

To: Warden and Members of County Council
From: Director of Paramedic Services

Joint Municipal Paramedic Service Deployment Review Final Report

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Report No. PS 2022-01, titled “Joint Paramedic Service Deployment Review Final Report”, including the review authored by Performance Concepts Consulting (Attachment 1) be received;
2. And further, that Council directs staff to proceed with their municipal partners (Elgin, Perth) to create an ongoing Paramedic Services Sharing Working Group as per Recommendation 11 in Attachment 1 in order to further consider the service sharing opportunities identified through the review.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- A detailed review of joint deployment for Paramedic Services in Oxford, Elgin, and Perth Counties was conducted through the Province of Ontario’s Municipal Modernization Funding.
- Opportunities exist to work together to address current and emerging challenges that could enhance individual and collective system performance, with attention given to working together to avoid extraneous costs as the demand for these critical services continues to rise.
- The collaborative approach between Oxford, Elgin, and Perth to conduct this review should continue, with the creation of an ongoing working group to further consider implementation of the consultant’s recommendations, in consultation with the respective Counties’ Council.

Implementation Points

Upon Council adoption of this report, staff will continue to work with counterparts in Elgin and Perth Counties as part of an ongoing Paramedic Services Sharing Working Group to further refine the list of recommendations and bring forth a proposed implementation plan for Council consideration.

Staff will submit a Final Report Back to the Province (based on the work completed to date) by March 23, 2022 as part of fulfilling our requirements in the Transfer Payment Agreement.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with the receipt of this report. The cost to conduct the review and produce the report authored by Performance Concepts (Attachment 1) is fully funded through the Province's Municipal Modernization Program.

Communications







The Chief of Paramedic Services for each of the municipalities involved in the review met regularly throughout the project, meeting with Performance Concepts Consulting to guide the work and provide feedback at key touchpoints.

The Chief Administrative Officer of each of the three municipalities have been kept informed throughout the project through their respective Chief Paramedic, as well as provided with two key opportunities to provide guidance and feedback: once during the project initiation stage, Performance Concepts Consulting met with each CAO individually to gain a better understanding of the local context; and secondly upon receipt of preliminary findings, so that they could provide feedback toward the final report.

Each Union was also contacted during the early stages of the review to gain a better understanding of the local context.

Other communications, such as the peer review, were carried out by Performance Concepts Consulting.

Strategic Plan (2020-2022)

					
<i>WORKS WELL TOGETHER</i>	<i>WELL CONNECTED</i>	<i>SHAPES THE FUTURE</i>	<i>INFORMS & ENGAGES</i>	<i>PERFORMS & DELIVERS</i>	<i>POSITIVE IMPACT</i>
1.ii.		3.iii.		5.i. 5.ii.	

DISCUSSION

Background

Under the Ambulance Act R.S.O. 1990, every upper-tier municipality (UTM) is responsible for ensuring the proper provision of land ambulance service in the municipality. In order to fulfill their obligations for the delivery service, each paramedic service must create deployment plans to direct the dispatch centre on how to utilize their ambulance resources in responding to requests for service. Traditionally, these deployment plan strategies are written with a single UTM focus and with exception of the most emergent call types, lack coordination between neighboring UTM plans for lower priority call responses, balanced/priority coverage areas, inter-facility transfers, major incident responses or other operational deployments.

Further, if an ambulance is dispatched from a paramedic service situated in an UTM to an area situated in another upper-tier municipality or local municipality, municipalities may enter into an agreement with respect to the costs associated with the provision of land ambulance services in both municipalities. The County of Oxford has such agreements with both the Counties of Elgin and Perth.

In 2019, the Government of Ontario indicated a desire to explore Emergency Health Service modernization in keeping with transforming the whole health care system to improve patient experience and strengthen local services. The areas of focus for consultations were on challenges affecting service delivery including:

- Outdated dispatch technologies;
- Lengthy ambulance offload times and delays in transporting medically-stable patients;
- Lack of coordination among EHS (paramedic services) system partners;
- Need for innovative models that improve care; and
- Health equity, or access to services across regions and communities.

To address the opportunity to improve coordination among paramedic services system partners across regions and communities, Oxford County took the lead through Report No. CS 2021-14 2021 Budget – Municipal Modernization Program Funding proposals – Intake 2. In March 2021, County Council approved the New Initiative titled “Joint Municipal Paramedic Service

Deployment Review”. Subsequently, the Province of Ontario approved funding for the New Initiative Request and the County received the Transfer Payment Agreement in August 2021. A Request for Proposals procurement process was initiated, resulting in the award to Performance Concepts Consulting in September 2021. The review was initiated with a project kick-off on September 15, 2021.

Comments

Project Scope

The scope of this project centered on a critical review of existing paramedic service deployment plans and operational strategies for each of the partnering UTM's and to examine effectiveness in terms of level of service and performance, and identify alternative approaches to derive improved levels of service and possible cost savings.

Key deliverables of the consultant's review include:

- A review and analysis of all existing call volume data to determine optimal ambulance deployment locations and priority posting algorithms for each UTM and in relation to each neighboring UTM boarder;
- Recommendations related to each UTM's deployment plans to maximize resource deployment for response time performance in each UTM and in coordination with each neighboring UTM;
- A review and analysis of each partnering UTM's deployment plan strategies in relation to UTM's border emergency coverage, major incident response and cross border call assignment, including inter-facility transports, and to provide recommendations for improved inter-municipal coordination and efficiencies; and
- Identification and recommendations of broader paramedic service considerations for overall service efficiencies such as cooperative procurement of vehicles, equipment, operational software, maintenance/service agreements, etc.

Project Report

This report to Council introduces the final report authored by Performance Concept Consulting for the Joint Municipal Paramedic Services Deployment Review. The consultants analyzed current performance data; interviewed system partners; forecasted future needs of the ambulance service; examined cross-border ambulance response and coverage; and created recommendations in how three paramedic services can best collaborate in providing high-quality paramedic and mobile health services across three communities. The findings are outlined in Attachment 1.

The report (Attachment 1) highlights the current performance of the tri-county system while comparing and contrasting to other similar size regions. The overarching finding is that the three services are like in size, and in our case are well posed to address growth and the needs of our

population within Oxford County. Considerable pressures will come in the form of increase in call volumes based on several factors not limited to the 'aging tsunami'. There is no 'silver-bullet' that can be deployed to address the predicted call volume increase, however there are a multitude of ways to approach the subject which are woven throughout the report.

Conclusions

Particular care was taken when looking at the cross-border ambulance responses in specific areas of the three counties. Efficiencies are also highlighted in the synergistic potential that exists if Counties tap into specific resources such as data analytics to drive wise business decisions. The final recommendation in the report, to develop a working group among the three municipalities, will help to prioritize our go-forward approach and to make realistic goals and provide Council with next steps.

SIGNATURES

Departmental Approval:

Original signed by

Ben Addley
Director of Paramedic Services

Approved for submission:

Original signed by

Michael Duben, B.A., LL.B.
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 Oxford Elgin Perth Counties Joint Municipal Paramedic Services Deployment Review, prepared by Performance Concepts Consulting, dated February 23, 2022