomplish this, the City of Vernon will need to maintain a workforce of sixty firefighters and a force of thirty auxiliary firefighters. Targeted staffing levels will provide six (6) firefighters from Station 1, four (4) firefighters from Station 2, and two (2) firefighters at Station 3 by 2032.



During the term of the plan, a facility review is needed to address aging buildings, disaster hardening, and future space requirements. The facility review will provide the opportunity to consider multi-purpose, multi-story building designs, especially in the downtown core.

This plan looks to keep pace with changing emergency management legislation and practices with an expanded focus on mitigation and preparedness. This expanded focus moves local government further into activities to support FireSmart, climate action, and disaster mitigation work. Historically, the Divisions focus has centered almost solely around response and recovery. To successfully meet these new requirements, the Emergency Program will require additional resourcing and a careful eye on opportunities to forge partnerships with other levels of government, NGOs, neighbouring communities, and residents.

Full implementation of this plan will increase the division's annual operational budget from \$9,017,026 in 2024 to an estimated \$17,534,149 in 2032, assuming a 4% annual inflationary rate. During the same period, we expect the population to grow from 49,337 in 2024 to 54,422 in 2032. A full plan review will be undertaken in 2028 to validate these assumptions and to assess how well the plan is doing with addressing the community's needs.

This plan is informed with input from Council, firefighters, other city employees, a third-party review, the community, North Okanagan Fire Departments, RCMP, BC Ambulance Service, and more. It is respectfully submitted for Council consideration and information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Lind', written in a cursive style.

David Lind  
Director, Fire Rescue Services

## REGULATORY MATTERS AND MANDATES

British Columbia fire services are organized and authorized through local government bylaws. In the City of Vernon, it is Fire Services Bylaw #5635 which provides the regulatory framework and defines which services are provided. The emergency program is authorized through City of Vernon Emergency Program Bylaw #5862. Both are available for review on the City of Vernon website from the Fire Rescue and Emergency Management page. <https://www.vernon.ca/homes-building/fire-safety>

Both fire services and emergency programming are regulated by a number of acts, codes and standards. The most impactful include:

- WorkSafe BC
- BC Fire Safety Act
- Emergency and Disaster Management Act
- BC Fire Code
- BC Building Code
- NFPA Standards
- Labour Relations Code
- British Columbia Fire Service Minimum Training Standards: Structure Firefighters Competency and Training Playbook
- Local Government Act
- Community Charter
- Employment Standards Act

When a local government decides to provide fire rescue services set requirements must be met. A Corporate Policy dated July 17, 2017 and titled “Fire Rescue Services Level of Service Policy” identifies that the City strives to provide a *Full-Service Level* and that this service level is reliant on a sufficient number of qualified and trained personnel being available. When the required resources are not available a lower level of service may be provided. For instance, should a fire occur in a home and resources fall below minimum standards to make entry into the home (WorkSafe BC) firefighters would apply water from the exterior of the building until the other required resources arrive. A Tim Pley and Associates Ltd. report noted that “The principal benefit of having an effective, well-equipped, and well-trained fire department is that it will materially improve the life safety of residents in its fire protection area.” And that, “...it also is important to understand that a fire department which is well rated by Fire Underwriters Survey will likely result in materially reduced insurance costs for both residential and commercial property owners. Those savings will offset, in whole or in part, the tax-cost of maintaining a Fire Underwriters Survey-recognized fire department.” (Tim Pley & Associates Ltd., 2024)

Local governments are required to maintain an emergency management organization with responsibility to “provide oversight, leadership and coordination of activities with respect to each phase of emergency management”. (Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, 2023) The phases of emergency management include mitigation, preparation, response and recovery. Emergency support services (ESS) and FireSmart both have importance in addressing a local governments commitment to emergency management and to building a more resilient community.



## SERVICE AREA & RISK PROFILE

As of July 2, 2024, The City of Vernon’s footprint spans 95.76 square kilometers. The City is a long and narrow community with geography and topography that present challenges for providing fire rescue service. A third-party service review noted that “... the dispersed nature of the community, especially where Predator Ridge, Okanagan Landing, and the Silver Star Foothills area are concerned, drives a need for firefighting resources (stations, apparatus, and firefighters) that is greater than might be found in other communities that have similar population levels but more compact service areas.” And also, that, “VFRS is currently challenged to adequately staff each of its stations.” (Tim Pley & Associates, 2024)

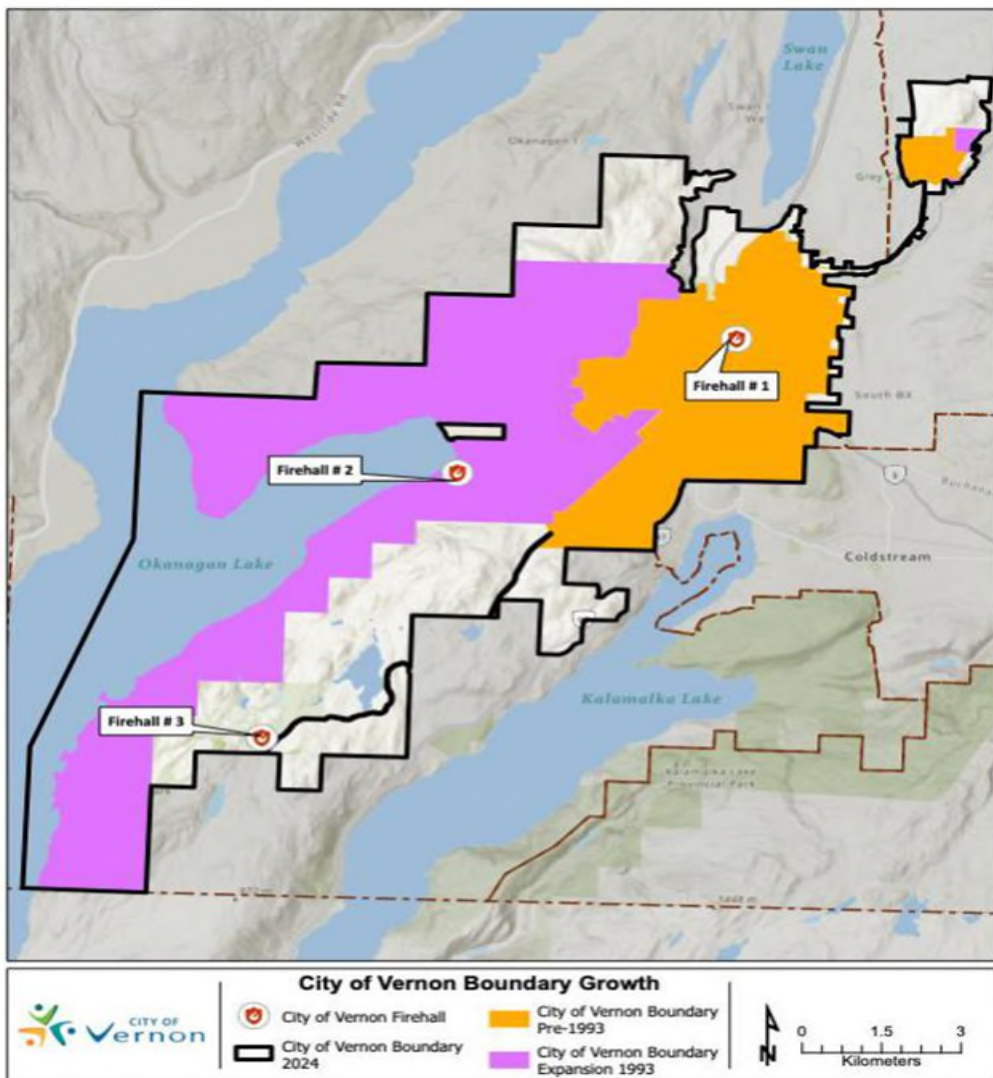


Figure 1 – Map of the City of Vernon’s geographical boundary. The orange shading represents the City’s boundary pre-1993, the purple shading represents an expansion in 1993 and the black line is the boundary as of July 2, 2024.

## SERVICE AREA & RISK PROFILE

**STATION 1** is located in the City's core and responds to a high volume of calls for service, 4,219 calls in 2023. The station is staffed with four (4) to six (6) firefighters 24/7. Within a ten-minute turn-out and travel time firefighters working from this station service an estimated population of 40,953 people (2023 data) and an area of 28.4 sq. km. Vulnerable populations live in the area, the tallest and oldest buildings are here, there is high density and numerous care homes and the hospital are located in the area. For these reasons, specialty fire apparatus is assigned to the station including; a fire engine, ladder truck, squad, wildland fire truck, water tender, hazardous materials unit and a reserve fire engine. In a 1990 FUS review, prior to significant City expansion, it was recommended to have six (6) firefighters respond from Station 1.

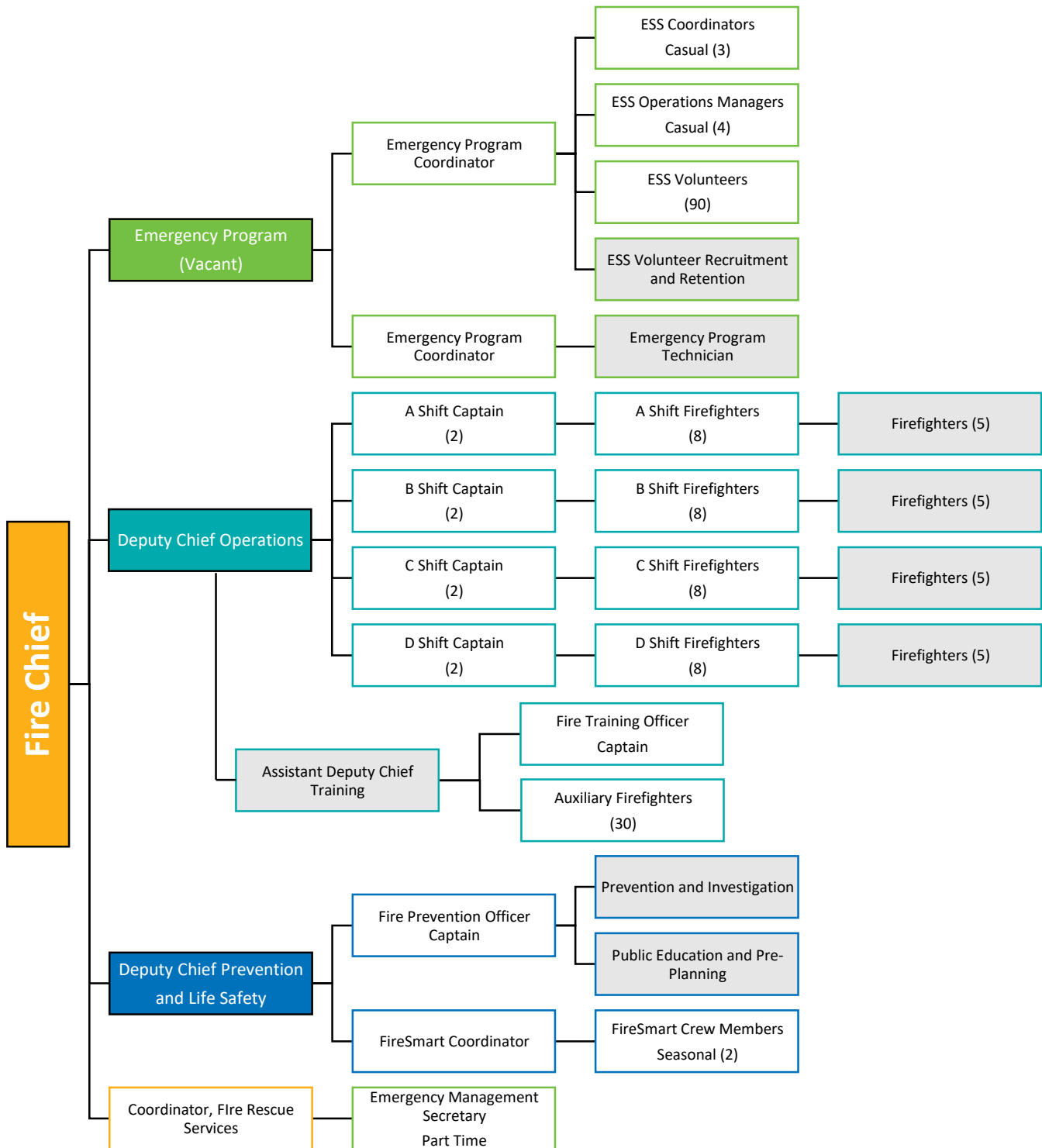
*“Some of the City’s most vulnerable citizens are concentrated in the Station 1 area.” (Tim Pley & Associates Ltd., 2024)*

**STATION 2** is located in the Okanagan Landing providing service to an area with less density. The station is staffed with two (2) to four (4) firefighters 24/7. Within a ten-minute turn-out and travel time firefighters working from this station serve an estimated 23,910 people (2023 data) and an area of 20.2 sq. km. This area is largely in the wildland interface and has several one-way-in and one-way out roads. In 2023 this station responded to 689 calls for service.

**STATION 3** is staffed with 15 exterior operations auxiliary firefighters who are supported by a simultaneous response from the other stations. Because auxiliary firefighters respond from another location to the station, and then to the call they travel a reduced distance within ten minutes. Station 3 serves an estimated population of 1,254 people (2023 data) and an area of 1.8 sq. km. During higher risk periods career firefighters are assigned to the station to increase the level of service. Predator Ridge is a quickly developing community with high value residential properties along with a world class golf course and resort. The community experiences a low volume of calls for service, 48 in 2023, and has some unique risk controls in place. Considering long response times from the other fire stations, 15 minutes at best, providing an initial fire attack and first medical responder services is a priority. Predator Ridge is surrounded by wildland interface. Prevailing winds and topography pose a risk of rapid wildfire spread during extreme conditions.



# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



***“In Service for Others”***

*The team provides fire rescue services and emergency management services 24/7 across 95.76 square kilometers*

# VFRS FACILITIES

Station 1 is well located and has been in service since 1965. It does not meet modern energy efficiency or post disaster standards. Station 2 is located in the Okanagan Landing area. The location and building will be part of a facility review. Station 3 is a new building and well located. The Emergency Operations Center has been extensively renovated and will serve its purpose for at least the next decade. A facility review and plan for renovation or replacement are required for Station 1 and 2.



**STATION 1 – CITY CENTER**



**STATION 2 – OKANAGAN LANDING**



**STATION 3 – PREDATOR RIDGE**



**EMERGENCY PROGRAM**



**STATION 2 - MULTI-USE**

## 2017 COMPARISON TO SIMILAR COMMUNITIES

City	Population	Responders		Admin. & Support			Budget
	2017	Full-time	Paid-per-Call	Training Officer	Prev/Insp Pub Ed	Chiefs	Budget (approx.)
Port Moody, BC	33,551	42	20	1	1	3	6,800,000
Penticton, BC	33,761	32	30	0	2	3	6,141,000*
West Kelowna, BC	34,930	32	60	0	3	4	6,700,000
Prince Albert, SK	35,102	46	0	0	2	2	7,200,000
Campbell River, BC	35,138	22	60	0	1	3	4,100,000
St. Thomas, ON	38,908	48	0	1	2	2	6,500,000
<b>Vernon, BC</b>	<b>40,116</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5,100,000</b>
Timmins, ON	41,788	28	143	1	3	2	6,800,000
West Vancouver, BC	42,473	95	0	1	5	4	16,000,000
Port Coquitlam, BC	58,612	72	0	1	2	4	11,000,000

Figure 2 – 2017 comparison between ten (10) cities of similar population to Vernon, BC. The information was collected through each communities Fire Service Leaders and verified using the municipality’s published financial reports and the 2016 Census. \*Penticton’s budget reflects large revenue offsets (\$481,000) which has been added to the reported operational budget amount to more closely reflect a true comparison to the other communities. (City of Vernon, 2017)

## 2023 COMPARISON TO SIMILAR COMMUNITIES

City	Population	Responders		Admin. & Support			# of Fire Stations	Budget
	2023	Full-time	Paid-per-Call	Training Officer	Prev/Insp Pub Ed	Chiefs		2024 Budget (approx.)
Port Moody	37,676	41	20	2	2	3	2	11,249,331
Penticton	38,651	40	32	1	2	3	2	7,561,497*
West Kelowna	39,853	42	54	1	4	5	4	12,000,000
Campbell River	38,259	24	50	1	1	3	2	6,085,440
<b>Vernon</b>	<b>48,087</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9,017,026</b>
West Vancouver	47,396	96	0	1	4	7	4	19,400,000
Port Coquitlam	66,974	74	0		4	4	3	14,825,260

Figure 3 – 2023 comparison between (7) cities of similar population to Vernon, BC. Population numbers based on estimated population stats from worldpopulationreview.com Note: These stats are based on online findings and are approximate. \*Penticton’s budget has a large revenue offset not reflected in the value, see Figure 2.

The number of fire stations operated increase the overall cost of service. Each station requires firefighters, fire apparatus, equipment and facility maintenance.



# POPULATION VS FIREFIGHTERS (1976-2016)

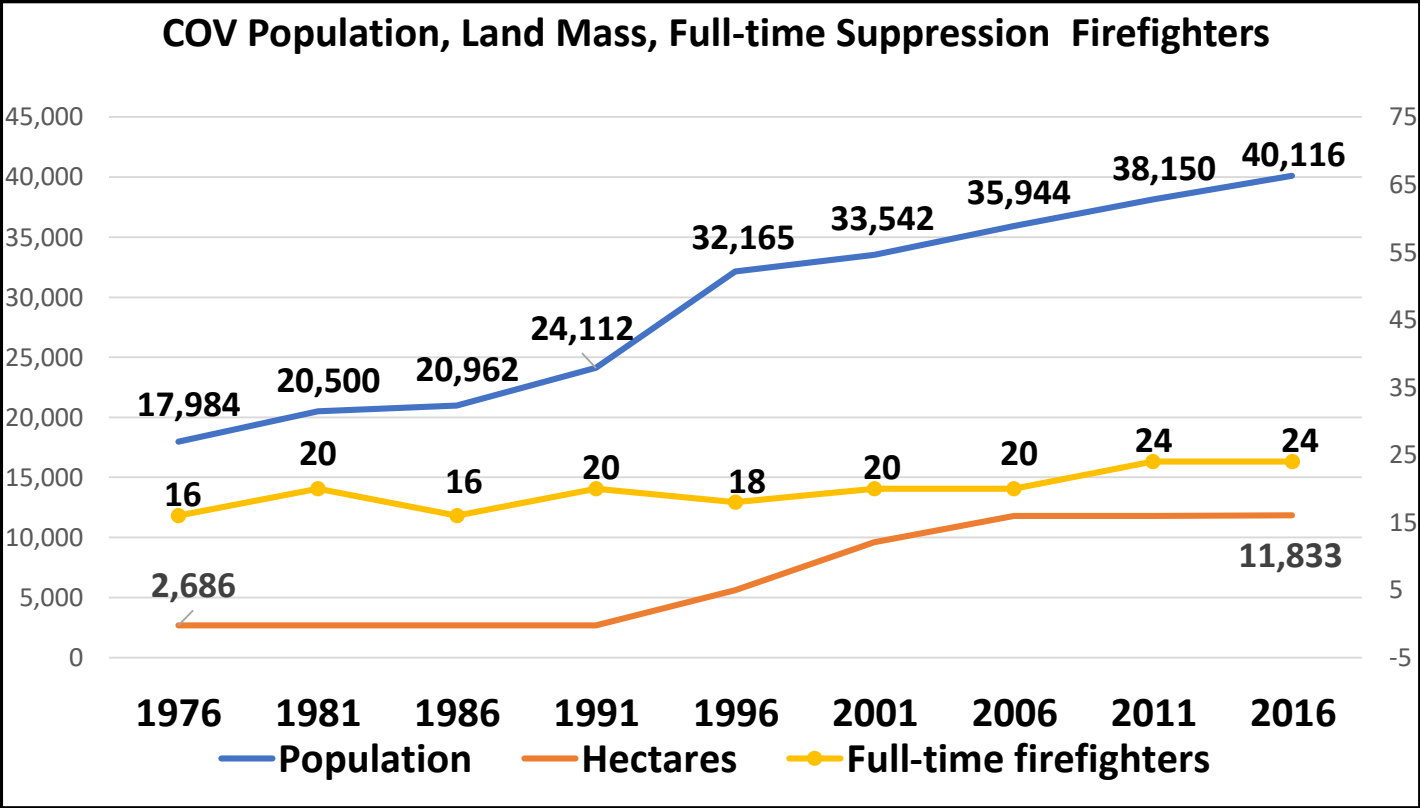


Figure 4 - This chart is figure 1 from the 2018-2025 Strategic Plan. It shows population growth within the City of Vernon, at five (5) year intervals, from 1976 -2016. Landmass grew from 2,686 hectares in 1976 to 11,833 hectares in 2016. Also, the City went from operating from 1 fire station to having 3 stations, without a significant increase in the number of firefighters used to provide service. (City of Vernon, 2017)

In the 2018-2025 Strategic Plan we discussed how many firefighters was enough and we considered the question from several perspectives. Figure 4 provides historical context for perspective as we consider the question once again, how many firefighters is enough?

# POPULATION VS FIREFIGHTERS (2024-2032)

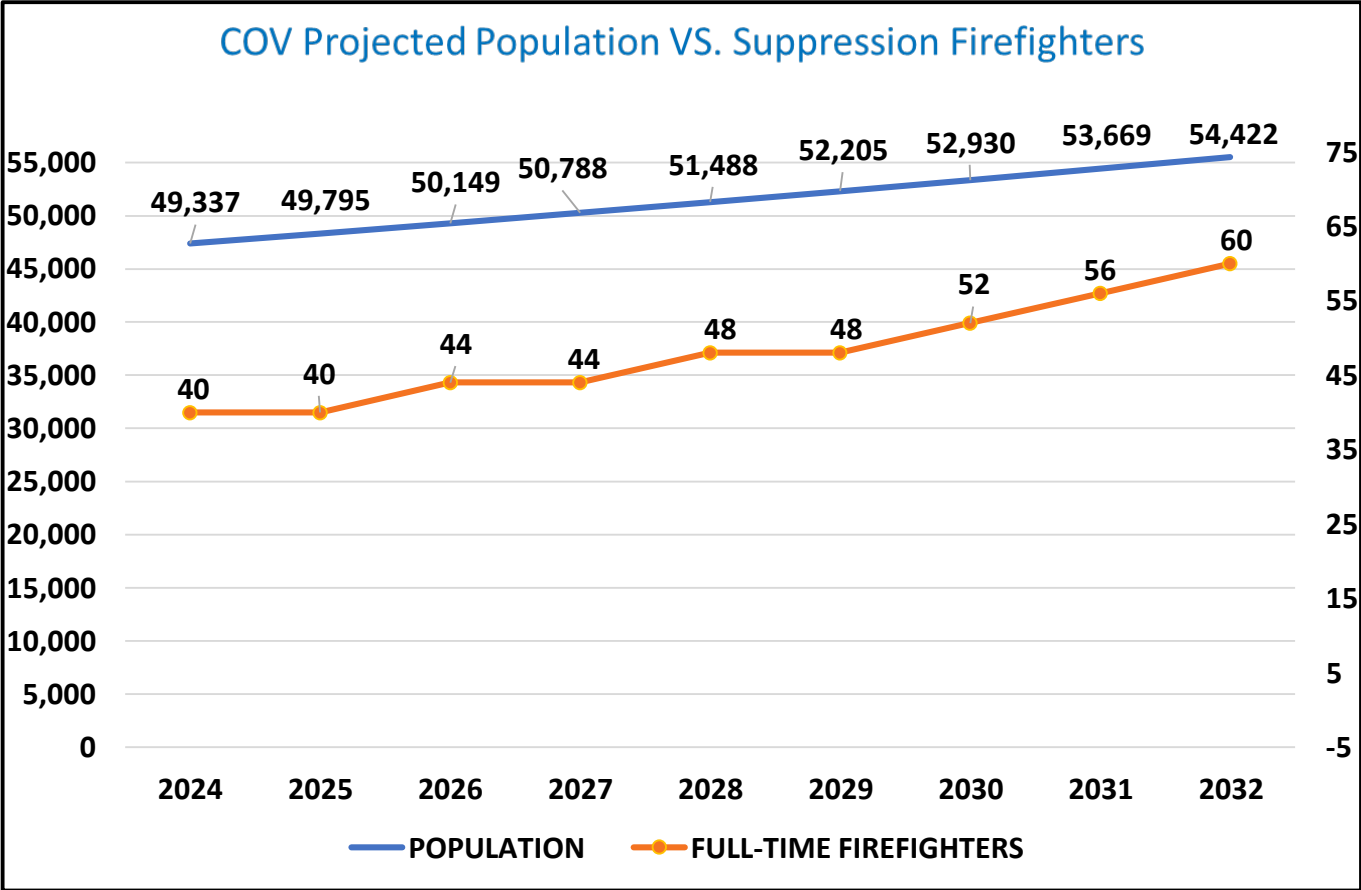


Figure 5 - in 2024 Vernon has an estimated population of 49,337 and has 40 career firefighters and 15 auxiliary firefighters trained to support the service with a limited scope of work. Population projections in Figure 5 were released July 12, 2024 by Stats BC.

The number of fire stations used to provide service is another important consideration in determining staffing levels. To provide a single engine response with four (4) firefighters 24/7 requires 20 full-time firefighters. This will be explored further after analyzing the number of calls for service.

# CALL VOLUME YEAR-OVER-YEAR

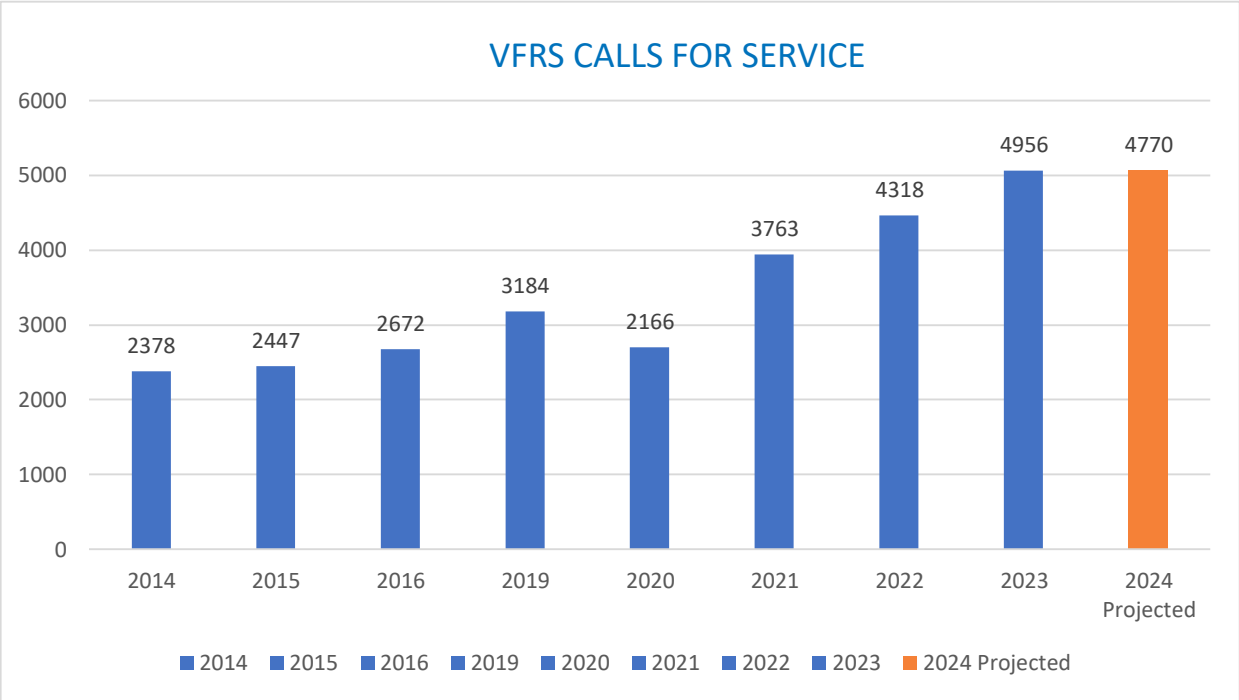


Figure 6 – Most of the City’s calls for service center around Fire Station 1. Station 2 responds to a magnitude of 680 calls for service per year and Station 3 approximately 50 calls for service. 2017 and 2018 were excluded as there was a change in data collection software which impacted the ability to accurately pull the information. During COVID (2020-2021) there were changes in societal behavior which included fewer activities and less travel. Also, the approach to the delivery of First Medical Responder Services was altered, resulting in uncharacteristically low call volumes. The 2024 projected total calls for service is 4770, based on a January to September data averaged over 12 months.

Calls for service trends are an important aspect of the story to be considered when resourcing fire stations. When calls for service increase the number of times when there are concurrent calls also increases. In 2023, Station 2 was the first-due engine 264 times when Station 1 was already assigned to another call. VFRS is experiencing high call-volumes and the projected call volume for 2024 is in the magnitude of 4,770.

VFRS monitors its calls for service and works to reduce response to unwarranted calls. First Medical Responder calls make up a significant number of the departments overall call-volume, 66% of the total call-volume in 2023. VFRS is focused on attending only those FMR calls in which the service will make a difference in the patient’s outcome such as cardiac arrest, life-threatening or serious injury. The medical dispatch system is complex and periodic review is required to ensure that firefighters are not being assigned to low acuity call types where their skills don’t improve patient outcomes.

Another area where call volume is increasing but can be managed is response to false fire alarms. Historically, the department has not fined repeat offences for the same type of fire alarm system problem that has gone uncorrected. In the term of this plan bylaws will be amended to include fines to reduce the frequency for uncorrected, reoccurring fire alarm problems.



# PROVIDING FIRE RESCUE SERVICES FROM THREE (3) FIRE STATIONS

## HOW MANY FIREFIGHTERS ARE ENOUGH?

It is a common practice in North America to staff fire rescue services at a ratio of one (1) full-time firefighter equivalent per 1,000 in population, along with additional consideration of local conditions and needs.

Auxiliary and volunteer firefighters can be considered in the calculation at a rate of three (3) to five (5) auxiliary firefighters equating to one (1) full-time firefighter, depending on the time that each auxiliary can commit to the service. A full-time firefighter is compensated for 2184 hours each year. At the time of this report the City of Vernon employs 40 full-time or career firefighters and fifteen auxiliary firefighters. In total, the full-time firefighter equivalent is 43 firefighters serving a population of 49,337. It is important to note that in Vernon, career and auxiliary firefighters are not interchangeable or like resources. The auxiliary force is trained to a base level to provide exterior operations and support the department in large or longer lasting events.

Another consideration is the number of fire stations being staffed and to what level. To staff one (1) station with one (1) crew of four firefighters 24/7 requires 20 career firefighters. Four (4) firefighters is the minimum number needed to be on scene in order to provide entry into an Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) atmosphere to conduct rescue or suppress a fire (interior operations). When call volumes exceed 2500 calls per year Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) recommends staffing a second engine from the station. Station 1 call volume far exceeds this benchmark.

In order to maintain a FUS recognized volunteer service grade from Station 3 a minimum of ten (10) auxiliary firefighters are required. Practically, 20 to 30 auxiliary firefighters are the number needed to provide 24/7 coverage while ensuring a minimum response of at least four (4) firefighters per event.

*“The Consultants observed VFRS chief officers to be making station staffing decisions in a triage manner, attempting to assign limited on-duty resources to the highest risk areas each shift. The underlying cause of this method of deploying staff resources is a considerable under-resourcing. Too few on-duty resources are available to consistently meet recommended levels of staffing.”* (Tim Pley & Associates Ltd., 2024)

## TARGETED MINIMUM SERVICE LEVEL (2026, 2029, 2032)

The City of Vernon provides fire rescue service from three (3) fire stations and utilizes a combination of career and auxiliary firefighters. As of July 5, 2024, staffing strength is at 10 firefighters per shift (total of 40) with 15 auxiliary firefighters working from Station 3. This plan recommends adding 20 career firefighter and 15 auxiliary firefighters over the term of the plan to close gaps in staffing and address the needs of a growing community.

At the end of the plans term in 2032 the City will provide a full level of service from Fire Station 1 with six (6) firefighters. A full level of service from Station 2 with four (4) firefighters and exterior operations level of service from Station 3 with two (2) firefighters.

Station 1 requires the higher staffing level to address the areas risk profile and call volume. Four (4) firefighters staff an engine rescue and two (2) firefighters staff a medical response unit or the ladder truck, depending on the nature of the call for service.

Staffing Station 2 with four (4) firefighters provides the ability to enter into an IDLH atmosphere to perform fire suppression and rescue and also helps to staff a tender (tanker) which is needed to achieve an Accredited Superior Water Tanker grade from FUS.

Station 3 will be staffed with at least two (2) firefighters, providing full-time exterior level of fire service, first medical response and auto-extrication, supported by an auxiliary force of 30 firefighters.

When staffing targets are met the level of service will exceed the minimum service level for parts of the year and Station 3 will have three (3) or four (4) firefighters, depending on shift strength. The department will continue to use a high hazard or a seasonal approach to increase staffing during periods of increased risk, raising the level of service to full-service during these times.

When staffing strength reaches 12 firefighters per shift, targeted for 2028, it will be important to assess the effectiveness of Station 3 response. Provided auxiliary response with co-response from the other stations and increased staffing during higher risk periods remain effective, and should community growth not reach anticipated levels, the additional staffing for Station 3 could be considered for deferral until a later date.



### STATION 1

**2026 Minimum Target** - staff one engine with four (4) firefighters and one squad or ladder with two (2) firefighters

- A Shift 7.5
- B Shift 7.5
- C Shift 7.5
- D Shift 7.5

**30 Career Firefighters**

### STATION 2

**2029 Minimum Target** - staff one engine with four (4) firefighter.

- A Shift 5
- B Shift 5
- C Shift 5
- D Shift 5

**20 Career Firefighters**

### STATION 3

**2032 Target** – staff one engine with two (2) firefighters, supported by auxiliary force

- A Shift 2.5
- B Shift 2.5
- C Shift 2.5
- D Shift 2.5

**10 Career Firefighters  
30 Auxiliary Firefighters**

Figure 7 - Career firefighters are assigned 2184 regular hours of work each year. They receive paid leave for holidays, vacation time and sick leave. For every FTE position we require a .25 FTE to cover absences. Station 2 and 3 staffing levels support a superior water tanker accreditation.

# AREAS OF FOCUS

These overarching areas of focus are considered during the creation of annual work plans and budgets. The services delivered by VFRS are reliant on people. Fire and rescue services is very much hands-on work, done in all weather conditions, often in difficult locations, in IDLH atmospheres or at elevation. Emergency management work is often complex, involving high stakes decision making under time constraints and with competing priorities. A strong focus on supporting employee wellness is foundational to accomplishing the organizations goals and objective.





## PEOPLE - Wellness & Culture

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
Fire Rescue – Operations  Fire Prevention & Life Safety  <b>MEDICAL SCREENING</b>	Firefighters are exposed to carcinogens and other toxins while performing their work. This is recognized as contributing to a disproportionate level of cancer and other disease in firefighters when compared to the general population. Early detection of cancer or disease can help with treatment and recovery.	2025 – <b>Service level adjustment</b> request to provide regular medical screening for employees exposed to toxic atmospheres.
Fire Rescue – Operations  Fire Prevention & Life Safety  <b>DECONTAMI- NATION</b>	Firefighters are exposed to carcinogens and other toxins while performing their work. We will continue to use PPE to reduce exposure, conduct gross decontamination at the site, to clean our bodies, PPE, trucks and equipment post event.  Currently, the department has one (1) washer extractor for the decontamination of turnout gear located at Station 1. A seconded is needed for redundancy and to expediate the decontamination process.	2025 – Purchase a washer extractor and gear dryer for Fire Station 2 funded from the <b>equipment reserve</b> .
Fire Rescue – Operations  Fire Prevention & Life Safety  <b>CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT (CISM)</b>	Firefighters are exposed to trauma and human suffering while conducting their work. We will maintain a well educated and prepared CISM Team to help firefighters cope with these events.	Maintain education and good CISM practices. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
Fire Rescue – Operations  Fire Prevention & Life Safety  Emergency Program <b>RESILIENT MINDS, NINE 8 WELLNESS, Etc.</b>	Responders and emergency managers are exposed to trauma and stressors while conducting their work. A healthy mindset makes a person more resilient to stress. We will continue to support programming to help maintain a healthy mindset.	Maintain education and mindful practices. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .
Fire Rescue – Operations  <b>PHYSICAL CONDITIONING</b>	Firefighting work requires physical strength, endurance and flexibility. We will continue to provide exercise space as well as time in the schedule for physical conditioning.	Maintain exercise program. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .
Fire Rescue – Operations  Fire Prevention & Life Safety  Emergency Program  <b>OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>	Sound Occupational Health & Safety programs consider many aspects of providing for worker safety.	Maintain an effective Occupational Health & Safety program. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .
Fire Rescue – Operations  Fire Prevention & Life Safety  Emergency Program  <b>MISSION VISION VALUES</b>	Since the departments mission, vision and values were set in 2017 there have been 18 new positions added to the department, along with several retirements and replacements. This was revisited in 2024 and a recommendation was made to conduct a fulsome review and updating at a later date.	2027 – Full review and update of mission, vision and values. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .

## PEOPLE

### Resourcing to provide effective service to a growing community

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
Emergency Program  <b>CHANGE POSITION</b>	<p>The Deputy Chief of Emergency Management is vacant (June 30, 2024) and there is an opportunity to remove the fire rescue aspects of the position to reclassify it. This will open the position up to a bigger pool of candidates.</p> <p>The fire rescue responsibilities of the Deputy Chief position will be temporarily absorbed by the Chief and other Deputy Chiefs.</p>	2024-2025 – Redesign Deputy Chief, Emergency Management position to Manager, Emergency Management. <b>No new cost</b> as there is an established position.
Emergency Program  <b>NEW POSITION</b>	Emergency Program Technician (EPT). This position will address new Emergency Disaster Management Act requirements, improve after-hours availability of emergency program employees and address workload challenges. The intention is to develop an EPT to be eligible to apply for Emergency Program Coordinator positions (HR Planning).	2025 – <b>Service level adjustment</b> request. New cost may be decreased by the difference between the Deputy Chief, Emergency Management and Manager, Emergency Management positions.
Emergency Program  <b>NEW POSITIONS</b>	Casual Emergency Support Services (ESS) position(s) can attract high performing applicants for a reasonable cost. Many of the people volunteering to work with ESS have retired from successful careers and there is a workforce available which can be engaged to do important work and address gaps within the ESS.	2025 – <b>Service level adjustment</b> request. 2027 – <b>Service level adjustment</b> request.
Fire Prevention & Life Safety  <b>NEW POSITIONS</b>	These positions would be responsible for public education, fire pre-planning, site inspections for construction and demolition projects, fire inspections and fire investigations.	2025 – <b>Service level adjustment</b> request. 2027 – <b>Service level adjustment</b> request.



DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
Fire Rescue – Operations  <b>NEW POSITION</b>	A new assistant chief position would be assigned to assist the Deputy Chief, Operations with the responsibilities of managing a complex and growing division. Operations provides service to the community 24/7. This position would have a lesser scope of responsibility than the deputy chiefs with a focus on operations and training. This will provide firefighters with an opportunity to confidently enter into a role of higher responsibility.	2027 - <b>Service level adjustment</b> request.
Fire Rescue – Operations  <b>NEW POSITIONS</b>	20 new career firefighter positions are needed to achieve and sustain service level targets for a growing community from three fire stations.  In 2028 a review is required to evaluate deployment and response from Station 3 for effectiveness. Should community growth not occur at rates anticipated and if the existing service level is meeting community needs consideration could be given to deferring career staffing of Station 3 until a later date.	2026 – <b>Service level adjustment</b> request four (4) new firefighters.  2028 - <b>Service level adjustment</b> request four (4) new firefighters.  2029 - <b>Service level adjustment</b> request four (4) new firefighters.  2030 - <b>Service level adjustment</b> request four (4) new firefighters.  2032 - <b>Service level adjustment</b> request four (4) new firefighters.
Fire Rescue - Operations  <b>NEW POSITIONS</b>	15 new auxiliary firefighter positions are needed to support 24/7 service delivery from Station 3.  As of June 30, 2024, there are 15 auxiliary firefighters. Long training times, employee availability and turnover result in variation in the number of active firefighters available.	2027 – <b>Service level adjustment</b> to request additional funding to equip, train and maintain a 30 auxiliary firefighter positions from Station 3.

## MITIGATION

Measures taken to identify, prevent, or reduce the impacts of an emergency or disaster

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
<p>Fire Prevention &amp; Life Safety</p> <p>Emergency Program</p> <p><b>PUBLIC EDUCATION</b></p>	<p>A modern public education strategy can be effective at preventing fires and injuries.</p>	<p>2024 – Implement a secondment position to create public education programming. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>2025 – Create a new full-time position to add capacity for sustained public education. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.</p> <p>Update on-line resources and fire safety messaging. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>Introduce a formalized smoke and CO detector program targeted for vulnerable populations. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>Introduce a fire safety program targeted for residents living within a 2-block radius of a recent structure fire. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.</p> <p>Introduce a fire prevention program targeted for school age children. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.</p> <p>Continue to provide season appropriate messaging to increase awareness of hazards. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>Host additional public information open houses to address community hazards and concerns. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.</p>
<p>Emergency Program</p> <p><b>FIRESMART &amp; FUEL TREATMENT TO REDUCE</b></p>	<p>A multi-faceted and whole of society approach is needed to increase the community’s wildfire resiliency.</p>	<p>2025 – <b>Service level adjustment</b> request for on-going community resiliency and risk reduction work.</p> <p>2025 – 2027 – complete initial treatment of high-risk fuels on City owned lands. Including, replanting of native, drought resistant and FireSmart plants where appropriate.</p>

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
<b>WILDFIRE RISK &amp; SEVERITY</b>		<p>Continue the summer student program to build new FireSmart advocates. <b>Community resiliency and risk reduction and Grant funded.</b></p> <p>Advocacy of fuel treatments on Crown lands within or adjacent to City boundaries. <b>Grant funded.</b></p> <p>Continue to champion the City’s FireSmart Task-Force ensuring FireSmart priorities are considered in all aspects of the City’s business. Funded through <b>existing budget.</b></p>
Fire Prevention & Life Safety  <b>FIRE CODE</b>	Ongoing Fire Code compliance helps to maintain safer, more fire resilient buildings. This requires the capacity to inspect, provide reports, work with building owners towards compliance and enforce the code.	Add 2,080 working hrs. with a new position in 2025 and another 2,080 hrs. in 2027 to address work load gaps and resource for a growing community. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.
Fire Prevention & Life Safety  <b>BUILDING CODE COMMUNITY PLANNING</b>	The Building Code is considered during construction and again with major renovation. This is primarily a function of the Building Department. Fire Prevention & life Safety need to consider emergency services needs at this stage to ensure the building, once built, can be safely evacuated and that the needed access, early detection, notification and fire suppression considerations are in place.	Add 2,080 working hrs. with a new position in 2025 and another 2,080 hrs. in 2027 to address work load gaps and resource for a growing community. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.
Fire Prevention & Life Safety  <b>INSPECTIONS</b>	With a growing number of inspectable properties in the community and requirements of the new Fire Safety Act additional working hours are needed to effectively identify and mitigate hazards.	Add 2,080 working hrs. with a new position in 2025 and another 2,080 hrs. in 2027 to address work load gaps and resource for a growing community. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.

## PREPARATION

Measures taken to establish the knowledge, capability and capacity to anticipate, detect, respond and recover from the effects of an emergency or disaster

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
Fire Prevention & Life Safety  Emergency Program  Fire Rescue Operations  <b>RISK ASSESSMENT</b>	Risk assessments help increase awareness and identify gaps in mitigation, preparation, response and recovery.	OH&S facility, near miss and work practice review. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .  After Action Review and Reports with a focus on improvement. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.  Incident Action Planning process review and updating. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .  Review and update the City of Vernon and Regional Hazard, Risk, Vulnerability Assessment. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.
Emergency Program  Fire Prevention & Life Safety  Fire Rescue Operations  <b>EARLY FIRE DETECTION</b>	Early detection and reporting of a fire help provide a timely response and aids in evacuation of both buildings and outdoor areas.  False alarms create complacency and tie up limited emergency response resources. Efforts will be made to reduce false alarms.	2025 – <b>Service level adjustment</b> request to provide ongoing support to the SenseNet early wildfire detection system.  2026 - City downtown SenseNet system trial. Tied to 2025 <b>Service level adjustment</b> above.  Bi-annual SenseNet system testing. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .  2025 – establish escalating fine system for instances when property owners fail to address system problems which result in reoccurring false fire alarms. <b>Revenue generating</b> .



DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
<p>Fire Prevention &amp; Life Safety</p> <p>Emergency Program</p> <p>Fire Rescue Operations</p> <p><b>PLANNING</b></p>	<p>Looking ahead, anticipating risk, considering approaches to challenges and documenting potential actions to different scenarios helps create a heightened awareness and common understanding of the options available.</p> <p>When employees leave an organization they often take with them a significant amount of corporate knowledge. It is important to develop a pool of employees to fill key roles and to share corporate knowledge amongst the team.</p>	<p>By year end 2026 - complete the update of fire and rescue pre-plans for inspectable buildings and confined spaces. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.</p> <p>Review and update emergency plans annually.</p> <p>Review and revise evacuation plan to include and document details regarding the evacuation of unhoused population and those without transportation. <b>Grant funded.</b></p> <p>Lead the review and update of business continuity plans for each business unit of CoV. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.</p> <p>Create re-entry plans in the case of evacuation for floods, fires, or other disaster (grant funded). Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus and <b>grant funded.</b></p> <p>Create disaster recovery plans for wide spread damage to the community due to disaster. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus and <b>grant funded.</b></p>
<p>Fire Prevention &amp; Life Safety</p> <p>Emergency Program</p> <p>Fire Rescue Operations</p> <p><b>EQUIP &amp; MAINTAIN</b></p>	<p>Properly functioning equipment, apparatus and PPE is essential to support the effective delivery of emergency services.</p> <p>Replacement needs are, for the most part, predictable and replacement schedules will be maintained to ensure timely replacement and responsible use of budgets.</p>	<p>2025 – purchase command vehicle, <b>reserve funded.</b></p> <p>2025 – Replace gas detection system, <b>reserve funded.</b></p> <p>2026 – replace engine rescue, <b>reserve funded.</b></p> <p>2026 – purchase tender, <b>one-time funding.</b></p> <p>2030 – replace high angle equipment, <b>reserve and grant funded.</b></p> <p>2030 – purchase sprinkler protection unit, <b>reserve funded.</b></p> <p>2031 – replace tender, <b>reserve funded.</b></p> <p>2032 – replace wildland response vehicle, <b>reserve funded.</b></p>

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
		<p>2032 - replace squad, <b>reserve funded</b>.</p> <p>2032 – SCBA replacement, <b>reserve funded</b>.</p> <p>Access <b>grant funding</b> to equip EOC and ESS.</p> <p>Conduct annual ladder and hose testing. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>Conduct annual pump testing. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>Conduct equipment, rope, harness, pully testing and maintain logs of service. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>Preform calibration and maintenance of atmospheric monitoring equipment. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>Complete annual FIT testing and POSI check on respiratory protection equipment. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p>
<p>Fire Prevention &amp; Life Safety</p> <p>Emergency Program</p> <p>Fire Rescue Operations</p> <p><b>TRAINING &amp; EXERCISE</b></p>	<p>Training, practice and exercising plans are cornerstones of an effective response.</p>	<p>Cross train firefighters for wildfire suppression, sprinkler protection work, and large multi-agency response. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>Conduct annual exercise or table top for large scale response with mutual aid departments. Provide annual Emergency Operations training program. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>Provide annual Emergency Support Services training program. <b>Grant funded</b>.</p> <p>Maintain annual certifications and qualifications for services provided. Funded through <b>existing budget and grant funding</b>.</p>

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
<p>Fire Rescue Operations</p> <p><b>AID/SERVICE AGREEMENTS</b></p>	<p>Aid agreements are an effective tool for both accessing resources and supporting regional public safety.</p> <p>Automatic aid dispatches additional resources from the region immediately to assist with a defined type of event. This could be a fire in a care-home which would require more firefighters than typically needed to preform rescue of a number of victims with decreased mobility. Also, consider a fire in a large building such as the hospital or a tall apartment block.</p> <p>Service agreements can provide service to areas within or adjacent to the City of Vernon. This supports regional public safety, can offset some of the cost of emergency services and also simplify service boundaries, reducing confusion.</p>	<p>2025 – formalize ladder truck reciprocal agreement with Armstrong-Spallumcheen for coverage when one of the apparatus are out of service. <b>In-kind exchange of service.</b></p> <p>2024 - Enter into an Okanagan Cities (Kelowna, Kamloops, West Kelowna, Penticton and Vernon) agreement to supply a task force consisting of four (4) fire engines, with four (4) firefighters each, and up to four (4) on-duty chiefs, with short notice for major events. <b>In-kind exchange of service.</b></p> <p>Maintain current North Okanagan (RDNO, Armstrong- Spallumcheen, Lumby, Enderby, Silver Star, BX-Swan Lake) mutual aid agreement. <b>In-kind exchange of service.</b></p> <p>Maintain service agreements providing service to IR6 and Kalamalka Lakeview Estates. <b>Revenue generating.</b></p> <p>Create and enter into an automatic aid agreement for working fires with BX-Swan Lake, Coldstream and Armstrong-Spallumcheen. <b>In-kind exchange of service.</b></p>
<p>Fire Prevention &amp; Life Safety</p> <p>Emergency Program</p> <p>Fire Rescue Operations</p> <p><b>PREPARED MESSAGING</b></p>	<p>Preparing some messaging ahead of time reduces time pressure related to just-in-time messaging. Where practical we anticipate messaging needs.</p>	<p>Continue to provide season fire safety messaging through social media, print and Fire Services web page. Funded through <b>existing budget.</b></p> <p>Create primers for typical fire rescue scenarios. Funded through <b>existing budget.</b></p> <p>Maintain primers for foreseeable emergency management messaging and review and update the emergency communications plan annually. Funded through <b>existing budget.</b></p>

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
Fire Prevention & Life Safety  Emergency Program  Fire Rescue Operations  <b>DISASTER RESILIENT FACILITIES</b>	<p>Emergency response and management facilities should be hardened to the impacts of disaster to the extent possible.</p> <p>As the community grows and additional resources are added and as existing facilities age it is important to consider facility needs for the future.</p>	2027 – request for <b>one-time funding</b> to complete a facilities review (Fire Station 1, 2, 3, EOC, ESS) and needs assessment. Create a plan for replacement or renovation, addition and disaster hardening.



## RESPONSE

Measures are taken to stop the loss and damage caused by an emergency or disaster

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
<p>Emergency Program</p> <p>Fire Rescue Operations</p> <p><b>DEPLOYMENT</b></p>	<p>Emergencies are managed by quickly assigning the right type of resources in sufficient quantity to protect life, reduce damage and to hasten recovery. In the City of Vernon fire rescue services need to be delivered from at least three fire stations. This is to position resources throughout the community in a way which enables a quick response.</p> <p>Staffing needs and service levels vary from station to station based on the areas call frequency and the risk profile of the area.</p> <p>For large or complex emergencies all stations respond and additional resources are called for through call-back of off-duty firefighters, and activation of aid agreements.</p> <p>Both an emergency program and fire rescue service need to be able to reliably provide service 24/7.</p> <p>Care and consideration must be given to only attending calls for service where a response can have a positive impact. As call volume increases it is important to ensure resources remain available for emergency response.</p>	<p>2025 – revise and document a minimum EOC call-back and standby process for times of high-risk or low employee availability. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>2025 – add Emergency Management Technician to address workload and improve after hour availability of Emergency Program employees (24/7). Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.</p> <p>2025 &amp; 2027 – add one casual ESS position in each year to address workload and increasing activation frequency. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.</p> <p>2027 – add Assistant Deputy Chief to Fire Rescue to support growing frontline workforce and assist with after hours duty-chief responsibilities (24/7). Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.</p> <p>2032 target – no less than:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Station 1 – six (6) firefighters on-duty</li> <li>• Station 2 – four (4) firefighters on-duty</li> <li>• Station 3 – two (2) firefighters on-duty</li> </ul> <p>Fire rescue operations strength of sixty career firefighters, fifteen per each of the four shifts. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.</p> <p>Continue to increase resourcing for Station 3 for periods of higher risk such as wildfire, storms, etc. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p> <p>At least annually, review First Medical Response protocol to ensure that crews are only dispatched to life threatening or serious injury types of calls. Funded through <b>existing budget</b>.</p>

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
Fire Rescue Operations  <b>ACCREDITED SUPERIOR TANKER SHUTTLE SERVICE</b>	Achieving FUS Superior Tanker Shuttle accreditation will typically reduce the cost of fire insurance for those not residing in a fire hydrant protected area. More importantly, the process of achieving and maintaining accreditation improves a fire departments ability to move large amounts of water. This is beneficial when there are water system disruptions and when managing wildfire in the community. It creates a more adaptive and versatile fire suppression team.	2026 - Implement a FUS Accredited Superior Tanker Shuttle Service. May require request for <b>one-time funding</b> of an additional Tender (water carrying fire apparatus). However, flow rates may be achievable through aid agreements with other fire services and City of Vernon Public Works.
Fire Rescue Operations  <b>INTERAGENCY OPERABILITY</b>	Large and complex events require multiple agencies to come together to provide enough resources to address the emergency. It is critical that agencies can communicate, stage and deploy in a manner which provides for organization and responder safety.	Document possible staging areas appropriate to accommodate different levels of aid with short notice. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .  Document different approaches for establishing an incident command post or area command. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .  Document a process for sharing radio frequencies and communications with other agencies. Establish shift rotation for extended operation with increased staffing level. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .

## RECOVERY

### Actions to return towards a normal state

DIVISION PRIORITY	RATIONAL	MILESTONE
Fire Prevention & Life Safety  <b>INVESTIGATION</b>	Fire and workplace incident investigations can identify the cause and/or contributing factors of an incident. This understanding is used to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence and can help people better process the trauma of the incident.	2026 – create a fire investigation module for shift officers to improve consistency and accuracy. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .  Continue to provide fire investigation and accident investigation training to officers. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .
Emergency Program  <b>EMERGENCY SUPPORT SERVICES</b>	The new Emergency and Disaster Act (EDMA) was released on November 8, 2023. As of July 1, 2024, not all aspects of responsibilities and resources are fully explained and the phased-in rollout is expected to take several years.	2025 – 2026 - Understand new recovery responsibilities and resources under the EDMA as they become available. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.
Emergency Program  <b>Emergency Program Bylaw #5862</b>	EDMA changes the approach to emergency program delivery significantly. The current Emergency Program Bylaw will require an in-depth revision or a full rewrite to align with the new legislation.	2025 - Review and rewrite Emergency Program Bylaw #5862 to be in-line with EDMA. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .
Emergency Program  <b>DISASTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (DFA)</b>	DFA may be available from the Province and there are requirements of local government to trigger DFA.	Review and document to ensure a corporate wide understanding of municipal government’s role in accessing DFA to aid in recovery. Funded through <b>existing budget</b> .
Emergency Program  <b>RECOVERY PERIOD &amp; POWERS</b>	New recovery period and powers and how and when they are used are not currently fully understood.	Review, document and provide an update to EOC staff to increase awareness regarding this evolving aspect of emergency management. Tied to change request under <b>PEOPLE</b> area of focus.



# VERNON FIRE RESCUE SERVICES FINANCIAL SUMMARY





## FIRE EQUIPMENT RESERVE

YEAR	EQUIPMENT	PURCHASE	YEARLY CONTRIBUTION	ONE-TIME CONTRIBUTION	SALE	BALANCE
2024			107,464			309,802
2025	WASHER EXTRACTOR AND GEAR DRYER (STATION #2)	60,000	110,688			360,490
2027			114,009			474,499
2028			117,429			591,928
2030	HI-ANGLE REPLACEMENT	30,000	120,952			682,880
2031			124,580			807,460
2032	SCBA REPLACEMENT	900,000	128,318			35,778

## FIRE APPARATUS RESERVE

YEAR	EQUIPMENT	PURCHASE	YEARLY CONTRIBUTION	ONE-TIME CONTRIBUTION	SALE	BALANCE
2023			350,000			-23,229
2024	SALE OF QUINT		360,500		50,000	387,271
2025	UTV WILDLAND AND RESCUE	75,000				312,271
2025	NEW LIGHT DUTY VEHICLE	80,000	371,315			603,586
2026	DEPOSIT NEW ENGINE (10%)	188,000	382,454			798,040
2026	TENDER PURCHASE (ONE TIME FUNDING)	700,000		700,000		798,040
2027			393,928			1,191,969
2028			405,746			1,597,714
2029	FINAL PURCHASE OF 2026 PROJECT (ENGINE - BALANCE)	1,692,000	417,918			323,633
2030	PURCHASE OF SPU TRAILER	200,000	430,456			554,089
2031	DEPOSIT NEW TENDER (10%)	80,000	443,370			917,458
2032	PURCHASE WILDLAND	400,000	456,671			974,129
2032	PURCHASE OF SQUAD/LIGHT DUTY RESCUE	400,000				574,129
2032	FINAL PURCHASE OF 2031 PROJECT (TENDER – BALANCE)	720,000		150,000		4,129

## SERVICE LEVEL ADJUSTMENT REQUESTS

YEAR	SERVICE LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS	COST
2025	1 FTE - FIRE PREVENTION & LIFE SAFETY POSITION	160,000
2025	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POSITION	108,000
2025	CASUAL EMERGENCY SUPPORT SERVICES POSITION	20,000
2025	FIREFIGHTER MEDICAL SCREENING	40,000
2025	EARLY WILDFIRE DETECTION SYSTEM	40,000
2025	COMMUNITY RESILIENCY AND RISK REDUCTION	60,000
2026	4 FTE - CAREER FIREFIGHTERS	552,000
2027	15 CASUAL - AUXILIARY FIREFIGHTERS	80,000
2027	CASUAL EMERGENCY SUPPORT SERVICES POSITION	25,000
2027	1 FTE - FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER	170,000
2027	1 FTE – ASSISTANT CHIEF OPERATIONS	175,000
2028	4 FTE - CAREER FIREFIGHTERS	597,000
2029	4 FTE - CAREER FIREFIGHTERS	621,000
2030	4 FTE - CAREER FIREFIGHTERS	646,000
2032	4 FTE - CAREER FIREFIGHTERS	672,000

## ONE-TIME PROJECTS

YEAR	PROJECT	FUNDING SOURCE	COST
2025	STATION 1 MEZZANINE (IMMEDIATE SPACE AND STORAGE NEEDS)	TBD	100,000
2025	REPLACE GAS DETECTION EQUIPMENT	Ammonia Chlorine Reserve	40,000
2027	VFRS FACILITIES REVIEW	TBD	TBD

## DEPARTMENTAL GOALS



### FIRE ADMINISTRATION

- PROVIDE A SAFE AND HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT
- PROVIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES THROUGH HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT.
- CREATE AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND AGREEMENTS



### FIRE FIGHTING

- PROVIDE EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS
- TO RESOURCE, CREATE, AND MAINTAIN TRAINING PROGRAMS WHICH ENABLE FIREFIGHTERS TO PROVIDE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE SERVICES
- PROVIDE APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT THAT MEETS OR EXCEEDS THE APPLICABLE STANDARDS
- TO IMPROVE AND STRENGTHEN COV AND REGIONAL RESPONSE AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION



### FIRE PREVENTION AND LIFE SAFETY

- DELIVER EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES
- FOSTER PERSONAL GROWTH, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND A HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY TO PROVIDE A SUSTAINABLE LEVEL OF SERVICE
- CONTINUE TO DEVELOP, STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS
- PROMOTE A SAFE, HEALTHY, AND PROGRESSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT THAT EFFECTIVELY MANAGES PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RISK



### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- STRENGTHEN THE CITY OF VERNON'S RESILIENCE AND TO REDUCE HUMAN AND ANIMAL SUFFERING IN THE FACE OF A CHANGING CLIMATE
- STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGH COMMUNITY EDUCATION
- STRENGTHEN THE CITY OF VERNON'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN STEP WITH CHANGING LEGISLATION AND ENVIRONMENT



VERNON FIRE RESCUE SERVICES  
FIRE  
ADMINISTRATION



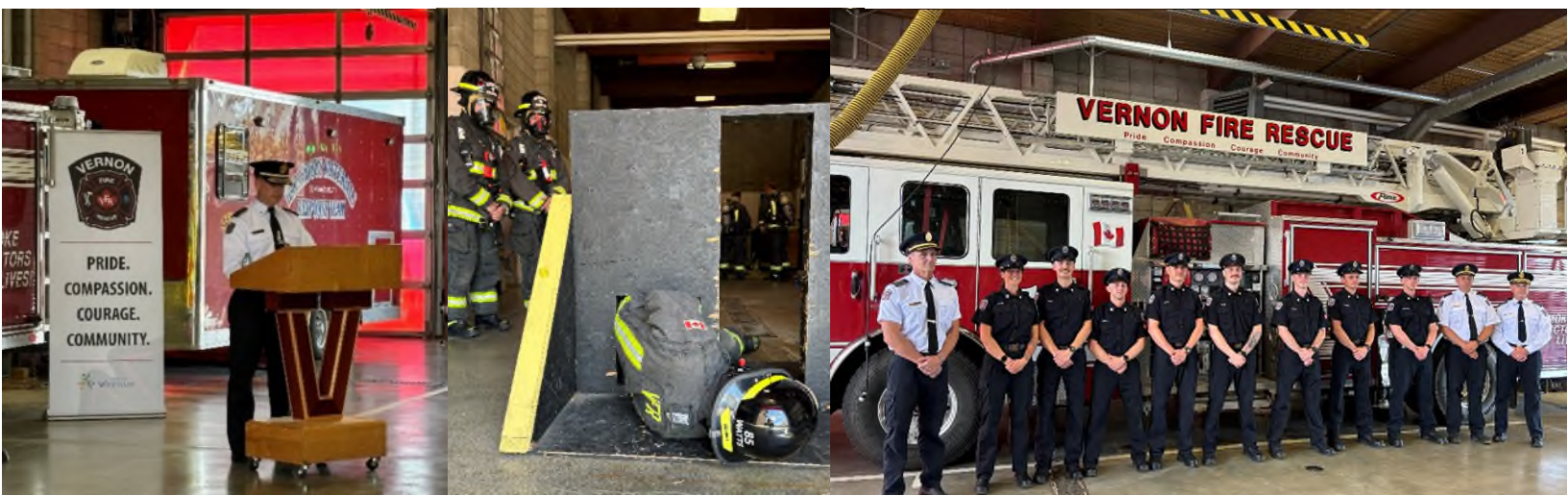


## FIRE ADMINISTRATION OVERVIEW

Vernon Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) is responsible for the delivery of services and programs including: rescue, fire suppression, fire prevention, Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fuels management, FireSmart, fire investigation, hazardous materials response, public education, first medical response, the City's emergency program, and provision of emergency support services.

The Administrative Team provides a common vision and direction for the Firefighting, Fire Prevention & Life Safety, and Emergency Management departments. This direction is aligned with Council's strategic priorities and also the goals set for the Corporation by the Chief Administrative Officer. The Administrative Team supports the management and delivery of services from Fire Station 1 (Downtown), Station 2 (Okanagan Landing) including the Training/Conference building, Station 3 (Predator Ridge) and the Emergency Operations Center.

GOAL	PROVIDE A SAFE AND HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	The nature of the services and work provided by the division can be inherently dangerous. These services can only be successfully delivered by a high functioning, healthy team of employees who are well trained, equipped and supported. We will provide supports for mental and physical health and wellness; early detection of disease and illness; and an effective Occupational Health and Safety Program.
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will celebrate team and individual successes.</li> <li>• We will maintain an effective Occupational Health and Safety program throughout the term of this Plan.</li> <li>• We will continue to provide space, equipment and on-duty time to maintain physical fitness.</li> <li>• We will provide fatigue management training for employees to help improve resiliency to the effects of shift work.</li> <li>• We will provide mental resilience training and supports to help build strong minds.</li> <li>• We will maintain and improve the Critical Incident Stress Management program.</li> <li>• We will revitalize the Chaplaincy program.</li> <li>• We will implement and maintain a voluntary medical screening program.</li> <li>• We will continuously seek to improve decontamination and detoxification process and systems.</li> </ul>



<b>GOAL</b>	<b>PROVIDE ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES THROUGH HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT.</b>
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	When key roles are vacant workloads can become heavy, important functions may be impaired or cease and a loss of corporate memory can occur. To minimize these outcomes, we will maintain Operational Guidelines, develop well suited employees for increasing roles of responsibility, resource functions appropriately and cross train peers to be competent in covering one another's roles.
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will evaluate key positions and anticipate potential vacancies at least annually.</li> <li>• We will identify and develop employees who demonstrate motivation, interest and ability to fill key roles of increasing responsibility.</li> <li>• We will cross train peers to cover responsibilities in others areas of responsibility.</li> <li>• We will utilize work planning to accomplish goals, focus efforts and provide appropriate time, space and resourcing to support the work.</li> <li>• We will contribute to and participate with the City's formal mentorship program.</li> </ul>

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>CREATE AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND AGREEMENTS</b>
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	Effective agreements can strengthen response and improve service by making the best use of the available resources within a region. We will foster cooperative relationships with other local governments, service providers, First Nations and the community to enable effective multi-agency agreements and practices in this region.
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will leverage our FireSmart Program and its successes to help others in the region establish their programs.</li> <li>• We will seek opportunities and facilitate conversations within the region to explore and encourage the application of automatic aid between fire services.</li> <li>• We will advocate for an approach which sees the closest resource attached to a call, even when the call is in another's jurisdiction.</li> <li>• We will seek ways to support and augment Emergency Programs and Emergency Support Services in the region.</li> <li>• When providing training for our team we will create opportunity to welcome others from the region with a focus on the development of mutually beneficial relationships.</li> </ul>







# VERNON FIRE RESCUE SERVICES FIRE FIGHTING



## FIRE FIGHTING OVERVIEW

With the completion of the 2018 strategic plan VFRS is positioned to deliver fire rescue services from all three (3) stations. With 40 career staff responding out of Station #1 (downtown) and Station #2 (Okanagan Landing) and 15 auxiliary firefighters responding from Station #3 in Predator Ridge we are able to provide efficient response to the citizens of Vernon while supporting our regional partners when requested. We responded to over 4,900 calls for service in 2023. These calls are for a wide range of responses from structure and wildland fires, First Medical Responses (FMR) and various other alarms, Motor Vehicle Incidents (MVI) and specialty rescues.

Our training division is led by our Training Officer who coordinates and oversees training programs which support the departments delivery of services. This year we spent a significant amount of time on two (2) key programs, wildfire suppression and high-angle tower-crane rescue. These programs are essential to meet an increasing need for service as the community continues densification through the construction of taller buildings and community development in a wildland prone region.

From a service delivery perspective, we continue to assess both current and future needs. In anticipation of steady community growth, we have developed a balanced and fiscally responsible fleet and equipment plan. These plans seek to balance fiscal responsibility with the need to provide safe and reliable tools to the firefighters.

A note worthy recent accomplishment is a recognized Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) response from all three (3) fire stations and a sustainable plan to maintain the recognition.

The department continues to build on these successes, striving to find innovative approaches to make the most of the resources available. This is an important mindset to position Fire Rescue to deliver safe and effective services to the community.



Alan Hofsink  
Deputy Chief, Operations





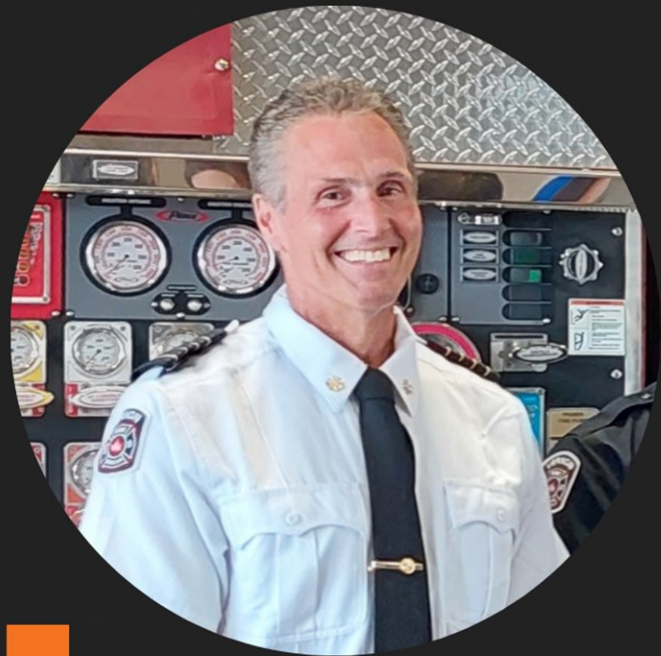
<b>GOAL PROVIDE EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS</b>	
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	We will focus on meeting or exceeding applicable standards and industry best practice for the provision of a safe and effective fire rescue service. We will regularly review our response approach and practices, and when required, implement needed change. We will annually evaluate programs for effectiveness and consider community need, resource levels and aid agreements.
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025-2026 Investigate the feasibility of Superior Tanker Shuttle accreditation in order to improve firefighting effectiveness in areas with little or no fire hydrant protection and to improve FUS grading in these same areas. We will consider aid agreements, City of Vernon Public Works and as a last choice, the purchase of a new tender.</li> <li>• We will hire 20 additional career firefighters to achieve service level targets.</li> <li>• We will hire additional 15 auxiliary firefighters based out of Station #3 to target a force size of 30 auxiliary firefighters.</li> <li>• We will address work load gaps and create and hire one (1) FTE position to help manage the Operations and Training portfolios.</li> </ul>

<b>GOAL TO RESOURCE, CREATE, AND MAINTAIN TRAINING PROGRAMS WHICH ENABLE FIREFIGHTERS TO PROVIDE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE SERVICES</b>	
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	We will ensure that the training programs meet or exceed relevant standards and required certifications. We will assess the needs of the community and the Council established service levels and match our training to those needs. We will implement training programs and practises that function well with both internal and external stakeholders.
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will revise the 1002 Emergency Vehicle Operator (EVO) and Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) programs to fully comply with the applicable standards.</li> <li>• We will replace outdated records management system.</li> <li>• We will develop ongoing maintenance training programs to equip firefighters for their expected roles.</li> <li>• We will provide time management programs and leadership training for officers.</li> <li>• We will annually evaluate rescue programs.</li> <li>• We will champion an interdivisional training program to support Sprinkler Protection Unit (SPU) setup.</li> </ul>

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>PROVIDE APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT THAT MEETS OR EXCEEDS THE APPLICABLE STANDARDS</b>
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	When creating plans for fire apparatus purchase or replacement we consider how to achieve the greatest functionality from each apparatus. Given the high cost and long delivery times we will consider options to extend the life cycle of the unit while maintaining the communities FUS rating. We aim to provide firefighters with the essential components needed to provide effective service and avoid additional cost. We seek in-kind agreements with others to provide cross coverage for out of service apparatus such as ladder trucks.
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<p>2025 -Purchase of a rescue/wildland UTV. A dual-purpose UTV will access challenging geographical areas such as biking and hiking trails. It will provide wildland firefighting, patient rescue and fire fighter transport.</p> <p>2025 – Purchase of a light duty vehicle</p> <p>2025 – Gas detection system replacement</p> <p>2025 – Mezzanine construction at Station #1</p> <p>2025 – Washer extractor for turn out gear - Station #2</p> <p>2026 – 2029 Replace engine rescue</p> <p>2026 – <i>Potential purchase tender</i></p> <p>2030 – High angle equipment replacement</p> <p>2030 – Purchase of Sprinkler Protection Unit (SPU)</p> <p>2031 – 2032 replace tender</p> <p>2032 – Replace wildland response vehicle</p> <p>2032 – Replace squad/light duty rescue</p> <p>2032 - SCBA replacement (2018)</p>

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>TO IMPROVE AND STRENGTHEN REGIONAL AND INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER RESPONSE AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION TO PROVIDE THE MOST EFFECTIVE SERVICES POSSIBLE</b>
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	We will foster cooperative relationships with regional fire rescue services and other local governments with a focus on finding win-win opportunities to strengthen regional response to emergencies and disasters. Agreements such as automatic aid, mutual aid and fee-for-service are needed to ensure the closest resource is quickly assigned to an emergency. Interagency training and consistency in operating practices is important for safe operations when neighbouring departments are working together.
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BX-Swan Lake and Coldstream automatic aid for general alarms and areas where geography and station location place a neighbouring fire service closer to the location.</li> <li>2. Reciprocal agreement with Armstrong/Spallumcheen for ladder coverage.</li> <li>3. Expand mutual aid with neighbouring communities to include Lake Country.</li> <li>4. Annual inter-agency training hosted by one of the regional partners.</li> <li>5. Train and work with internal resources to activate the SPU when Fire Rescue resources are tasked out.</li> </ol>

VERNON FIRE RESCUE SERVICES  
FIRE PREVENTION  
AND LIFE SAFETY



## FIRE PREVENTION AND LIFE SAFETY OVERVIEW

The mission of the Fire Prevention & Life Safety department is to avoid injury and life or property loss by advocating for a safe and resilient community. Through effective fire inspection and code enforcement programs, community risk reduction activities, and strong leadership, we will maintain high standards and seek to achieve bylaw and code compliance first through education and collaboration.

We provide public education and work to increase the community's awareness of risks which can be reduced through prevention and mitigation actions. The pillars of Fire Prevention and Life Safety include Life Safety, Property Protection and Community Awareness.

### Life Safety

- To prevent the occurrence of fire and explosion through education, inspection and enforcement, when required.
- To protect building occupants from injury and reduce the risk to loss of life and property caused by fire through an effective inspection program.
- To ensure Firefighter safety by providing training, equipment and a comprehensive Occupational Health and safety program.

### Property Protection

- Once life safety is provided the secondary goal of fire safety is to prevent property loss and damage by ensuring that fire safety systems and early fire detection is in good working order.

### Community Awareness

- Increasing awareness promotes community-based preventive and coping strategies for different emergencies. Often there are practical and easy to implement strategies which most people can undertake to prevent an emergency or reduce its impacts.
- A focus on youth and early years education can help create a fire safe mindset that a person carries throughout their lives. An added value is that young people can often influence the behavior of the adults in their lives.



Brian Parsons,  
Deputy Chief, Prevention & Life Safety



GOAL	DELIVER EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES
<p><b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b></p>	<p>The primary goal of fire prevention is to protect human lives from injury or death caused by fire or its by-products, such as smoke, heat, and toxic gases. A reduction of life-safety risks can be achieved through innovative and robust fire prevention services. A preventative message can have the most impact and has the highest chance of causing action in a person when it is delivered at a time when the person is ready to hear the message. A message to check fire alarms may be very effective if received a day or two after your neighbour experienced a fire in their home.</p> <p>Community growth is anticipated to continue in upcoming years. Higher density housing will increase the challenges with providing fire services. It is essential to ensure that compliance with building codes and smart design occurs during the development of a new community. Working with City partners on code enforcement and fire safety issues we will continue to best serve the residents and visitors to the City of Vernon.</p>
<p><b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and hire for a new Fire Prevention and Life Safety Position – One FTE</li> <li>• Consistently conduct inspections of new and existing businesses ensuring fire code compliance prior to receiving business licenses.</li> <li>• Create and implement a development review guideline pursuant to the 2024 Fire and Building Codes and City of Vernon Bylaws.</li> <li>• Review, re-write and expand Fire Service Bylaw #5635.</li> <li>• Create and implement a “Fire Safety Plan for Construction and Demolition” to be used by all developers to document required fire safety consideration’s during the project.</li> <li>• Work with internal departments and stakeholders to ensure compliance with Fire Safety Plan during construction and demolition.</li> <li>• Implement a corrective program to address reoccurring nuisance fire alarms.</li> <li>• Create a multi-agency team comprised of: Fire, Police, Ambulance, Bylaw, Building Department and Emergency Management officials to address concerns with identified non-compliant code violations and challenges associated with being unhoused.</li> <li>• Establish and maintain relationships with RCMP fire investigators.</li> <li>• Create depth in the capacity for fire investigation.</li> <li>• Modernization of the lock box program.</li> </ul>





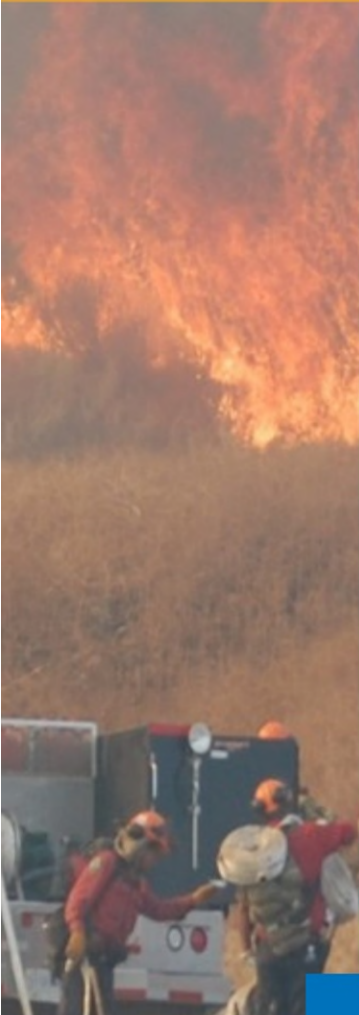
<b>GOAL FOSTER PERSONAL GROWTH, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND A HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY TO PROVIDE A SUSTAINABLE LEVEL OF SERVICE</b>	
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	<p>Currently, there are gaps in resourcing the division which need to be addressed to enable the sustainable delivery of services. With ongoing community growth, the service demands on the department increase. We use opportunities to utilize firefighters to help fill service gaps in the short term.</p> <p>Human Resources planning is essential to providing program continuity, maintaining corporate knowledge and for anticipating employee turnover.</p>
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and hire a new Fire Prevention &amp; Life Safety Position</li> <li>• Provide leadership training and development within the department.</li> <li>• Participate with the City’s formal mentorship program to support career advancement.</li> <li>• Develop a formal Human Resource plan for the department.</li> <li>• Identify continuing education program opportunities for specialized positions (Fire Prevention Officer, Public Education Officer).</li> <li>• Ensure adequate training and mentorship to NFPA 1031(Inspection) &amp; 1033 (Investigation) standards.</li> </ul>

<b>GOAL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP, STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	<p>Vernon Fire Rescue Services will use a community risk management approach to build a safer community. Incorporating educational and community-based programs targeted for at-risk populations we will foster community involvement and participation.</p> <p>Partnerships provide opportunities for growth, expanded resources, increased community trust, innovation, and problem solving.</p>
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vernon Fire Rescue Services shall develop effective working relationships with key partners including community care facilities; Interior Health, Downtown Vernon Association, City of Vernon Tourism, Planning and Building Departments.</li> <li>• Create a resource database including; public education programs, and mapping.</li> <li>• Cultivate a well-developed network of partnerships with key support agencies including; RCMP, City of Vernon Bylaw, Regional District North Okanagan, and indigenous community partners.</li> <li>• Develop and implement strategies to reduce fires in the downtown core.</li> <li>• Facilitate a safety conscious community delivery and promotion of fire safety and awareness.</li> <li>• Develop a guideline for construction and work collaboratively with developers, planning and building departments to ensure that compliance with building and fire codes are met.</li> </ul>

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>PROMOTE A SAFE, HEALTHY, AND PROGRESSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT THAT EFFECTIVELY MANAGES PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RISK</b>
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	<p>The most important resource that Vernon Fire Rescue has is its workforce. The health and wellness of the firefighters is paramount to the overall departmental well-being.</p> <p>The hazards of modern construction, environmental risks, changing building codes, new manufactured materials, and diverse risk potentials have significantly changed emergency response tactics and techniques increasing pressures on all Vernon Fire Rescue employees.</p> <p>Ongoing training must meet or exceed industry standards. Training in not only operational strategies and tactics but in overall mental health and wellbeing is essential to ensure a competent, healthy and resilient workforce.</p> <p>Providing quality training is also reflected in the service delivered to the citizens of Vernon and provides safe working practices for firefighters.</p>
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further development of the Mental Health/Peer Support Program and revitalization of the chaplaincy role.</li> <li>• Vernon Fire Rescue Services shall provide health, safety, and wellness programs that contribute to the long-term wellbeing of its personnel.</li> <li>• Conduct comprehension medical assessment of members annually.</li> <li>• Ensure personnel posses the required core competencies (as per the updated legislated BC Fire Safety Act) and are maintained and upgraded through ongoing training, education and certification i.e. Incident Safety Officer.</li> <li>• Continue to provide a comprehensive Occupational Safety and Health program.</li> <li>• Maintain effective decontamination and detoxification processes post exposure.</li> </ul>



VERNON FIRE RESCUE SERVICES  
EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT





## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The Emergency Management Department provides for the City's emergency program as required by Provincial legislation and is guided by the four pillars of Emergency Management: Mitigation, Preparation, Response and Recovery.

Department activities are supplemented by grant funding and government transfers for eligible emergency response and recovery costs. The Emergency Program employs a full-time Emergency Program Coordinator, a part-time Emergency Program Secretary, three (3) On-Call Emergency Support Services Response Coordinators, and over 100 Emergency Support Services (ESS) Volunteers. Emergency Management also employs a full-time FireSmart Coordinator and two (2) grant funded FireSmart students.

When activated during an emergency, the Emergency Operations Center is staffed by City employees from every division of the Corporation.

Over the last decade emergency programs across Canada are experiencing an increased frequency of activation for longer periods of time. This is often in response to wildfire, floods, pandemic or weather emergencies. In recent years, when the City's emergency program is not activated to manage its own emergency or disaster it has been activated to support other communities in need.



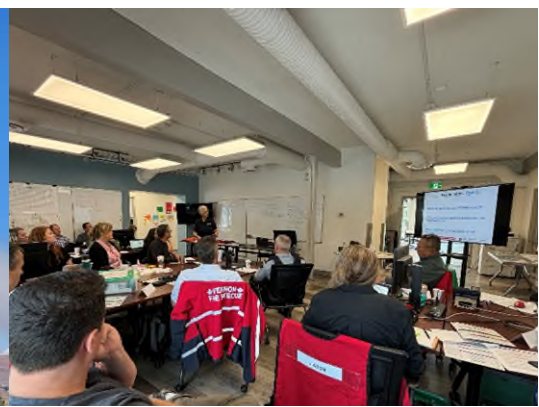
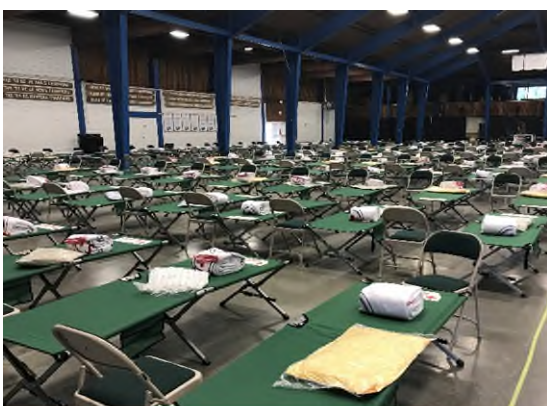
David Lind  
Director, Fire Rescue Services



<b>GOAL</b>	<b>STRENGTHEN THE CITY OF VERNON'S RESILIENCE AND WORK TO REDUCE HUMAN AND ANIMAL SUFFERING IN THE FACE OF A CHANGING CLIMATE.</b>
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	<p>In the City of Vernon, we prepare as the world endures disasters with larger magnitude and increased frequently. The Emergency Management Department will work with other divisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to hardened the community against future disaster events;</li> <li>• to assist First Responders to operate safely during disasters through planning and mitigation;</li> <li>• to increase the community's awareness of risk reduction strategies to prepare for disaster events; and,</li> <li>• to provide a recovery plan to reduce the psychosocial impacts of disasters by returning citizens to normalcy in an expedited manner.</li> </ul>
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<p>Create and hire one Emergency Management FTE to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support the Emergency Program;</li> <li>• focus on addressing some of the new legislated responsibilities; and,</li> <li>• strengthen the Emergency Operations Centre staffing matrix.</li> </ul> <p>Create and hire a casual position(s) to support the Emergency Program – Emergency Support Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support Emergency Support Services reporting to the Emergency Program Coordinator;</li> <li>• responsible for recruiting new volunteers to maintain core numbers;</li> <li>• responsible for training volunteers for response;</li> <li>• responsible for maintaining the Level 1 staff and ensuring on call availability; and,</li> <li>• responsible for coordinating ESS response.</li> </ul> <p>Build and maintain team consisting of a minimum of four (4) grant funded seasonal staff to support the FireSmart Coordinator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess privately and City of Vernon owned lands using FireSmart principles;</li> <li>• Perform FireSmart work on City of Vernon owned lands using FireSmart principles concentrating on high-risk areas first; and,</li> <li>• perform FireSmart work on private lands owned by seniors (65 years of age or older), people with limited mobility or vulnerable populations who cannot undertake mitigation activities themselves concentrating on high-risk areas first.</li> </ul>



GOAL	STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGH COMMUNITY EDUCATION
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	<p>In the City of Vernon, we aim to strengthen community resilience by implementing a comprehensive community education program. This program will focus on emergency management and FireSmart principles, empowering our citizens with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect themselves, their families, and their properties. We will leverage local resources, partnerships, and technology to deliver this education in a manner that is accessible and engaging for the community. Through this initiative, we aspire to foster a culture of preparedness and proactive action, enhancing our community's ability to effectively respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters.</p> <p>This strategy aligns with our commitment to safeguarding our community and preserving the quality of life in Vernon. By providing education, we equip the community with information and instill a sense of empowerment, encouraging collective action towards emergency preparedness and mitigation.</p>
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<p>Develop and implement a FireSmart education program with school aged children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate FireSmart education toolkits into School District #22 in partnership with FireSmart BC; and,</li> <li>• Expand the FireSmart mentorship program.</li> </ul> <p>Expand the FireSmart landscape program into larger franchise style landscape sellers.</p> <p>Deliver emergency preparedness messaging in conjunction with FireSmart messaging at community events.</p>



<b>GOAL</b>	<b>STRENGTHEN THE CITY OF VERNON'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN STEP WITH CHANGING LEGISLATION AND ENVIRONMENT</b>
<b>STRATEGY STATEMENT</b>	<p>The Emergency Management Department is committed to strengthening our Emergency Management Program in alignment with evolving legislation and environmental conditions. Our strategy involves continuous monitoring of legislative changes and environmental trends, ensuring the program remains compliant, relevant, and effective. We will engage in regular training, table top simulations and full-scale exercises to prepare first responders and equip them with the latest best practices. We will foster strong relationships with local, regional, and national partners to enhance our collective response capabilities. Through these efforts, we aim to ensure the City of Vernon is prepared for an emergency or disaster, thereby safeguarding the community and enhancing its resilience.</p> <p>We are dedication to proactive emergency management, and strive to achieve legislative compliance. By adapting to changing circumstances, we can ensure our community's safety and resilience.</p>
<b>PROJECTS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	Foster, improve and maintain relationships with neighbouring local authorities, Indigenous Governing Bodies, Provincial/Federal Authorities, and Corporations



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

VFRS acknowledges the important contributions of our stakeholders and staff that contributed to the strategic planning process.

Vernon City Council

Vernon Fire Rescue Services Staff

City of Vernon Staff

Tim Pley and Associates

Community members

Predator Ridge Community Safety Committee

North Okanagan Fire Departments

Mike Walroth, Deputy Chief, Emergency Management June 2023 – June 2024





PRIDE. COMPASSION. COURAGE. COMMUNITY

VERNON FIRE RESCUE SERVICES

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2032