



POSTPONED MOTIONS: ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

NUMBER: PM35-2018

REQUESTED BY:	Councillor Natalie Joly
ORIGIN OF REQUEST:	Email
DATE OF REQUEST:	November 20, 2017

AUTHOR:	Darrel Bliss
DEPARTMENT:	Fire Services
DATE RESPONSE DUE:	November 22, 2017

MOTION:

That the Wildland Urban Interface Fire Fighting Vehicle project is moved from funded to unfunded.

RESPONSE (one page max.):

Administration's Understanding of Intent Motion:

It is Administration's understanding that the Wildland Urban Interface Vehicle project be moved from funded to unfunded.

Operational or Organizational Impacts if Motion is Approved:

There would be no organizational, staffing, or workload impacts should the motion be approved. Operationally, unfunding this project would diminish fire suppression effectiveness in wildland/grassland urban interface settings.

Financial Implications of Motions:

If this motion is approved the 2018 capital budget would be reduced by \$193,000.

Stakeholder Consultations:

N/A

Background:

St. Albert Fire Services (SAFS) does not currently have a suitable fire fighting vehicle to adequately handle Wildland/Grassland Urban Interface fires. The 2015 fire tornado, where one of our members was injured, was a prime example of this.

Presently, the fire fighting vehicles in the SAFS fleet are too large and heavy to access and fight wildland/grassland fires, and do not have features such as 'Pump and Roll' (where the fire truck can move and yet have a pump engaged in order to extinguish running grassland wildfires) like this unit has. This capability allows for extinguishment of large areas of land in a relatively short time period.

The truck has interchangeable 'Pods' which can be changed depending on need. In this, it can drop off a Wildland/Grassland Pod (which contains a water tank, a fire pump, hose, hand tools for ground fires and wildland fires, etc.) in otherwise inaccessible areas, and still be used as a utility truck by putting a Utility Pod on the unit, or a Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Air Bottle Pod on, in order to transport vital SCBA air to members in the field.

It has off-road capabilities with a water capacity of 1200 litres. None of the SAFS department's units have this off-road capability. It also carries Class A foam to more efficiently extinguish combustible fires. With the newly acquired annexed lands, an increase in the amount of agricultural lands within the city limits, as well as the ever-expanding trail system within the city, this lightweight vehicle will be more effective in fire suppression before fires spread into more highly populated areas. Areas of concern are North, South, and West St. Albert, along the trails and river valley, various ravines (i.e. Braeside), as well as areas such as Meadowview Drive. Quick access is needed to these areas with a suitable amount of water/foam. A lightweight unit is vital so that the vehicle does not sink when the ground is soft (i.e. low-lying areas).

The unit is a multifunctional truck with a crew cab. This is a vital feature because it allows for the transport of proper manpower to the fire scenes as well. This truck will also have the ability to pull the departments Emergency Supply/Training Trailer to areas anywhere in the Province, if our services are required elsewhere. The Slave Lake and Fort McMurray Fires are prime examples. At present the SAFS does not have a vehicle that can safely pull our Emergency Supply/Training Trailer. The units we have are simply underpowered for towing capacity. For the past several years we have been renting trucks to assist in pulling this trailer.

Lastly, the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) award, that the SAFS recently received (which only a few departments in Canada have attained), stated that one area the SAFS needs to improve in is our Rural/Urban Interface Firefighting capabilities. Cities/communities across the province of similar size, which have such a vehicle include Airdrie, Red Deer. Spruce Grove, Leduc City, Strathcona County, and Fort Saskatchewan.